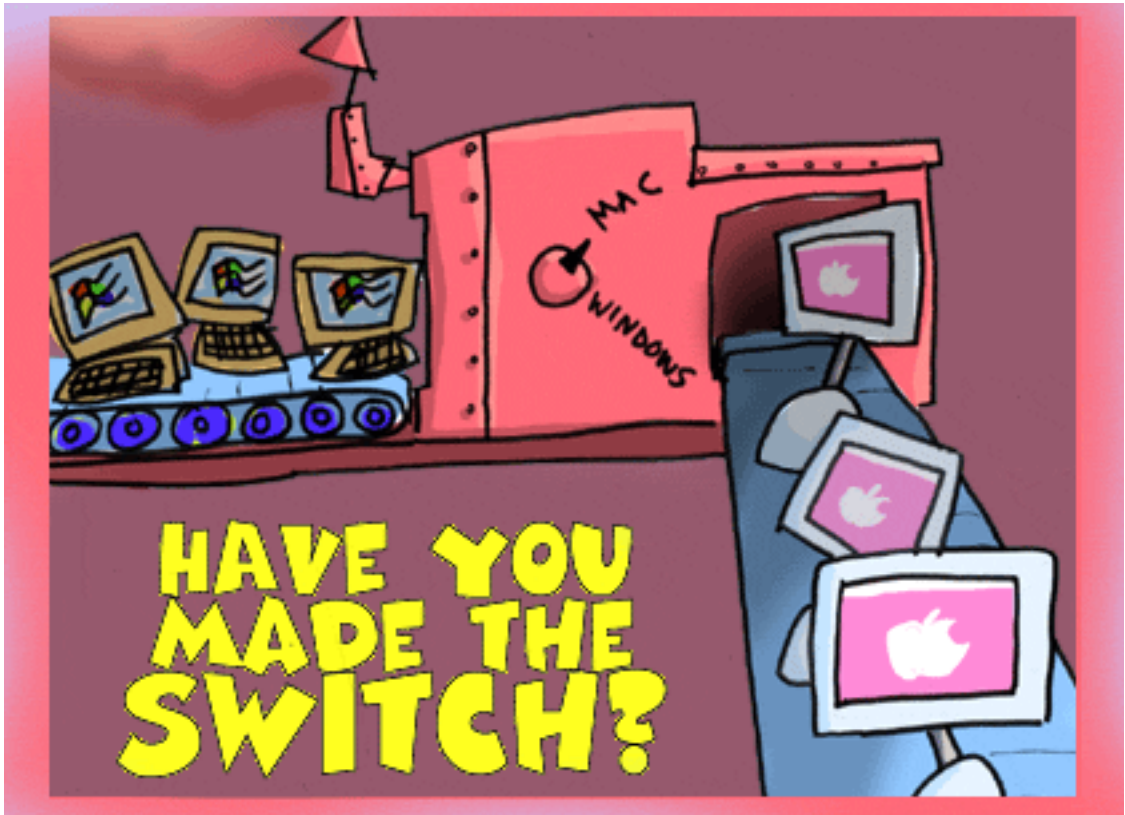


ATPM

8.07 / July 2002
Volume 8, Number 7



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

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ISSN: 1093-2909

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Welcome

Welcome to the July issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We've waited months for July. It's the semi-annual 31-day period in which Apple Computer and its products are the focus of a major trade show and the month the storied PC maker announces its quarterly results.

In January Apple announced the new iMac with an LCD screen, and within days the company was flooded with tens of thousands of pre-orders. In January the company also announced favorable results for its December quarter. This month Apple is set to announce there is no longer pent-up demand for the LCD iMac and less-than-favorable results for the June quarter. What a difference six months make!

The Mortal Mac

Introduced with great fanfare in January, Apple's lamp-like iteration of the marvelous iMac garnered a cover story in *Time* magazine and hundreds of thousands of orders from the "Mac faithful" and the PC curious. By May demand for the new iMac fell to the same levels of demand from consumers as the products offered by Apple's competitors. In other words, the once scarce iMac is now ubiquitous on retail store floors as Apple cuts production to compensate for lower-than-expected demand.

The fall off in demand forced Apple to issue a revenue and earnings warning for the June quarter. Apple told analysts and investors that sales and profits would be down around ten percent from its April estimates. A fall off in sales of pro-level products accounts for much of the drop in sales.

The Apple Hype Hangover

Mac enthusiasts have learned over the years that the semi-annual U.S. Macworld Expos usually bring about the news of new products. In years past Apple's hype machine has worked overtime to make the expos major PC industry events. Not wanting to be burned by the experience of buying a new Mac just before an expo only to find the same product heavily discounted after the show because an updated product has just been announced, enthusiasts tend to delay purchases until after the summer show.

Apple has been combating this sales problem by releasing new products between expos and cutting production of existing products before the shows to clear out inventory of older products before new products come to market. Still, old habits die hard and the “expo effect” has caused Apple sales problems in the June quarter for several years in a row.

Apple Shares Selling Well

That is if you are an Apple executive. At press time several stories were running in major news publications concerning the sales of shares by Apple executives in the weeks before the earnings warning. Whether or not the timing of the sales was a mere coincidence or a well-organized effort by Apple executives to pocket profits ahead of the warning will be revealed in the weeks to come.

There’s a lot of news in store for July. We’ll all have to wait to see how events unfold. But there’s one thing for which our readers don’t need to wait and that’s the latest issue of ATPM available at your Internet newsstand now!

The ATPM Staff

Our July issue includes:

The Candy Apple: Ups and Downs of the Market

When is enough really enough? Ellyn Ritterskamp grapples with stock market concepts, in the wake of Apple’s revised earnings projection.

About This Particular Web Site

This month’s *ATPW* offers tips on Mac OS X, FileMaker Pro, and finding proprietary batteries. You can also read about the next generation space shuttle, and what lumberjacks do when they aren’t starring in Monty Python skits.

The User Strikes Back: Who Controls Your Future?

Learn from Ken Gruberman how artists become indentured employees to the recording companies and how these same companies want to control your future.

The User Strikes Back: Attack of the Killer CDs

Arnold Woodworth and Ken Gruberman explain how to deal with copy-protected CDs that can lock your Mac up.

Profiles in Networking: Thoughts on Apple's Xserve

Matthew Glidden gives us his take on the Xserve, Apple's new rack-mount server.

How To: Connecting Two Macs via LocalTalk When Using System 6

The buzz is all OS X, but ATPM hasn't forgotten OS VI. Learn how to connect two Macs running this venerable legacy OS

How To: Choosing a Digital Camera

With the plethora of cameras and specifications, it's difficult to make a decision on the right digital camera. Photography expert Rachel Robbins helps us get hooked up to the Digital Hub with the right shooter.

Cartoon: Cortland

Cortland has a funny take on Mac OS X this month.

Desktop Pictures: Normandy

Staffer Ellyn Ritterskamp continues to mooch pictures from her traveling companions. This month she continues her voyage through France and brings us superb pictures of that wild and beautiful country known as Normandy.

Review: Burst 1.0.1

Ellyn Ritterskamp looks at a cute virtual carnival game called Burst. Is balloon-popping your thing? You can pop forever in this game, and there are lightning bolts, too!

Review: FileXaminer 1.1

Eric Blair takes a look at FileXaminer, another attempt at getting some useful information about files in OS X. Read the review to find out how it stacks up against Super Get Info.

Review: Learning Unix for Mac OS X (book)

Paul Fatula reviews Dave Taylor and Jerry Peek's *Learning Unix for Mac OS X*, only to find that there's simply too little information provided for much learning to take place, and that the book fails to provide novice Unix users a reason to fire up the Terminal program.

Review: Mojo Mail 2.6.7

Michael Tsai reviews Mojo Mail, a free mailing list server that runs on your Web server.

Review: QPict 5.1

Gregory Tetrault reviews QPict, a shareware media cataloging program that packs quite a punch. If you're pushing the limits of iPhoto, you should definitely take a look.



E-Mail

[AquaGrep Review](#)

You can also check out [MacGrep v1.0](#). The author shares a lot of the same views about charging \$10 for writing a wrapper.

—*Knox*

[FreeHand 10 Review](#)

FreeHand 10 has been extremely problematic for me. Files open much slower and tools select much slower. I was on this site because I was looking to see if anyone else is having this problem. I have been talking to Macromedia about a color conversion problem and they deny there are any problems with 10. And I have been using FreeHand happily for years. So how do we fix this?

—*Roy Smith*

Please contact us if you have any suggestions for Roy. —*Ed*

[Episode II: Attack of the Installers](#)

Thank you Ken Gruberman for the fine article on installing software. So clear and well written. Keep up the good work.

—*Blaine Wollan*

[Building the Dream Machine](#)

Congratulations. I have an 8600/300 running Mac OS X and I, too, had to use the XPostFacto option. At first, the Sonnet workaround worked but I had problems galore. The XPostFacto solution was much better. I'm running a G4/450 with a Sonnet FireWire/

USB card and it's great. My iPod works and all of the free software works. My only problem is drivers for my video card (3dfx) and scanner (Canon) are still unavailable. Also, the upgrade business has gone kaput. Nothing since the 450 in three years.

—*Roland McBride*

Mac OS X does not fully support older video cards. Video- or screen-intensive applications will have poor performance or will not run at all on older Macs running OS X. I considered adding OS X to my beige G3, but too many video-related tasks (including playing DVD movies) and analog audio tasks are not supported by it. You lose a lot of productivity if you have to continually reboot to switch between OS 9 and OS X. —*Gregory Tetrault*

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Ups and Downs of the Market

I never claimed to understand the stock market. I like to dabble in it, in the sense that I like the idea of owning a small piece of a company that I believe makes a contribution to society.

Apple announced June 18 that its quarterly earnings would be 1.45 billion dollars, rather than the projected 1.6 billion dollars. This brought earnings per share down from around 11 cents to between 8 and 10 cents.

I'm sure everyone will hop on board to correct me, but I just can't understand why, on any level, this is disappointing news. I still hear them saying that the company will earn *1.45 billion* dollars. I own some shares of Apple, so I try to keep up with such forecasts. I like hearing the company say it is earning a profit. Any profit. That means I get a return on my investment.

There are two things that mystify me about the fundamental basis of the market. One is the way a share price goes up and down based on expectations rather than on actual performance. I can sort of see how this reflects demand, although my economics professor a few years ago said that cost is never a function of demand. Demand has its own equation, and cost is a whole separate thing. That's one of those concepts I understood for about two seconds, and then it was gone. I got it, but can never adequately explain it to anyone else. So I'm willing to let this problem slide, for now. Buyers bid more or less on a stock share, based on what they think it will be worth down the road, and I can sort of understand that. But it still kills me when announcements like this one cause a share price to drop.

The other mystifying fundamental concept I struggle with is the notion that a company is supposed to continue to grow. I've never been able to figure out our expectation that a company should always make *more* money than the previous quarter, or the same quarter a year ago. At some point, haven't we arrived at a place where we're making plenty, and we don't need to try so hard to make more?

Not that this will be an issue for Apple anytime soon, but at what point do we stop trying to run everyone else out of business? Isn't it good for most businesses to have competition? Not just good for the customer, but for the companies as well? Isn't that what maybe keeps us honest, or at least makes us try to appear honest?

I realize these are very broad questions about the nature of business in a capitalistic society, and we covered lots of that ground in a column a few months ago. But when is enough really enough? I'm not going to lie awake tonight worrying that Apple won't reach the original 1.6 billion dollar target. When next quarter rolls around, they'll still be in business, they'll still be supplying schools with affordable, useful equipment, and we'll all still have the option of purchasing a Mac if we want one. I don't know exactly what Wall Street expects from a company, but all that sounds pretty good to me.

Onward.

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About This Particular Web Site

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

Macintosh Tech Tips

There are lots of sites out there that give you tips for using Mac OS X, but most of them tend to be on the relatively non-technical side. This site however offers detailed instructions on how to do complicated tasks like moving swapfiles to a different partition, creating a bootable OS X CD (the difficulty of doing this speaks volumes on how far OS X has to go before it equals OS 9's ease of use), and removing non-English localization files (with a program called DeLocalizer). Keep in mind you will need to use the Terminal to do some of these things, and Things Can Go Wrong if you're not careful.

Space Launch Initiative News

In spite of NASA's pathetically small budget, the search is on to find the next reusable launch vehicle, to replace the aging space shuttle. This page shows you some of the models being considered by the various companies making bids on the job. You can also read press releases relevant to the bids, and view QuickTime movies of some of the proposed spacecraft in action. Just animations though; the real thing is a long way off.

Battery Barn

It may be a commercial site, but it's really useful. I don't know why electronic devices can't use standard batteries, or create a few new standards, rather than using proprietary, hard-to-find batteries, but that's what they do. I discovered this site while looking for a replacement battery for my old cordless phone. If you need a battery for something, this is the place to look. (There are a few other such online shops, but this one easily beats the competition judging by posts on [ResellerRatings](#).)

North American Lumberjack Guide

Are you a lumberjack? Are you okay? Then in between sleeping all night and working all day, you should definitely check out "the first guide on the Internet devoted to the promotion of timber related sports in North America." You can find out where the next

contest is going to be held, view world's records in areas such as One Man Crosscut and Standing Block Chop, or follow links to the second through fourth timber related sports Web sites. So what are you waiting for? Get choppin'!

FM Forums

Using the latest version of FileMaker Pro on a high-end G4, it feels a bit anachronistic to fire up trn (a Unix newsreader) and head for Usenet's comp.databases.filemaker when I need help. Any one of the numerous threads on this site offer more entries than the one FileMaker newsgroup, with posts by hundreds if not thousands of users on topics such as defining fields, security issues, AppleScript, ODBC/JDBC/XML, and relational database theory. And unlike Usenet, forum posts tend to stay pretty tightly on-topic, without degenerating into flame wars or unwanted advertisements.

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Thoughts on Apple's Xserve

Introduction

Apple recently announced the [Xserve](#), a high-capacity storage server aimed at businesses prepared to make the [switch](#) without sacrificing existing network utility. An Xserve unit combines high processing power (single or dual gigahertz processors) and lots of hard disk space (up to 480 GB per unit) in a package about the size and thickness of a coffee shop table top. Xserve is aimed squarely at business needs, and may prove valuable to the image of Apple as a "serious" computer company, with more to offer than colors and cool chrome.

Playing Rack-a-Mole

The Xserve and similar units from other makers conform to a rack-mount size standard, the "U," which is about 1.75 inches in height. Racks are pretty much what they sound like, effectively bookshelves for computer components, though the emphasis is on functionality over sex appeal (meaning no prospect of different Xserve flavors). "Mounting" something simply entails connecting it to the rack's frame using screws. A typical rack has numerous components, with supporting power supplies, network switches, and so forth. Racks usually reach eight feet in height, allowing for lots of components in a relatively small space. Racks have open fronts and backs, for free access to wiring and peripherals. Businesses rely on racked systems for large quantities of reliable, network-ready computer storage that use a minimum of space and power, since both mean additional business expenses.

Who Cares?

So Apple can sell big storage to companies. So what? Should you or I, who may only scratch the surface of one terabyte of storage, care about something that can hold over 20? From an image perspective at least, the answer is yes. A "serious" computer company (Dell, let's say) gives their clients a range of options on a single account: desktops, laptops,

servers, and big, network-friendly storage units. For most businesses, this covers all the bases. Even with great products everywhere else, Apple had a big zero in the storage category before Xserve, a category which could easily make or break a large business deal.

Where Business Storage is Now

Compared to an established industry like fast food, where innovations come slowly and with much forethought, the business-class storage industry rises and swoons almost overnight. Last year, everything was Network-Attached Storage (NAS) and storage-area-networks (SAN), and industry titans like EMC and IBM happily packaged their hard disks into big boxes and counted the profits. This year, management software and “smart” hardware is suddenly the rage and the former market leaders find themselves on the verge of being innovated out of large chunks of their business by startups with new ideas and lower costs. This climate change and a poor economy mean that storage buyers tighten their budgets and wait for someone—perhaps anyone, regardless of business cachet—to offer an elegant and affordable solution.

Where Business Storage Might be Going

Most potential clients, especially large-scale buyers like public utilities, the government, and media companies, face immense complexity in their networks and storage needs. These companies usually have whole departments devoted just to managing their computer storage: who has access to it, how to make changes, and who gets to spend the precious storage dollar. In the past, they’ve had to bite the bullet and figure out people-driven ways to handle the complexity. Recently the storage makers started the slow push towards computer-driven solutions, working on one problem at a time on the road to providing storage that is conveniently available when and where their clients need it. The final solution isn’t even on the radar yet, but will probably involve a “black box” mix of storage and software. The effect—to return to fast food—could look like a drive-through window: you “order” a bigger database, and receive a certain chunk of memory. You know they “cook” your order inside the box, but the exact process is unimportant as long as the memory looks and acts like a database. It shouldn’t matter whether the memory is actually Dell memory, EMC memory, Hitachi memory, or (aha!) Apple memory.

The Apple Advantage

So where does Apple fit in? I mentioned business cachet, and how the next business storage winner may not need it, if their product is sufficiently compelling. Ironically, Apple finds itself at both ends of the spectrum. The iMac and iBook may not look like business computers to an IT department, but Mac OS X sure works like Unix, which businesses have relied on since before Bill Gates went tinkering around with [QDOS](#). Sure you *could* run both Unix and Windows on a Dell server, but those aren't the first two operating systems that you expect to play nice together. The fact that Mac OS X works both sides of the fence could be a nice bonus, should Apple create (or purchase) some complimentary storage management software. Of course, there's nothing saying they *have* to—they may be happy to implement the first competent Unix-based solution that comes along. But if nothing else, the Xserve creates a nice foundation to work from, and they risk little by trying. People are screaming for solutions from the storage market leaders—even the aforementioned Dell—but no one's putting the screws to Apple. There's a pot of gold at the end of this rainbow; perhaps Apple should be looking for leprechauns.

Copyright © 2002 Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com. Matthew Glidden is the webmaster of [Threemacs.com](#), a guide to constructing and maintaining home and small-office Macintosh networks. He can also tango and juggle, not necessarily at the same time.



The User Strikes Back

by Ken Gruberman, kgruberman@atpm.com

Who Controls Your Future?

Recently the Macintosh world has been in an uproar over copy-protected music CDs. The CDs—sold in record stores and through vendors such as Amazon.com—supposedly play on regular CD players but not on computer CD-ROM drives. The intention, as stated by the record companies, is to prohibit the extraction of audio tracks into MP3 files. The rationale is, if you can't rip a song, you can't trade it online. The problem with these CDs, however, is they totally lock up Macintosh computers when inserted (and to a lesser degree, PCs). Some people have even reported serious damage to their beloved Mac after inserting one of these CDs.

Dealing with such a situation is a topic for [another column](#). Instead, I would like to talk about the philosophical and legal issues raised by the record companies' copy-protection schemes. One reason these topics are worthy of discussion is because we use Macintosh computers which, according to Apple and Steve Jobs, are now digital hubs in the "new digital lifestyle" that many of us are leading. If media companies get their way, however, the idea of a digital hub will become nothing but a pipe-dream.

