

ATPM

8.08 / August 2002
Volume 8, Number 8



About This Particular Macintosh: About the [personal](#) computing experience™

Cover Art

Copyright © 2002 by [Jamal Ghandour](mailto:jghandour@atpm.com)¹
We need new cover art each month. [Write to us!](mailto:cover-art@atpm.com)²

Editorial Staff

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief Michael Tsai
Managing Editor *Vacant*
Associate Editor/Reviews Paul Fatula
Copy Editors Raena Armitage
Johann Campbell
Ginny O'Roak
Ellyn Ritterskamp
Brooke Smith
Vacant
Web Editor Lee Bennett
Publicity Manager *Vacant*
Webmaster Michael Tsai
Beta Testers The Staff

Contributing Editors

Graphics *Vacant*
How To Ken Gruberman
Charles Ross
Vacant
Interviews *Vacant*
Legacy Corner Chris Lawson
Music David Ozab
Networking Matthew Glidden
Opinion Ellyn Ritterskamp
Mike Shields
Vacant
Reviews Eric Blair
Gregory Tetrault
Christopher Turner
Vacant
Shareware Brooke Smith
Technical Evan Trent
Welcome Robert Paul Leitao
Kim Peacock

Artwork & Design

Graphics Director Grant Osborne
Graphic Design Consultant Jamal Ghandour
Layout and Design Michael Tsai
Cartoonist Mike Flanagan
Blue Apple Icon Designs Mark Robinson
Other Art RD Novo

Emeritus

RD Novo

Robert Madill
Belinda Wagner
Edward Goss
Tom Iovino
Daniel Chvatik

Contributors

Eric Blair
Paul Fatula
Mike Flanagan
Ken Gruberman
Joseph Henry
Matt Johnson
Chris Lawson
David Ozab
Robert Paul Leitao
Ellyn Ritterskamp
Brooke Smith
Gregory Tetrault
Evan Trent
Michael Tsai
David A. Zatz
Macintosh users like you

Subscriptions

Sign up for [free](#) subscriptions using the
[Web form](#)³ or [by e-mail](#)⁴.

Where to Find ATPM

Online and downloadable issues are
available at <http://www.atpm.com>.

Chinese translations are available
at <http://www.maczin.com>.

ATPM is a product of ATPM, Inc.
© 1995–2002, All Rights Reserved
ISSN: 1093-2909

Production Tools

Acrobat
AppleScript
BBEdit
CVL
CVS
Disk Copy
FileMaker Pro
FrameMaker+SGML
iCab
ImageReady
MacSQL

1. <mailto:jghandour@atpm.com>
2. cover-art@atpm.com

3. <http://www.atpm.com/subscribe/>
4. subscriptions@atpm.com

Mailman
Mailsmith
Mesh
Mojo Mail
Perl
rsync
Snapz Pro X
ssh
StuffIt

The Fonts

Cheltenham
Frutiger
Isla Bella
Marydale
Minion

Reprints

Articles and original art cannot be reproduced without the express permission of ATPM, unless otherwise noted. You may, however, print copies of ATPM provided that it is not modified in any way. Authors may be contacted through ATPM's editorial staff, or at their e-mail addresses, when provided.

Legal Stuff

About This Particular Macintosh may be uploaded to any online area or included on a CD-ROM compilation, so long as the file remains intact and unaltered, but all other rights are reserved. All information contained in this issue is correct to the best of our knowledge. The opinions expressed in ATPM are not necessarily those of this particular Macintosh. Product and company names and logos may be registered trademarks of their respective companies. Thank you for reading this far, and we hope that the rest of the magazine is more interesting than this.

Thanks for reading ATPM.



Sponsors

About This Particular Macintosh is free, and we intend to keep it that way. Our editors and staff are volunteers with “real” jobs who believe in the Macintosh way of computing. We don’t make a profit, nor do we plan to. As such, we rely on advertisers to help us pay for our Web site and other expenses.

We are now accepting inquiries from interested sponsors and advertisers. We have a variety of programs available to tailor to your needs. Please contact us at advertise@atpm.com for more information.

You can help support AT^{PM} by buying from online retailers using the following links: Amazon.com¹, MacMall², MacZone³, and Outpost.com⁴.



