

# ATPM

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

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# Welcome

As the little ones all head back to school, most Mac users are anxiously awaiting the arrival of Mac OS X 10.1. The initial release of OS X was, well...shy of perfection. There has been a good deal of discussion among ATPM staffers as to the ins and outs of OS X and what the future may hold. We are all enthusiastic and optimistic that OS X will indeed flourish into the revolutionary operating system it foreshadows. We are equally hopeful that this next release will smooth out enough of the rough edges (and perhaps fill in some of the gaps) of OS X and represent a big step forward for Apple and its loyal user base. Apple has always been the best innovator in the industry—no one would argue that it has come up with some of the best “ideas” in computing history. But it’s no longer enough for Apple to have the vision. Visionaries are falling by the wayside as DSL companies drop like flies and technology stocks continue to fall (it ain’t over ‘till the fat lady sings). The time for action is nigh. Some might even go so far as to say long past due.

## Apple Cider: Hey, I Recognize You!

Tom Iovino discusses the communal joy of being a Mac user this month. “In fact, after *Independence Day* premiered, I was able to tell PC supporters that while it was great that 90% of businesses were using Wintel boxes, the Macintosh was the computer that saved the world.”

## Beyond the Barline: And They’re Off!

David Ozab sums up the state of the Mac music software industry in the context of OS X’s new API “Apple has released ‘OS X Audio Features Documentation’ a document describing their new Core Audio system, a set of APIs that tackle the issues of timing and latency created by the preemptive multitasking and virtual memory capabilities of OS X’s BSD core.”

## My Apple Wedge: Organized Mobility

Dierk Seeburg bites the bullet and buys a VisorPhone, with a tip of the hat to Evan Trent and his review of the Smartphone in issue 7.08. A revealing comparison of the two is provided. “You can get the same functionality of the Smartphone (except for voice dialing and speakerphone) by buying a Handspring Visor for US \$200 and you will still come out

ahead. In the end, with the Handspring, you have a complete computer solution that sports virtually unlimited expandability through the Springboard slot, which is what attracted me to the Visor in the first place.”

## **Legacy Corner: How Old Did You Say that Mac Was?**

Ed Goss continues the exploration of older Macs in *The Legacy Corner*, fields a letter from a gent with a Ilci running a network chat server, and provides some tasty trivia treats.

## **Oooh Baby Baby It’s a Wild Web**

Paul Fatula shares some great Web sites with readers this month, including one which will bring a smile to any Net surfer who has encountered a 404 “File Not Found” error when trying to pull up a Web page.

## **Takin’ Care of Business (and Workin’ Overtime)**

Evan Trent goes off on a rant, with a nod to Dennis Miller, questioning the prominence of the PC in the business world. “My supply of sympathy is running dry, and I have grown tired of banging my head against the wall as I listen to yet another PC-based excuse for failure to perform or communicate.” Who knew that he had this much pent up frustration? He seems polite enough when he responds to reader mail.

## **Low End Mac Lore**

Muzamil Akram interviews Daniel Knight of Low End Mac fame. For those readers who aren’t familiar with Mr. Knight or his site, this is a great introduction. For the fans out there, check out the juicy details.

## **Desktop Pictures**

Michael L. Bovee and Jens Grabenstein provide the photos for this month’s desktop pictures series. About a gorgeous set from Israel, Bovee writes “This selection of photos is just a tiny sample of the hundreds I took in February 2000, on my first trip to the Holy Land, Israel, and also my first excursion with a brand new Nikon CoolPix 950.” Grabeinstein’s photos are from the wetlands of Long Island’s North Shore. Have a look at these great shots!



## Review: Airburst

Daniel Chvatik takes a look at a uniquely enjoyable gaming suite for the Mac. “What makes Airburst a hit is its flawless combination of amazing graphics, well-done music and sound effects, and addictive game play. Another reason why I still am drawn to the game after many hours of game play is the sheer quantity of variation the game has to offer. There are twelve game types, which run on many different levels with unique characteristics.”

## Review: eClick

Eric Blair checks out a snazzy design tool for generating Web buttons. “I used the ATPM tutorial on a few of my earlier Web sites. The result were, admittedly, rather bland. Using eClick, I am able to create much nicer buttons in a fraction of the time. Also, it’s far easier and less expensive than Photoshop. Each of eClick’s six steps is straightforward and makes sense in the grand scheme of things.”

## Review: Snapz Pro X

Daniel Chvatik reviews Snapz Pro X, the OS X version of an invaluable Macintosh screen shot utility. Those readers who already use Snapz Pro 2 will be pleased with Ambrosia’s latest offering. “Among the new features in Snapz Pro X are the abilities to add borders, drop shadows, thumbnails, and even overlays of watermarks or copyright messages. Another new feature is the FatBits function, accessed by pressing Control while in any of SPX’s modes. FatBits displays additional information about the capture, like the current location of the mouse pointer, the size of the selection, and a magnified view of the area around the cursor for more precise selections.”

## Review: TiBag

Chris Turner gives the new TiBag a try. “The TiBag is a courier-style bag designed to be worn over one shoulder, like a backpack, or across the chest, messenger style. It features three main pockets, with two smaller ones. The first big pocket is on the flap of the TiBag itself, accessible through the large zipper that dominates the top of the flap. The flap affixes to the main compartment via a velcro strip at the bottom.”

## Review: Tropico

Eric Blair enjoys Tropico, the latest game from MacSoft. "Tropico is one of the most addictive games I've played in a long time. It takes the classic concept of the city building simulation and twists it around into something new and original." If you've always wanted to rule your own Caribbean island, here's your chance.

## Review: Ultralingua

Paul Fatula reports on a French-English dictionary from Ultralingua. "Ultralingua has created a number of language-to-language dictionaries, as well as monolingual dictionaries in French and English. In addition to Macintosh (classic and X), there are versions available for Windows and Palm, the latter of which I'd think could be extremely useful to travelers."



# E-Mail

## PowerPoint

I am an engineering student. Please help me to construct a GIF file using PowerPoint. For simple animations, could I combine several pictures in a single GIF file?

—*Senthil Kumar*

The latest version of PowerPoint should handle animated GIFs properly. Older versions will show only the first frame of the GIF file.

The easiest way to construct an animated GIF, in my opinion, is to get a copy of [GIFBuilder](#) and then paste or import each frame, one by one. GIFBuilder lets you configure every aspect of the animation and even has some great filters for fading in and out, or between frames. It's very easy to use and gives you good results. —*Evan Trent*

## DPP-SV55 (dye-sub printer) Review

I recently purchased the DPP-SV55 but I haven't used it. I was going to return it because the DPI is 403x403. I have an HP DeskJet with 2400x1200; wouldn't it make better prints?

—*Chris*

The DPI values can be deceiving...you can't compare them directly, because the DPP-SV55 is a dye sub printer and your HP is an inkjet. Of course I don't know how your DeskJet's output looks (I have an 870cxi, which is nowhere near the quality of the DPP-SV55), but the DPP-SV55 output is indistinguishable from a print of a film photograph. Also inkjet output tends to fade/discolor over relatively short stretches of time. What your DeskJet can do, however, is print larger prints; the DPP-SV55 maxes out at 4x6. —*Paul Fatula*

## Coolpad Review

How does it feel typing for prolonged periods? Isn't the angle of the Coolpad, in effect, tilting against the angle that you're supposed to be typing at? Looks like a great investment; I just want to be sure I'm keeping the carpal tunnel syndrome demons at bay. :-)

—*Kevin Hnatiuk*



Many people just turn the Podium CoolPad 180 degrees so they have a negative keyboard tilt. Then just adjust the height to suit you. You can see a [picture](#) of this.

—*Jim MacEachern*

## [Datahand Review](#)

Does anyone have more experience with the Datahand? Especially those with severe RSI and who have used Datahand much longer than one month.

—*Jan Oonk*

Datahand's site has some testimonials which may be of interest to you. Click on Testimonials, where there are not only soundbites but also a downloadable 95-page (!) PDF containing extensive commentary from a number of users. In a few cases, contact information for a commenter is given. Full names and company names are given as well. One user (pp. 10–11) started off with "so much pain his ability to do his job was severely affected" and reports after four months that while his pain is not gone, he can "type as much as I want." —*Paul Fatula*



Did you follow up on any of the four-year-old information on the company's home page, particularly the reports about Sarah Lee company using these keyboards? Are there any more recent reports? Any research citations that you can find? (I can't; the company's page mentions names and institutions but not journal cites.)

I was able to read Datahand's page from a Macintosh with iCab, but not with a Wintel PC with Microsoft Explorer 5 later the same day—the latter hangs at their "detect.html" page on which the only active link leads directly to the ATPM review, rather circular.

I'm using a Kinesis after failed carpal tunnel surgery left me in pretty bad shape. I like it OK but am getting more pain as the months go by, and would like to know more about the Datahand—both for Mac and for Intel/PC.

—*hsr*

On the Datahand page, if you click "Studies" it shows only a "brief summary," but in the frame above that,

there are links (“Health and comfort,” “speed and fatigue,” etc.) with more extensive information about particular studies and links to the full text of the studies. I’m not sure why you couldn’t access their site with MS IE; I’d guess their site was just down at the time. I don’t have a Windows machine to test from, but I’d be pretty shocked if their site was inaccessible by design from the most popular browser on the most popular platform! —*Paul Fatula*



A Google advanced search for “ergonomic keyboard” turned up [this site](#). It has links to ergonomic articles, including one from December of last year from MSNBC that quotes Datahand as saying they’d have an inexpensive, \$400-range home user model sometime in 2001.

The Keybowl itself is taking preorders at that price for their no-fingers-at-all input device, which looks very interesting.

—*hr*

The keybowl does look cool; I heard about it a few months back, but alas the Mac version (was then and still) is forthcoming. I can’t find the reference on their page now, but if memory serves when I first checked out their site it said typing speed maxes out at 20–30wpm. If I’m remembering that correctly, that would mean a pretty heavy productivity hit, as opposed to Datahand which studies found offers productivity gains (and which at least in my experience, doesn’t offer any productivity hit after a month of use). I haven’t heard anything about a home user model of Datahand, but I’d really love to see one; I’ll see what I can find out and if I learn anything substantive I’ll post it here. —*Paul Fatula*

## Networking

I have just found [macwindows.com](#). They have tutorials on how to do various things with the network. We really want to figure this all out ourselves, but school is fast approaching...

This is for home. We will have three or four PCs and one or two Macs. The laser printer is on my Mac. The Jaz drive and the scanner are also. The inkjet printer can be substituted for the laser, but I think the inkjet can also be a network printer (better, I think). The CD burner is on the PC.

We have one parent each on a PC (Dell w/Windows 2000) and a Mac (G3 PowerBook soon to be updated to Mac OS9). We will have two teens on PCs and one teen on PC/Mac.

The requirements are:

- Buy as few new peripherals as possible.
- Allow me to transfer files from my computer to the PC with the CD burner. Also allow the kids to transfer to the CD burner.
- Allow my partner to print his photos to the inkjet.
- Along the way, pick up PC network knowledge.
- General flexibility to take advantage of whatever we can.

—*Trudy MacArtor*

The first thing that you want to do is set up an Ethernet LAN for your home. Make sure each PC machine has an Ethernet card (sounds like they do), and get yourself a hub or ideally a cheap 10/100 Ethernet switch. I personally recommend Asanté but there are many other good brands. It sounds like you will need at least an 8-port unit. Run category five cabling from each machine to the hub. If this presents a problem let me know and we can discuss wireless options.

As for the printer...what printer model is it? If you tell me I can offer you specific instructions for how to set it up.

The machine with the CD burner will need to be set up with Windows File Sharing so that you can easily transfer files to it for burning CDs. The PCs will be able to access this machine out of the box, but the Macs will require that you install a piece of software called DAVE. It lets you log on to Windows File Sharing machines as if you were logging on to a Mac running File Sharing, via the Chooser that is.

Another good solution you might want to consider is PC MACLAN, which is a bit more PC-centric but also a bit more comprehensive in its offerings. I recommend both wholeheartedly and have used them in different situations. —*Evan Trent*

## 50th Apple Cider

Today was my first experience with ATPM, and your columns have been the most enjoyable aspect. I particularly connected with the "Tidings of Comfort & Joy" and laughed my head off reading "Cast Off Your Vote."