My main complaint with record companies in particular is their methodology of obstructing consumer rights—along with the quiet elimination of "fair use"—in an attempt to protect corporate profits. The concept of fair use has been around for years, but recently it has been slowly and carefully eroded in the courts and in the halls of government by huge multi-national media conglomerates. It is also at the heart of why we, as Mac owners, have a right to use CDs, iTunes, and an iPod in the way in which they were intended. A Congressman named Rick Boucher is trying to protect [fair use](#), and here's what he has to say about it:

The American public has traditionally enjoyed the ability to make convenience and incidental copies of copyrighted works without the necessity of obtaining the prior consent of the owner of the copyright. These traditional 'fair use' rights are at the foundation of the receipt and use of information by the American public.

From the college student who photocopies a page from a library book for use in writing a report to the typical television viewer who records a broadcast for viewing at a later time to the prudent home computer owner who makes back-up copies of the information he has lawfully stored on his hard drive, we all depend on the ability to make limited copies of copyrighted material without having to pay a fee or obtain prior approval from the owner of the copyright prior to making the copy.

In fact fair use rights to obtain and use a wide array of information are essential to the exercise of First Amendment rights. The very vibrancy of our democracy is dependent on the information availability and use facilitated by the Fair Use Doctrine.

The time, in my view, has come for the Congress to reaffirm the Fair Use Doctrine and to bolster specific fair use rights which are now at risk.

How to Tell the Pirates From the Sharks

As someone who has made (at times) a good living in the music business, you would think I'd be firmly in the camp of the [RIAA](#), the large trade association that represents the major record labels. Their position on the issue of file sharing, copying and the ripping of CDs for use elsewhere can be easily summed up: "Anyone who trades music over the Internet or rips CDs is taking the bread out of the mouths of our hard-working artists and their families!"

Oddly enough, I don't agree with this position at all...probably because I know all too well how the music business *really* works. I've been in it long enough!

I'm not saying we should be able to make backup copies of CDs or download music simply because record company executives often flagrantly exploit their artists, but I feel it is important to understand the realities of how big record labels make their money—it helps to put the issues of copying and downloading in perspective.

Here are some concrete examples of the strange accounting practices in the music industry: after reading them, it will be hard to take the claims of the RIAA seriously. The first one is a [rant](#) by Steve Albini that's a couple of years out of date, but you'll get the

idea. It shows, in gruesome detail, how a typical band can make \$3,000,000 in profits for a record company while the band members themselves *lose* \$14,000 instead. 150 years ago this was known as “indentured servitude.”

Last year, the infamous Courtney Love testified in front of Congress and laid bare just how the music business works in 13 pages of lurid deposition. Salon captured every juicy detail in the riveting [Courtney Love Does the Math](#).

In addition, a recent article in *New York* magazine shows that things have gotten *worse*, not better, since Steve Albini’s article. Author Michael Wolff shows how the actual market for music is shrinking, even though record execs don’t seem to realize it. He states:

This glum (if also quite funny) fate is surely the result of compounded management errors—the know-nothingness and foolishness and acting-out that, for instance, just recently resulted in what seems to be the final death of Napster.

You can find out how the Music Business is now like the Book Business (minus the literacy) by reading [Facing The Music](#).

Finally, things are now so bad in the music business that the artists themselves are uniting in protest. Not against the copying of CDs or the downloading of free music, but against the record companies they work for and the RIAA! Find out what led Don Henley, Clint Black, and other musicians to form the [Recording Artist’s Coalition](#).

What about the RIAA’s contention that music-swapping services like Napster have negatively impacted CD sales and wreaked havoc with the music industry as whole? Is it really true? Maybe not.

The *Los Angeles Times* ran an article by Jeff Leeds on June 20, 2001 showing that, when Napster was at peak popularity, CD sales actually went *up*, and that the dip in sales started almost at the same time Napster was cut off at the knees in March of 2001. (If you want to read the article, you’ll have to search the archives at www.latimes.com and pay a small fee.)

Wired looked at the issue and also found the RIAA's conclusions specious, mainly due to flawed research. [Several instances](#) are cited where CD sales have risen dramatically on various e-tailer sites like Amazon and CDNow when free downloads of songs from various artists and albums were offered.

Add up these facts and you get a different picture than the one the RIAA is painting.

Tripping (and Falling) Down Memory Lane

For those of us with long memories, this situation has a familiar ring to it. Didn't we go through entertainment industry hand-wringing over new technologies before? Of course we did...several times.

For example, I've read in Musician's Union publications about the panic in the music business when records first became popular, and the fervent belief that it would kill off live music.

The first time I can personally recall a full-blown technological media panic happened when audio cassettes became popular. I remember it well.

It was 1968 and I was attending Los Angeles City College while also spending time at KPFK. I spent a lot of time in the LACC broadcasting department, learning the audio skills I still use today. For a couple of years, I never went anywhere without my trusty Norelco portable cassette recorder; it weighed around 8 pounds but was much easier to use and less bulky than a Nagra portable reel-to-reel. I used it for interviews, documentaries, and other features during my "radio days." At times, people would stop and ask me what it was. "A 'compact cassette' recorder invented by Philips" I would tell them. (Remember that Norelco was—and still is—owned by Philips.) For a while it remained an oddity, and then (it seemed like it happened overnight) *everyone* had a cassette recorder or player. In their home, their car, and after Sony's "Walkman" appeared several years later, just about anywhere else.

It didn't take long for people to figure out how easy it was to make cassette copies: just patch two decks together and hit the record button. (Portable boom boxes would come later with two decks built-in.) By the early 70s, homemade audio cassette copies of popular albums were as prevalent as homemade CDs are today. The record companies

made the same noises then as well. “Stealing music is wrong!” they cried, and even came up with a cute “skull and crossbones” logo that was put on all the pop records of the time to remind people not to make illegal copies.

Yet, strangely enough, record sales continued to rise—at times, spectacularly—during the same period. The contention that cassettes were killing the music business was never proven.

Fast forward to the mid-70s, and a new technological terror is born: Sony’s dreaded Betamax video cassette recorder. Now people could make copies of their favorite TV shows (and in some cases, movies) all by themselves. The phenomenon became as widespread as audio cassettes, with the same predictable results. By the early 80s another “sky is falling” press release came, this time from Jack Valenti’s MPAA, which was soon picked up by the mainstream press. Screaming headlines such as “Video cassettes will be the death of the movie business!” appeared in the *LA Times* and other papers as Universal brought suit against Sony in 1984.

Universal charged Sony with contributory copyright infringement, saying it was illegal to tape certain broadcasts on public airwaves, a capability that Sony’s technology made possible. But the US Supreme Court ruled that if new technology had substantial, *noninfringing* uses, it should not be squelched, even though the technology may be used for illegal purposes as well.

This ruling, now commonly referred to as the “Betamax Defense,” is still being used today but is under escalating attack from an increasingly conservative judiciary.

The Oldest Trick in the Book

If all that weren’t bad enough, convincing the public that copying and downloading music is wrong goes against one of the cornerstones of modern retailing: the concept of “try before you buy!”

I remember the famous music store at the corner of Sunset and Vine called Wallich’s Music City. They had several listening booths where customers could hear any album they chose: they could listen first and then decide if they wanted to buy it. The idea was wildly successful and the store remained a Hollywood fixture for decades as well as spawning imitators across the country. In the 1990s, the Music Plus chain of stores tried the same

idea with CDs, but foundered. They tried to blame the “we’ll open and let you listen to one CD per visit” policy for their financial woes, until it was revealed that bad management was really to blame. Today, music stores such as Tower Records and Borders have listening stations, but patrons can only hear what the store and record label reps want them to hear.

The shareware community is also founded on the principle of try before you buy, and has flourished because of it. This is even more remarkable when you consider that, by and large, shareware authors use the honor system.

The Song Remains the Same

The latest record industry copy-protection fiasco is simply one in a long history of failed attempts to control what can’t be controlled, and only serves to antagonize the people who are legitimately buying music.

The RIAA’s logic is bizarre: “So what if a copy-protected CD won’t play in some PCs, all Macintoshes, and approximately 30 percent of all consumer CD, DVD, and even car players? It’s worth it to keep people from making illegal copies!” Call it their “musical scorched earth” policy.

The truth—as any kid will tell you—is there has never been, nor will there ever be, any copy-protection scheme that can’t be broken. History tells us this time and again. History also shows there will always be a segment of the public that refuses to buy your product: they will either make a copy of it or not deal with it at all, but they *will not buy* no matter what you do.

As to the question of why the current Internet music sharing craze is so popular, the answers are varied. Of course, the allure of free music is strong, as you might expect it to be, but that isn’t the only reason why Napster became so popular, and current file-sharing networks continue to grow. There are other reasons, all of which elude music executives with their heads firmly stuck in the sand...or elsewhere. Here are some other reasons why music-swapping won’t go away, no matter how hard anyone tries:

The economy—A more logical explanation for the rise and fall of CD sales over the last few years is the economy. When times are good, people will spend money on things they don’t really need, but when money gets tight they won’t. Add to that the steady rise in CD

prices over the last several years and you would expect to see a drop in CD sales. And now that everyone knows a blank CD sells for \$0.30 or less, the idea of paying \$17.98 for a CD makes little sense. Yet that's exactly what Tower Records charges for current releases, with some selling for even more, even though online e-tailer prices average around \$12. No wonder the kids headed for the virtual hills.

The death of the 45 rpm record—Not every recording artist can produce 12 songs of pure genius: many pop records contain only one or two good songs on them at best. This is nothing new, but in the past, people got the songs they wanted on inexpensive 45 rpm records that typically cost \$0.99 to \$1.49. Today's CD singles cost anywhere from \$4 to \$6, with the same one song that used to come on a 45 with some filler material thrown in. At these prices, three songs cost as much as a full album, which is why CD singles have never become as popular as 45s used to be.

Lock-step radio—I could write another article on what is wrong with today's FM radio scene, but so many others have already done so. For a real eye-opener, try the *Chicago Tribune's* [Rocking Radio's World](#).

Here is the first line: "Commercial radio may be in its worst shape ever, with listeners tuning out and legislators calling for investigation into corporate control of public airways." Just as with the record industry, a few huge corporations have gobbled up most of America's radio stations, the end result being the same dreary music being played in every American town and hamlet.

FM radio used to function as a medium that exposed listeners to new music of all types, which in turn spurred record sales. When there's nothing to hear on the radio but the same songs over and over again, whether the station plays rock, country, or urban, there's no reason to expect record sales to increase. You'll notice I didn't mention jazz or classical: stations that play this kind of music have virtually disappeared from American radio, except for the occasional college station. According to conglomerates like Clear Channel, there's not enough profit in it.

Perhaps one reason sales increased when Napster came on the scene was that people were again free to sample new kinds of music, and if they liked something they downloaded, they could then buy the album *already knowing* they would like it. There's that concept of "Try before you buy" again.

Interestingly enough, the latest rage is streaming Internet radio. If you have a copy of iTunes on your hard drive, click on the “Radio Tuner” and you’ll see a healthy selection of stations. Fueled by the proliferation of fast Internet connections in homes and businesses, Internet radio is another attempt by people to break away from the rigid playlists and formats of FM stations run by soulless automatons and bring back a sense of adventure and playfulness to radio. Not surprisingly, the RIAA has just announced a campaign to squash Internet radio as well.

Time to Take a Stand

If you think all this sounds grim, it’s going to get worse. The RIAA has won a few skirmishes, most notably the hobbling of Napster, and this has emboldened them—and other industry trade associations—to go after the Ultimate Dream of Hollywood: the complete and total control of *everything you see, read and hear*.

In an article called [Hollywood Wants to Plug the Analog Hole](#), you’ll find out what plans major entertainment corporations have for you, your computer, and your future. As the article says, “[Hollywood’s] three-part agenda—controlling digital media devices, controlling analog converters, controlling the Internet—is a frightening peek at Hollywood’s vision of the future.”

If you would like to take a stand on these issues and preserve the idea of the Digital Hub and everything else the Macintosh excels at when it comes to multimedia, I urge you to join, as I have, the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#). They are one of the oldest organizations promoting the rights of consumers and individuals over the forces of corporate greed. They will make your voice heard, and they will stand up for your rights. If you do nothing—if you believe that all of this will be sorted out by others and that there is nothing you can do about it—one day you will wake up and find your rights have vanished. Your once vibrant Digital Hub will have become nothing more than a Digital Doorstop.

The choice is yours.

Copyright © 2002 Ken Gruberman, kgruberman@atpm.com. Ken Gruberman is a member of the Apple Consultants Network and has been writing about the Macintosh since 1989. He has edited The MacValley Voice, the award-winning newsletter of the MacValley Users Group in Southern California, for 11 years and wrote for MacUser magazine for 7 years. Ken lives in Chatsworth, CA.



The User Strikes Back

by Arnold Woodworth and Ken Gruberman, kgruberman@atpm.com

Attack of the Killer CDs

If you haven't been paying attention to recent Mac news on the Internet, you might not know that inserting a "copy-protected CD" into your Mac's CD drive can cause it to freeze up. Restarting your Mac won't help, because the CD can prevent your Mac from starting up at all. The good news is that copy-protected CDs won't do any permanent damage: your Mac will work just fine after you manage to get the problematic CD out of the drive.

In other words, this problem, although highly annoying, is not as bad as some of the hysterical headlines I've seen on Web sites that go something like this: "(Insert your favorite musician's name here)'s CD Killed My Mac!"

In this article, I'll talk about (a) what a copy-protected CD is, (b) the problems it can cause, (c) who makes them and why, (d) how to tell if a CD is copy-protected and (e) what to do if one gets stuck inside your Mac.

The Music Goes 'round and 'round, But it Doesn't Come out Here

"Copy-protected" means that the manufacturer has attempted to make the CD impossible to copy (the colloquial term is "rip-proof"), which also means the owner is prevented from extracting tracks from the CD into the popular MP3 format. I say *attempted* because all methods so far have been defeated. One protection method, used by Sony, was defeated by drawing along the rim of a CD with a felt-tip marker...but that's another story.

The disks in question are music CDs that are designed to work in audio CD players, but not in computer drives. This is accomplished because the disks have corrupted data in an area of the CD which computers normally read but which consumer-based players supposedly ignore—in addition, the corrupted data was intended only to confuse computers, not to stop them from working altogether.

This method is used mainly by Sony, but according to Garry Margolis, the current president of the Audio Engineering Society (AES), there is more than one system in use. Another method is called the Cactus system, and was developed by Midbar of Israel (“midbar” is “desert” in Hebrew), which screws up the audio data and depends on the error correction in consumer players to restore the playability; the error correction in computer drives doesn’t work the same way as consumer players. Discs protected with the Cactus system *won’t* hang a Mac.

However, there is no way to tell which type of protection was used without inserting the disc in the machine. What a mess.

Problems, Problems!

Unfortunately, the truth is that copy-protected CDs can completely disable Macs—and to a lesser degree PCs—if only temporarily. There have been many reports of Macs freezing up as soon as a copy-protected CD was inserted. Even if a problematic music CD doesn’t freeze your Mac, be sure to eject it before shutting down or restarting your Mac, as the CD could prevent your computer from starting up again.

As stated before, your Mac will work normally again, after the copy-protected CD is ejected from the drive...and that’s where the fun begins.

The newest Quicksilver desktop Macs and the brand-new iBooks, PowerBooks, and iMacs have no physical button to press to get the CD to eject: they have to use the media eject key on the keyboard to do so. That’s when the problem becomes serious. People who know the right tricks can usually find a way to eject the offending CD; those who don’t have to take their Macs into a repair shop. And those who take their Macs to a repair shop are in for a rude awakening when they discover their AppleCare warranty doesn’t cover the cost of dealing with these CDs and the havoc they may create. The reason is Apple considers the CD to be the problem; they don’t want to pay every time a user slips one of them into a Mac.

As you can see, knowing how to eject one of these CDs can save you time, money, and aggravation. I’ll tell you everything you need to know in a couple of minutes, but first, let’s take a look at who created the problem in the first place.

How to Identify a Copy-Protected CD

According to the Web sites I researched for this article, companies started copy protecting music CDs around January 2000. I think it's safe to say than any CD purchased before that date is not copy-protected. Most copy-protected CDs released in 2000 and 2001 were sold in Europe and not in the US. Probably only a few CDs you bought in 2000 or 2001 are copy-protected. This year, an increasing number of music CDs are copy-protected and are *not* safe to put in your Mac.

Sometimes, you can identify a copy-protected CD when you're still in the store. Starting this year, many (but not all) copy-protected CDs are now marked "Will not work on a PC/Mac," both on the jewel case and on the CD itself. Look carefully. The words may be in very small print, or worse, they might not be there at all. Remember: not all copy-protected CDs are labeled as such!

Garry Margolis adds:

Another thing to keep in mind: Philips (the company that helped invent the audio CD) has notified record companies that copy-protected CDs do not meet the Red Book specifications; i.e. the official specifications on what constitutes a CD-Audio disc. Therefore, copy-protected CDs are not supposed to use the CD logo on the disc or package. It's a fairly safe bet that if the CD logo is not on the disc, it has copy protection...but there is no guarantee at this point that a disc or package with a CD logo is free of this problem either.

What to Do If a Copy-Protected CD Gets Stuck in Your Mac

Now we get to the good part: if a CD gets stuck in your Mac, how do you get it out?

Suppose you're using Mac OS X on your Mac, and suppose you stick a copy-protected CD into it. Your Mac will try to read the CD and fail, but it will never give up trying. As a result, the icon for that CD never appears on your screen. You are left with no icon to drag to the trash. This is where many beginners get stuck. Before you restart:

Trick #1

If you're using Mac OS X, a bad CD shouldn't freeze your Mac altogether. Use the iTunes application (or the iDVD application) to eject the CD. In the iTunes window, click the "Eject" button or the "Burn CD" button. This trick can work only in Mac OS X. Earlier versions of the Mac OS will freeze up altogether.

The next three tricks will work no matter what version of the Mac OS you are running.

Trick #2

If your CD or DVD drive has a manual eject button, try it. An older Mac has an eject button on the front panel, typically right below the drive. Some PowerBooks had them embedded in the drive tray, or right next to it.

Trick #3

In addition to the button, most CD and DVD drives have a tiny manual eject hole sized for the end of a paper clip. You'll need to straighten out a paper clip first, then poke the end of the wire into the manual eject hole.

Unfortunately, that hole is hidden from view in the new G4 towers and in the new iMac G4. Fortunately, you can gently pry open the door that hides the CD or DVD drive, then shine a flashlight in. If the drive has a manual eject hole (not all do), you should be able to spot it.

Trick #4

OK, we're at the point where you just have to restart your Mac. The instant you hear the startup sound, press your mouse button and hold it down until the CD pops out. This trick has been around since the first Mac appeared in 1984, and was traditionally the way you got a stuck floppy disk out of the drive.