-
1. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/aboutthisparticu>
 2. <http://www.commission-junction.com/track/track.dll?AID=53427&PID=297078&URL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Emacmall%2Ecom%2Fmacaffiliate>
 3. http://service.bfast.com/bfast/click?bfmid=1942029&siteid=26240435&bfpage=mac_zone
 4. <http://www.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=N00D3BtDeo0&offerid=2161&type=3>

Welcome

Welcome to the August issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We're back this month to bring you all the news, the best reviews, and our well-informed views about the latest happenings in the world of Macintosh computing. Before you go leaping through the electronic pages of our latest issue, we'd like to recap a few of the Macworld Expo announcements.

In the days since the recent Macworld Expo, Mac users have become quite vocal in expressing their views about .Mac (formerly known as iTools) and the \$129 price tag for the latest upgrade for Mac OS X.

No New G4, But One Big iMac

To the surprise of many Apple watchers, Steve Jobs & Co. did not unveil a new iteration of the Velocity Engine–powered G4 mini-tower at Apple's semi-annual trade show. Instead, the Cupertino-based company offered buyers a new, 17" LCD iMac. No matter that the existing inventory of 15" LCD iMacs in retail stores provides consumers with a more than ample supply of the stylish all-in-one computer introduced in January, the new 17" iMac is supposed to spur what to now have been lackluster sales of the flat-panel PC.

Got A Mac? Get .Mac?

In another conference surprise, Apple announced that the free e-mail and Web page hosting service formerly known as iTools has been re-branded as a premium-priced suite of services now called .Mac. What would a user with a Mac do without .Mac? Well, that's the question Mac users are answering in very large and vocal numbers. For \$99.95 dollars (existing iTools members get a one-time discount to \$49.95 on the annual price) a .Mac subscriber gets 100 MB of remote storage, 15 MB of e-mail storage along with a prestigious mac.com e-mail address, virus protection services, a backup solution that works with the remote storage service, and a few other handy features. Of course, a select portion of these services had once been offered for free. Do Mac users need .Mac? Well, the iTools account holder who don't wish to ante up \$49.95 and other Mac users who never used the service but don't like losing the option of getting something for free have begun petition drives and filled every available space on the Mac Web with vitriolic complaints. Of course, those of us who have quietly shelled out \$49.95 for the new and enhanced services have been rather quiet.

The \$129.00 Jaguar Upgrade

Apple is releasing the latest upgrade to Mac OS X, 10.2 or "Jaguar," for the retail price of \$129. This is the first upgrade from Apple of its next generation operating system that is not being made available to users for free. Regardless of the enhanced features, the .Mac re-branding announcement combined with the \$129 upgrade of OS X has created quite a stir. That is until a few rather observant folks discovered that the \$129 upgrade is available for [pre-order](#)¹ at Amazon.com for \$79 after a \$50 rebate.

But Here's Something That's Still Free

It's the latest issue of *ATPM!* We haven't raised our price since our complimentary subscription service began in 1995. We won't promise you the world, but we do believe you will find many things of real value inside our August issue.

The ATPM Staff

Our August issue includes:

Beyond the Barline: The Other Petition

David Ozab reveals common threads between the .Mac controversy, and the Emagic acquisition. Here's one: separate petitions are posted online in protest of each.

The Candy Apple: Macworld's New Toys

It's not even close to Christmas yet, but Ellyn Ritterskamp is already talking about toys—Macworld toys, that is! She gives us a rundown of the new offerings presented at the recent Macworld New York show. Get your list out, and check it twice.

Roll Your Own: Go with the Flow

Chuck Ross is back with the latest installment in his series on creating your own programs. He now gets into the nitty-gritty of flow control, boolean expressions, and more.

Segments: Mac OS X 10.1.5—While We Wait for 10.2

For those readers who have not made the "Switch" (to OS X, that is), David Zatz provides some useful tips and a warning or two for those who want to make the jump. For those who have, his comments might provoke some discussion. Learn from his experience.

1. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00006F7S2/aboutthisparticu>

Segments: Why I Haven't Switched to Mac OS X

We've been told that a couple of million Mac users have gone over to OS X. But that leaves quite a few (in fact, the majority) who have not. Gregory Tetreault is one of these. He explains why "The Future of the Mac" is not for him right now.

Report: Macworld Expo New York 2002 Wrap-up

Our intrepid reporter, Eric Blair, braved the five-hour drive and the wilds of NYC to check out the recent Macworld. Read his take on what he saw and heard while mingling with the masses.

Cartoon: Cortland

Everyone is impressed at how Steve Jobs can do his Macworld Keynotes so "off the cuff." Ever wonder where he gets his inspiration? Cortland gives us a clue on where he came up with the new upgrade pricing on "Jagwire" which he (Steve, we mean) presented during his Macworld New York keynote.