The first is simply too true, and unfortunately a sign of our times. Common courtesy is considered weak, ineffective, and unnecessary in a culture focused on entitlement for a generation of the ungrateful, selfish, and immature. The latter goes to show why speech writers are paid so well! Most politicians—most people—don't converse in complete sentences and have difficulty completing a thought, never mind articulating it. It's entertaining when someone takes the time to assemble these gems into one article.

I'm not surprised that a few people didn't get it and resorted to profanity. I'll never forget what Mrs. Kerr, my 7th grade English teacher once said—"Swearing is a sign of a limited vocabulary." It's probably not original with her, but for me, she's the source. That comment has reminded me for over 20 years to be careful with my words. God help me if I ever go into politics (unlikely)!

Congratulations on hitting the 50-column milestone in your writing career! I look forward to catching up on some of the other earlier works, as well as those you turn out in the future.

Good Luck!

—*Andy Enright*

Thanks for writing! It's always great to get feedback from our readers, and—hey—when it's positive, it makes it that much better. I'm glad to see that you like the *Cider* columns, and, of course, I encourage you to read the whole series. You'll also be pleased to know that ATPM is just jammed full of product reviews, a guide to interesting Web sites, and other columnists whose views are a lot more understandable than mine.

You might be interested in what I do for my 'real world' job—I write speeches for elected officials, and I get a first-hand education in just how our community leaders sound so intelligent...

Thanks again for your e-mail, and I look forward to counting you among my loyal readers (I think I might be up to three—or is it four?) —*Tom Iovino*

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# Apple Cider: Random Squeezings From a Mac User

by Tom Iovino, [tiovino@atpm.com](mailto:tiovino@atpm.com)

## Hey, I Recognize You!

Our parents and grandparents had it a whole lot easier than we do.

Before the Internet, before cheap air travel, before even telephones, people typically never moved far away from where they grew up. You might have been born in your parents' house or the local hospital, attended the neighborhood school, fallen in love with the girl or boy next door, gotten married, and repeated the cycle all over again as you raised your own children just a few miles from your childhood home.

One by-product of this phenomenon is that you knew everyone in your neighborhood. Neighbors who might have congratulated your parents on your birth and waved hello to you as you walked home from school would often attend your marriage and congratulate you on the birth of your own children. As you went about your everyday business, you constantly ran into people you knew—in the stores, on the streets, at the movie theater.

But now, things are a little different. Mobility is apparent a whole lot more, with friends, relatives, and children moving across the country to pursue their careers. I was one of the first of my paternal grandmother's 27 grandchildren to pack up and leave New Jersey and not move back. While I was at the University of Maryland, just about everyone I met was new to the campus, but the shock of leaving my friends and relatives was lessened. After all, the University provided plenty of opportunities to make sure that I was able to meet people and make new friends.

But, in October of 1992, I pulled up tent stakes and moved to Florida. What an adventure: it was even fitting that I moved to Florida on the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus setting foot in the New World. I had no job, and the circle of people I knew there was extremely small. There was no organized way for me or my wife to meet other folks. We spent New Year's Eve 1992 by ourselves in our small apartment because we didn't know anyone else. It was a little disconcerting for me, coming from a large family, to know that there was only a very remote chance that we would ever run into anyone we knew while out and about. We were the consummate strangers in a strange land.



In many ways, Apple had become a similar stranger to us through the dark days of the late 80s and early 90s. Sure, as Apple enthusiasts, we always knew where to look to find Macintosh computers—quite a few companies were using them, as well as graphic designers and other creative professionals. Their ease of use, processing power and compatibility with the creative thought process made them a must-have for forward-thinking business owners. Unfortunately, their high cost and the perception that they were not a ‘serious’ business computer made the Macintosh a computer that never got a lot of face time. Computers in movies, TV shows or commercials were typically PCs running DOS or Windows, or large main-frame workstations. This, after all, was the ‘real world’ of computing, since market analysts and other pundits were absolutely sure that Apple couldn’t compete in the cut-throat world of computing.

That’s what made the use of Macs in movies such as [The Net](#), [Independence Day](#) and [Jurassic Park](#) so interesting. Here, in these large-budget blockbusters, the lowly Macintosh, with its rainbow-colored Apple Computer logo, was prominently featured. In fact, after *Independence Day* premiered, I was able to tell PC supporters that while it was great that 90% of businesses were using Wintel boxes, the Macintosh was the computer that saved the world.

Macs have also been seen more frequently on television. As I have confessed in the past, I am a [Home and Garden TV \(HGTV\)](#) addict. While the main reason I watch the station is to see the home improvement, landscaping, and woodworking shows, I’m amazed at how prominently Macs are featured in a series of ads for the station’s Web site. In these commercials, computer users seeking information about a particular home improvement issue can be seen typing on the keyboards of their trusty iMacs and iBooks—with nary a Dell, Gateway, or Compaq in sight.

The prominence of the Macintosh isn’t just limited to HGTV. On [the Food Network](#)—yes, it’s another favorite cable station of mine—Alton Brown, host of the quirky, entertaining, and quite educational show [Good Eats](#), makes frequent reference to Apple Computer. In fact, in the episode *Ham I Am*, he advised consumers to stay away from hams that looked more like iMacs than a piece of porcine anatomy. Think about that—here’s the host of a show referring to the iMac in a way that assumes his viewers can immediately picture what an iMac looks like in their mind’s eye. While that may not seem like much, it shows that the show’s writers classify the iMac as a recognizable cultural icon somewhat like the golden arches of McDonald’s. It’s a subtle but very important statement about the market penetration of Macintosh computers.

Even the print media are getting in on the Apple act. While I work out at the gym, I'll usually pass the time on the Stairmaster or treadmill by reading magazines. In several of the issues of *Men's Journal*, *GQ*, and *Parenting*, among others, I've seen a fair share of Macs somewhere in the photos. While the articles are typically not about computing, a piece on dressing for success at your office, how to convince your boss to give you a raise, or getting your kids ready to go to school will show an iMac or an iBook on a desk.

Within a few months of our moving to Florida—and given that my wife and I are two extremely outgoing people, judging from our professions as a TV news producer and Public Information Officer—it became difficult for us to break away and not be noticed. Turning the corner in a grocery store, picking up our dry cleaning, or taking the kids to the pediatrician, we seem constantly to be running into folks we have met at a party or a business meeting. Florida is becoming a lot like our own neighborhood, with recognizable faces appearing almost everywhere.

Hey, Macintosh, welcome back to the neighborhood!

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## And They're Off!

Last May, in my column [Why I'm Waiting to Upgrade](#), I discussed the issues facing third-party developers in upgrading MIDI and digital audio applications to Mac OS X. Since then, Apple has released "OS X Audio Features Documentation," a document describing their new [Core Audio](#) system, a set of APIs that tackle the issues of timing and latency created by the pre-emptive multitasking and virtual memory capabilities of OS X's BSD core. Though there was no official announcement from Apple at [the last Macworld New York Expo](#), I think it's safe to assume that at least some of these capabilities are included in version 10.1 (would that be OS X.1 or X.I?) due out this month.

The release of the APIs has set off a mad dash among manufacturers to get to market first. Here's a rundown of how the various companies look coming out of the gate:

### Emagic

First out is [Emagic](#), with their beta versions of Logic Audio 5.0, along with drivers for the Unitor 8 MkII, AMT 8, and MT 4 MIDI interfaces, and the EMI 216 Audio Interface. These debuted at Macworld New York and are due out this month. With a complete hardware/software solution ready just in time for the OS X upgrade, Emagic has the early lead.

### Bias

Hot on Logic's tail is [Bias](#), the Bay Area company that makes both Peak, the premiere stereo digital audio editor on the Mac; and Deck, the venerable multitrack editor that has changed hands more times than I can count. OS X compatibility is a must for this Mac-only company, and carbonized versions of both applications are due out in November.

## Steinberg

Logic's German rival has an OS X version of [Nuendo](#) (a software-based multitracking program based on the audio portion of Cubase) in the works, and plans to include OS X support in their next version of [Cubase VST](#). Given the universal acceptance of the VST plug-in architecture, everyone's waiting on Steinberg to some extent.

## Mark of the Unicorn

The pioneer Mac MIDI and audio company is also working on OS X versions of their software (Digital Performer) and hardware (the MIDI Timepiece and various MOTU audio interfaces), but hasn't set any release dates. They already have a significant lead in the FireWire audio interface market with the [MOTU 828](#). It remains to be seen if they can capitalize on this early lead.

## Digidesign

No word yet from the industry leader. Rumors of their death, however, are greatly exaggerated. With their huge installed base, and virtual monopoly on the high end market, [Digidesign](#) can easily recover from a late start.

## Dark Horse Companies

So those are the industry leaders. What about the smaller companies? A number of [shareware applications](#) are already carbonized, including Felt Tip Sound Studio, Myriad's Melody and Harmony Assistant, and Antoine Rosset's Player PRO. These applications can't possibly compete in the pro market, but for a hobbyist with a new iMac, they're worth a try. [Cycling 74](#) (Max) and [U&I software](#) (Metasynth, Metatrack, and Xx) are also working on carbonizing their applications, but these programs have always been marketed to a more select clientele. The die-hards (like me) will wait, but your average rocker (I was one of those too once) could care less.

## So How Will the Race End?

It's easy to jump to conclusions (as many who post comments online do). Those already predicting the unfettered success of Emagic, or, conversely, the demise of Digidesign are calling the race before the first turn. There's a long way to go.

*Copyright © 2001 David Ozab, [dozab@atpm.com](mailto:dozab@atpm.com). [David Ozab](#) is a Ph.D. student at the University of Oregon, where he teaches electronic music courses and assists in the day-to-day operation of The Future Music Oregon Studios.*



# My Apple Wedge

by Dierk Seeburg, [dseeburg@atpm.com](mailto:dseeburg@atpm.com)

## Organized Mobility—Mobile Connectivity—Connected Organizer

### Biting the Bullet

Inspired by Evan Trent's recent [review](#) of Kyocera's Smartphone in last month's issue of ATPM, I bit the bullet and bought what many view as the competitor to the Smartphone: The [Handspring VisorPhone](#). My new job is a lot easier to accomplish with this mobile connectivity solution for my organizer. Now I am usually instantly available for clients when they want to reach me, and that means a lot in terms of quality customer service in these times of endless holding loops or voice-mail systems.



The VisorPhone in action: phone and Web.

## Comparison Shopping

There were several features that attracted me to Handspring's solution:

- The Visor is Mac-compatible out of the box, the hook for this article in the first place.
- I already own a Handspring Visor Platinum.
- The Kyocera Smartphone costs US \$500, activation is US \$35, and it comes with only 20 included minutes.
- Handspring is running a promotion on the VisorPhone for US \$49, activation costs US \$20, and it comes with 60 included minutes.
- It is based on the global GSM standard, so I can use it in Europe when I visit family and friends.

You can have the same functionality of the Smartphone (except for voice dialing and speakerphone) by buying a Handspring Visor for US \$200 and you will still come out ahead. In the end, with the Handspring, you have a complete computer solution that sports virtually unlimited expandability through the Springboard slot, which is what attracted me to the Visor in the first place. Besides the formfactor as an obvious definite plus, check [Evan's article](#) for other advantages of the Smartphone.

## Vienna Calling©

The calling plan that comes with the Smartphone is limited to SprintPCS, and data minutes are subtracted from your calling plan minutes. For the VisorPhone, you can choose among providers, but you have to purchase a separate data plan for US \$30, which includes 1500 minutes.

## Size Matters

I know, I know, don't go there. What I like about the VisorPhone is that it adds only about five-eighths of an inch to the Visor's overall length, but on the other hand (and more importantly), seven-sixteenths of an inch to its thickness, and almost 3 ounces to its weight, which makes it more than what the founders of the Palm intended it to be: a shirt pocket computer.



The VisorPhone adds bulk to your Visor: it is about as thick as the Visor itself.