The CD should eject almost immediately after the "Happy Mac" appears on your screen; if it doesn't, keep holding the mouse button down for a minute. If it still hasn't come out, try tricks 2 & 3 again.

Trick #5

This trick works only with Mac OS X. It is intended to get your Mac started up again despite the bad CD. Restart your Mac: you'll need to use the reset button. (The location of the reset button depends on what model of Mac or iMac you have.) The instant you hear the startup sound, hold down the "x" key on your keyboard until your Mac has started up. That finishes trick #5: now try Trick #1 again.

If none of these tricks work, you'll probably need to call for help. However, keep in mind that the best way you can avoid trouble is to not put a copy-protected CD in your Mac in the first place. As the old saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

References

- Apple's [official explanation](#) of the copy-protected CD problem and recommended ways of dealing with it.
- Is that new CD you just bought safe to put into your Mac? Want more info on your rights as a consumer? Find out at Web sites: [Fat Chuck's Corrupt CDs](#), [Corrupt Audio Disc Information](#), and [Corrupt CDs: The List](#).
- The official [record company stance](#) on Internet music sharing.
- How you can [protect](#) your legal right to copy and write CDs.
- Write your [representative](#) on this issue.
- The Gnutella network. Reliable Kazaa-based clients are not yet available on the Mac, so you'll want [LimeWire](#).

Copyright © 2002 Arnold Woodworth and Ken Gruberman, ArnoldW@wgn.net and kgruberman@atpm.com. Arnold Woodworth is a founding member of the MacValley Users Group in Northridge CA, which was created one month after the Macintosh debuted in 1984. He created the group's "MacAdemy" classes and seminars, and has been personally teaching Beginning Macintosh for 18 years. Ken Gruberman is a member of the Apple Consultants Network and has been writing about the Macintosh since 1989. He has edited The MacValley Voice, the award-winning newsletter of the MacValley Users Group in Southern California, for 11 years and wrote for MacUser magazine for 7 years. Ken lives in Chatsworth, CA.



How To

by Nikolai Knopp, pyrex@mapscene.de

Connecting a System 6 Mac via LocalTalk

This tutorial describes how to connect two Macintoshes via LocalTalk when you're using System 6. This is ideal for backing up hard disks, or to connect an old Mac (for example a Macintosh Plus or equivalent) with a newer one. Here's a list of tools you'll need:

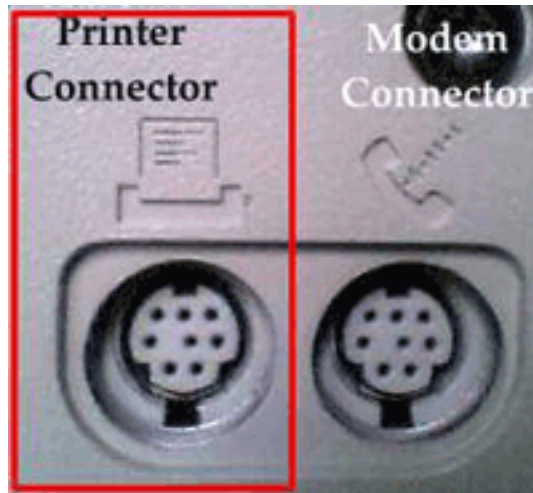
- Two Macintoshes (one running System 6).
- A standard Macintosh printer cable.



- One disk of 1.4 MB size.
- The [AppleShare File Server](#) disk image. Important: When you download this file with a Windows/DOS/Linux computer, you also need one Macintosh which is able to read both 1.4 MB PC Disks and 800 KB Mac disks.
- [Stuffit Expander](#) (version 5.5 works fine) for extracting the disk image.
- [Disk Copy](#) to create readable disks from the image files.
- System 6.0. Important: When you have something like System 6.0.7 and not the real System 6(.0), you must copy the System Folder from the disk image to your boot disk. System 6.0.7 can't be updated by the software on the image; only System 6 can be updated.

To be able to follow my tutorial step by step, you need one Macintosh with System 7.5 and AppleShare server extensions installed, and one with System 6.0.7. Other configurations should also work, but some may perhaps not be set up correctly with my tutorial.

Connect the two Macintoshes via the printer port, found at the back of the computers (highlighted in red).



Download the software you don't have that's listed above. You needn't download System 6; it's included on the disk image.



Turn on both Macs and wait for them to boot until you see the desktop. If you had to download Stuffit Expander or Disk Copy, install them before continuing. If you downloaded the programs to a non-Macintosh computer, copy them on 1.4 MB PC-formatted disks and insert them into your Macintosh (the one with System 7 or newer). It will be able to read them (requires the extension PC Exchange, which is provided with System 7 or higher). Now install the programs.

Setting up System 6

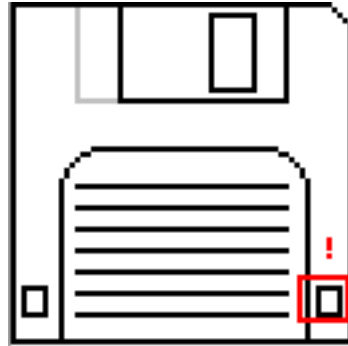
Note: If you downloaded the file `AppleShareFileServer2.sit` to one of the Macintoshes you want to connect, you can skip the next step. When the Macs are ready, copy the file "`AppleShareFileServer2.sit`" from your PC to a 1.44 MB Windows-formatted disk and insert it into your Mac drive. The Macintosh must be able to read both 1.4 MB and 800 KB disks (see above). Copy the file to a temporary folder on your hard disk and eject the disk.

Now open StuffIt Expander, select the copied file on your hard disk, and extract it. After StuffIt Expander has extracted all the files, close it and delete the file AppleShareFileServer2.sit (it's possible that its name was shortened by the system, so that it's called "APPLES~1"). You should now have a new folder called AppleShare File Server 2.0.1. Open it and you should find three files.



The most important file of those is the one called AppleShare Workstation.image. If you installed Disk Copy correctly, you should be able to open it by double-clicking. If not, open Disk Copy and manually open the image by selecting Load Disk Image... from the File menu and selecting the image file in its folder. In the upper box of the Disk Copy window you should now see information about the image file.

Now it's time for a little trick. I'd bet that you don't have a real 800 KB (Double Density, not High Density) disk, so you have to make the Macintosh think that your disk is only Double Density. You can do this by covering the right hole on the disk (highlighted in red) with a little piece of sticky tape. Important: The tape must cover both sides of the hole; otherwise it won't work.

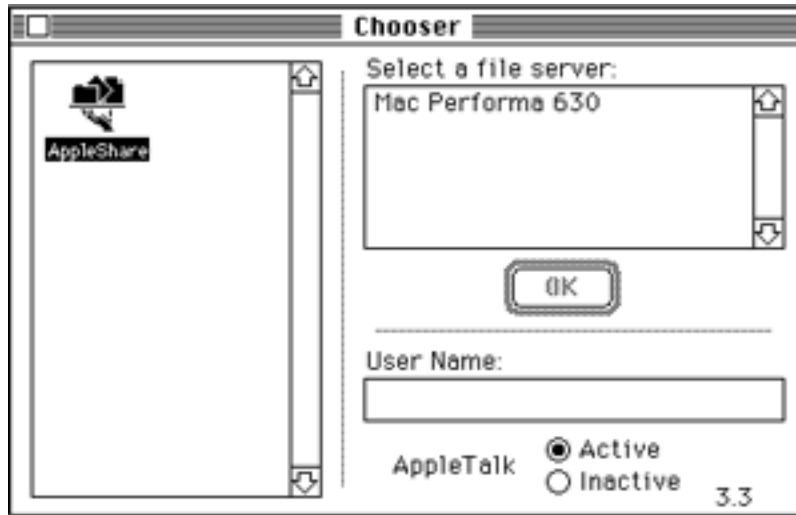


Now you can click on Make a Copy in the Disk Copy application. You'll be prompted for a disk to copy onto. Insert the prepared disk. All data on it will be lost, and the disk will be initialized to 800 KB. When the process is finished, the program will eject the disk. Now close the program and insert the disk into the drive of the Mac with System 6 (in my case it's the Mac Plus).

Note: If you exactly have System and Finder version 6 you can skip the next two paragraphs.

If you have System 6.0.7 or something like this but not exactly System 6, there are two ways of sharing files: (1) You can use the AppleShare Client disk as a boot-disk to copy files from your HD to the other Mac, or (2) You can create a new System folder on your System 6.0.7 HD and copy the system files from the disk to this folder. The first way is very simple to set up; you just have to insert the boot disk, boot from it, and open the Chooser.

Activate AppleTalk and select AppleShare. If the other Macintosh is already set up as a file server, its name will pop up in the box (in my case the server's name is Mac Performa 630). How to set up the other Mac as a file server will be described below.



The second way is a bit more complicated. If you just want a temporary connection—for example, only to backup your hard disk—you can create a new System Folder on your hard disk. Copy the contents of the System Folder of the AppleShare disk into the new folder on your HD. When you're done, open the new system folder and highlight the System icon. Choose Set Startup... from the Special menu and select Finder in the upper part and Finder Only in the lower part of the windows. Click OK and reboot. If you want to set up a permanent connection, you can just copy all the files from the disk's System Folder into your System Folder, so your old extensions will still be used. Important: If you do this, parts of your old system software will be permanently overwritten. You should back up the most important files (like your own System and Finder) on disks or different folders on your HD. Downgrading from System 6.0.7 to 6 can also cause some applications to run incorrectly or not at all.

If you're using System version 6 you can do this: Boot from the AppleShare Workstation disk with your hard disk turned on (if it's external). When the Macintosh is ready, you should see something like this:



Open the AppleShare disk and launch the Installer application. In the list you'll see these items:

- AppleShare Workstation
- EtherTalk
- Macintosh II/Plus/SE Installation

Select AppleShare Workstation and the installation, which corresponds to your Mac, for example Macintosh Plus Installation if you have a Mac Plus. You don't need EtherTalk because Mac Plus or equivalent computers don't have Ethernet connectors. Note: The Mac calculates the space which will be freed or occupied if you remove or install the extensions. This may take several moments. Then select the desired drive at the right by clicking Drive and install by clicking Install. After this process is finished, you can eject the disk and restart.

Your System 6 machine is now set up completely.

Setting up System 7 or Newer

System 7 or newer should already be equipped with AppleShare client and server software, so there isn't much to install. You just have to change a few settings.

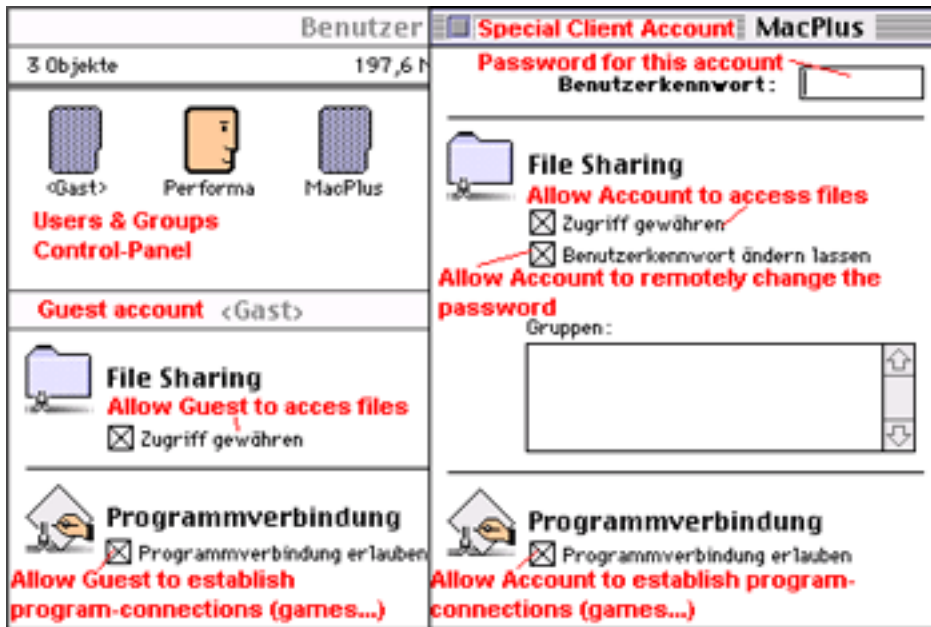
First of all you have to set up the connection, which should be used for engaging an AppleTalk network. Open the Network control panel from the Apple menu. In the new window, select the LocalTalk (Integrated) connector.



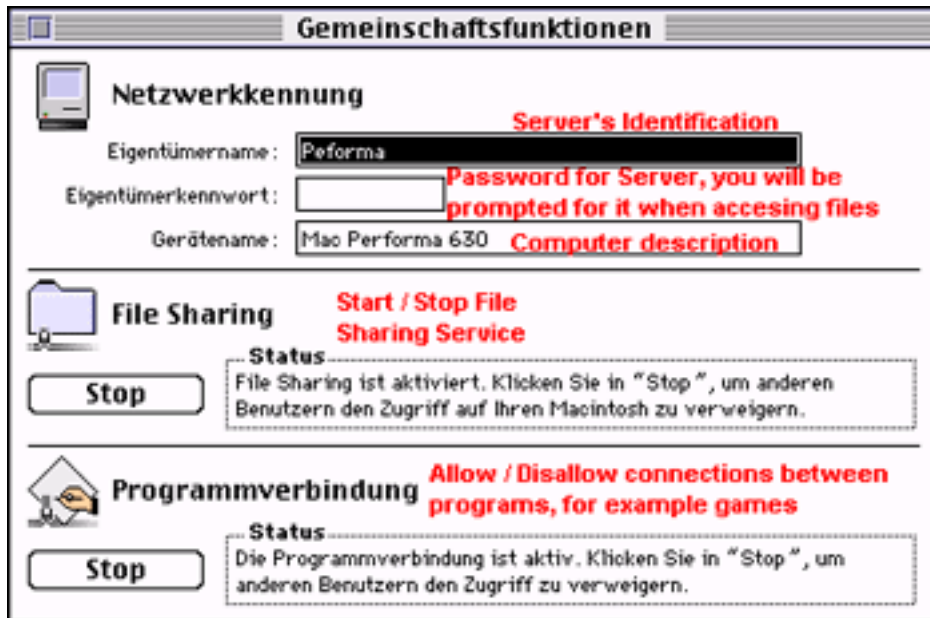
Now you have to create a new user account for the old Macintosh to identify and connect. Open the control panel Users & Groups. There you have two options: You can set up a guest account, which is not locked by any passwords and can be accessed from any Macintosh. This is the easiest way of setting up a user. Just double-click Guest, and activate the settings Allow Guests To Connect under file sharing, if you want the user to access files on your hard disk; and Allow Guests To Link To Programs to allow the user to let two applications communicate with each other, for example games. Remember, guest accounts don't have any passwords!

If you want to create a new user with password-protection, go into the User & Groups panel and choose New User from the File menu. Then you have to give a name to the account. This is the name the client enters in order to connect to the file server. Then double-click the account. You can set a password for the account or leave the field empty.

You can allow the user to copy files, to change their password, and to let their programs communicate with yours. If you set up a user account, you can now close this window and set up the server.



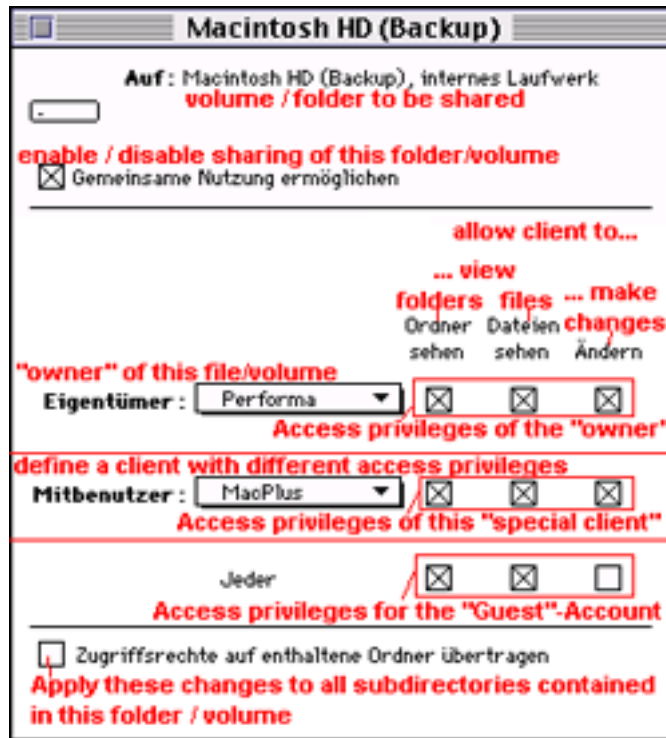
First you must identify the server itself, so open the Sharing Setup control panel. There you can define the server's name, a password for the server, and a short description of the computer type. Under File Sharing you can start and stop file sharing, and under Program Connections you can start and stop connections under special programs. You may now close this window. Finally both systems are set up correctly!



Exchanging Files

Note: The settings you set until now don't need to be changed anymore, except if you want to add new users. The next settings will be changed much more often as you will see. If you set up your Macs like I did it you will now have a server Mac (System 7 or newer) and a client Mac (System 6). That means that the Macintosh with System 6 can copy files from or to the Mac with System 7 or newer. The Macintosh with System 7 is not able to access the client Mac's hard disk. That doesn't matter, because when one Mac can copy from and to the other one, there is only one needed. If you want to establish connections over AppleTalk this limitation has no effect. The Macintosh with System 6 is no file server, but it can be a server for a game, for example.

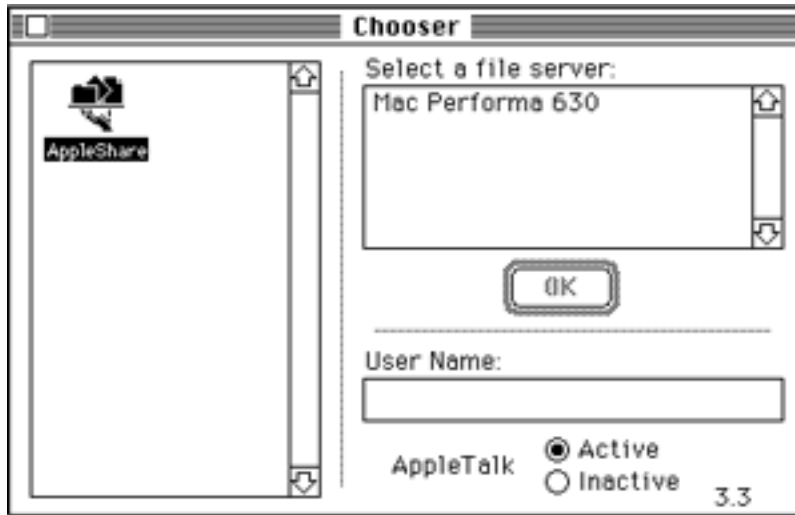
When you want to copy files between the two Macs, you must define a folder/hard disk of the System 7 Mac as "shared." You can do so by simply highlighting it and then clicking on Sharing in the File menu. Then this window should pop up:



Note: This screenshot was slightly adapted so that my comments fit into it. This window is normally smaller and doesn't contain these red additions / comments.