Desktop Pictures: Oregon's Southern Coast

Contributing Editor David Ozab shares more pictures from Oregon—this month, the southern coast.

Shareware Roundup: Scrabble and Boggle

In the mood for some wordplay? Brooke Smith rounds up five Scrabble- and Boggle-type games that will let you check your Mac's (and your own) vocabulary.

Review: 24U Appearance OSAX 2.0

Perfect for all those times when your Mac knows just what to ask but not how to let you respond, Michael Tsai reviews 24U Appearance OSAX, an AppleScript scripting addition that gives new powers to the old `display dialog` command.

Review: Locator 0.7.2

Tired of waiting for Sherlock to plod through your hard drive looking for files? Paul Fatula shows you how to find faster and smarter with Locator, which provides a GUI for the Unix `locate` command.

Review: MacReporter 1.1.1

Want to know the latest news of the Macintosh world? Guest reviewer Joseph Henry introduces you to MacReporter, a convenient alternative to surfing from site to site.

Review: Three Periodic Table Programs

Students and scientists, rejoice! No more shall you have to flip through weighty tomes of paper knowledge when, from time to time, you need to learn about this element or that. Gregory Tetreault reviews three programs that put the Periodic Table of the Elements right at your fingertips.

Review: pop-pop 1.01

Paul Fatula reviews Ambrosia Software's newest release, pop-pop, an addictive Breakout clone that adds much addictive excitement to the game while maintaining the original's easy-to-learn game play.

Review: Tinderbox 1.1.3

Our dictionary calls a Tinderbox a dangerous situation likely to erupt into violence, but in Gregory Tetreault's review, Tinderbox takes on a whole new meaning, as a "personal content management assistant."



[Choosing a Digital Camera](#)¹

I was very interested in Rachael's article about choosing a digital camera. One point that she didn't mention is physical size and weight of the camera.

I had an Olympus D-620L. I took the [ATPM desktop pictures of France](#)² (Nov. 2000) and I used that camera. It took very good pictures but was big. I am just five feet tall. The first week in France it rained a lot and I had to get my raincoat around myself and my camera that was on my chest. It was a big hassle aside from that fact that it was heavy to carry along with a purse and an umbrella.

Now I have the 4-megapixel Olympus D-40Zoom, which is tiny and just 11 oz. I can drop it in my purse, wear it on my wrist, or put it in a case I bought that goes over my head and arm. I'm trying to cut down on the weight of things I carry while still getting the quality I desire and that fit this little old lady. I think most of the computer engineers are big, strapping guys who forget about the "other half." Now that I have this little camera, I bought a 12-inch iBook for traveling. My motto now is: Think small.

—Janet Mobley

[Basic FTP File Sharing Between Macs and PCs](#)³

Thank you for the well-written article. I normally use PCs, but at work we use all Macs. Finally, a Mac networking article that I can understand!

—J.Q.

Alternatives to Office and AppleWorks

I am new to Mac computers and recently purchased a G4 PowerBook because of its facility with multimedia and Web-based applications (which I am truly impressed with). I am a long-time user of Microsoft Office and am searching for an alternative for word processing and presentation applications that will run in OS X and not cost an arm and a leg. So far, all that seems to be available is Office and AppleWorks, which are [not too highly regarded](#)⁴.

Are there any other integrated packages out there available for OS X?

—Eric Villafane

[RagTime Solo](#)⁵ is free but not yet OS X–native. [Mariner Write](#)⁶ and [Mariner Calc](#)⁷ are an inexpensive, OS X–native word processor and

1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.07/digital-camera.shtml>

2. <http://www.atpm.com/6.11/france/>

3. <http://www.atpm.com/7.11/networking1.shtml>

4. <http://www.atpm.com/6.05/aw6.shtml>

5. <http://www.ragtime-online.com>

6. <http://www.marinersoft.com/write/index.html>

spreadsheet pair. —Michael Tsai

[Seven Deadly Internet Graphic Sins](#)⁸

I am just starting out with this Web stuff and this is the first page I have found that offers advice and makes sense. Not bad for a 50-year-old, so an old dog can learn new tricks.

—Ian Standish-Leigh

iTunes Problem

When I play a CD with iTunes (2.0.4 on Mac OS 9.1) the vocals are often buried and the sound is muddy, even after fiddling with the equalizer. AppleCD Audio player, on the other hand, sounds sharp and well balanced, even without an equalizer.