Still, I don't really mind the additional size and weight as I don't put my Visor in my shirt pocket, but rather on my belt in Targus' leather belt pouch. I think the Visor is too bulky to put in a shirt pocket, which I don't always have available anyway. It still fits in my hand just fine, and I prefer the bigger screen compared to Kyocera's Smartphone.



Complete and still handy: The VisorPhone Springboard module.

## Ease of Use

When it comes to using the VisorPhone, it is truly plug-and-play. This is what makes it endearing to a Mac user in general, of course, and to me in particular.

1. Plug it into the Springboard slot.
2. The VisorPhone application autostarts like any other Springboard application.  
Turn on the phone.
3. Wait for service to be confirmed.

4. Now it's your call. Literally. Use a speed dial button. Or the keypad. Or tap a number from your address book. And you will by accident, when you actually want to edit an entry in your address book. You just have to get used to tapping on the name of the address book list entry instead of the entry's phone number.



Quick access buttons on top of the VisorPhone.

Other than that, there is nothing in particular (that I can think of) that makes this product more specific to the Mac platform. If anything, to me it's another product that helps me just get the job done and even have some fun along the way without having to worry about .dll files. Pardon? You don't know what they are? No wonder, you're a Mac user, and you shouldn't have to. In some respects, they are Windows files similar to system extensions under the Classic Mac OS, but their management defies description and invites headache by their mere presence.

## Speed Dial

Using speed dial is the same as using the speed dial on your regular phone. You can program ten speed dial buttons by writing the desired phone numbers in the silk screen area with your stylus.



Sending SMS messages with the VisorPhone.



Speed dial 10 numbers on the VisorPhone.

## SMS

I'm just getting into this now: I'm asking all my friends if they can receive SMS messages—might as well use my built-in messaging capability to spend some of my plan-minutes.

## Wireless Internet

The VisorPhone Wireless Suite is found on the CD enclosed with the VisorPhone. Be prepared for Internet Explorer to start automatically when you insert the CD. Unfortunately, all Microsoft applications I happen to have on my hard drives cause my machine to crash sooner or later (I only keep them for those instances when someone sends me a document that requires editing of specially formatted documents). Everything else I run hardly ever crashes, the exception being Netscape Communicator, but only once in a while and only whenever it runs into a badly designed Web site. So, I had to restart my machine and just opened the HTML autostart document in Netscape Communicator, since it didn't autostart when the CD was in the drive at startup.

The applications that let you use the Internet wirelessly all require you to install one or more relatively small .prc files by HotSyncing your Visor. This is the usual procedure when installing applications on your Visor. Handspring has incorporated this feature into the User Guide on the CD enclosed with the VisorPhone: in the user guide Web page, simply click on the installation link of the wireless Internet application you would like to install, and it is automatically downloaded off the CD onto your hard drive, after which the Palm OS's HotSync Manager starts and shows the file to be uploaded onto your Visor next time you HotSync. Easy enough.

## Saddling Blazer?

[Handspring](#) provides their own optimized Web browser in the VisorPhone package. Be prepared to deal with Web sites that don't cater to the handheld computer clientele. On a good note, Blazer is compatible with HTML, cHTML, and WAP standards.



Wireless Internet with Handspring's Blazer Web browser.

## One-Touch Mail

[JPMobile's](#) mail application features all the functionality you're used to from your desktop e-mail application: it sorts, filters and files messages, reports message status, allows access to up to six e-mail addresses, creates custom "canned" messages that can be copied into

an e-mail message, sends messages to a defined group, delivers messages to any pager or any Internet e-mail address, and most importantly, it uses your existing Palm address book for it. I have to say, though, at this point, I expect nothing less.



E-mail with JPMobile's e-mail client.

## Yahoo! Messenger

Personally, I use [AOL's Instant Messenger](#) on my desktop machine, just out of convenience since it comes with Netscape's Communicator package and hasn't caused any problems with anything else I have on my hard drives. Unfortunately, none of the instant messaging applications use the same protocol, so Yahoo's Instant Messenger users can only send instant messages to other Yahoo's Instant Messenger users, and not to AOL's Instant Messenger users. Just something to keep in mind. AOL also has a messenger application for the Palm platform; check [Palmtracker](#), just to name one other.



Instant messaging with Yahoo's Instant Messenger.

## BugMe! Messenger

[Electric Pocket's](#) BugMe! Messenger has the additional appeal of enabling users of Palm-based devices to send handwritten, text, and graphic notes—and even photographs to other BugMe! Messenger users.

Now this is something I am itching to try sometime: upload a favorite photograph (maybe taken with your digital camera—see my [last article](#) for some hints as to what's possible), add a note on top of it, and send it to your buddy.



Write sophisticated notes with BugMe! Messenger.

## Accessorize, Accessorize!

Thankfully, the VisorPhone comes with all the necessary accessories: besides the VisorPhone Springboard module with the Lithium-ion battery, the VisorPhone comes with a headset for complete hands-free operation and a travel charger. The headset is your common earphone that plugs into the eighth-inch connector on the side of the VisorPhone. The travel charger plugs into the bottom of your Visor which normally plugs

into your cradle. Now if only there was a travel charger to charge the Visor itself! I've heard of home-made chargers, but nothing commercial—what's up with that? Feel free to send me an e-mail and enlighten me on the latest developments in this area.



VisorPhone headset for hands-free operation while driving etc.

### **At Last (Homage to Etta James)**

So, before you decide to buy, make sure you know what functions you require from your connected organizer or organizer phone. Make sure, however, that it has one function that I have already found very useful for evaluating how much time I have spent on my VisorPhone: Call History. The VisorPhone keeps track of all your calls, including the time

spent on each call. If you spent so many minutes over your plan last month, well, you can't say you didn't know how many minutes you already spent—it's all right there, at the touch of a button.



The complete package:  
VisorPhone in the Visor,  
ready to talk.

Now, as one of my colleagues at ATPM says in his e-mail signature: [Hang up and drive!](#)

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# The Legacy Corner

by Edward Goss, [egoss@atpm.com](mailto:egoss@atpm.com)

Welcome to *The Legacy Corner*, where each month we feature items of interest to owners of older, “experienced” Macs. If your Mac has a built-in floppy drive, this column is for you. If you have anything that you would like to see featured, or if you have an interesting use for an older Mac, [e-mail](mailto:egoss@atpm.com) me. Anyone who submits an idea, tip, or a feature that I use in *The Legacy Corner* will receive a super-cool ATPM T-shirt!

This month I received a nice letter from Ian Roberts about his use of an older Mac:

Hi Ed. I work at a Department of Energy National Laboratory, and we use various forms of high-end computing equipment (Mac and PC). Our desktop machines are all G3s and G4s but we have one special machine that no one is allowed to take. We have been running a program called Chat on our Mac Ilci for about six years now. Chat is a telnet-based chat server, and we use it internally for staff in our group to connect and discuss things. It has saved us so much time because we can usually get decisions made and questions answered without holding a meeting. The little chat box just keeps going and going. It crashes maybe once every three months.

Last month I installed [Macjordomo](#) and the [Eudora Internet Mail Server](#) on there to run our own e-mail lists. The Ilci chugs along perfectly. I love that so many old programs still work flawlessly in today’s high-powered environment.

Thanks for the great site.

Ian

## Trivia

Each month we feature a few legacy Mac trivia questions. The answers are at the end of the column.

- Which Mac model, released only in Japan, was the ultra-thin, ultra-light PowerBook—code-named “Mighty Cat”—that never made it to the US?

- Which Mac model was the first to offer an internal CD-ROM option?

## Links

My friend Eric Schwarz of *ClassicMacWEEKly* tipped me off to a [neat site](#): It has pictures of many strange and wonderful Macintosh prototypes on it. Everything from a “flat screen” SE to a translucent Portable. Although the site is in French, the pictures can be enlarged by clicking on them, and most are self-explanatory. I want a Paladin!

## Tips

My friend Gary Lyons informed me he has “a ton of complete older software on floppy disk for 68K Macs...” If there’s something you need, [let me know](#) and I’ll see whether we can provide it for you.

## Games

Last month I asked for input on some older Mac games. Getting a few mentions were:

- “The Uninvited”—it’s a System 6, 1st-player game from 1986, but won’t work any longer.
- “Starglider II”—by MicroPlay Software. I used to play this one on my Mac Plus. (the Plus still runs, but not the game.)
- “PT 109”—the coolest old war game ever! This one still works well even on a minimum Mac OS 8.6!
- “Space Rogue”—a leap in role playing games in its time. This one also runs on Mac OS 8.6.
- “The Scarab Of Ra”—my personal favorite Mac game. It is still available at [this page](#). A challenging, ever-changing, maze-based game that even works with Mac OS 9.1.

ATPM staffer Greg Tetrault mentioned that Delta Tao has modern versions of two games: [Dark Castle](#) and [Strategic Conquest](#). He also mentioned he has a number of older games he would be willing to part with. You can contact [Greg](#) here.

## Quote of the Month

“So we went to Atari and said, ‘Hey, we’ve got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, and what do you think about funding us? Or we’ll give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, we’ll come work for you.’ And they said, ‘No.’ So then we

went to Hewlett-Packard, and they said, 'Hey, we don't need you. You haven't gotten through college yet.'"—Apple Computer, Inc. founder Steve Jobs on attempts to get Atari and H-P interested in his and Steve Wozniak's personal computer.

## Trivia Answers

- The PowerBook 2400c/240
- The Mac IIvx



Have a great month!

Ed Goss, the doyen of ATPM.

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# About This Particular Web Site

by Paul Fatula, [pfatula@atpm.com](mailto:pfatula@atpm.com)

## Digital Photography Review

There are many good sites devoted to reviewing digital cameras, but this one has one really terrific feature the others don't—a learning section. I feel this is a must-read for anyone who's just getting into digital photography. The large learning section includes image-editing techniques, photography and lighting techniques, and my favorite, a [glossary](#) of all the terms used in digital camera specs and reviews which beginners might not understand. It's extremely well organized, including cross-references and illustrations.

## File Not Found!

How many times have you clicked excitedly on a link, only to be disappointed by a “404 file not found” error? Well, selfish reader, have you ever considered how the poor file server feels? If you look for a nonexistent page on [homepages.karoo.net](http://homepages.karoo.net), the Web server will share with you the full force of its existential angst.

## FTC: Sharing Your Personal Information: It's Your Choice

Much too little is being done to protect personal privacy these days, and my days of idealistic daydreaming of an industry responsible enough to regulate itself have long since faded, and lie buried under an ever-growing pile of junk mail. While we may never see legislation requiring “opt-in” rather than “opt-out” for direct marketing or information sharing, this page from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) gives clear instructions for opting out those credit card offers that result from credit bureaus playing it free and loose with your information. There's a phone number you can call (entirely automated) to opt out of their mailing lists, as well as ways to opt out of other kinds of direct marketing via the [Direct Marketing Association \(DMA\)](#).

## The Online Joke Book

In addition to displaying a monthly cartoon, this site hosts several volumes of downloadable joke books in DOCMaker and PDF formats (what do you expect from an ATPM contributing editor?). The PDF of the latest tome weighs in at 55 pages, so you're sure to find plenty to laugh at. I especially like the real classified ads from the latest

volume, including: "For Sale: Tickle Me Elmo, still in box, comes with its own 1988 mustang, 5L, auto, excellent condition \$6,800" and "Found: Dirty white dog. Looks like a rat. Been out awhile. Better be a reward."

## [Ars Technica](#)

Though this site focuses mostly on PCs, it's my favorite site for tech news, providing links to interesting articles as well as commentaries and reviews on subjects ranging from business news of technical companies to science news. On the Mac side, the site published the best [OS X review](#) I've seen anywhere. Not dwelling on the new Aqua interface, the review delves into the internals of the system. On a somewhat lighter note was a [recent article](#) (loaded with "edgy" digressions) reviewing a few different mice. It's well worth a read if you're looking for something completely different.

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# Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Evan Trent, [etrent@atpm.com](mailto:etrent@atpm.com)

Am I the only one who has noticed that PCs are always broken? Apparently not, given that IT has become an industry unto itself. Take a look around the corporate world and you'll find that every company with sufficient financial resources has contracted the services of a company whose sole purpose is to fix broken PCs. Some companies even have their own IT geeks on staff as full-time employees, presumably because hiring an outside firm would either be prohibitively expensive or inadequate given the frequency of problems. Scary isn't it?