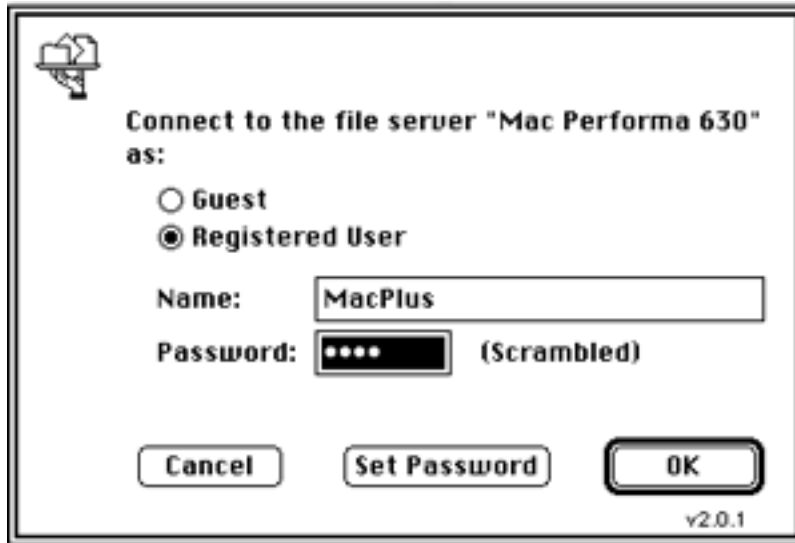
Here you can define the owner of this drive/folder, you can give one client special client rights, and you can change the rights of guests. You can enable/disable sharing of this resource and apply the settings to all folders which are included in the selected drive/folder. If you set up everything like you want it, close the window. In the box which pops up click Save to apply the changes. Note: The rights are applied every time you start your Mac. When you share the whole hard disk with all its subdirectories, it's possible that the startup procedure takes approximately 1–2 minutes longer, so you should find a selection

of folders you want to share instead of the whole drive. Or you create a folder called Shared which you share, and where you can copy everything to you want to share. That makes you sure that you only share files you want to share and startup is very quick.

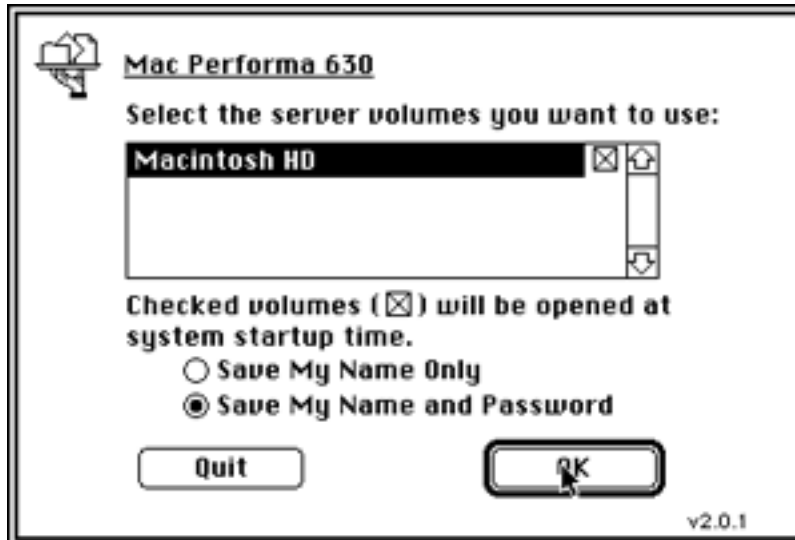


If you set up the system so that every folder you want to share is shared, you can now come back to your Mac with System 6. Open the Chooser, make sure that AppleTalk is activated, and select AppleShare. In the box which says Select a File Server should now popup the server. Select the server and click OK. You will be prompted to enter your

username and password. If you set up the guest account, you can also click on Guest and you won't need to enter any password. If the server allows you to, you can change your password by clicking Set Password.

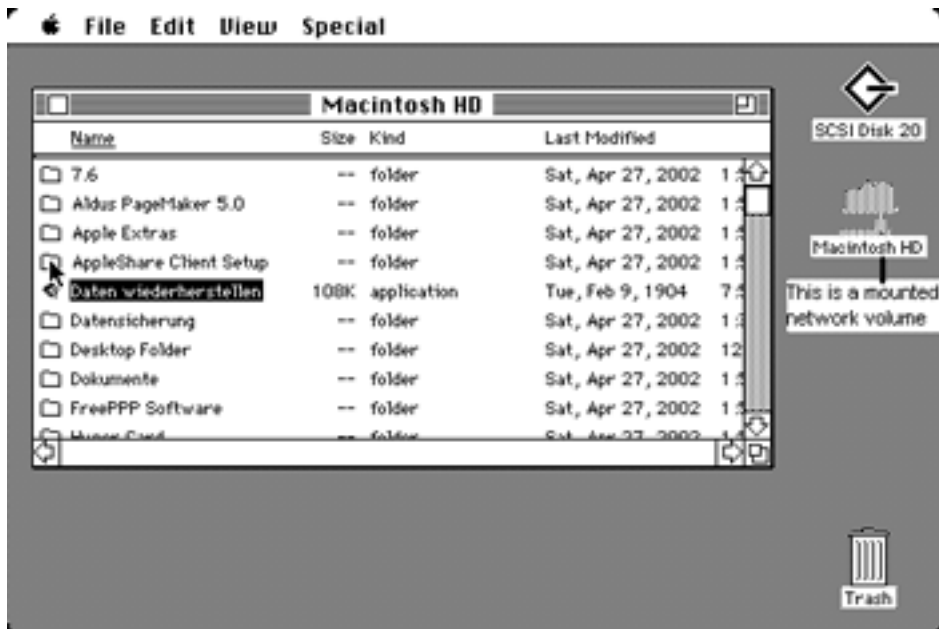


Now you can see a complete list of shared resources from the server. You can mount volumes on the desktop by selecting them and hitting OK. If you want to mount multiple volumes, you can select them by Shift-clicking them. If you click a checkbox next to a volume, this volume will appear automatically on the next startup. When you're ready, click OK.



The selected volumes will appear on the desktop as if they were normal drives, except that they have a different icon. You can unmount a volume by simply dragging it onto the Trash. If you are allowed to make changes to the volume, you can use it as if it was a normal hard disk. If you wanted to backup your old hard disk to your newer one, you could do so by simply moving your hard disk icon to the mounted one. You'll be prompted

if you want to copy the contents into a folder on the mounted volume. You can proceed by clicking OK. Note: LocalTalk is rather slow. I think it has a throughput of around 20–30 KB/sec. Backing up my 20 MB drive took around half an hour.



Congratulations! You have connected your two Macs.

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Choosing a Digital Camera

Friends often ask me about buying a digital camera, since I have been an avid user and proponent of digital cameras for a number of years. They want to know where to buy a camera, how much they can expect to spend, how the pictures are transferred to a computer, how they can print the photographs they take, and, most often, what camera they should get. That last question is the most important and the hardest to answer. There are a myriad of factors in choosing a camera.

These days, choosing a digital camera can be overwhelming, due to the sheer number of models and the large range of prices and options. To avoid disappointment, it is well worth it to do some research before buying. Like any computer peripheral purchase, this is an important decision. You want to make sure you get a camera that does what you need and is well made, so it will last as long as possible in these days of quick obsolescence. You want your purchase to be supported fully by its manufacturer in case of any problems or defects. You want your money to be well spent.

So where do you start? For most of us, the first step will be to set a price range. This is obviously something only you can decide. The next step is to determine your needs: what kinds of pictures do you take, and what do you want to do with them? One important factor is whether you plan to print your pictures as photo quality prints, or plan to view your pictures primarily on the computer screen with some light printing (i.e., not as photographic prints). For example, you may just want to take pictures to e-mail to friends and family, to put on Web pages, and to use as desktop backgrounds. If, instead, your main purpose is to print your pictures, do you want to be able to print pictures larger than 5" x 7"? The answers to these questions will determine how many megapixels you will require in a digital camera.

The term megapixel refers to the area (width times height) of an image, with one megapixel equal to one million pixels. A camera that takes images with 1280 x 1024 pixels has a little over 1,300,000 pixels and is called a 1.3 megapixel camera. A one-megapixel camera is good for taking pictures to be viewed on the computer screen and printed as

photographic quality prints as large as 5" x 7". A two-megapixel camera is enough for computer screen use and for printing up to 8" x 10". There is some controversy on this subject, and some sources recommend 2 megapixels for 5" x 7" prints, and 3 megapixels and larger for 8" x 10" prints. If printing is a major concern for you, you might want to lean toward more pixels. The more pixels, the greater your flexibility in terms of large-size printing, and also in terms of your ability to crop an image and still have enough pixels to use it in any way you like.

On the other hand, more pixels in the images means larger file sizes, which means you will need more storage for your images, both in the medium the camera uses to store its pictures, and on your hard drive. Something I think many people who give digital camera advice don't realize is that the average person doesn't need a camera with more than two to four megapixels, and cameras with larger images can actually be a hindrance in terms of storage. The hassle of storing and working with larger image files might actually be frustrating for some users. This is a balancing act, like so many other computer-related decisions. I suggest you figure out how large you need your images to be, in terms of how you will be using them, and then shop for a camera in that range. Don't allow yourself to get sucked into the megapixel craze!

Another consideration is your printer: if you want photographic-quality prints, you will need a photo quality printer. A laser printer or an inkjet printer that is not specifically billed as a photo printer will print decent looking pictures, but not the beautiful, fool-your-eye photographic prints that a photo quality printer will produce on glossy paper. Shopping for a photo printer is a separate issue, and if this is something you will need, you should consider this purchase along with the camera or as something you will need to buy in the near future. Choosing a photo printer is easier than choosing a digital camera, but you should still research this purchase as thoroughly as your camera purchase; you will end up with an excellent digital photography lab.

You also should think about what kind of subjects you will primarily be photographing. Are you just taking snapshots, pictures of family, and so on? Do you particularly like to take macro shots, or need to do so to sell small items on online auctions or in a Web site storefront? Is your photography interest in the areas of action, sports, or wildlife? Or do you lean towards portraiture? And, finally, maybe your main photography interest is in scenery, vistas, or still scenes. All of these types of subject matter *can* be photographed with any digital camera, but some cameras have strengths in certain areas. Some are able to focus closer than most and have special settings for photographing close subjects, and

are therefore better for macro shots; some are particularly good at capturing realistic skin tones, and might be your best choice for portraiture and family snapshots; some are better at capturing fast action, are quicker to recover from one shot and be ready to take the next, and have longer zoom lenses, which makes them particularly good for sports and wildlife photography.

If zoom is important to you, make sure you are looking at *optical* zoom. Digital cameras usually have both optical and digital zoom. Optical zoom is what non-digital cameras with zoom lenses have; it is the physical capability of the lens to get a closer view of a subject. Digital zoom is more of a simulation of real zoom, and is generally not worthwhile; it just uses a form of interpolation to enlarge the central portion of a view. You can perform the same function with your image editing software, probably with better results, but neither digital zoom nor software can create detail where it didn't exist in the first place, while optical zoom acquires full detail when it closes in on the subject. The moral is to ignore the digital zoom specifications of the camera, and only look at the optical zoom number, which will typically range from 3x to 10x. For most people, 3x zoom is a good amount. If you typically photograph subjects from a distance and want to get in closer to your subjects, you may want to look for a camera with 5x to 10x zoom.

Another issue is how much control you want over your camera. Many people want a point-and-shoot, completely automatic camera, while some prefer to have control over every aspect of each shot. Most, if not all, digital cameras have a completely automatic mode (point-and-shoot). On top of that, most will have at least a few manual settings or overrides, and some have a manual setting for every function, from aperture to shutter speed, white balance to type of flash.

You will also want to look at the interface that each camera uses. All digital cameras can connect to a computer by one or another interface via a cable, enabling direct download from the memory card in the camera to the hard drive of the computer, sometimes with a software application to enable the download, and sometimes by actually mounting the camera as a volume on the desktop. A camera might have a USB, serial, parallel, or FireWire interface, and some have more than one interface built in. Virtually all digital cameras use a removable memory card (SmartMedia, CompactFlash, MemoryStick, PC Cards, and more) or other removable storage medium (CD-R disk, floppy). Many people find that the simplest method for downloading images from their camera to their computer is by way of a card reader. These devices can be found with many interfaces and the ability to read one or more digital camera storage media types, which are directly

inserted in the reader. Using a card reader is usually faster than directly connecting a camera to the computer to download images, and can bypass any interface issues between the camera and the computer. There are various other adaptors to look into, such as floppy disk adaptors, which mount a SmartMedia card on a floppy-disk-shaped adaptor and allow the card to be read via your floppy drive.

Again, the more pixels in an image, the larger that image will be in file size, as well as its size when displayed on the monitor or printed. The file size is important when you consider that you will need to store these images on whatever storage medium the camera uses. You will need enough portable storage capacity to take as many pictures as you want when you are away from your computer. Most cameras have the option to take your pictures as smaller files, either with fewer pixels (i.e., by taking pictures with smaller dimensions) or with greater JPEG compression, and often with both methods combined. However, it is advisable to avoid using these methods of saving space, as you lose data with both. Fewer pixels means less flexibility in terms of editing the images; greater JPEG compression means less quality in your original image. You can never regain data or image quality, if you didn't acquire it in the original image. If you are at all concerned about image quality, start out with your camera's largest size and highest quality possible, and keep these originals as unaltered master copies. You can always reduce the image in your image editing software later, for Web page use and e-mail, and save the reduced versions separately. You will need to look at how many highest quality images are stored on a given size of storage medium. You will probably need to buy more storage. Factor this into your total purchase price.

How should you deal with all of this information? This is part of what makes buying a digital camera so confusing, but the many options are also what makes it so exciting. My advice is to think about the pictures you take now and the pictures you would like to take. Write down your needs, if that helps to focus on what is really important. Then read the specifications and reviews of different digital cameras and see what seems to satisfy your photography needs most thoroughly. Two Web sites have helped me tremendously in my digital camera research. One is Jeff Keller's [Digital Camera Resource Page](#), which has reviews of almost every digital camera available, a buyer's guide that helps narrow down your camera choices based on your requirements, and excellent discussion forums about all aspects of buying and using digital cameras. Another Web site I highly recommend is [Imaging Resource](#), which I find has some of the most detailed digital camera reviews on

the Internet. Their reviews helped me when I had narrowed my choice down to two cameras and couldn't decide which to buy; the detail and thorough testing in this site's reviews of the two cameras tipped the scales towards one, and finalized my decision.

After you have narrowed down your choice of digital camera to one or two camera models, you should spend some time finding the best deal. Prices can vary widely. Sometimes local stores will have good deals on current cameras, but most often online stores have the best deals. I recommend always searching [DealMac](#) for your particular choice of camera model, and also looking there and at their sister site, [DealNews Coupons](#) for store coupons, free shipping deals, and the like, which may help find the best deal possible. Beware of unknown stores and deals that sound too good. There are gray-market digital camera sales, which will look like great deals but are often cameras that weren't meant to be sold in this country and therefore won't be supported by their manufacturer. The best way to avoid scams like this is to buy from a dealer that you know is reputable, or read the discussion forums at the Digital Camera Resource Page to see if users have good experience with a dealer you're interested in. If you don't find any information, ask questions in the forums. (Remember when posting on Web forums to read enough posts to get a sense of the Web site's tenor, find out if your questions have already been answered, and read any rules, FAQs, and guidelines before posting.)

Another must-have accessory purchase will be good rechargeable batteries and a battery charger. For most cameras and most uses, NiMH batteries are an excellent choice, as they last through many more shots than alkaline batteries, they can be recharged quickly and at any stage of their charge capacity with modern, fast chargers, and they are relatively inexpensive. They do discharge slowly when not being used, but this seems to be less of a problem with modern NiMH batteries. Some cameras have rechargeable batteries included, and some will only use certain types of batteries, so check those specifications before buying any supplementary batteries. One thing is sure, though: regular alkaline batteries will disappoint you and cost too much for regular use. There are times when they are the only choice, for example, when traveling for a long period of time in an area where you won't have regular access to electricity. It also can't hurt to have some sets of alkaline batteries available for emergencies, since they have a much longer shelf life than do fully charged NiMH batteries. Most often, however, rechargeable batteries are the best bet. You will find a discussion forum on batteries and a great deal of excellent advice at the Digital Camera Resource Page, and I suggest looking through that forum for details on what to buy and where to get the best deals.

The decisions you make when buying a digital camera are almost as important as the decisions you make when buying a new computer. Take your time and don't make hasty choices. But don't let these cautions overwhelm you. Almost any major-name digital camera will please most people. This advice is to steer you towards getting the best camera for your purposes and a camera that will last and satisfy as long as possible. If you put some research and thought into this, you will end up with a camera that will delight you and provide the tools to create excellent pictures!

Copyright © 2002 Rachel Robbins, pics@pixelmountain.com. Rachel Robbins has free desktop pictures for download on her Web site, [Pixel Mountain Desktop Pictures](#). She photographed almost all of the pictures posted there with her latest digital camera, an Olympus 2100-UZ.



Cartoon: Hambone

by Mike Flanagan, sensible@sensible.screaming.net



Copyright © 2002 Mike Flanagan, sensible@sensible.screaming.net.



Cartoon: Cortland

by Matt Johnson, <http://www.cornstalker.com>

Cortland & Gala

by Matt Johnson



WELL, THAT EXPLAINS IT! SOME PROGRAM
CALLED "SPINNING RAINBOW CURSOR.APP"
IS CONSUMING 93 PERCENT OF THE CPU!

Copyright © 2002 Matt Johnson, <http://www.cornstalker.com>.



Extras: Desktop Pictures

Normandy

These pictures were taken by Shelly Shepard of Charlotte, NC during a May 2002 trip to Normandy, France. They were scanned on an Epson 1640 XL, and toned with Photoshop 5.5 for Macintosh.

Bayeux: A water wheel behind the Office of Tourism in Bayeux, France.

Cemetery: 9,386 American soldiers are buried in this cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer.

Cemeterywalk: This walk separates the American cemetery from Omaha Beach.

Gold Beach: The central of the five invasion beaches at Normandy. Pieces of landing craft and artificial harbor elements remain in the water and on the beach. This beach was primarily attacked by British forces, with Canadians at nearby Juno. The second British beach was Sword, and the two American beaches were Utah and Omaha.