I have the same problem with the MP3s I've ripped (high-quality 192 kbps). Having an MP3 jukebox doesn't make much sense if you have to adjust each song to hear the vocals. I love iTunes in concept but I've gone back to AppleCD Audio player.

Has anyone else experienced sound quality problems or is it just me?

—Jean

Jean, go to the Edit menu and down to Preferences. Click the second tab called Effects. Find the checkbox for Sound Enhancer and uncheck it, then hit OK. I'm betting your music will now sound better. Some people like the Sound Enhancer, but I personally find it makes the sound hollow and tinny sounding. Maybe you will too. —Ken Gruberman

New iBook Keyboard

Where would I be able to find a new keyboard to install on my iBook?

—Janessa

There are a couple places on the Web that specialize in PowerBook parts. I think [PBParts.com](#) is one such place, founded in the aftermath of the "falling keycaps" fiasco of 2000. —Chris Lawson

AirPort and AppleTalk

I have a Pismo G3 500 MHz PowerBook running Mac OS X and a Power Mac G4 466 MHz running OS X. They both have AirPort cards installed and are properly communicating with the Base Station. I have no issues with Internet, e-mail, etc., but I cannot print to my laser printer anymore. Why?

7. <http://www.marinersoft.com/calc/index.html>

8. <http://www.atpm.com/6.10/graphicsandtheinternet.shtml>

I have the AirPort Base Station (older model with one Ethernet port) plugged into a NetGear Gateway Router and the laser printer plugged in as well. But because the printer is not directly wired to the G4 or the PowerBook, I cannot set it up in the Chooser (under OS 9). I prefer both computers to be able to print to the printer so having the printer hooked up permanently to one of the systems will not do.

Under OS X, I have added the printer in the Print Utility using its IP address, but it will not print PostScript this way.

Any ideas?

—*Brian J. Tomassetti*

The router does not forward AppleTalk, and the printer probably doesn't support TCP/IP. The easiest solution is to put a hub before the router and plug everything into the hub then plug the hub into the router. That way the hub will forward AppleTalk before the router gets involved. —*Evan Trent*

Copyright © 2002 the ATPM Staff, editor@atpm.com. We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise. Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's OK too. Send your e-mail to editor@atpm.com. All mail becomes the property of ATPM.



The Other Petition

Is it just me, or has Apple been ticking a lot of people off lately? By now you certainly know about their unveiling of .Mac, with its \$99 yearly price tag and the termination of iTools come September 30th. A petition is already online, demanding, at the least, continuation of basic e-mail at a greatly reduced price. September 30th is a significant date for another group as well, though. For once, Apple has actually found a way to shaft Windows users.

On July 1st, Apple [announced](#)¹ its acquisition of Emagic, the manufacturer of Logic Audio sequencing and multitracking software, along with a number of hardware audio interfaces and controllers. I saw this as encouraging news. The development of MIDI and audio applications for OS X has been glacial so far. I was beginning to doubt Apple's commitment to a very important part of their installed base. Emagic, meanwhile, has been postponing their OS X versions of Logic for almost a year. (At last year's Macworld New York, the company said September, and they have been backpedaling ever since.) Now, with Emagic in house, I'm hopeful that the delays will finally end, and an OS X version of Logic will hit the shelves before the year is out.

There was another, more sinister, part of Apple's announcement. Emagic is a cross-platform manufacturer, and versions of Logic are available for both Mac and PC. Their customers split about 2 to 1 in favor of Mac, but still out of 200,000 total customers, about 70,000 run Windows. Well, as of September 30th (yes, the same date that iTools shuts down), Emagic will no longer support Windows versions of their software. Not surprisingly, there is another petition online objecting to this new policy.

OK, we can all use a laugh at the expense of Windows users. "Software discontinued on your platform? Welcome to the pain I live with every day!" But seriously, once Apple bought Emagic, all Emagic's customers, Mac or PC, became Apple's customers. That very day, Apple gained 70,000 new customers, and promptly alienated every single one of them.

If the plan was to tick off the very people most likely to switch, Apple succeeded far beyond their expectations. I can just see the "Switcher" ad now:

You know, when I first learned Logic, it was a real bear. I must have spent a week with that thing just setting up the MIDI interface. Fortunately, I'm also a Windows user, so I'm used to frustration.