On the other side of the map, we've got the Macintosh. Ever notice how IT geeks don't even know how to turn a Mac on? "Oh—that's a Mac, I don't know anything about those." Could that be because Macs don't require a dedicated team of around-the-clock IT monkeys?

Now given that one of my jobs here at ATPM is to field help mail, and resolve the various problems our loyal readers are having with their Macs, I'll be the last person on the planet to argue that Macs are trouble-free. On the contrary, they can be a royal pain in the neck. Let's face it—computers are universally problematic and Murphy's law is perhaps never demonstrated with greater clarity or more pristine timing than in the case of the computer. Not only will something go wrong if it can, but it will go wrong at the worst possible moment in time. Ah...computers: can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em.

The aforementioned paradox notwithstanding, there is certainly a lot to be said for the Mac. Macs may crash more often than Wintel boxes, although it's worth noting that I've got a room full of Mac servers that haven't been rebooted in months. And they may not be faster in every case (although as we'll soon discover the marginal speed increases don't pay off as one might expect).

But when was the last time a Mac owner said to you "I'm sorry, sir, but I can't fax you that document because my sound card and fax modem are incompatible," or "Gee I didn't get your e-mail because Windows won't recognize my modem [or Ethernet card] and I can't get onto the Net," or "I had to reinstall Windows and my laptop lost the driver for its trackball so I have to find a mouse somewhere here at the office and then get the driver for this thing installed." Actually our very own editor, Michael Tsai, remembers having

seen a similar problem occur in front of him at a demonstration, and worse yet Windows had lost the driver for the laptop's internal CD-ROM drive, making reinstallation of most anything highly unlikely!

There truly is an infinite supply of inexcusable and comical problems from which your run-of-the-mill Wintel box might suffer. Comical, that is, until you realize that you bought your PC because everybody told you that it was the machine of choice for business. After all, Macs are toys. They're for kids, classrooms, first-time computer-using moms, grandmas, sissies, etc. Real men use PCs. Businessmen use PCs. Why? Because they're faster and more powerful and you can do more with them. Wow, thanks Mr. Gates—I'll keep that in mind next time I want my e-mail program to trigger a macro in my word processor that erases my hard drive. Yep that's mighty impressive, all right. Look at that inter-application communication—simply astounding.

I recently had a corporate contact tell me that his entire e-mail archive had been deleted, along with his address book, because of some silly macro virus his e-mail client (Outlook) triggered. That'll boost your efficiency rating right through the roof. Where do you want to go today? How about to a world where e-mail programs and word processors don't know how to erase hard drives—is that too much to ask?

I recently started a new company here in Chicago called Symphony Sound, and it specializes in high-end audio products for the home. My fellow ATPM staffers have known for a while that I suffer from audiophilia, but until this moment I haven't shared my condition with the general public. I welcome you all to check out [my Web site](#) and to give me a holler, even if you're not in Chicago. I'd love to hear from readers, wherever you are.

In any event, I had to make some decisions about my record keeping methods in the process of starting this company. Was I going to cave and get a PC, the official [broken] machine of the business world? Heck no. My Mac can do everything I need it to and more. I've been conducting various small business ventures on my Mac for ages now and there's no reason for that to change, just because this is the first time I've actually, officially, incorporated.

I do my bookkeeping in QuickBooks. It does everything I could want from A to Z. It prints my checks, invoices, and purchase orders. It handles my inventory and makes pretty bar graphs and charts—it does it all. And there are plenty of other choices out there as well. For contact management I still use TouchBase. For personal contact and time management

I have switched to [Now Contact and Up-to-Date](#), since the folks at Power On Software have done a nice job of updating it, and because it syncs with my Palm-based [Smartphone](#). But no contact manager I've ever used has such a rich library of templates as TouchBase. It can print labels of every shape and size, it does a great job with form letters, envelopes, contact lists, etc. And for my business contact management, that's what I need. I go through envelopes like Kleenex, and flexible printing is a higher priority than HotSyncing for my biz contacts.

For DTP I use PageMaker and Quark, and Photoshop for image work (big surprise). My spreadsheets are in Excel. I've never had a problem, lost any data, or suffered any sort of inferiority complex as a result of using my Mac to conduct business. What I have experienced is a sort of euphoric state of bliss, resulting from the fact that my computer, and hence my ability to conduct business, is chugging along full speed ahead.

Best of all, when I get on the phone with a graphics professional, like an offset printer, they're all Mac users. In fact the company I sent my business cards to specifically instructed me *only* to send them Macintosh files and fonts. Same with the folks I've sent all my advertisements to. None of them have ever complained that they didn't get my fax or e-mail because their computers were down. It's really a joy working with Mac users.

On the other hand, every other business contact I've spoken to recently functions on a PC. Most of the companies I deal with are small—very small. They don't have the money to hire IT pros, either as independent contractors or as full-time employees. So when their PCs break they go to Best Buy and Circuit City and try to get them fixed there. Not the best course of action given that these places tend to take a long time to "fix" your computer, and generally they don't know a SCSI card from a tea kettle.

I don't even know where to begin, really. I've had so many small businesses tell me that their fax modems are down, e-mail is down, computers are down, etc. In one sense it's funny, and reassuring to me personally as a Mac user. But in another sense it's highly unprofessional and just plain obnoxious. Anybody who lets their computer rule their life, and dictate when and how they can and cannot conduct business, is a victim of the Microsoft empire. My supply of sympathy is running dry, and I have grown tired of banging my head against the wall as I listen to yet another PC-based excuse for failure to perform or communicate.



If you want to increase your productivity, get a Mac. If you want to reduce the number of hours spent debugging hardware and software conflicts, get a Mac. If you want to stop making trips to the local bonehead PC repairman, get a Mac. If you want a machine that never forgets how to talk to a modem, mouse, Ethernet card, etc.—get a Mac. If you want a perfectly reliable PC with a full support policy from a major PC vendor...well, you might as well get a Mac and save some money. You see PCs are only cheaper when you throw them together from a bunch of pieces you bought at uBid.com or Best Buy. A real PC with a real support policy is more expensive than a Mac, and it doesn't do all that much more for your business, other than cause an awful lot of unnecessary grief and frustration. Sure it can run a host of business applications, many of which are not available for the Macintosh, but a PC can't run much of anything when it's broken.

There's a five-minute solution to all of these problems—it's called the iMac. You buy it, you plug it in, you do the Jeff Goldblum thing and giggle at the lack of Step Three, and poof—you're on the Internet, cruising along without a care in the world.

How many times do you have to reinstall Windows before you realize that your PC is limiting your business' potential by distracting you, or your employees, from your corporate mission?

Get a Mac. Get a life. It's that simple. Of course I realize I'm preaching to the choir here, given that ATPM's reader base is staunchly in favor of the Mac. But feel free to send your IRQ, BIOS, DOS-prompting, task-managing, Control-Alt-Deleting, Windows-reinstalling PC jocks over this way and maybe they'll realize that they've spent a significant chunk of their lives mastering a worthless body of knowledge—namely Windows survival tactics. I'm green with envy. I wish I knew how to write a Windows batch file with one hand tied behind my back (and no mouse driver—haha, I truly am a PC God!).

Sheesh. 'Nuff said.

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# Interview

by Muzamil Akram, [egoss@atpm.com](mailto:egoss@atpm.com)

## Daniel Knight, Low End Mac

[Low End Mac](#) went live in 1997 aiming to help “users get the most value from their Macs and Macintosh clones.” While it now covers everything from the Lisa to the latest Macintosh models, its primary focus remains on older models. Founder Dan Knight has since quit his day job to dedicate more time to this great site.

**ATPM:** First of all, tell us a little bit about yourself.

**Daniel Knight:** My name is Dan Knight. My parents were post-War Dutch immigrants to Canada, and I’ve spent most of my life in Michigan. I’ve been into math, science, and technology as far back as I can remember and have a strong affinity for hardware.

I spent too many years in retail sales, mostly working with camera gear, audio equipment, and personal computers. Before going into Web publishing full time, I spent over eight years supporting a Mac network for a local publishing house.

**ATPM:** What is Low End Mac (LEM), and when and why did you start LEM?

**DK:** Low End Mac started out back in April 1997 as two dozen computer profiles on my personal Web space. I couldn’t find any really good profiles for some of the older Macs I had to support at work and at home (Mac II, LC, Ilci, etc.), so I waded through my books and magazines to create the kind of profiles that would make my job easier. Then I added links to other pages and sites with helpful information on these models.

Low End Mac grew well beyond that; today we cover every Mac ever made including top-end G4s. Our goal has grown from just supporting pre-Quadra machines through the pre-Power Mac stage to becoming a leading resource for users of all Macs. Our mission is helping Mac users get the most value from their Macs, whether new or old. A big part of that is our Mac Daniel advice column, which grew out of e-mails people sent asking me which upgrade was best for their older Mac—or would they be better off replacing it with something newer.

**ATPM:** What was the initial computer setup at Low End Mac and how has the setup changed since then?

**DK:** I bought a Centris 610 in mid-1993; I was still using that when I launched Low End Mac in mid-1997.

Part of the impetus for the site, in addition to the older Macs at work, was buying some surplus Macs for myself and the kids. We'd recently obtained a Mac II, LC, and LC II—low-end stuff even in 1997!

When the Centris was five years old (June 1998), I bought a Umax SuperMac J700. Umax was the last licensed Mac clone, and they were liquidating this \$1,800 machine for \$800. After my 20 MHz Centris, the 180 MHz SuperMac was a real treat. Over the years the J700 grew to over 100 MB RAM, had a G3/333 processor added, received a slightly better video card, got a TV card, and a 15 GB hard drive. That computer served me until the end of January 2001, when I picked up my PowerBook G4.

Quicksilver, my TiBook, is my working computer. The SuperMac is being used by my third-oldest son. (Son #1 has a G3/400 upgraded SuperMac, #2 is using a Power Mac 8100/100av and also owns a Color Classic, #4 uses a 200 MHz SuperMac, and my wife has a 366 MHz indigo iBook.) I have 512 MB RAM, the stock 10 GB hard drive, and an AirPort card in Quicksilver. I love the “megawide” screen, the performance, and the portability.

I have a huge stash of older Macs ranging from one or two 512Ks through a bunch of Quadras, three 6100s, a Radius System 81/110, and another SuperMac I built from parts. I even managed to reacquire my first Mac, a Mac Plus, from its third owner when he upgraded to an iMac last year.

**ATPM:** Since the beginning, how many people have contributed to the site and what are your duties at LEM?

**DK:** We currently have about a dozen regular contributors and several occasional contributors. Adding in those who contributed in the past, we've probably had two-dozen writers contribute to the site.

That said, I still design, proofread, edit, and publish everything myself. I know how hard it is for a writer to edit his own work, so I insist on proofreading and editing everything we publish. It's not a flawless process, but I hope it helps make already good content a bit easier to read.

**ATPM:** Do you think LEM is a success? How long has it taken to become one?

**DK:** Low End Mac has been successful since the beginning. My only goal was to collect the kind of information I found useful and make it freely available to everyone.

**ATPM:** With the introduction of Mac OS X, do you think LEM will be valued in the years to come?

**DK:** Definitely. Most Apple products last nearly forever. Over the past year, we've been asked to launch lists for Apple II, Newton, Lisa, and System 6 users. There are plenty of Macs out there that will never support Mac OS 8, 9, or X; we will continue to support those users.

That said, we are not going to ignore OS X. I hope to get a copy of 10.1 in September, if only to familiarize myself with it. I really want to make the switch to an OS that won't bomb or lock up, but all of my applications run under the classic OS, so I'm not rushing into OS X.

**ATPM:** What else have you been working on lately?

**DK:** My oldest domain is [reformed.net](http://reformed.net), which grew out of some research projects undertaken when I attended seminary. There's some really solid material on Reformed church history and church growth in there, but the site hasn't seen much development in recent years.