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

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.1.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.0.x

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

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: Burst 1.0.1

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Developer: [Dracosoft](#)

Price: \$9.99

Requirements: Mac OS 8.6 with CarbonLib 1.1 or Mac OS X

Recommended: CarbonLib 1.6

Trial: Time-limited (60 minutes of game play)



Burst is a cute little game that lets you pop balloons without having to blow them up first. The version number lets you know that it's a new game, so don't expect it to be perfect. For its price, I'd say it's a decent value. Burst reminds me a lot of Pogo.com's Sweet Tooth, or GameHouse's Bounce. The upside to buying a game like Burst is that you don't need to use up Internet connection time (the way you do with Pogo or GameHouse), and you can tailor the settings.

The game is available as a download (size is 1.4 MB, so it took only ten seconds with a cable connection). You can play it free for 60 minutes, and then you'll need to pay \$9.99 to register it.

The idea is to get three balloons of the same type in a row, and then they'll pop and go away. Others will fill their spots, and after you've scored enough points, you'll advance a level. You click on a balloon, and then on a balloon adjacent to it, so they can switch

places. If this results in a match of three, they'll pop and float away. If it doesn't make a match, the balloons will return to their original places. You can't switch them unless it results in a match.



Opening Screen

Burst also has plenty of bonus goodies to make things interesting: the best one is Lightning, which zaps an entire row of balloons and makes an impressive thunderclap sound as well. There's a Burst balloon, which changes those around it to matching colors

and pops them; a Flying Saucer, which wipes out several balloons; a Tornado, which randomly changes balloon colors; a Help button, which can be used three times per round; and bonus points (numbers on the balloons).

How to Play

Swap adjacent balloons to create lines of 3 or more identical shapes.



Use the Help Balloon when you feel you may be out of options. The Help Balloon can be used 3 times per level.



Add bonuses to multiply points on balloon combinations.



Lightning will destroy all balloons in a single column.



The Burst Balloon will magically transform the surrounding balloons into similar shapes.



Tornadoes move sporadically through balloons, changing whatever lies in their paths.



The Flying Saucer levels all of the balloons that get in its way.



The game ends when you can no longer swap any two balloons to create a combination or the time expires in a Timed game.

Game Over

Burst Instructions

I started at level one without the timer and played until level 12 or thereabouts. But I was very bored. Without a clock, there was no reason to have to think fast. So I changed the settings to start at level 5, and turned on the timer. Now, we were cookin'! That adjustability makes this game appropriate for all ages and game-playing ability.

For future versions, I'd like to see a few other features. Command-Q ought to quit the game from any screen. We can still have the Exit line available to click, but there's nothing wrong with hot keys, either. For timed games, a Pause function between levels would be nice. Game play is also a little sluggish in that you can't click on one balloon and then immediately click on the next one. Takes a little while to get the timing down.

Strengths

- Great for kids, or for those who like their games fairly simple and slow.
- Cheap.
- Appropriate sound effects.
- Presentation is cute. There's no other word for it.

Weaknesses

- Needs a little tinkering with speed of response, adding a Command-Q function, maybe a Pause feature. Nothing serious.

Conclusion

Dracosoft released version 1.0.1 a few weeks after its launch of 1.0.0. They've made some useful tweaks, but the features I want will take a little longer to put together.

If I had a kid age ten or under who liked spatial thinking or colors, I'd buy Burst. If I wanted to avoid staying online to play a puzzle game for long stretches of time, I'd buy Burst. Since neither of those applies to me, I won't be buying it. But not because it's not a good product.

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Review: FileXaminer 1.1

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

Developer: [Gideon Softworks, Inc.](#)

Price: \$10

Requirements: Mac OS X

Trial: Fully-featured



Several months back, I reviewed Bare Bones Software's [Super Get Info](#), a utility designed to correct many of the shortcomings of OS X's Info window. Super Get Info is not the only game in town—Gideon's Softworks' FileXaminer gives users another option for regaining the functionality that Apple left out of OS X.

It should come as no surprise that FileXaminer shares many of Super Get Info's features—including the use of Command-Shift-I to bring up an Info window. After all, there are usually some basic pieces of information users want to either get or modify about a file. FileXaminer splits this information into six sections, each of which is accessible from a popup menu, similar to the Finder's Info window. In addition to the six sections, the filename, file path, and icon are shown at all times.

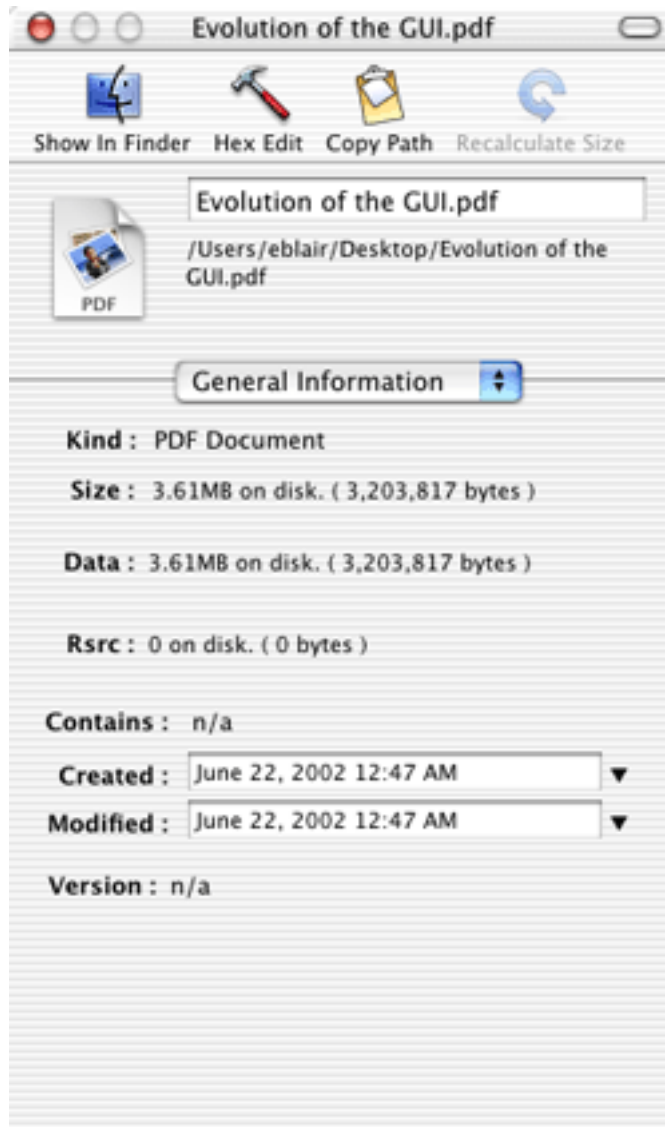
FileXaminer's windows also contain an optional toolbar. The toolbar contains buttons to show the current file in the Finder, open the file in a hex editor, copy the file's path to the clipboard, and recalculate the file's size.

File Information

The first of the six sections is the General Information section. This contains the basic file information most people would expect to find—file type, file size, the sizes of the data and resource forks, the creation and modification dates, and the version.

You can change either the creation or modification date by either typing in a specific date or using a relative time like "today," "tomorrow," or "yesterday." Unfortunately, the date and time fields are not intelligent enough to accept partial information. You must specify a complete date and time. Furthermore, the fields do not recognize the 24-hour time

format—"April 23, 2000 13:32" is not considered a valid time. However, "April 23, 2000 13:32 AM" will sometimes be converted to "April 23, 2000 01:32 PM" and will sometimes remain unmodified.



Viewing the Standard File Information

There are also popup menus for modifying the creation and modification times. The popup menus give you the options to set the time to now, to the creation or modification time (depending on which field you are modifying), or to reset the time to its original

value. This last option does not work exactly as expected, though. It only seems to work as long as the user has not moved the cursor focus outside of the text field. Once the focus has changed, FileXaminer no longer remembers the original time value.

One mild inconvenience when dealing with the General Information section is that you cannot select any text from the un-editable text fields. This becomes noticeable if you need to copy file information into a document.

A more glaring bug becomes apparent when using FileXaminer with unpackaged Classic and Carbon applications. For some reason, FileXaminer appears unable to get information about these applications.



FileXaminer Displaying Incorrect Data About a Classic Application

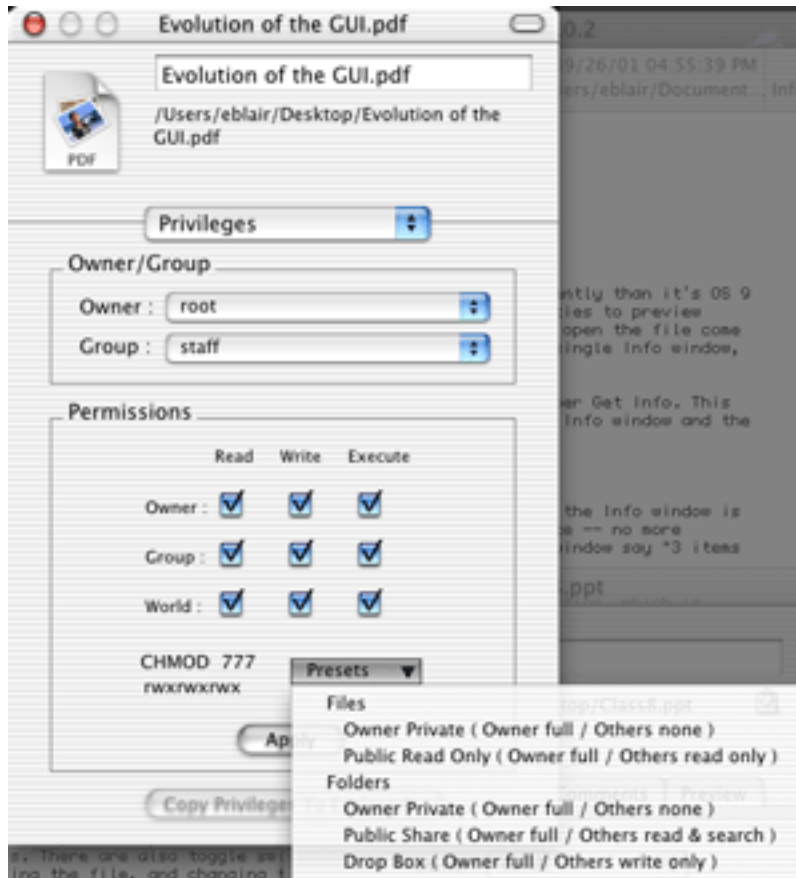
As the information for RealPlayer indicates, FileXaminer thinks that this is a Carbon application—an application that can run under either the Classic Mac OS or Mac OS X. As anybody familiar with the various forms of streaming audio and video on the Internet can probably tell you, RealPlayer has most certainly not been Carbonized. Oddly enough, this is not consistent for all Classic applications. Going through my folder of OS 9 applications,

FileXaminer thinks that Outlook Express, Graphing Calculator, and Network Browser are Carbon Applications, while SimpleText is just listed as an Application. The Finder correctly lists these all as Classic Applications.

What is consistent for all Classic and unbundled Carbon applications is that FileXaminer cannot determine the size of the application. The size data shown for RealPlayer is consistent with what you see whenever you get information about any application of the aforementioned types. I confirmed this by getting information about Mailsmith 1.5 and Escape Velocity Nova 1.0.1, both of which are unpackaged Carbon applications.

File Permissions

FileXaminer's second section deals with setting file permissions. Like Super Get Info, FileXaminer uses a grid layout for setting the read, write, and execute options for the each of the file's owner, the group, and the rest of the world. You can also change the file's owner and group from a pair of popup menus.



Setting a File's Privileges With the Presets Menu

FileXaminer goes one step further than Super Get Info in that it includes some useful presets for setting permissions. Unfortunately, there is no way to add presets for any other permission settings you may find useful. Also, if you accidentally select Files or Folders from the Presets menu (they are supposed to be separators for different categories of

permission settings), all of the permission settings are unchecked. If FileXaminer included a Revert button for resetting a file's permissions, this would be less of an inconvenience. Unfortunately, FileXaminer lacks this feature.

I noticed one other issue with the Privileges section. If you change the user to something that requires you to authenticate yourself and you are unable to do so, the Owner popup does not reflect the fact that the user has not changed. For instance, if I (eblair on my computer) try to change a file's owner from eblair to root and cannot provide the appropriate password, the owner will remain eblair. However, FileXaminer will continue to list root as the owner. In the interest of full disclosure, I have discovered this bug is also present in Super Get Info, though I did not discover it at the time of that review.

File Type and Creator

The third section of FileXaminer deals with setting the file type and creator information for a given file. This behaves as you would expect—you can either type the codes into the fields, drag a file to the fields to inherit that file's settings, or choose from a popup menu of user-editable types and creators.

I actually find this to be a fairly problematic section. First of all, it includes a field for modifying the file extension. This is fairly redundant, since you can modify this just as easily from the always accessible filename field. Furthermore, if you change the file extension from the filename field, the new extension does not appear in the Type/Creator section.

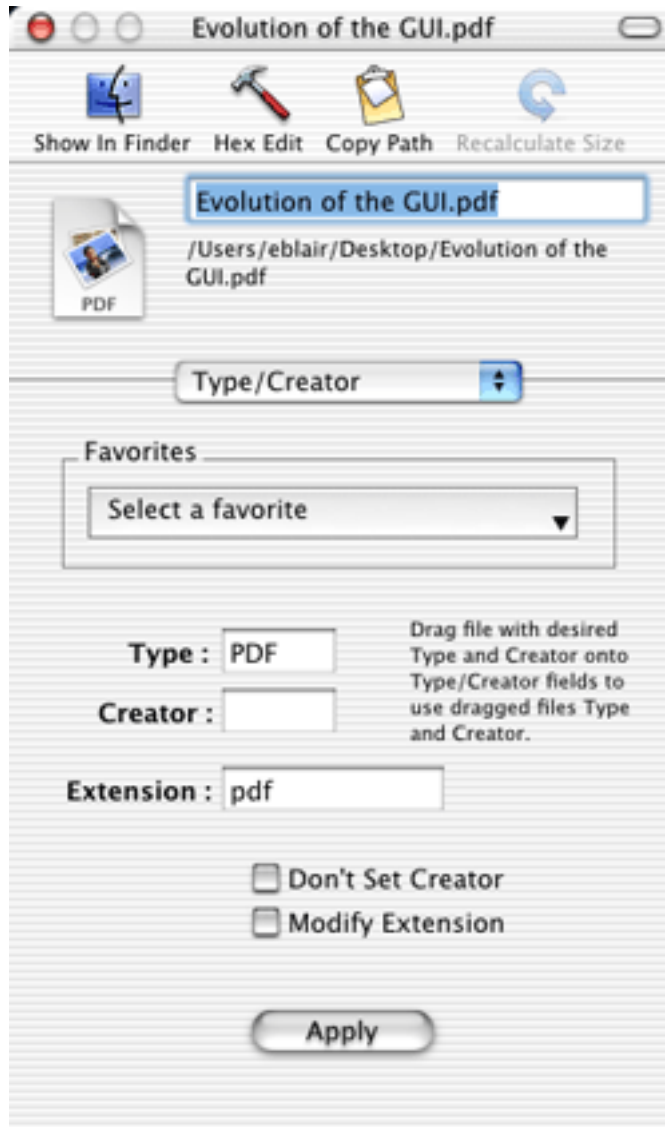
Drag and drop does not work particularly well, either; you can only change all of a file's attributes using this method. There is no capability for dragging a file to the creator field and only changing the creator code. Even worse, when you are dragging a file to the FileXaminer window, it doesn't not properly update to show what information will be changed. When you drag a file into the vicinity of the type and creator fields, they are highlighted. This would lead you to believe that these two fields will be changed. In addition to changing these two codes, though, dragging and dropping also changes the file extension.

This brute force approach to changing file information via drag and drop necessitated some rather cumbersome workarounds. First, you need to click the Apply button to update the file. I cannot recall seeing the step on either of the other get info utilities I have

used over the years: the aforementioned Super Get Info or the venerable Snitch from the classic Mac OS. Second, there are a pair of checkboxes just above the Apply button. One tells FileXaminer not to set the file's creator code. You might think you could use this to keep dragging and dropping from modifying the creator code. This doesn't appear to be the case though, as dragging and dropping a file completely ignores this setting. The second checkbox tells FileXaminer to modify the file extension when updating the file information. I think these workarounds might not be necessary if users could drag and drop files onto the individuals fields of the Type/Creator section.

Finally, the Apply button does not activate at the appropriate times. When you first enter the Type/Creator section, the Apply button is active and will apply your changes. After updating the file, though, the Apply button goes inactive. You can only reactivate it by choosing a file and type setting from the Favorites popup menu or via drag and

drop—typing in changes by hand is not enough to make the Apply button active. This should really be fixed because some people may find it faster to type in common codes by hand than finding them in a menu.



Setting a File's Type and Creator Code

Advanced File Information

FileXaminer's fourth field allows you to modify some of the Unix and Mac OS file flags. For the most part, all of the flags in this section are somewhat related to securing files.

When dealing with files, you can toggle the traditional Mac OS flags for locking files and making them invisible. You can also toggle the Unix permission flags for setting the user ID and setting the group id. These both influence what permission settings the file should use when it is opened.

For folders, you can toggle the Unix sticky bit permission setting. This flag reduces the number of users who can rename or remove a file from a directory.

Although all the flags in this section deal somewhat with file and folder security, it is still called the Advanced section, so I do not think I am out of place stating that the Stationary Pad flag is missing from the Mac OS Flags section. Although stationary is not as prominent

a feature as Apple made it out to be in older versions of the Mac OS, it is supported in OS X (the setting appears in the Finder's Info window) and should be included in the Mac OS Flags section.



Previewing a PDF's Cover Page

File Previewing

The fifth section of FileXaminer is the file preview section. This section attempts to give you an overview of a file without opening it. If FileXaminer cannot preview a file, it displays the file's icon.

In FileXaminer's help, it claims to support all the file types supported by QuickTime, RTF files, RTFD files, PDF files, and text files. In my testing, I have also noticed that FileXaminer is capable of previewing HTML files as a Web page instead of a text file. PDF previewing is not perfect, though—documents with white backgrounds are previewed with transparent backgrounds. Trying to read the preview-sized text over a striped background can be somewhat difficult. Neither the Finder nor Super Get Info have this problem, so it is disappointing to see it in FileXaminer. Another PDF preview nicety present in Super Get Info and missing from FileXaminer is the ability to preview each page in a multi-page PDF. Since FileXaminer already uses QuickTime to support many other file types and QuickTime supports multi-page PDFs, I do not think this request is unreasonable.

Customizing Icons

The final section of FileXaminer deals with customizing icons. The Finder's Info window gives you the limited ability to copy and paste icons. FileXaminer greatly expands on this capability.