I have two other domains which are on hiatus until I have the money to have them hosted again. [digital-views.com](http://digital-views.com) is a DVD/Video CD review site, and [digigraphica.com](http://digigraphica.com) is my site for digital cameras. I have a couple other projects on the back burner; I'll announce them as they're ready for launch.

**ATPM:** Taking your business skills into consideration, what would your advice to future Mac entrepreneurs be?

**DK:** I have few “business” skills. I can write, edit, design, publish, and promote, but I can’t sell, I don’t really understand accounting software, and I hate dealing with the dollars and cents of operating a business. But that doesn’t mean I can’t offer advice.

- Don’t go into debt. Ever.
- Spend sparingly. Nice as the TiBook is, buying it really put a crimp in our cash flow. (That said, always buy AppleCare for portable Macs. Out of warranty repairs are very costly.)
- Know your strengths and weaknesses. Work to your strengths. Find others to work to your weaknesses. That’s why we have someone else manage ads for the site; it’s not one of my strengths.
- Be yourself. Know what you know; admit what you don’t. Work within the community, letting others rise based on their strengths. Don’t be jealous of the success of others. Do your best because it’s what you do, not because it makes you better than anyone else.
- Build positive relationships with others, especially those you respect. What goes around comes around.

**ATPM:** How have you seen the Internet change over the past 7 years and into the new millennium?

**DK:** Seven years ago I didn’t know what the Internet was. Today it’s indispensable. The Internet is the phone network of the 21st century. Forward thinkers are planning how it can be extended beyond the confines of Earth.

The Web has changed for better and for worse. It has allowed people like me to find a niche, but it’s also allowed social problems like bloated splash pages, online gambling, spam, porn sites, chat rooms, and computer viruses. The Internet has a very powerful social aspect.

I can’t predict where the Internet is going, but I suspect wireless high speed Net access will be commonplace within five years, just as cell and PCS phones are replacing land lines for a lot of people.

**ATPM:** With the Internet Era in its downfall, how do you view it generally and in relation to the Macintosh community?

**DK:** Downfall? Sorry, I disagree. Some people had vastly overblown business plans that nobody would have taken seriously a decade ago. They failed, and their money blew away, but the Internet Era has only just begun.

The Internet breaks down barriers. I don't generally know if I'm corresponding with a kid or a senior citizen, and it really doesn't matter. Thought matters. Ideas matter. Communication matters. If anything, the importance of good writing—thoughtful, well phrased, well structured writing—will be a stronger asset in the 21st century than it was in the last decades of the 20th century.

Still, the dot-com meltdown has been horrendous. Ad rates dropped precipitously, turning Low End Mac from a very profitable enterprise in late 2000 into something that barely meets expenses in 2001. But that will turn as real businesses realize that Web advertising is just like radio, TV, newspaper, billboard, and other advertising. It's not about clicks; it's about promoting your business. Clicks are good, but Coke hasn't stopped running TV ads just because we can't buy a six pack via TV.

**ATPM:** Finally, do you have any last thoughts or views that you would like to share?

**DK:** Quoting one of the great fun movies of all time, [Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure](#), "Be excellent to each other." Mac users tend to create communities. Whether this is because the Mac is special or because we are an oppressed minority, who knows, but for the most part we have learned to pull together and build community.

Community counts. Don't ever lose sight of that.

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# Extras: Cartoon

by Mike Flanagan, [sensible@sensible.screaming.net](mailto:sensible@sensible.screaming.net)



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# Extras: Desktop Pictures

## Israel

[These photos](#) were taken by [Michael L. Bovee](#). He writes:

### Setting and Equipment

This selection of photos is just a tiny sample of the hundreds I took in February 2000, on my first trip to the Holy Land and Israel. It was also my first excursion with a brand new Nikon CoolPix 950. I tried to hold out for the announced 990, but that didn't happen. Nevertheless, the maximum "real" resolution on the 950 (1200x1600) is more than adequate for high-quality prints and full-size 8x10s! I used the camera basically straight out of the box, without any fancy filters or lenses.

Since I also took a PowerBook G3 along, I simply used a PC card adapter with the 32 MB CompactFlash camera card and loaded pictures onto the hard drive as the card filled up! This worked flawlessly. I find that the pictures look great straight out of the camera, but they can be dramatically improved in Photoshop, usually by enhancing the brightness and contrast, as well as by increasing the color saturation. (But color *correction* is not an issue except for artistic reasons; I think the Nikon *still* has the highest endorsements for color accuracy and overall quality.)

### The Photos

Anyway, I have included many "tactile history" photos (a couple of floor mosaics that date back tens of centuries; Tabgha was discovered by monks poking around a field about the 6th century, I think. King Herod's aqueduct is over 2000 years old and much of it is buried in sand; the exposed "tourist" portion is right on the Mediterranean Sea. Geographical vistas including the Tiberius area at the north of the sea of Galilee, and also the temple ruins at Capernaum, are datable to around the first century. (Please don't anyone flame me if my dates are wrong, I can check my notes later!) Nazareth today in one picture; the unfinished homes can sometimes be decades-long family generation projects. St. George monastery is a spectacular sight that's invisible from a winding mountain road between Jericho and Jerusalem (Wadi al Qelt). Our guide stopped the bus so we could walk to see it. We had some ice cream on Ben Yahuda street, a favorite night spot in Jerusalem. There's a picture of one of the stations along the Via Delorosa in Old Jerusalem, colorized



by yours truly. Last but not least, the obligatory Western “Wailing” Wall, which is the most holy *site* remaining for Jews, who will not go up on the adjacent Temple Mount for fear of accidentally standing on the spot where the Holy of Holies once stood within the long-destroyed temple (70 AD).”

## Long Island’s North Shore

[Jens Grabenstein](#) brings us [pictures](#) from the wetlands on Long Island’s North Shore, close to the [Marine Sciences Research Station](#) of the [State University of New York at Stony Brook](#). The pictures were taken with a Canon EOS 300 using a 28–80mm zoom lens and a 200 ASA 35mm Kodak Gold film. They were developed as 4" reprints and scanned with a Umax PowerLook II, which produced a raw scan of each image with a resolution of 300dpi. Re-sampling and re-touching were performed with Adobe Photoshop 5.5 for Macintosh.

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

## Placing Desktop Pictures

### Mac OS X

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

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

### Mac OS 8.5–9.1

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: Airburst 1.0.1

by Daniel Chvatik, [dchvatik@atpm.com](mailto:dchvatik@atpm.com)

**Developer:** Strange Flavour ([product page](#))

**Price:** \$5 (£2)

**Requirements:** Mac OS 8.6/9.x with CarbonLib 1.2.5 or Mac OS X 10.0.4.

**Recommended:** 300 MHz G3, Rage 128. We recommend making a backup copy of version 1.0 before upgrading to 1.0.1, as some readers experienced incompatibility problems with certain configurations. Strange Flavour is working on a fix.

**Trial:** Feature-limited (first two game types only and no balloon editor)



Most veteran gamers have played Breakout, Bricks, Pong, or any of their variations at some point in their lives. Although these are simple games, they exert a certain fascination on most people who try them. Airburst squares that fascination. Although Airburst takes some ideas from other games, the combination is so unique and amazingly well done that one cannot help but become addicted to the game.

Airburst was written by two brothers from the UK whose software company, "Strange Flavour," had its debut with the side-scrolling action game BushFire not long ago. When I first tried Airburst, I was struck by the level of craftsmanship and attention to detail that found its way into the game, something one rarely finds these days in shareware games, except from the big shareware developers like Ambrosia and Freeverse.

What makes Airburst a hit is its flawless combination of amazing graphics, well-done music and sound effects, and addictive game play. Another reason why I still am drawn to the game after many hours of game play is the sheer quantity of variation the game has to offer. There are twelve game types, which run on many different levels with unique characteristics.

## What Is It?

The idea is simple. In Airburst, each player controls a character sitting on a big balloon (called a "Floater"), surrounded by protective rings of smaller balloons. Each player has a "bat" or "paddle" that he can move around his balloon in a circular way (clockwise or counter-clockwise). The exact goal depends on the game type, but in general you'll try to avoid being hit by the spiked ball(s) in the game by deflecting it/them with your bat. You

can deflect them onto other players or various bonus power-ups that you encounter. If you cannot deflect the ball and it hits your balloons, they will “burst.” Once the balls make their way through to your big center balloon, you lose and fall down the Earth. Similarly, a well placed ball can send your opponents tumbling down once their protective shields are gone.



Too Many Balls

The first two game types, Levels and DM, are available in the free version. Playing and winning them will unlock further games in the registered version:

*Levels:* In a levels game, the last player surviving wins the level and progresses to the next. Each level is defined by having different power-ups available in it. The distribution of power-ups changes the style and tactics required for each level. Every five levels, there is a bonus level, where one player must try to collect all the points bonuses without losing any shield balloons.

*DM: DeathMatch!* Protected only by a single ring of shield balloons, players must try to shoot each other down. For each player you shoot down, you score a “kill.” When there is only one player remaining, all the other players are respawned, and play continues. The winner is the first person to 10 kills.

*Castles:* An extra Floater, called the Castle and surrounded by shield balloons is set in the center of the play area with a sticker on it. The winner is the player who manages to shoot down the castle (all other players’ Floaters will automatically burst when this happens). If no players survive and the castle is still airborne, then the castle is declared the winner. If you win a Castles game, you also win the sticker to place on your shield balloons (using the balloon editor).

*Catch The Frog:* This is a team game. When playing a team game, each player controls all the computer players on his team (third and fourth players only control their own characters). To play Catch The Frog, you must capture the Flying Frog by hitting it with the ball. Whichever team owns the frog cannot be shot down, as their players will automatically respawn if their floaters burst. The team without the frog doesn’t respawn; the aim of the game being to shoot down both opposing teams while owning the frog.

*Thief:* This game is a variant of Levels. It works the same, but players only start with two rings of shield balloons. Every time a ball owned by you bursts an opponent’s balloon, you “steal” that balloon and it is added to your own defenses.

*Football:* This is of course, Airburst Football, not real football or soccer. Each team has three players: a goalkeeper (with no shield balloons and a bigger, sticky bat) and two strikers (with a single ring of shield balloons). Instead of a standard Airburst ball, a modified version is used for the primary ball. If this primary ball gets into the goal area, the opposing team scores.



A Game of Football

*Team Levels:* These are similar to ordinary levels, but with two teams of four players. The surviving team wins the level.

*Super DM:* This is like the normal DeathMatch, but more scary: there are no shield balloons!

*Chaos:* You'll never fully understand chaos until you try a levels game with completely random power-ups!

*Dual:* Duals were once used as a challenge between two players with a grudge against each other. Players start facing away from each other, each with a ball and a soon-to-time-out sticky bat. They float away from each other for five seconds, turn and fire. The survivor is declared the winner and best arguer of the two.

*Dogs:* Otherwise known as Mexican Standoff. Up to eight players face into the center of a circle; each of them has a ball and a short-time sticky bat. The survivor (if any) wins.

*Grenades:* Russian Grenade Roulette, a very dangerous game. Set up like a normal Levels game, each player has three rings of shield balloons. However, when the first player loses a balloon, a hand grenade with a ten-second fuse is teleported to him. To lose the grenade, he must burst one of the other players' balloons, in which case the grenade will teleport to that player, with the timer still ticking down. When the grenade's timer reaches zero, it explodes, bursting the floater of the player carrying it. Play continues, with another grenade as soon as someone else loses a balloon. The winner is the surviving player.



What gives the game extra appeal are the various power-ups you'll encounter. They spawn multiple balls, slow down or speed up the balls, shrink or grow your bat, make it sticky so you can aim your shots, give you pop-gun ammo, remove your bat temporarily, and much more. The power-ups can turn the tide of the game in moments.

As entertaining as the single-player game is (against up to 15 computer opponents for some game types), the real fun lies in playing against other humans. Currently all human players (up to four) have to be on the same machine. Strange Flavour is working on a more networkable (LAN, Internet, and hopefully GameRanger) version for the near future. There are few moments with such pure gratification as seeing your friend's character tumble down to Earth after you have popped his or her balloon.

Version 1.0.1 adds a few bug fixes, especially when it comes to non-standard monitor resolutions, as well as the ability to control bat speed.

Overall, Airburst is a game I can recommend to everyone. It has plenty of action, but it's not like the Quake or Unreal shooter games. The limited amount of violence makes it suitable for a family game because it holds plenty of fun and excitement for the younger members, but also enough serious entertainment for the adults. Seasoned players will



appreciate the balloon editor, which lets each player customize her balloon colors and place stickers won in Castle games. I only wish Strange Flavour had included more than four characters. The game is carbonized and runs very well under OS X. All that for an incredible low price, or free trial version with unlimited play in the first two game types, makes Airburst a must-try.

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# Review: eClick 1.0.1

by Eric Blair, [eblair@atpm.com](mailto:eblair@atpm.com)

**Developer:** Kinetic Creations ([product page](#))  
**Price:** \$29.95 (+\$5 s/h—no download option)  
**Requirements:** Mac OS 8.6, CarbonLib 1.3.1.  
**Trial:** Feature-limited (limited number of buttons)



According to Apple, there is no step three when it comes to assembling an iMac. Whether or not you agree with that statement, there is definitely a step three when creating buttons with Kinetic Creations' eClick. Along with steps one, two, and three, there are also steps four, five, and six. Considering ATPM's own [button tutorial](#) contained 20 steps, this is definitely an improvement.



eClick under Mac OS X

## Click, There It Is

I used the ATPM tutorial on a few of my earlier Web sites. The result were, admittedly, rather bland. Using eClick, I am able to create much nicer buttons in a fraction of the time. Also, it's far easier and less expensive than Photoshop.

Each of eClick's six steps is straightforward and makes sense in the grand scheme of things.

For step one, you select your button out of the 900-plus styles that are included with eClick and select a size. Every button starts off at 100% and can be scaled down to 10%. Some of the buttons can scale above 100%, but they are only stretched length-wise. If you want a button that contains two lines of text, you're out of luck. Also, it seems that if the button is filled with a pattern instead of solid color, it can't be enlarged beyond 100%.

Step two gives you some control over the coloration of the button—here, you get to modify the button's hue and brightness. This doesn't give you full control over the button's coloration, but it gives you more freedom than having the developers choose which colors they will support.

The third step lets you choose a background color. This is really important for any non-rectangular button, since the resulting image will be rectangular. Of the three file types eClick supports, only PNG supports transparencies. Unfortunately, Internet Explorer 5.5 for Windows does not support PNG transparencies, so you really need to set the transparency color to match your background.

The fourth step is whether or not you want a drop shadow. This is just a checkbox, so you can't specify the size or color of the shadow.

Fifth, add your text. You can choose any font installed on your system, use any of the standard text styles, choose your font size, and choose your color. You also have the option of anti-aliasing your text or adding a drop shadow. Finally, you can move text around using a set of arrow cursors.

Aside from more robust color selection, I think the text tool is most in need of help. First off, text properties are all or nothing for each button. You can't mix or match fonts, colors, or styles in a single button. This may not seem like a huge thing, but it is somewhat ironic,

considering there's a button with mixed font colors on the eClick home page. Also, the text placement controls could use some work. If you move the text, there's no way to get it back to the starting position, aside from trying to remember how much you moved the text and working backwards. The application doesn't support Undo, so that's not an option. Something along the lines of a Recenter button would be nice. It would also be nice if text could be justified to the left or right side of a button. Using the arrow tools, it's just too hard to consistently line up text across multiple buttons.

The sixth and final step is saving your button. eClick gives you the option of [PNG](#), [JPEG](#), or PICT. PNG is an upcoming standard for Web graphics that combines high quality images with small files sizes. JPEG is one of the more common standards for images on the Web. PICT, of course, is the standard Macintosh image format in OS 9.



You'll notice that [GIF](#) is missing from the list of files. This is because Unisys holds a patent on the compression algorithm used in GIFs. As a result, there's a significant fee involved if a program saves GIF files. PNG is intended as a replacement for GIF.

## Making Changes

One of eClick's major advantages is that it's intelligent about saving files. As far as your Web browser is concerned, a PNG created by eClick is just a plain PNG. The same goes for JPEG and PICT. Your drop shadow, text, and other settings are just pixels. If you reopen the file in eClick, though, the settings are all preserved. You can edit your text, change the button color, do basically whatever you want. eClick accomplishes this by storing its information in the file's resource fork. Most programs just look at the file's data fork, so this extra information doesn't hurt anything.

If you move the file to a Windows or Unix system, this feature disappears because the resource fork gets stripped away. So, if you think you'll be editing buttons you created in eClick, don't just rely on the button stored on your Web server (unless, of course, it's a Mac)—keep a backup copy on you Macintosh for editing.

## ...But it's Still Version 1.0

Version 1.0 software almost always needs some work. eClick is no exception.

I try to work almost exclusively in OS X. Fortunately, eClick is Carbonized, so it runs natively in OS X. From time to time, the software crashed on me. I didn't see this happen during the time I tried using the software in Classic mode.

The controls for size, hue, and brightness are a little rough. They are sliders that cover the range of available options. The hue slider covers the largest range: 0°—360°. With a fairly small slider and a large range of numbers, accuracy isn't really possible with a mouse. Kinetic Creations could deal with this by making the arrow keys move a single percent (or 0.1% for brightness) or letting the user type in her desired value.

I recently bought a 19" monitor because I wanted more screen space. As a result, I usually don't have windows fill the whole screen. However, I do like to resize my windows. With eClick, I'd like make the window taller so I can see more buttons without scrolling. This isn't possible, though, because the eClick window has no grow box.

Finally, it would be nice if users could add button styles to eClick. I think these additions would fall into two categories—buttons distributed on the Web for the general public, and buttons created by users who import them into eClick for access to its consistent text and shadowing options. I don't know how this would impact eClick's technique for recognizing saved buttons, but support for button plug-ins would be nice.

## Conclusion

As much as I like designing Web sites, I've never been good at creating intricate buttons. This may not seem major, but well-designed buttons can really tie a site together. eClick makes it possible for anybody to have professional looking buttons at a fraction of the time and cost it would have taken in the past. There are still some things that could be improved for the next version, but eClick is a quality piece of software that definitely does what it promises.

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# Review: Snapz Pro X 1.0

by Daniel Chvatik, [dchvatik@atpm.com](mailto:dchvatik@atpm.com)

**Developer:** Ambrosia Software ([product page](#))

**Price:** \$29; \$49 with movie capture (can be upgraded later for price difference).

Upgrades from Snapz Pro 2 are \$19 and \$39 respectively.

**Requirements:** Mac OS X

**Recommended:** G4 for movie capture

**Trial:** Fully-featured (30 days)



Many Mac users know what pressing Command-Shift-3 and Command-Shift-4 do: they take screenshots. Those who made the switch to Mac OS X have painfully become aware that Apple decided to do away with this useful feature and to replace it with the cumbersome Grab application.

Luckily, Ambrosia Software has ported their popular Snapz screen capture utility to Mac OS X. Or, rather than ported, Ambrosia has completely rewritten Snapz Pro X from scratch and added many new features in the process. As a result, the new Snapz Pro X runs on Mac OS X *only*. However, [Snapz Pro 2](#) is still available to pre-OS X users.

The first thing that stands out about Snapz Pro X (SPX) is its versatility in terms of the file formats it can save to. Unlike Apple's Grab, which can only save in TIFF format, SPX can save in BMP, PICT, GIF, JPEG, PNG, TIFF, PDF, and even Photoshop format. Like Snapz Pro 2, SPX can also record the screen as a QuickTime movie.

As expected from Snapz' long and successful history, the features don't stop here. Screenshots can be scaled, cropped, color depth-changed, and dithered. Among the new features in Snapz Pro X are the abilities to add borders, drop shadows, thumbnails, and even overlays of watermarks or copyright messages. Another new feature is the FatBits function, accessed by pressing Control while in any of SPX's modes. FatBits displays additional information about the capture, like the current location of the mouse pointer, the size of the selection, and a magnified view of the area around the cursor for more precise selections.

SPX can literally be installed in a snap. Just mount the disk image by double-clicking it and drag (as instructed) the SPX folder to your hard drive. Because OS X does not support "Extensions" any more, you'll either need to start SPX by hand for it to work, or you can

just add it to the Login preferences in the System Preferences to have it automatically launched at every system start. While SPX is running, it does not appear in the dock. Instead, you invoke it by pressing the usual Command-Shift-3—changeable to any other shortcut you like. SPX's palette will appear and allow you to make several choices.

Once invoked, you can operate SPX with the mouse, or you can use the keyboard for the most common commands. The mouse may not always work in some applications (like games). The palette, besides allowing you to change a wide range of preferences, has four main buttons: Screen, Selection, Objects, and Movie (if you pay for the movie option). Their corresponding keys are 1 through 4. "Screen" takes a picture of the entire screen. "Selection" takes a picture of an arbitrary rectangular area. Once invoked, SPX grays out all of the screen except for a selected area, which you can move or resize. Once you are happy with the area, just double-click it or press the Return key. A nice touch is the option to automatically open shots in the application of your choice.

"Objects" is a feature new to Snapz that lets you to select natural "objects" like windows or menus. Just click on different objects to select them. You can select several objects at once by Shift-clicking them. The unselected areas in the enclosing rectangle will be faded out according to your preferences. Unfortunately, "Objects" only captures what you see, so you cannot capture the content of a window that is hidden behind another. As with the older Snapz, you can take screen shots in many situations that were previously inaccessible, such as pictures of dropped down menus. Besides being able to save to files (which can be named automatically or entered by you after the capture) in different formats, SPX can also capture directly to the clipboard and the printer.

One of the coolest new features introduced by the old Snapz Pro 2 was the ability to [capture QuickTime movies](#) of the screen action. SPX does not disappoint in this regard. Movie capture comes with many options, including different frame rates, different compression codecs (provided by QuickTime), and three different camera modes: fixed camera, follow cursor, and smooth pan. This features is great for making movies of your favorite game or iTunes visual. Movie capture is restricted to the more expensive version of SPX—although it can be tried out in the demo for 30 days. The movie capture is AltiVec-accelerated and hence works best on G4s.

A nice touch is the ability to see a miniature version of the movie while it is being post-processed. SPX can add sound from the microphone input to the movies. Due to technical shortcomings in the current sound APIs in OS X, Snapz cannot capture sound directly from the OS (such as music playing in iTunes). However, as a workaround, you can connect your Mac's sound out to the sound input and use the microphone setting.



[QuickTime Movie](#)

If you want to see more Snapz Pro screenshots and movies, check out Ambrosia's [Snapz Pro X gallery](#).

While SPX still has a few small glitches, mostly due to the unfinished nature of OS X, Snapz Pro X is even more indispensable for OS X than Snapz Pro 2 was for the old Mac OS. It's a tool that simply should be on every Mac desktop. The price including the movie feature is a bit steep, but if you have any use for that function, it's worth the money.

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# Review: TiBag

by Christopher Turner, [cturner@atpm.com](mailto:cturner@atpm.com)

**Developer:** TiBag

**Price:** \$39.95 (plus shipping & handling)

**Requirements:** something to put in it

**Trial:** None



Don't you just hate the movie reviewers who sit there and judge every single flick that Hollywood produces as if it were supposed to be the next [Citizen Kane](#)? Or [The Ten Commandments](#)? Or [The Birds](#)? Why do so many reviewers across the country have a problem with judging the movies they watch simply on the basis of the movie itself?

We all know there are action movies worth seeing, and many more that are not. We all know there are comedies that will leave us nearly at the point of asphyxiation from laughter, and many others that leave us wondering why we just wasted six bucks and two hours of our time. You get the point.

So when I set out to review the TiBag, the invention of PowerBook G4 lover Sebastian Sindermann, I determined that I would judge the bag on its own merits, and not compare it to other bags that are out of its league, and vice versa.



The TiBag, loaded and ready to roll.

The TiBag is a courier-style bag designed to be worn over one shoulder, like a backpack, or across the chest, messenger style. It features three main pockets, with two smaller ones. The first big pocket is on the flap of the TiBag itself, accessible through the large zipper that dominates the top of the flap. The flap affixes to the main compartment via a velcro strip at the bottom.