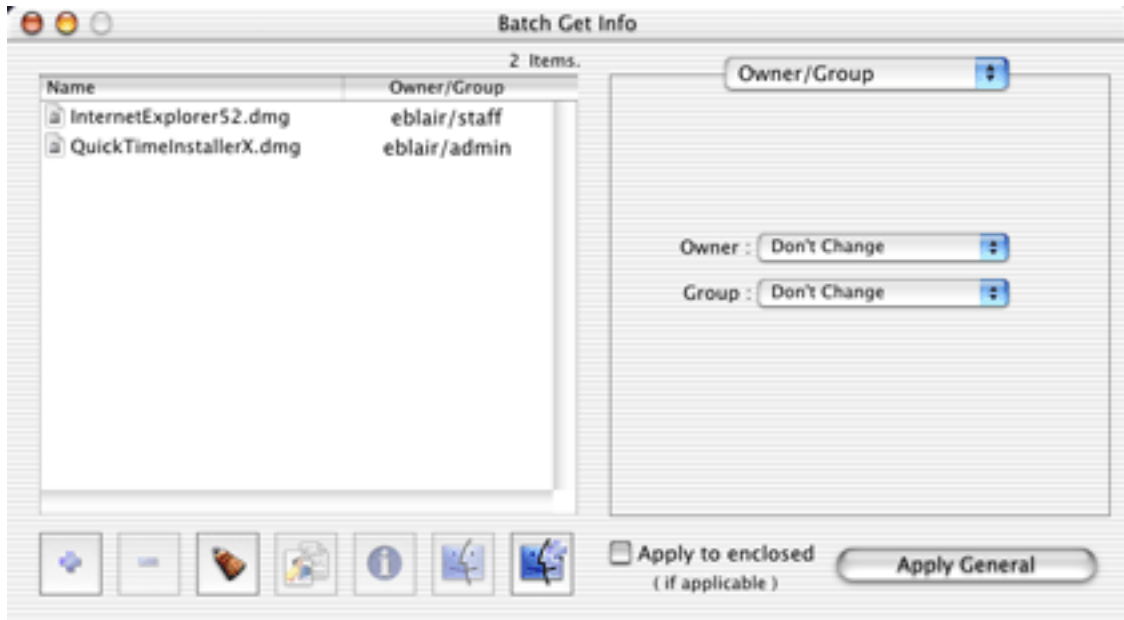
The traditional copying and pasting of icons is accomplished through the Clipboard popup menu at the bottom of the window. You can also drag a file to the image of the icon in the middle of this section to set the icon.

The Other popup menu gives you more options for dealing with the file's icon. You can create an icon from any image on your computer, create an icon from a thumbnail of the file's contents, or export the file's icon as an image. However, when I tried to create an icon for a folder using an image file, it did not work. On the bright side, when you export a file's icon as an image, FileXaminer seems to export the icon at the largest size possible. This is nice, since many of the better designed icons for OS X look much better at 128x128 pixels than at 32x32 pixels.

Finally, FileXaminer gives you the option of opening an icon in an external icon editor. It appears you can use most any icon editor with FileXaminer just by specifying it in the preferences. The makers of FileXaminer recommend [Icon Machine III](#), though I had luck working with [Can Combine Icons](#).

All at Once Now...

FileXaminer also includes a feature it calls Batch File Info. This might be a bit of a misnomer, but it is a useful feature. The reason I say it's a misnomer is because you are not really getting info about a collection of files. What this feature really does is gives you the ability to quickly make identical changes to large numbers of files.



Using Batch Get Info to Modify a Collection of Files

The Batch Get Info window also features six sections that are accessible from a popup menu. The sections are: Owner/Group, Permissions, Type/Creator, Advanced, Dates, and Custom Icon. For the most part, these sections have counterparts in the standard Get Info window, although there are a few exceptions. For instance, the Type/Creator section does not contain any information about changing the file extension and the Advanced section only includes a setting for lock/unlock file setting.

It seems there are major problems with the Owner/Group section. The majority of the times when I try to batch change either the file owner or group, FileXaminer crashes. Sometimes, it will crash after modifying some of the files, so I am left with some files having the old settings and some files having the new settings.

The Batch Get Info includes a collection of buttons at the bottom left of the window. These buttons let you add and remove items from the batch, reveal the selected item in the Finder, show the info panels for selected items, and preview items. In Batch Get Info mode, preview has a different meaning than it does when using an info panel. Previewing in Batch Get Info mode actually opens the selected items. This means that, instead of seeing an icon for an application, you will actually launch the application. Depending on the speed of your computer, this might be something that you want to avoid.

Beyond Info

FileXaminer goes beyond just providing information about files. Some features it provides are also provided by Super Get Info while other features go beyond Super Get Info's feature set.

The first of these features deals with emptying the trash. Sometimes, users of OS X will end up with files in the trash that they do not have permission to delete. FileXaminer provides two methods of dealing with this. First is the "Force Empty Trash" command. This lets you empty the trash with administrator privileges without needing to log in as an administrator. The second file deletion tool is "Super Delete...", which lets you select and delete any file as an administrator, without needing to drag it to the trash.

FileXaminer also includes some rudimentary group managements tools for creating, deleting, and examining groups. The FileXaminer interface is much cleaner than digging through NetInfo Manager to accomplish the same task. FileXaminer also includes a "Manage Users..." menu item, but this simply opens the Users preferences pane.

A number of contextual menu plug-ins are included with FileXaminer. The two straightforward plug-ins are Get Info and Batch Get Info, which open info panels or a Batch Get Info window, respectively, for the selected files. There are five more contextual menu plug-ins which you can optionally install. One clears the type and creator codes for the selected files. One copies the selected file's path to the clipboard. Two modify the permissions of the selected files. The final plug-in calls Super Delete for the selected file.

Finally, FileXaminer includes the ability to open files in a hex editor. This may or may not be something that you need to do on a regular basis. If so, you might find this feature very useful. It would be nicer if you could access this feature without needing to open FileXaminer, perhaps through another contextual menu plug-in.

Let Your Money do the Talking

If you find OS X's Info Window lacking, both FileXaminer and Super Get Info provide viable options for getting and modifying file information. Which you should use depends on your needs. FileXaminer costs \$10 less than Super Get Info and includes batch info, icon, and group management tools not found in Super Get Info. Super Get Info includes command-line support, better preview support, Finder comments, the Bare Bones Open With contextual menu plug-in, and (in my opinion) much better support for type and creator codes. The way I work, the latter two features make Super Get Info the better tool for me. However, FileXaminer's features might be exactly what you need.

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Review: Learning Unix for Mac OS X (book)

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

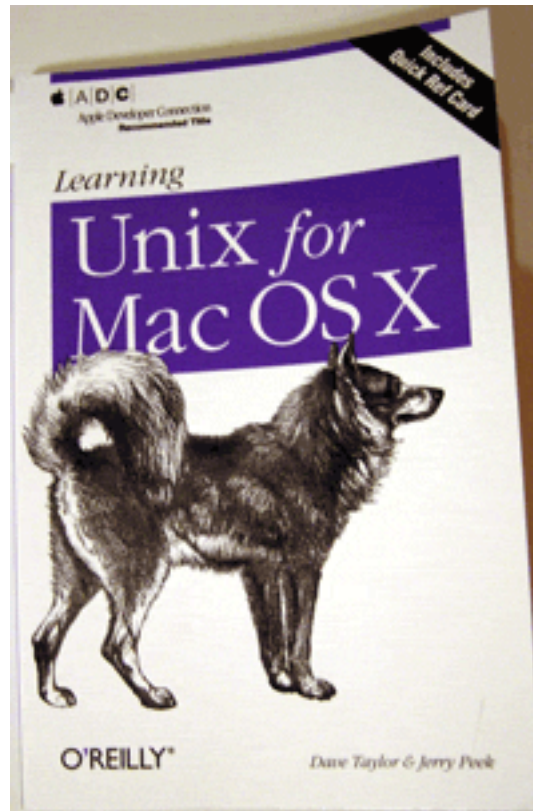
Developer: [O'Reilly and Associates](#)

Price: \$19.95

Trial: Chapter 4 available [online](#).



Mac OS X's Unix base seems to receive rather strange treatment from Apple and the press. Although it's very powerful, it tends to be loudly ignored in favor of the candy-like Aqua interface; since it's text-based, it's not thought of as especially user-friendly. Combine that with the fact that many Macintosh users simply aren't familiar with a command-line interface (or, worse, are taught to fear it!), and you end up with a lot of users missing out on some of the best features of OS X.



For Whom the Book Tolls

The first step in writing any instruction book is asking, what is my target audience? To whom is this book going to appeal? What kind of user? What will he/she want to know? What resources will he/she already have?

It seems as if Dave Taylor and Jerry Peek came up with an answer like this: the book is written for someone in an office environment, with access to a system administrator, who doesn't really need to use Unix for anything that can't easily be done from Aqua, and who wants only to use Unix, not to understand it.

Especially in early chapters, the book is peppered with phrases like "The details are more than we can cover in an introductory book." In many places, only a few options for a particular Unix program are offered, the others silently ignored. The authors often "suggest that beginners get help from experienced users..." or "ask your system administrator for advice first..." There is a reference to "a very powerful command history syntax [that is] built into tcsh that allows you to recall a previous command by number," but it is never elaborated on.

At this point, I expect to be told that I'm missing the point of the book. At a short 139 pages, of course there are topics that can't be covered. This isn't *Unix Power Tools*. *Learning Unix for Mac OS X* is written for beginners, who can buy another, more advanced book when they feel ready.

All true...but the typical Mac user does not have a system administrator to get help from when he needs it: Macs are found most often in homes or small businesses, where they are chosen because they don't need a guru to maintain them. Also, Mac users have easy access to the attractive Aqua interface, where they can point and click their way through almost any task. If such a user is going to put aside that ease of use to type in memorized semi-cryptic commands at a command line, there's going to have to be some serious advantage to doing so. A series of different options for listing the contents of a directory, or a half-page table of commands for moving about in and deleting words from a text file...well, that's not going to cut it. The people who pick up this book, for the most part, will be looking for the fabled power built into Unix. They will be looking for things Unix can do better than Aqua, or that Aqua cannot do at all. This book is simply far too basic to satisfy.

Learning Unix...

The comment I made earlier, that *Learning Unix for Mac OS X* isn't written for someone who wants to understand Unix, is not one I make lightly. But to me, the title of the book implies that at the end you will understand; understanding is the goal of learning, or it should be. This book teaches you how to get by in Unix, that's all. (But then, how well do you think *Muddling Through in Unix for Mac OS X* would sell?)

What this book does teach you is more along the lines of, "How do I get to a directory and open a document?," "How do I move or copy a file?," "How do I edit a file?," and the like. Yes, it's essential to know these things if you are going to work in Unix at all. But at the end of the day, you're not likely to fire up the Terminal just for the joy of editing a file in vi.

The book does teach a few tools available in Unix, such as wildcards, piping, and grep, that aren't part of Aqua, but often they aren't taught in such a way that their advantages over Aqua's offerings are made clear. The grep command, particularly when combined with piping, is so useful that years ago, I would copy files from my Mac onto a Unix machine just to use that command on them. *Learning Unix for Mac OS X*, however, fails to give any idea of the power or usefulness of grep. Its examples consist of displaying lines of a file that contain a particular word, and listing files in a directory which were modified in a certain month. The first is not something which it's easy to imagine being useful without a context, and the second is something which is easily (and better) accomplished within Aqua, by sorting files by modification date.

Peek's and Taylor's idea of "giving an example," in most cases, is to show you something you can type at the command line—that's it. That is exactly what I'm looking for in, for example, *Unix in a Nutshell*, an excellent book that lists Unix commands and programs with their options and syntax. But in an introductory book for first-time users, an example should include a real-world scenario which the reader might encounter, where it would be desirable to use the command being shown. That is the sort of example that can lead to understanding. While such examples are sometimes used, their occurrence is all too rare.

The best chapters of this book are the two that cover the Internet and Unix-based Internet programs such as Lynx (a text-only Web browser), Pine (an e-mail program), and ncftp (a (relatively) user-friendly FTP program). These sections are well-written and easy for a new Unix user to follow. Usenet news and IRC (both of which seem much more seldom used

with the advent of Web-based bulletin boards and the likes of AIM and ICQ) are discussed as well. Even the talk program, which lets one Unix user chat with another on a simple split screen, is given a page.

...for Mac OS X

I was surprised by how little of *Learning Unix for Mac OS X* was OS X–specific. Since Unix is fairly new to Macs (or should that be vice-versa), and there are so many versions of Unix out there on so many platforms, it's easy to imagine being worried about going to a bookstore and picking up a general introduction to Unix and expecting its contents to apply to OS X. It turns out that everything I know from working with Unix outside of OS X applies on OS X as well. On the other hand, most of the Mac OS X–specific information that needs to be provided in this book is there.

In addition to basic information about configuring and using the Terminal, printing issues that Mac users are likely to encounter are discussed quite well and at some length. The AppleTalk-aware `atprint` program, for printing to AppleTalk printers, is described, as is the process of configuring `lpt` (another print program) specifically for use on OS X. The `enscript` program, necessary for printing to postscript printers, is also explained.

A useful aside in a section about creating text files explains a problem with end-of-line markers that can make a text file created on a Mac look funny in Unix, or vice-versa. The programs `m2u` and `u2m`, which can fix this problem, are presented, and mention of `tr` is made, for more general translation of one character to another.

File permissions are discussed at some length, which will be especially useful for readers who are more accustomed to OS 9's way of handling things. Unfortunately, mention is not made of how to change file permissions from within Aqua. Permissions-related issues that are likely to be encountered in Aqua—such as not being able to move, rename, or delete certain folders—are not addressed directly.

The only major OS X related omission, though, is the lack of instructions for activating the root account. The `sudo` command, which can temporarily give you full control over your system, is mentioned several times in the text of the book, but it does not appear in the book's index, nor do "root user", "NetInfo Manager", or "su." The NetInfo database gets an entry, but it only discusses printing. There is also an entry for "superuser," which

uselessly directs the reader to a page indicating what the default prompt is for the superuser, followed by a warning that you can accidentally damage your system if logged in as such.

Conclusion

Learning Unix for Mac OS X teaches some of the basic essentials of working in Unix, without going into sufficient detail to show why you might actually want to do so. It seems like brevity was a goal for this book, not a side-effect of its introductory nature. An introductory book should be chock full of situation-based examples, and should provide enough complexity to show the reader the usefulness of the system and to prompt some understanding of how it works. Readers interested in Unix would be better served by a book with more depth, and readers not interested in Unix will find little here to change their minds.

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Review: Mojo Mail 2.6.7

by Michael Tsai, mtsai@atpm.com

Developer: [Justin Simoni](#)

Price: free; [donations accepted](#)

Requirements: Web server with support for Perl 5 CGI, mail program such as sendmail, Web browser that supports JavaScript. Mojo Mail runs on a stock Mac OS X machine.

Recommended: Mail agent that can pipe incoming messages to a program (filter), some Unix experience for installation, some Perl experience if you want to take advantage of its open source code.



A *mailing list* is a special kind of e-mail address. When someone sends a message to the list address, e.g., atpm-notify@atpm.com, the message is sent to every e-mail address that's on the mailing list, e.g., to all the ATPM subscribers. This is a bit like the group feature in your e-mail program's address book, except that mailing lists are managed by specialized programs called *list servers*. List servers are more than mere address books. They let people subscribe and unsubscribe themselves from lists, and they can accept or reject messages sent to the list address based on various criteria. For instance, some lists are used for announcements and only the list owner is allowed to post. Other lists are used for discussions and anyone (or perhaps any subscriber) is allowed to post.

Like most other kinds of server software these days, list servers either cost hundreds of dollars or they're free. This review is about Mojo Mail, a relatively new list server that's free. It's released under the [GPL](#), so the source code (written in Perl) is available if you want to tweak it to better fit your needs.

What is Mojo Mail?

Mojo Mail is a list server that runs on Macs, but it is not a typical Mac program. Unlike Mac list servers such as [LetterRip](#) and [ListSTAR](#), there's no icon to double-click. Mojo Mail runs on a Web server and its entire interface is accessed through a series of Web pages. This is troublesome when setting up new lists as there are many settings to change. LetterRip provides a remote administration application that lets you log into your server from anywhere on the Net and configure it using a real Mac interface. On the other hand, the LetterRip administrator runs only on Mac OS 9. Mojo Mail's Web interface isn't as

comfortable to use, but it works on any machine with a Web browser. Once I've set up a list, the Web interface is great for making little changes from whatever machine I happen to be using.

Installing Mojo Mail

Mojo Mail runs on a wide variety of machines and operating systems, including Mac OS X, Linux, and Windows NT. It comes with installation instructions for common configurations, including Mac OS X. To install Mojo Mail you need to copy its files into the proper locations and set their permissions. You do not need administrator access to the server. Then you have to configure it by editing a few text files so that it knows where your mail program is, where to save its preferences, and what the URL and password will be.

The installation process involves using the command line and may be uncomfortable for some Mac users. It certainly helps if you know a bit about Unix (see the [book review](#) in this issue) and Perl. However, the first time I installed Mojo Mail I blindly followed the instructions to a T and it worked on the first try. If you do have trouble installing Mojo Mail, there are a mailing list and a Web-based discussion board where you can get help.

You may also need to install an additional program called `mojo_send`. If you want to run a discussion list, Mojo Mail has to be able to receive messages sent to the list's address. Unlike some other list software, which "pulls" messages from POP accounts, `mojo_send` receives messages "pushed" to it by the mail server. This means that you need to be able

to configure your mail server to pass all the messages sent to the list address to Mojo Mail, which acts as a “filter.” This feature may not be supported by all mail servers, and some Web-hosting companies do not allow you to filter incoming mail.

Mail Management
Recipe List
[Return to Overview](#)

sorted by receiving address

Type sort	Receiving Address sort	File/Target
filter	atpm-notify@atpm.com	/usr/home/atpm/mojo-qmail/mojo_send.pl
filter	atpm-pdf-print@atpm.com	/usr/home/atpm/mojo-qmail/mojo_send.pl
filter	atpm-pdf-screen@atpm.com	/usr/home/atpm/mojo-qmail/mojo_send.pl
filter	atpm-webzine@atpm.com	/usr/home/atpm/mojo-qmail/mojo_send.pl

ATPM's server is run by [Pair Networks](#). This screen shows how I configured it to filter messages through the `mojo_send` program.

Using Mojo Mail

Once you've installed Mojo Mail, using it is easy. The Web-based administrator interface is by far the best I've seen. The interface is attractive. The settings are thoughtfully organized. Most settings have a short label along with a description that explains the setting in plain English. Often, there is a link to the Mojo Mail documentation where you can find more information.

The administrator interface is protected using passwords. The Mojo Mail root password (which you set when you install Mojo Mail) is required for creating lists. The root user can log in to modify the settings of any list. Additionally, each list can have a separate password for the list owner.