Be forewarned, however, that should you stuff the flap pocket full, you may be unable to get the velcro strips to stay connected. I tend to pack quite a bit around with my TiBook, and many a time did I find myself with the flap, well, flapping free.

Pulling back the flap, you are greeted first by a series of smaller pockets, which useful for pens, small note pads, and your disk carrier of choice. I also keep my TiBook's extra battery in the small zippered pocket.



Main flap open on the TiBag.

Behind this series of pockets, you are greeted with the TiBag's two main compartments. Here lies the potential for some confusion, but the TiBag folks save the day with a handy instruction sheet, included with each TiBag. The first of these two compartments is for your Titanium PowerBook G4. The larger pocket, at the rear of the bag, has a small zippered flap pocket at the top, which could potentially scratch the TiBook. The first pocket is designed and sized specifically for the TiBook, and it fits like a glove.

The second, larger pocket, is thick enough to slide in a few magazines, and my [Podium CoolPad](#) will fit in there as well, provided none of the risers are on it.

Showing careful thought in terms of design and function, the TiBag also features a mobile phone/PDA holster that attaches to the main strap. This puts your phone or PDA within easy reach while the TiBag is over your shoulder. For me, this little extra is worth the price of admission alone, as I have found myself removing it (it attaches via the miracle of Velcro) from the TiBag and using it on my other backpack, for longer trips when I need more carrying space. Seeing as how this is a messenger-style bag, it only stands to reason that messengers would have mobile phones for staying in touch with their dispatcher and/or PDAs running custom software where clients can sign for their packages. This premise carries over to the mobile professional's world perfectly. I simply cannot tell you how often I have found the holster invaluable, and my Palm V has taken up residence there.



Chris's Palm V rests in the PDA/phone holder.



A quick flip of the Velcro flap and the Palm is ready to rock.

The main strap the holster attaches to is also highly adjustable, again, thanks to Velcro. The TiBag designers realized that one size does not fit all. Even the same person will not keep the shoulder strap at the same length if they switch from over-the-shoulder carry to across-the-chest. The Velcro backing makes this adjustment fast and easy.



Side view of the TiBag worn messenger-style.



Rear view of the TiBag worn messenger-style.

The TiBag has become my every-day use bag. Most of the time I am simply going from home to the office and back again, with the occasional off-site meeting. With this sort of schedule, I do not need to schlepp around a multitude of items; only the basic essentials. Having two AC adapters for my PowerBook, I do not even carry one of those around every day. One stays at work; the other remains at home, freeing up more space in the TiBag.



Side view of the TiBag worn as a single-strap backpack.



Rear view of the TiBag worn as a backpack.

The quality of the TiBag is clear. It is constructed out of super-durable 600 Denier Polyester, with thick zippers that are easy to open and close. It looks great, and feels great, even when fully loaded. It is one of those items that just feels right, kind of like the TiBook it is designed to carry.

There is room for improvement, however, as far as this reviewer is concerned. While I love my TiBag, there are a few things I would like to see in the next revision of the product. First, I would appreciate a firmer seal on the main flap of the TiBag. The Velcro works great, but as I stated earlier, if the TiBag bulges, the flap will come loose and just flap around. Perhaps one of those two-piece, quick-click locks is the answer here. Second, I am not too fond of the way the pocket for the PowerBook is open at the top. A simple flap that seals via Velcro would do the trick, covering the part of the PowerBook that sticks out of the top of the pocket.

The TiBag is currently available only in black, with the silver TiBag logo. Other colors are slated for release in 2002, including blue, khaki, red, and silver. The TiBag sells for \$39.95 plus shipping and handling, and is currently available only through [www.tibag.com](http://www.tibag.com). The TiBag comes with a lifetime warranty against manufacturing defects and features a thirty-day money-back guarantee. Sebastian Sindermann, TiBag designer and President, is so sure you'll love his product that he'll refund your money, minus shipping, if you are not absolutely satisfied. With that kind of offer, what do you have to lose?

If you are a TiBook owner, and need a simple bag for every day use that doesn't require a ton of storage space, then I encourage you to check out the TiBag. This is not one of those computer bags that tries to do it all. Rather, it is perfect for every-day, back-and-forth, around-the-town use, without unnecessarily weighing one down. There is room for improvement, but this is a fine product to add to your PowerBook G4 arsenal.

*Copyright © 2001 Christopher Turner, [cturner@atpm.com](mailto:cturner@atpm.com). Contributing Editor Christopher reviewed the Podium CoolPad by RoadTools in last month's issue of ATPM, and is currently trying to convince his wife of the need (yes, darn it, need!) of a second AirPort Base Station for their home. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at [reviews@atpm.com](mailto:reviews@atpm.com).*



# Review: Tropico

by Eric Blair, [eblair@atpm.com](mailto:eblair@atpm.com)

**Developer:** MacSoft ([product page](#))

**Price:** \$39.99

**Requirements:** G3 Processor, Mac OS 8.6 or Mac OS X 10.0.2, 850 MB disk space.

**Trial:** None



I'm sure that just about everybody out there has sat down and played some sort of simulation game. The granddaddy of this genre would have to be SimCity. I was introduced to this game on a black and white IBM with an 8086 processor (for those lucky enough never to have used a DOS-based computer, that's an *old* computer). Now, I'm playing MacSoft's Tropico on my Power Mac. Things have certainly come a long way since my days a grayscale city building.

## Installation

Tropico installs the same way as just about any other Mac application, with one exception—the installer can run under both the Classic Mac OS and under OS X. This is because Tropico is Carbonized for use in either environment. The only caveat is that running the installer under OS X is extremely slow. At first, I thought the application had crashed. Turns out it was launching very slowly.

When the installation is done, you end up with roughly 830 MB of stuff. This includes two copies of the application—one for OS X and one for OS 8 and 9—as well as movies, maps, voices, scenarios, and other graphics. .



## Game Play

Tropico's roots lie in the city building simulation domain. However, it builds on this base to become something different than the norm.



First off, instead of designing some generic city in the middle of nowhere, you're ruling a Caribbean island. You take power in 1950, in the midst of the Cold War. Barring rebellion, *coup d'état*, or losing an election, you will rule until 2000 and beyond. Considering the period, your decisions will be monitored by both the USA and the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, your dictator's personality influences the path of the game. You start off by basing your personality on one of 19 real-life dictators like Mussolini, Evita, Castro, and Papa Doc. Then you choose how you initially take power (election, revolution, installed by

KGB), your strengths (charismatic, financial wizard), and your weaknesses (womanizing, flatulent). All of these factors influence how you are viewed by the various factions on your island and by the two world superpowers.

Your island is not even isolated from the rest of the world. Along with trying to please the USA and/or the Soviet Union, you need to worry about things such as tourism, trade, immigration, and emigration. These all contribute to the financial well-being of both your island and yourself.

Unlike most simulation games, just because you created your island out of thin air doesn't mean you get to rule forever. By design, you have 50 years to accomplish whatever goals you selected at the start of the game. You can choose to play beyond this time, but anything that happens thereafter won't affect your final score. Of course, there's always the possibility that you might not make it the full 50 years. Your citizens could remove you through an election (assuming you choose not to "correct" a few ballots). They could also drive you out through open rebellion. Similarly, the military could turn against you. Also, there's nothing stopping the USA or the Soviet Union from stepping in and taking control if they don't like the way you're running things. In short, it's very much like running a real banana republic.

Since you don't really have lots of job security, you also need to put a little something away in case things turn bad. Fortunately, you have a Swiss bank account into which you can siphon funds. If you start skimming too much, though, people might realize that something is amiss and hold you accountable.

As dictator, you get to decide almost everything about your island. For instance, you get to pick almost every building that appears on your island (people will build shacks on their own if there's insufficient housing). These buildings don't just appear, though. They take time and manpower to build. If you decide that your island needs five farms, two hotels, and a power plant, you will probably be waiting several years to see all these completed.

Your work is not done once the buildings are complete. For farms, you need to decide what they're producing. Different crops grow better on different parts of the island. Furthermore, some crops are better suited for feeding your people while others are better for exporting to the rest of the world. For housing, you need to decide how well you want to maintain the buildings and what you want to charge for rent. For places of work, you

need to set wages. Of the Sim games that I've played, SimTower comes closest to matching Tropicó's level of control. That said, the Tropicó system is far more complex than SimTower.

Along with creating your own island and setting your own victory goals, Tropicó comes with several scenarios, some with very specific goals, for you to play—things like “sell lots of Tropicó cigars” and “prove to cousin Fidel that you can run your own island”. PopTop Software has already released [two new scenarios](#) (they can be decompressed with Stuffit Expander and the first version of Tropicó for the Mac incorporated all of the 1.0.3 changes, so you're all set for running the scenarios).

## The Tropicóans

Another area where Tropicó excels is the way it handles people. I would say that this aspect of the game falls somewhere between SimTower (where you could name people and see their happiness with your building) and The Sims (where you can control almost everything). Although you can't manipulate your people by telling them exactly what to do, you can find out all sorts of information about them—you can view their needs, their thoughts, their political leaning, and their families.

People in Tropicó live full lives. While they do change over the course of their lives, their actions make sense based on their beliefs. An ardent supporter won't suddenly start to hate you unless you do something to prompt his reaction. For instance, in one of my games, there was one particular citizen who ran against me in three straight elections until the time he died from cancer. I was never able to fulfill his wishes while running the island, so he was always determined to defeat me.

Although you can't tell individual citizens what to do with their lives, there are other ways to manipulate them. If there's a particularly annoying citizen you want to discredit, you can have that person declared a heretic. If that doesn't work, throw them in jail. These actions have side effects—your target and his or her family won't be particularly fond of

you, for instance. If these methods aren't strong enough, you can have the citizen assassinated. At this point, his or her opinion of you really doesn't matter. The victim's family will not like you, though, and any witnesses to the murder will think less of you.



Yolanda Del Negro and her family.

Of course, punishment's not your only option. If you're feeling benevolent, you can simply bribe this person. The benefactor and his or her family will respect you more.

## Graphics and Sound

I'm between video cards right now, so I played Tropico in software rendering mode. Nevertheless, the graphics were quite nice—I was even able to read the name of my hotel from its sign.



The 66 Hostel, a cheap hotel aimed at low-class tourists.

The individual characters were the only things that didn't look great—when viewed at the closest setting, they were quite fuzzy. From some of the pictures I've seen on the Web, I have every reason to believe that the people, along with most everything else, would look much better if I were using OpenGL. For the record, Tropico does require a video card with 16 MB of video RAM to use OpenGL.

Along with the excellent graphics, Tropico sounds great. Most of the time, you're treated to authentic Latin music, which sounds really good and adds to the enjoyment of the game.

Also, your advisor speaks with a Caribbean accent. He provides you with information about your people's complaints and little comments about your reign.

## Complaints

I only had one real problem with Tropico—I wasn't able to get the OS X version of the game to run. I tried using the safe mode option, but this didn't do any good. According to [MacSoft's technical support page for Tropicio](#), "It is recommended that you exit the game, reboot the computer into OS 9.1, and play the 'OS 8 or 9' version of the game." I believe that's called avoiding the issue. The Read Me says that you can run the OS 8 or 9 version of the game under Classic, which I did, but you are limited to software rendering if you choose this approach. According to some of what I've read about this game, some people have this problem and others do not.

Aside from this, I love everything about this game—well, aside from the fact that it cuts into the time when I'm supposed to be productive, that is.

## The Bottom Line

Tropico is one of the most addictive games I've played in a long time. It takes the classic concept of the city building simulation and twists it into something new and original. If you're looking for a game that is both enjoyable and challenging, look no further.

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# Review: Ultralingua French-English Dictionary 3.4

by Paul Fatula, [pfatula@atpm.com](mailto:pfatula@atpm.com)

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

**Price:** \$29.95

**Requirements:** System 7.1

**Trial:** Fully-featured (10–30 days)



While I'm generally not a fan of computerized books, there is one point where they can definitely come in handy: searching. Encyclopedias and dictionaries have long been available on CD-ROM; go into a bookstore and you'll find that a few paper dictionaries come with a computer-readable version. Ultralingua has created a number of language-to-language dictionaries (French-English, German-English, Italian-English, Spanish-English, and French-German), as well as monolingual dictionaries in French and English. In addition to Macintosh (classic and X), there are versions available for Windows and Palm, the latter of which I'd think could be extremely useful to travelers.