The screenshot shows the Mojo Mail Administration interface. At the top, there is a header with "{ Mojo Mail }" on the left and ":: Administration ::" on the right. Below the header, the main content area is titled "Enter Your List Control Panel". Under this title, it says "You will need to know your List Password to access your control panel". There are two input fields: "Select your list:" with a dropdown menu showing "dropdmg-announce" and a "Type in your List Password" field. A "Login" button is positioned to the right of the password field. Below this section, there is a horizontal line and another section titled "Set Up a New Mailing List". This section says "You will need to know the Mojo Mail Root Password to create a new list". It features a "Type in your Mojo Mail Root Password" input field and a "Make a New List" button. At the bottom of the main content area, it says "list management using [Mojo Mail 2.6.7](#)". The footer of the page contains "copyright © 1999 - 2002 justin simoni" on the left and "get your [mojo](#)" on the right.

Logging Into Mojo Mail's Admin Interface

Each page in the admin interface has a menu at its left where you can select a screen of settings to edit. The main part of the screen shows the settings themselves.

[Send A List Message](#)

[Send a Web Page](#)
[Send a List Invitation](#)

Manage List

[Change List Information](#)
[Change Your Password](#)
[Delete This List](#)
[Mailing List Options](#)
[Sending Options](#)
[Group Options](#)

Manage Subscribers

[View Subscribers](#)
[Add Subscribers](#)
[Remove Subscribers](#)
[Search Subscribers](#)
[Black List Rules](#)

Manage List Archive

[View Archive](#)
[Archive Options](#)

Manage Copy

[E-mail Messages](#)
[HTML Messages](#)
[Create a Back Link](#)

Manage Appearance

[Edit Template](#)
[Get HTML Code](#)

About Mojo Mail

[Logout](#)

[Sign Into Another List](#)

[Customize Feature Set](#)

The Admin Interface's
Menu

Sending Messages

The first group of screens is for sending messages. You can send a message to the list from the Web interface. Mojo Mail supports plain text messages as well as HTML. If you send an HTML message, it's nice to include a plain text version too. Mojo Mail can generate this

from the HTML version, or you can specify the plain text version separately. The sending screen also has an Advanced interface that lets you specify the Reply-To, Errors-To, Precedence, and Priority headers, as well as upload attachments to accompany the message.

The easiest way to send an HTML message is to use Mojo Mail's Send a Web Page feature. You specify a subject and a URL, and Mojo Mail sends the source of the Web page in an e-mail, adjusting the links (using the <base> HTML tag) so that images on the page will display properly. When you compose a message using the Web interface, Mojo Mail lets you send a test message to the list's owner. That way you can be sure that the message will look right before sending it to everyone on the list. This is a nice touch.

Finally, you can use Mojo Mail's Web interface to send invitations for joining your list. Each invitee will receive a customized message with a link he can click to subscribe to the list.

Managing Lists

The next set of screens is for configuring the list itself. The List Information screen lets you change the name of the list (but not the “short name” that appears in the list’s e-mail address), the address of the list’s owner, the list’s description, and its privacy policy.

Your list’s **short name** is: *atpm-notify*

What is the name of your list?

What e-mail address corresponds to the list owner? When e-mails are sent, they are sent using this address.

optional What e-mail address corresponds to the list administrator? All e-mail errors will be sent to this address, instead of the list owner. If left, blank, this job will be left to the list owner, which might be just fine for you.

Description of ATPM-Notify

optional Would you like to write a small privacy policy summary? Some people don’t subscribe to lists because they fear their e-mail addresses will be used for spamming purposes.

Changing the List Information

You can hide a list so that it is only available in the administrator’s menu, not in the public list control panel. You can close a list so that only the administrator can add subscribers. (There is no automated way to allow anyone to subscribe subject to the administrator’s approval.) Mojo Mail can automatically notify the list owner whenever someone subscribes or unsubscribes, and it can optionally require confirmation from users before processing their subscribe or unsubscribe requests. The confirmation process works very

well. First, the user makes a request using the Web interface. Then, Mojo Mail sends her a confirmation e-mail containing a URL. She can then click the URL to confirm the command. This process prevents malicious users from subscribing or unsubscribing other users. Other list servers require users to send reply e-mails or to remember passwords; the clickable URLs are more reliable in my experience.

Mojo Mail has several options for how messages are sent. You can control how many messages it tries to send at a time (to help control server load), and it can optionally send the list owner status messages so he can track how many users have received the message so far. If your message has an attachment, Mojo Mail sends the owner a copy of the attachment with each status message. Luckily, Mojo Mail is open source so I was able to remove this “feature.”

The next screen lets you choose whether the list is a discussion list (group list) or an announcement list. Only the list owner can post to announcement lists, but any subscriber can post to discussion lists. There is no way to allow non-subscribers (or subscribers sending from non-subscribed addresses) to post, nor is there a way to reject posts from certain subscribers.

Mojo Mail can optionally disallow HTML messages sent by list members, but I’ve found that this setting also rejects messages with attachments. Mojo Mail can also add the list’s name to the subject of each message. Unfortunately, this text is not configurable and Mojo Mail always puts it before the “Re:” in replies; most other programs know to keep the “Re:” first. Mojo Mail can add a Reply-To header so that replies are directed back to the group. If you don’t select this option, replies are directed to the message’s sender.

Managing Subscribers

You can view the list’s subscribers, though unfortunately Mojo Mail shows them all on one page. It displays them in a scrolling list; for large lists your browser may not be able to display such a long list. Fortunately, Mojo Mail can also display the subscriber list in plain text or mail it to the list owner. The latter feature is nice if you ever want to switch to a different list server; Mojo Mail doesn’t hold your subscriber list hostage like [Mailman](#), another Web-based list server, does.

Of course, as the list owner, you can add and remove subscribers. When adding subscribers, you can paste a bunch of addresses into the form at once or import them from a local file. Either way, Mojo Mail shows you the addresses it's going to add and won't add anything that doesn't look like an e-mail address. Removing subscribers is just as easy. Mojo Mail shows you a scrolling list of who's subscribed; you can then remove one or more addresses at a time.

Most users will probably subscribe themselves, and Mojo Mail lets you set up a Black List to control who is allowed to subscribe. You can put specific addresses on the Black List or use [regular expressions](#) to block certain domains or only allow subscribers from particular domains.

The coolest feature, though, is that you can search for a subscriber by entering *part* of her address. When I used other list software, I often received complaints from people who couldn't unsubscribe themselves. They'd subscribed to the list under an address like person@mail.domain.com. Then, when they tried to unsubscribe person@domain.com, the list server would complain that that address wasn't on the list. With Mojo Mail, it's easy to search for "person" to find the address in Mojo Mail's database. This feature alone would have saved me hours spent wrestling with Mailman over the years.

List Archives

Mojo Mail can archive the messages that are sent to a list. It can make the archives available on the Web for administrators or for everyone. In either case, it hides the messages' senders to prevent spam. The archive feature is rather primitive, but it's more

than adequate for basic use and includes a search feature. I hope that future versions of Mojo Mail will add a threaded archive view and support for downloading archived messages in mbox format.



The screenshot shows a web interface for a Mojo Mail list archive. At the top, there is a header bar with the text "{ Mojo Mail } :: dropdmg-announce archives ::". Below this, a message entry is displayed: "1 [ANN] DropDMG 1.5 Released" with a sub-line "Sent May 2nd, 2002". A search section follows, with the text "Search This list's archives" and a search box containing the word "Search". Below the search box is a horizontal line. The next section is a sign-up prompt: "Sign up for this list to receive an e-mail each time a new version of DropDMG is released." This is followed by a "Subscribe" section with the text "Subscribe to dropdmg-announce:" and a "Subscribe" button. Below this is a link: "Go back to [Michael's Macintosh Software](#)". At the bottom of the main content area, it says "list management using [Mojo Mail 2.6.7](#)". The footer contains "copyright © 2000 - 2001 [justin simoni](#)" and "get your [mojo](#)".

List Archives

Customizing Mojo Mail

Mojo Mail is very customizable. You can customize the look of its Web pages and make them link back to your home page. The Mojo Mail root user can choose which administration screens the list owner has access to. More importantly, you have full control over the e-mails Mojo Mail sends out. You can edit templates for the confirmation e-mails when people subscribe or unsubscribe, the welcome message, the goodbye message, and

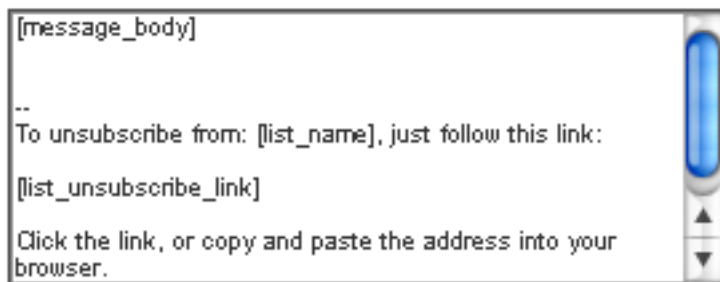
the error messages (for instance, if someone tries to post to an announcement list). Of course, you can also customize the template for normal messages sent to the list. The templates can include special tags that Mojo Mail fills in, kind of like a mail merge.

This Tag	Is Replaced With
[list_name]	The name of your list
[list_info]	The description of your list
[list_subscribe_link]	The subscription link
[list_unsubscribe_link]	The unsubscribe link
[list_privacy_policy]	The privacy policy of your list
[list_owner_email]	The list-owner's e-mail address
[list_admin_email]	The list-administrator's e-mail address
[mojo_url]	The url of this script, http://www.o-command.com/cgi-bin/mojo/mojo.cgi

Put these tags in your templates and Mojo Mail will fill them in.

Mailing List Message:

This is the mailing list message. The bottom of the e-mail should at least provide how to unsubscribe from the Mailing List.



Clear All Changes

Save All Changes

This is the template for messages sent to the list. As configured here, each subscriber gets a customized unsubscribe link below the message body.

One problem is that if you send a message with an attachment, Mojo Mail discards all of the template below the [message_body] tag. I'd like for ATPM subscribers to receive customized subscribe and unsubscribe URLs with each message, but this bug prevents that (except on our notification list, which has no attachments).

The Subscriber Interface

So far I've talked about how to administer Mojo Mail. The interface for subscribers is similar, but much simpler as it has fewer commands. One screen shows the publicly available lists and their descriptions. Another lets people unsubscribe. In either case, Mojo Mail provides immediate feedback. If you try to unsubscribe from a list using the wrong address, Mojo Mail tells you from the browser that you weren't on the list. This is much better than other software I've used, which provides the feedback through e-mail.



The screenshot shows a web interface for signing up for a list. At the top, there is a header with the text "{ Mojo Mail }" on the left and ":: sign up for a list ::" on the right. Below the header, there are two main sections. The first section is for entering an email address. It contains a dropdown menu labeled "Choose a list" with "ATPM-Notify" selected, and a text input field labeled "Enter your email address:" followed by a "Signup" button. The second section is titled "Available Lists:" and contains a description for "ATPM-Webzine:" which states: "Sign up for this list if you would like a free subscription to our offline HTML version. Issues of ATPM are mailed to subscribers around the 1st of the month and are about 1.5 MB in size. They are distributed in HTML format (on a disk image) and require a Web browser for viewing."

Subscribing

The screenshot shows a web form for unsubscribing from a list. At the top, there is a header with the text "{ Mojo Mail }" on the left and ":: unsubscribe to ::" on the right. Below the header, the text "Enter your email address" is displayed. Underneath, the question "What list do you want to unsubscribe from?" is followed by a dropdown menu. The dropdown menu is currently open, showing the selected option "dropdmg-announce" and a list of other options, with "unsubscribe" highlighted. Below the dropdown menu, there is a button labeled "unsubscribe". At the bottom of the form, the text "list management using [Mojo Mail 2.6.7](#)" is visible. The footer of the page contains the copyright information "copyright © 1999 - 2002 justin simoni" and a link "get your [mojo](#)".

Unsubscribing

Mojo Mail can also help you generate custom interfaces for subscribing and unsubscribing, such as [the one ATPM uses](#).

Drawbacks

Mojo Mail is written almost entirely by Justin Simoni, who is a full-time student. As such, Mojo Mail doesn't feel like a professionally developed piece of software. I found lots of minor bugs in the first few minutes of using it. Since I know Perl, I was able to fix them myself in short order. Simoni himself is responsive to fixing bugs, although he has not yet fixed all the ones I reported. There have already been seven maintenance updates since the 2.6 release in April. It's certainly good that the bugs are being fixed, but they should be fixed *before* new versions are released.

The Mojo Mail Web interface is full of misspellings and typos. When I first installed Mojo Mail, there were also typos in the default e-mail templates. I had to correct these each time I made a new list. I think this problem is fixed in the latest version, but it's embarrassing that the version I first installed shipped with those mistakes.

Mojo Mail lacks a few features that are common among other list servers. It does not support digests or moderation and it only stores subscribers' addresses, not their names. Storing names would be particularly nice given Mojo Mail's support for templates and tags. There are some basic bounce management features, but I wasn't able to get them to work.

I mentioned in the Installing Mojo Mail section that Mojo Mail receives messages as a filter rather than from a POP account. As such, it has to rely on the message's headers to determine the list that the message was sent to. This means that the list address has to appear in the To header; you can't BCC the list. Likewise, Mojo Mail looks at the From header to determine who sent the message. This means that anyone can post to an announce-only list if they fake their From header so it looks like the message came from the list owner.

Mojo Mail's installation instructions are good, but the rest of the documentation is only adequate. Some of the features are documented for programmers, not users, and some features aren't documented at all. Despite these flaws, the documentation is still way above par for an open-source program, but Mac users expect more.

Conclusion

I like Mojo Mail. For basic lists, it's a great free alternative to Yahoo! Groups. There are no advertisements and the list address can use your own domain name. It's much easier to install than other Unix list servers such as Mailman and Majordomo, though installation isn't as simple as drag-and-drop and you may need a bit of Unix knowledge.

Mojo Mail isn't as polished as the commercial Mac list servers and it lacks some of their features. Nevertheless, the Mac list servers aren't yet OS X native and many Mac users don't run Mac servers. Mojo Mail runs on most Web hosting accounts. You don't need special administrator access to the Web server, and you can install Mojo Mail like an ordinary CGI.

Mojo Mail has a lot of flaws when I compare it to my ideal mailing list server. But compared to the software that actually exists, it shines. The forthcoming OS X version of LetterRip will probably be a better choice for people who run Mac servers, but Mojo Mail has the advantages of being free and available today. There's no one feature that's so much better than what you'll find in its competitors, but Mojo Mail covers a broad range of features in one integrated package. It feels like a Mac program in that it doesn't give you every possible option, but it presents the options that it does have in an intelligent, accessible manner.

The ultimate test, though, is that people find Mojo Mail easy to use. In the past, ATPM has used LetterRip and Mailman to manage its subscriber list. Each time we released an issue people would ask us for help subscribing or unsubscribing. We received a lot of complaints after switching to Mailman because people had trouble with its cumbersome password confirmations and poorly designed Web interface. I probably spent an hour each month helping people with their subscriptions. Since switching to Mojo Mail two issues ago, we've received only two subscription questions and no complaints. Once I had Mojo Mail installed, I could pretty much forget about it. All server software should be that way.

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Review: QPict 5.1

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

Developer: [Rune Lindman](#)

Price: \$35 (shareware)

Requirements: Mac OS 8.6 with CarbonLib 1.1 or Mac OS X

Recommended: 15 MB of RAM

Trial: Feature-limited



Overview

QPict helps you organize graphic, audio, movie and font files. Each QPict index file can be organized using a variety of criteria (media type, date, size, name, keywords, and custom categories). Each QPict index can display thumbnail versions of images and movies. QPict can index files located on fixed drives, removable media, local networks, and the Internet. QPict also functions as a slide show program and can display images, movies, and MP3 audio files within a single slide show.

Installation

Just place the decompressed QPict folder on your hard drive. QPict does not place any files in the System Folder.



QPict Folder in Mac OS 9

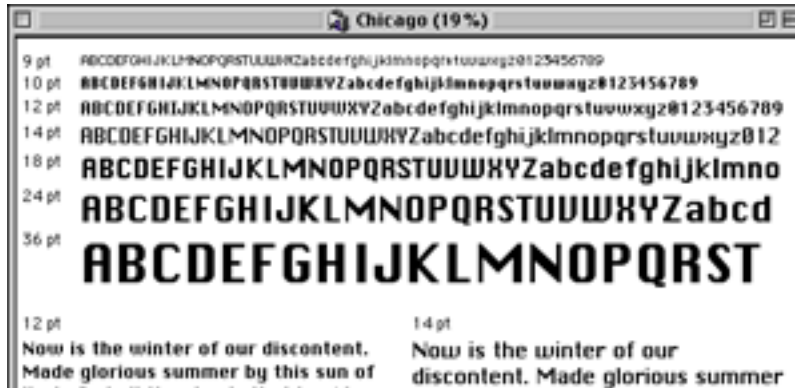
Using QPict

You create a new QPict index file by selecting New from the File menu or by typing Command-N. You add individual items or entire folders to the index in one of three ways: dragging and dropping, clicking on the import media files button, or selecting Import... from the File menu (Command-Shift-I).



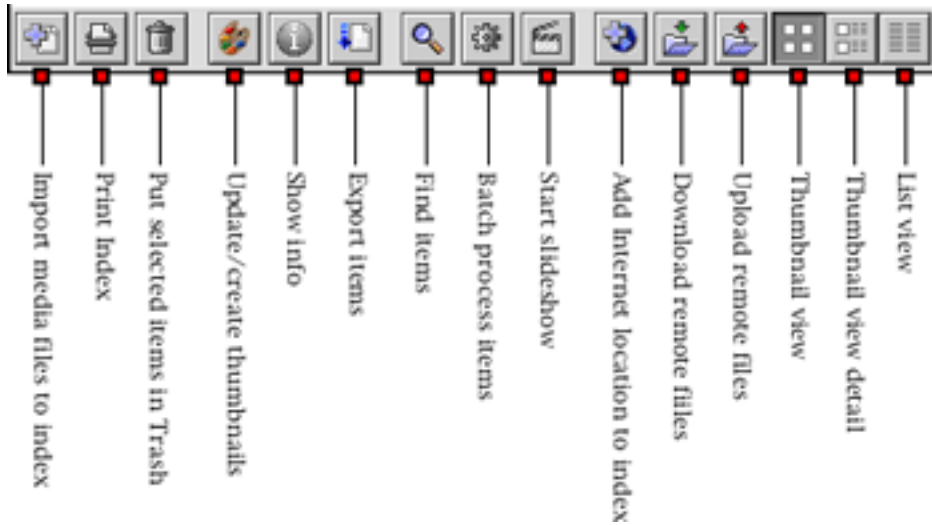
QPict Index Window with Large Thumbnail Images

Supported media formats include all still image formats supported by QuickTime; movies in QuickTime, MPEG, or AVI formats; audio MPEG level 3 (MP3) files, and font files. A complete listing of supported formats can be found [here](#). QPict creates thumbnail images of your image and movie files. The size of the thumbnails is set via the Media tab of the Preferences (Edit menu or Command-;).



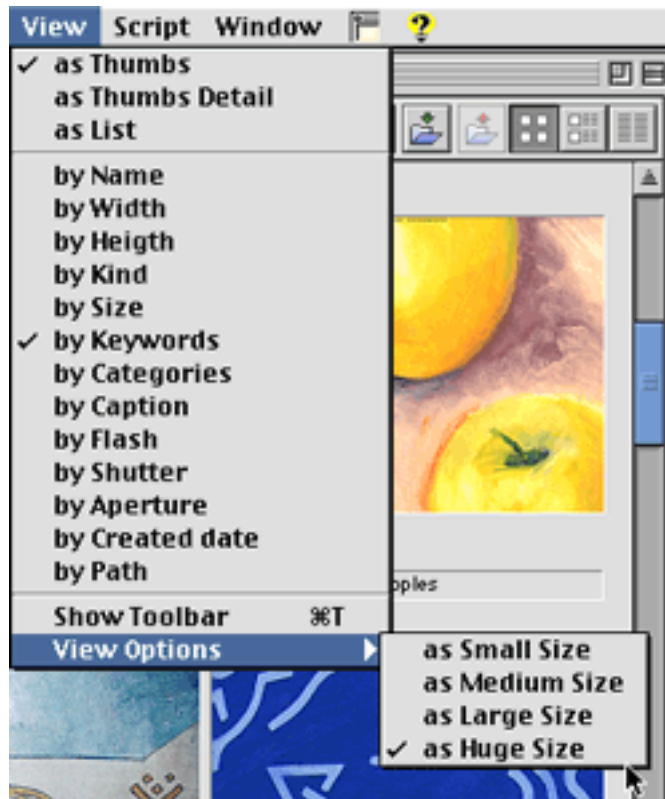
QPict's Display of an Indexed Font

QPict's index window contains a toolbar at the top that gives quick access to some of the functions and commands found in QPict's menus. Placing your cursor over a toolbar button reveals its name or function. The toolbar can be hidden by changing its preferences.



QPict Toolbar

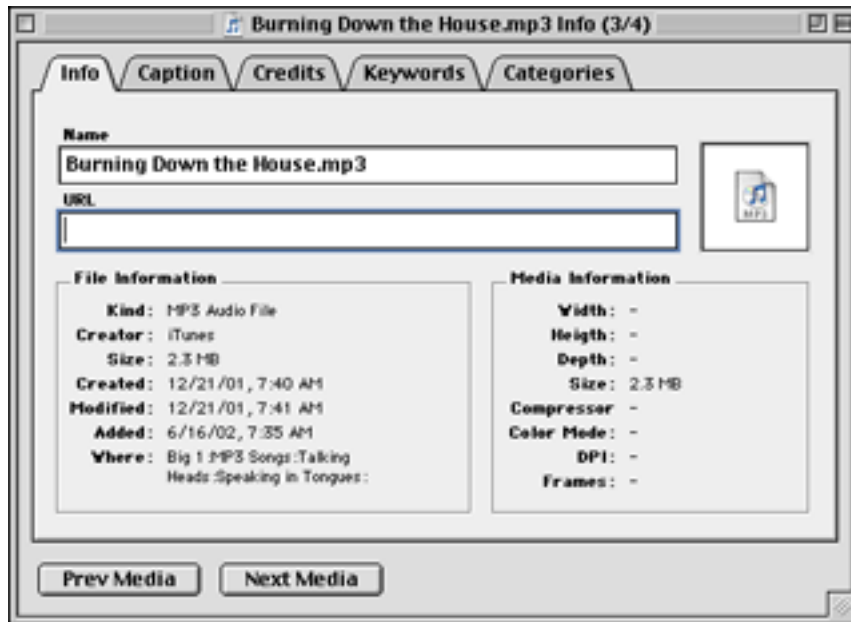
The index itself has three views: thumbnail, thumbnail with details (eight information fields to the right of each thumbnail), and list view. The latter view contains information columns that you can select with the View menu.



View Menu Choices

Loading a large index can take many seconds. QPict initially recreates the thumbnail images of the files that will appear in the index window. Therefore, initial loading takes longer if the QPict window is large. Once the visible thumbnails are displayed, QPict continues loading non-visible thumbnail images in the background. After the thumbnails are loaded, QPict begins to cache image files. It can cache as many as 4,000. You can see

the caching progress in the status bar at the bottom of the index window. Clicking the Show Info button pops up a window with five tabs. This displays more information than the thumbnail detail view.



QPict Item Information Window

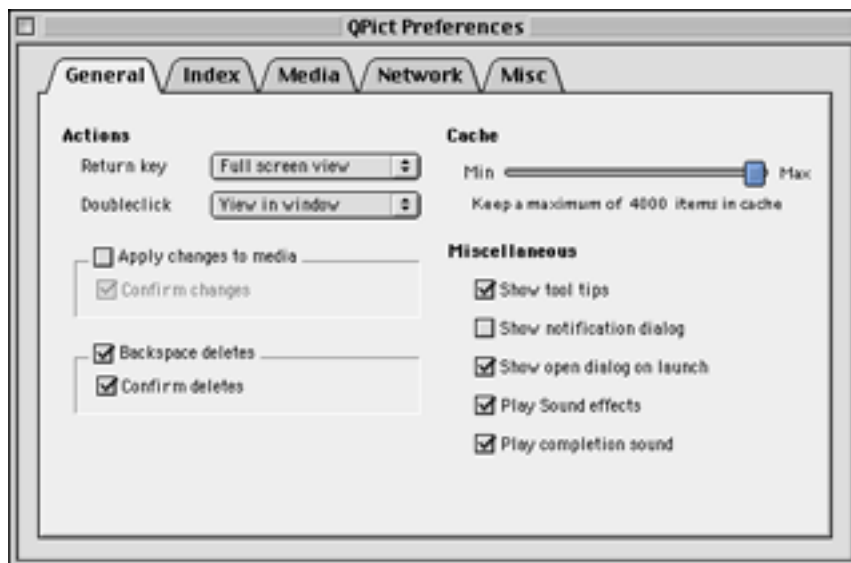
Indexed files can be sorted or selected by many criteria. You can create captions, keywords, and categories for each file. There are dozens of prebuilt categories such as created date, shutter, aperture, flash, image format, transformation, etc. QPict supports ANPA annotation, a standard of describing different media that is compatible with image editing applications such as Adobe Photoshop. QPict's powerful indexing and labeling

features allow you to quickly find a few desired items among hundreds or thousands of files. Found items can be selected, copied to a new index, moved to a new index, or moved to the top or bottom of the searched index.



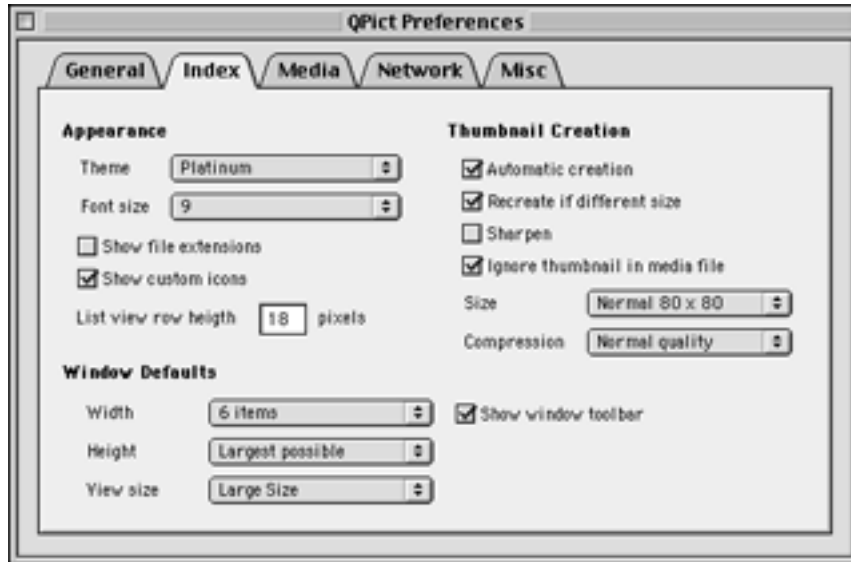
QPict's Search Window Showing Three Selection Criteria

I recommend experimenting with QPict before adjusting preferences. The preferences dialog box contains five tabs: General, Index, Media, Network, and Misc. The General preferences set some keyboard functions, the cache size, and some miscellaneous effects.



General Preferences Tab

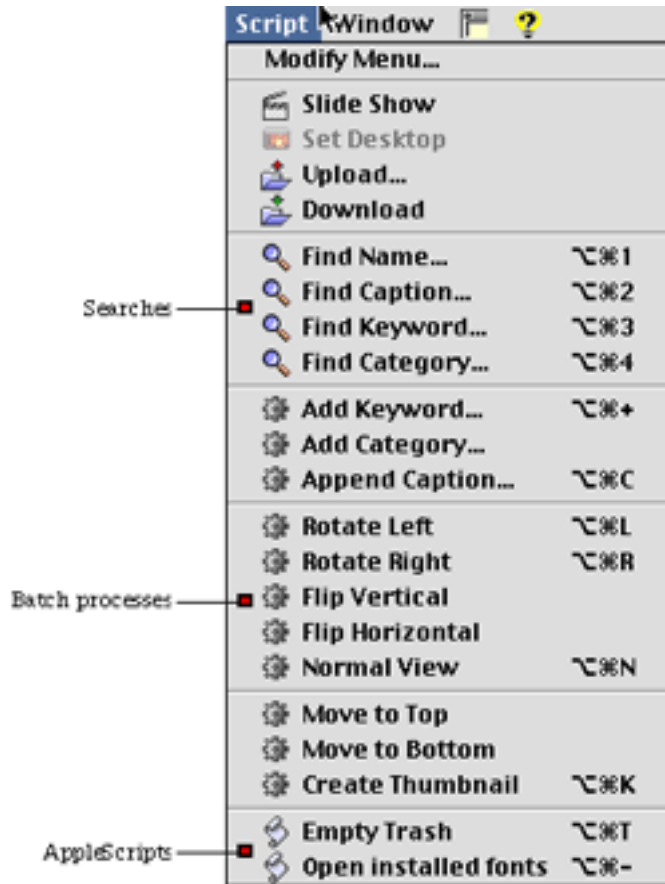
The Index preferences control the appearance and size of new Index windows and the size and quality of the thumbnail images. The Media preferences control slide show presentations. The Network preferences are relevant only if you are working with Internet-based media files. The Misc(ellaneous) preferences set the helper application for image files, some printing features, and the handling of file aliases.



Index Preferences Tab

QPict's slide show features are minimal. You set slide show parameters via the Media tab in the Preferences dialog box. You can set a universal interval between files, toggle between looping or stopping after the last image, set universal image and movie scalings, and choose from among numerous backgrounds. If you need a fancier slide show, you can use QPict's export function to place selected files into a single folder for use by another application such as iMovie or PowerPoint.

QPict supports batch processing of images. Batch processes can include assignment of categories and keywords, changing modification dates, rotating images, transforming image formats, etc. You can perform multiple operations simultaneously in batch mode. You can save combinations of batch operations and place them in the Scripts menu.



Script Menu with Search, Batch, and AppleScript Entries

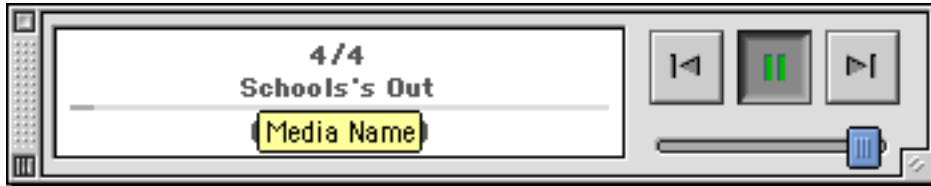
You can print QPict indexes in any mode (thumbnail, thumbnail with details, or list). QPict will place images based on page size and orientation, not based on the screen dimensions of the index window. Image quality depends on the thumbnail image characteristics set via the Index tab of the Preferences dialog box.

QPict lets you share media files via HTTP or FTP. You can link to distant sites for downloading media files indexed in QPict, or you can set up your Macintosh as a media server for access by others.

QPict fully supports AppleScript and allows you to launch AppleScripts from its Script menu. Unfortunately, no documentation on this is provided (except in QPict's AppleScript dictionary).

Utility of QPict

QPict is designed primarily as an image and movie cataloging and management tool. In that role, it works very well. QPict also works very well as an MP3 audio file organizing and playing tool.



Playback Controls for Audio MP3 File

QPict can sort and organize audio files better than iTunes. You can use index files as playlists. QPict can play audio files singly or continuously (using “slide show” mode). In slide show mode it can play files sequentially (based on whatever sort order you choose) or randomly. One caveat is that QPict-based audio does not play in the background as smoothly as iTunes.

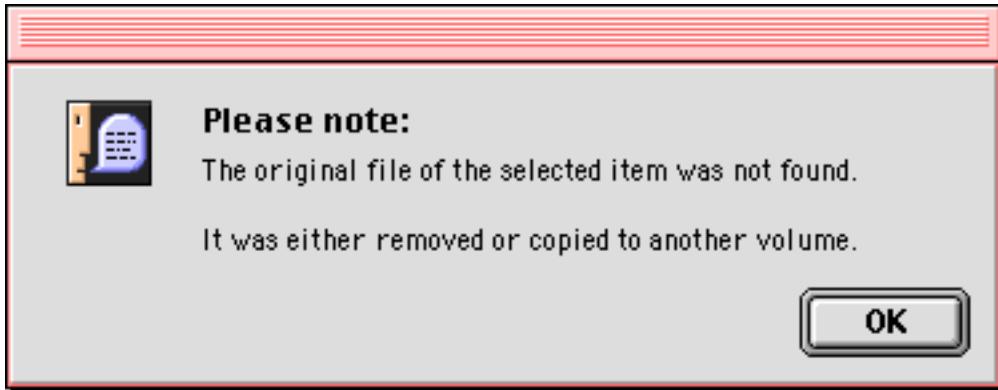


Slide Show Playing MP3 Audio File

Problems, Bugs, and Omissions

QPict sometimes crashes while in list mode when resizing the index window or the column widths. After deleting an item, QPict 5.1 displays an alert message saying that the original is missing. When playing MP3 files in a slide show that contains other file types, the text information and picture appear in the lower right corner of the screen and are clipped on

the right and bottom edges. This does not occur if the slide show contains only MP3 files. After adding files to an index containing MP3 files, their icons disappeared. Opening the MP3 files restored their icons.



Inappropriate Error Message After Deleting a File From the Index

QPict does not use a preference file. Preferences are stored within the application, a practice that I believe increases the risk of application corruption.

This actually may be a feature, not a bug: QPict allows you to play multiple MP3 files simultaneously. This can be quite amusing with the right combination of songs, since QPict lets you pause MP3 files and adjust their volumes individually during playback.

Most help menu items do not work. The "About this menu..." choice sends you to the QPict registration Web page. The "Introduction..." menu sends you to the usage examples Web page. The remaining QPict Help menu choices yield "Bad Request" error messages. This occurred because the QPict Web site URL changed, but the author forgot to update the links throughout the latest versions of QPict.

Documentation

The application comes with a 39-page (8.3" x 11.7") electronic Adobe Acrobat PDF manual. This manual has not been updated since March 2000, so it does not cover new features. However, it adequately describes the most important features of QPict.

The "Read Me" file refers to version 5.0.1 (January 2002), not 5.1. It has a small amount of useful information.

The QPict Web site user guide page is even more outdated than the PDF file. The screen shots page recently was updated and now shows OS X screen shots.

Technical Support

Only e-mail or snail mail based support is available. The Web site has an Introduction page and lists a few frequently asked questions. Unfortunately, the Web site documentation is out of date.

Alternatives

[Image Viewer 6](#) (\$35 shareware) looks similar to QPict but does not have QPict's indexing power.

[iView MediaPro 1.5](#) (\$65 download, \$80 on CD, discount for owners of Toast or other iView products) is a full-featured commercial media management application with more supported media types and more features than QPict. If I were buying a media organizer today, I would give this one a close look.

Summary

After I bought a digital camera, I spent a few weeks assessing media cataloging programs. I preferred QPict over a number of other programs, and I have been using it for two years. QPict would have received an Excellent rating if its documentation had been current and if the OS 9-compatible version had fewer bugs.

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FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

What Is ATPM?

About This Particular Macintosh (ATPM) is, among other things, a monthly Internet magazine or “e-zine.” ATPM was created to celebrate the personal computing experience. For us this means the most personal of all personal computers—the Apple Macintosh. About This Particular Macintosh is intended to be about your Macintosh, our Macintoshes, and the creative, personal ideas and experiences of everyone who uses a Mac. We hope that we will continue to be faithful to our mission.

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



The **Print PDF** edition is saved in Adobe Acrobat format. It has a two-column layout with smaller text and higher-resolution graphics that are optimized for printing. It may be viewed online in a browser, or downloaded and viewed in Adobe's free Acrobat Reader on Macintosh or Windows. PDFs may be magnified to any size and searched with ease.



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What Are Some Tips for Viewing PDFs?

- You can [download](#) Adobe Acrobat Reader for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 5 has better quality and performance. ATPM is also compatible with Acrobat Reader 3, for those with 680x0 Macs.
- You can zoom the PDF to full window width and scroll through articles simply by single-clicking anywhere in the article text (except underlined links).
- You can quickly navigate between articles using the bookmarks pane at the left of the main viewing window.
- 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.
- For best results, turn off Acrobat's "Fit to Page" option before printing.

Why Are Some Links Double-Underlined?

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

What If I Get Errors Decoding ATPM?

ATPM and MacFixIt readers have reported problems decoding MacBinary files using early versions of StuffIt Expander 5.x. If you encounter problems decoding ATPM, we recommend upgrading to [StuffIt Expander 5.1.4 or later](#).

How Can I Submit Cover Art?

We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for ATPM, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to editor@atpm.com for more information.

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Got a comment about an article that you read in ATPM? Is there something you'd like us to write about in a future issue? We'd love to hear from you. Send your e-mail to editor@atpm.com. We often publish the e-mail that comes our way.

Do You Answer Technical Support Questions?

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How Can I Contribute to ATPM?

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

Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

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

Hardware and Software Reviews

ATPM publishes hardware and software reviews. However, we do things in a rather unique way. Techno-jargon can be useful to engineers but is not always a help to most Mac users. We like reviews that inform our readers about how a particular piece of hardware or software will help their Macintosh lives. We want them to know what works,

how it may help them in their work, and how enthusiastic they are about recommending it to others. If you have a new piece of hardware or software that you'd like to review, contact our reviews editor at reviews@atpm.com for more information.

Shareware Reviews

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

Which Products Have You Reviewed?

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ATPM uses the following ratings (in order from best to worst): Excellent, Very Nice, Good, Okay, Rotten.

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Where Can I Find Back Issues of ATPM?

[Back issues](#) of ATPM, dating since April 1995, are available in DOCMaker stand-alone format. In addition, all issues since ATPM 2.05 (May 1996) are available in HTML format. You can [search](#) all of our back issues.

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