## Content

According to the Web site (you don't think I counted, do you?), the French-English dictionary contains some 250,000 indexed translations. That alone compares quite favorably to the two paper dictionaries I have lying around, the larger of which claims only 120,000. Point being, at least on the surface, the dictionary seems to be pretty complete. (Anyone interested in medical terms can purchase a separate French-English Medical Terms module.)

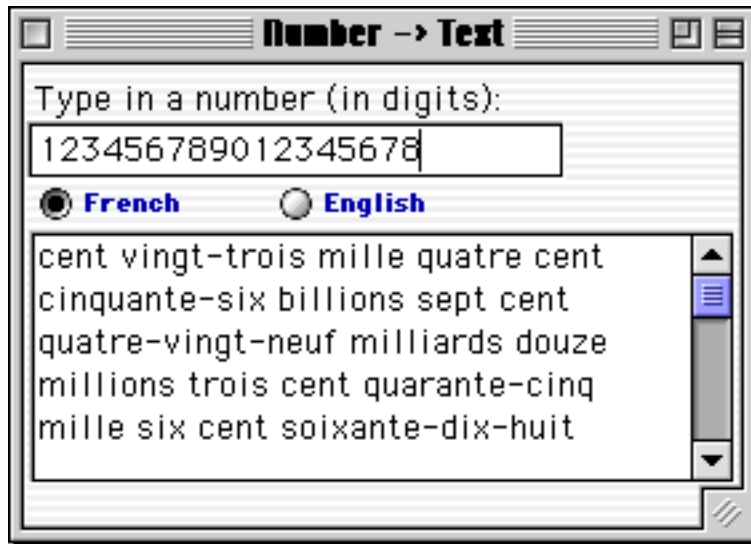
Definitions themselves in Ultralingua's dictionary tend to be quite terse, just giving a word or two into which the word can be literally translated. There are however numerous listings for expressions involving a particular word. Listed under *tête*, for example, you can

find être *une tête de mulet* ("to be muleheaded"), être *une tête de pioche* ("to be pigheaded"), and, well, let's just say well over a hundred more expressions using the word; I'm sick of counting.





Content doesn't stop there, however. There's a handy feature where you can type in a number (in digits) and see the number typed out in words. To me the most exciting thing about this is it's instantaneous, and updates as you type, handling up to 18-digit numbers.

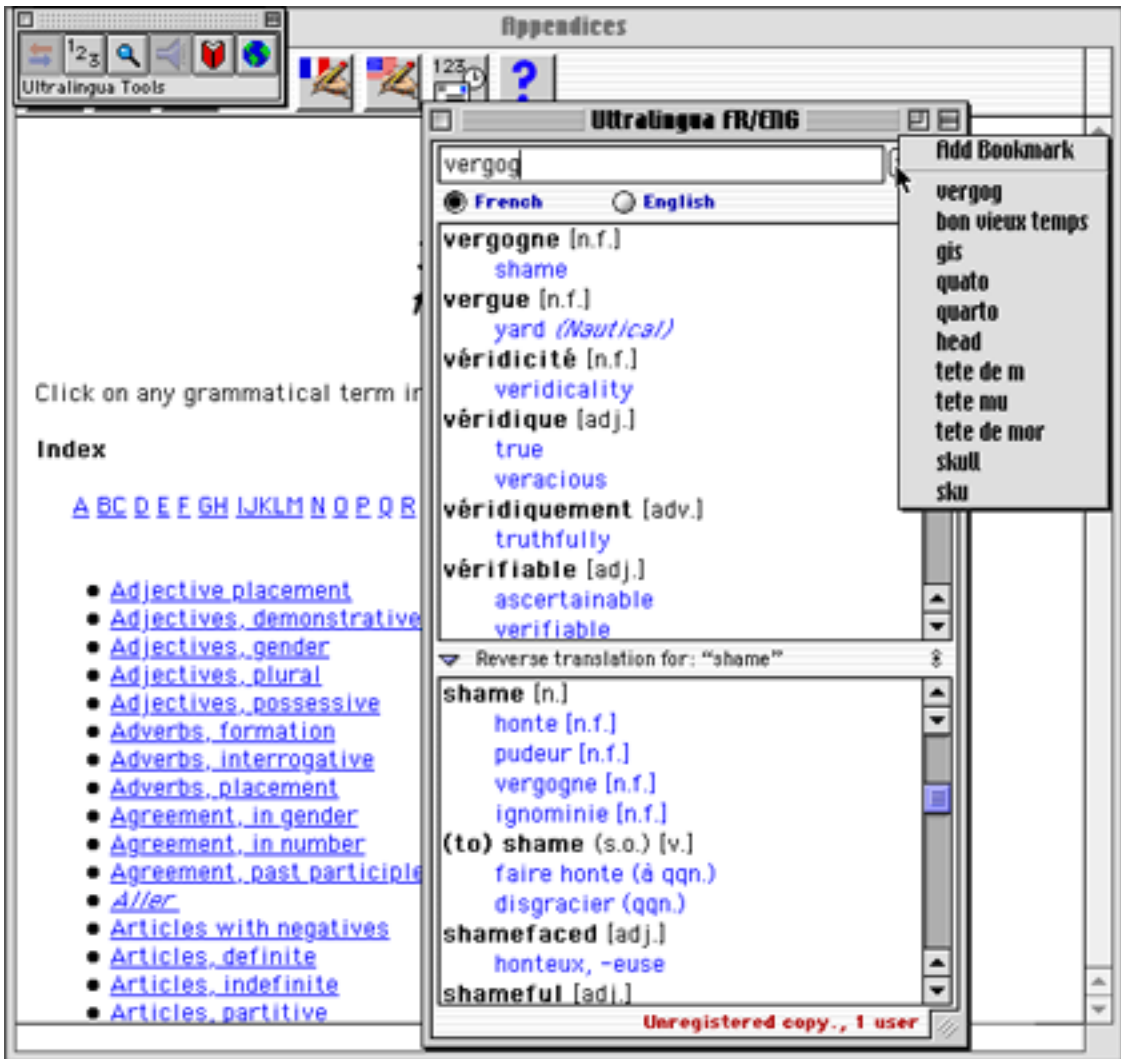


There's also a references section, which includes the manual for the product, French Grammar (written in English) and English Grammar (written in French) sections, and a table of correspondences (weights and measures, etc.). The Grammar section is extensive (far more so than in either of my paper dictionaries), well-written, and cross-referenced. Students will find the section listing common endings for masculine and feminine words to be quite useful, for example; I know that when I was studying French something like that would have helped me out a lot. Unlike many paper dictionaries, however, Ultralingua doesn't offer any verb tables, something I for one sorely miss.

## Interface

Oh, how I wish that every program I used worked as well as this one. It behaves as expected, and it's lightning fast. Windows are resizable, buttons look like buttons, and the floating toolbar's tooltips appear instantly. As you type in a word you want to look up, the window scrolls along with you; when you see what you're looking for, just stop typing: you don't have to hit enter and watch a spinning beachball while the program lethargically looks up a word. That means it is actually faster to look up a word with

Ultralingua than in a paper dictionary...and since you can scroll through the whole dictionary, we few (we happy few) who like to browse through dictionaries can do so just as well with Ultralingua's dictionary as with the paper kind.



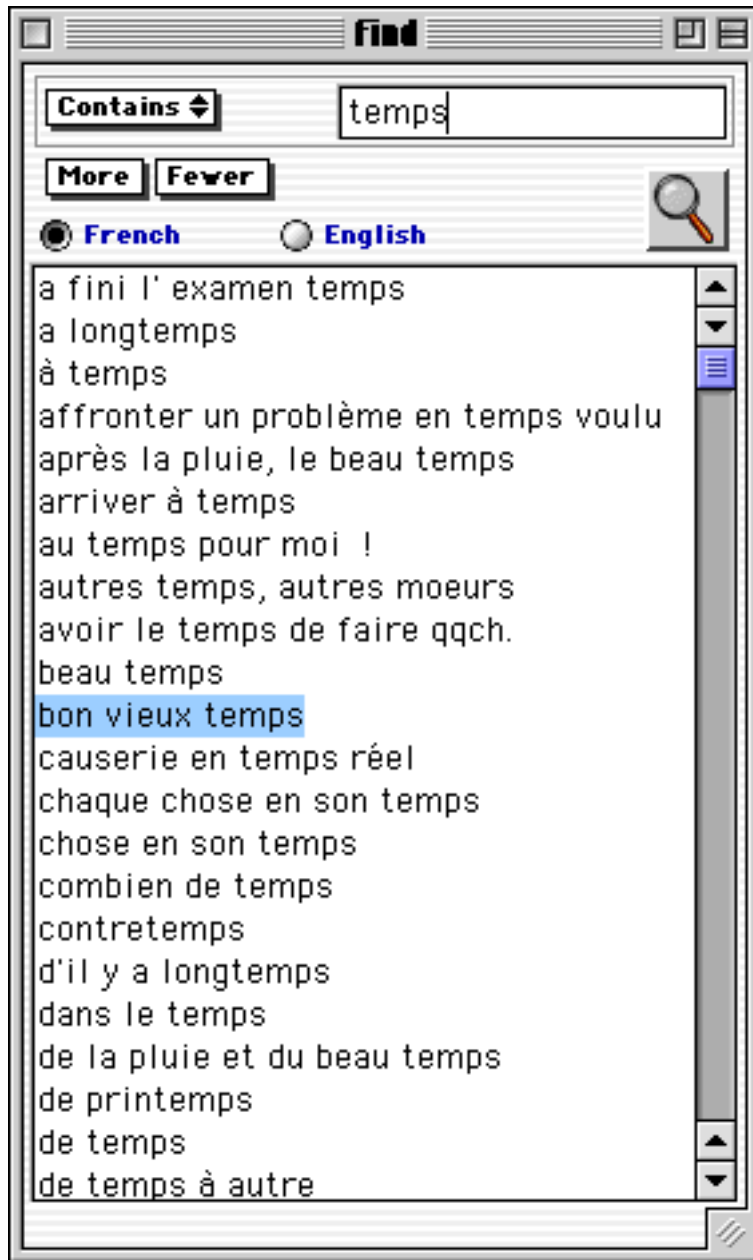
The interface has a second window, showing reverse-translation, allowing you to double-check a word you plan to use. Just double-click on a word (in blue, mimicking Web pages), and up pops a reverse translation. Frankly, reverse-translation is something I never bother with using a paper dictionary; it's just too cumbersome. With Ultralingua, however, it's so simple that it's become a matter of course.

You can bookmark a useful entry you find, and a drop down menu remembers words you looked up recently, making it easy to backtrack or double-check something you've already seen.

Maybe the handiest interface feature of Ultralingua (not yet available for X, but they're working on it) is an extension that allows you to activate Ultralingua with a key combination you choose. With that installed, you can select any word on your screen, from any application (at least in my experience; I expect there may be exceptions), hit the key sequence, and Ultralingua will look up the word for you. It's extremely useful if you're hanging out in a French language chat room on IRC or placing an order from <http://www.bol.fr>.

The one place where I'd say there's really some room for improvement is the dictionary's Find feature. This is different from looking up a word alphabetically, as described above. In the Find window, you can type in a word and get a list of terms in the dictionary that contain (or begin with, end with, or (gasp) do not contain) it. This is extremely useful for looking up expressions, or doing a quick check to see whether you're translating literally something that's actually an idiomatic expression. However, all the Find feature does is

give you a list. If you want to look up any of the terms it returns, you have to select the term, copy it, go to the dictionary screen, and paste. It's a real shame that you can't simply double-click on the term, as you can to get reverse translation.



## Conclusion

Ultralingua's French-English dictionary is a highly useful tool for anyone who works with both languages. The dictionary returns useful results instantly, and the grammar sections provide useful explanations and examples of commonly asked questions about points of grammar, in both languages. If this review has at all piqued your interest, take advantage of the free (and fully-featured) trial and see how well it meets your needs.

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# FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

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