But once I had it set up, it was great. Then I found out that Apple bought Logic, and were going to discontinue Windows support. After all that time I spent learning Logic, I don't want to give it up. I guess my only choice is to switch to a Mac. My friend says they're easier, but I still have to fork out some bucks...I'm Ken Adams, I'm a musician, and Apple can [expletive deleted] my [expletive deleted].

Goodwill is a part of good business, and Apple has been missing that point lately. When someone signs up for a service that's advertised as "free for life," they expect it to be free for life. When someone buys software written for a particular operating system, they expect the software to continue development on that platform as long as there's a viable market for that operating system. Yes, companies reserve the right to "fill in the legal bull plop here," and apparently companies also reserve the right to make bad decisions that cost customer goodwill and, ultimately, customers. Maybe we fooled ourselves into thinking that Apple was different, that Think Different (and better) meant do business different (and better). Time to wake up. The decision is made, and petitions won't change anyone's mind. Only bad sales will.

So both good and bad will probably come from Apple's acquisition of Emagic. The good:

- Logic for OS X (finally).
- Apple's celebrated ease-of-use will thankfully become part of Logic.
- Final Cut Pro and Logic make a great video/audio package.

And the bad:

- Steinberg will have the only high quality, cross-platform MIDI/digital multitrack application (Cuebase). Expect them to extend their dominance.
- Instead of encouraging PC users to switch (which I can only guess is Apple's motivation), they will alienate them, and drive them over to Cuebase or Cakewalk.
- Avid might see a Final Cut/Logic bundle as a threat to their own position on the Mac with their Avid/Pro Tools package. Will this discourage Avid from developing Pro

1. <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2002/jul/01emagic.html>

Tools for OS X, and will they instead put all their effort into Windows development, and leave OS 9 users without an upgrade path?

My overall opinion of the acquisition itself is still undecided. I'm going to wait awhile longer before committing to Logic or going another route. My opinion of Apple's treatment of their customers is another matter. July was a bad month. I hope it's the last, but I'm not counting on it.

Copyright © 2002 David Ozab, dozab@atpm.com. [David Ozab](#)¹ is an Graduate Teaching Fellow at the University of Oregon School of Music, where he teaches an introductory class in electronic music for the Multimedia Minor in the Department of Art. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in Composition and will be completing his dissertation and finishing his degree this school year..



1. <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/%7Edlo>

Macworld's New Toys

I'm sure other articles in this month's issue will cover some of these in more detail, but let's just hit the high notes, with my reactions to them.

"Jaguar"—Mac OS X 10.2

What an incredibly cool name! Power and speed, with all the silky smoothness of being a cat. I have no idea if it will do all they say (I'm still bopping along happily in 9.1), but if I were in the market for a new machine, the draw of friendly-sounding stuff like Cocoa, Aqua, and Jaguar would be irresistible! The addition of iChat is especially timely; everyone else has a free instant messaging system available, so it was getting to be time for Apple to hop on board.

New iMac

I don't know what some of this stuff is, but I know enough to be afraid—sort of like last week when I started thinking about buying a convertible car. I read enough about the Ford Mustang Cobra to know that the purpose of that car is to chase down other cars, pure and simple. I think my state highway patrol still buys them. It's got something like eight cylinders, five liters of displacement, and 450 horses—that's just way too much car for me. That said, I salute those who are ready to take on the challenge. That's the way I feel about this new iMac—for someone who needs all this stuff to run a business or whatever, great! Have at it. Me? I'm a-feared.

Check this out: 17-inch wide-screen LCD iMac, for a suggested retail price of \$1,999, includes an 800 MHz PowerPC G4 processor with Velocity Engine, DVD-R/CD-RW SuperDrive, NVIDIA GeForce4 MX with 32 MB DDR memory, 256 MB RAM, 80 GB Ultra ATA hard drive, and Apple Pro Speakers.

Okay, the SuperDrive I understand. Computers are all gonna have to have recordable drives in a year or so, just to keep up with the television industry. 256 MB of RAM sounds like just enough to get this puppy warm, but RAM is still cheap. An 80 GB hard drive. Wow. I know some of the people who understand all the rest of the technical specs on this machine will scoff at 80 GB; they use that much all the time already. I guess if I tried harder I could fill it up with a few movies here and there, a song library, back issues of *ATPM*—all that adds up. And I have to say I still think those Apple Pro Speakers are kind of cool-looking in a retro sort of way. Sort of a skating rink feel to them, yes? All we need is

iDisco, software that mimics the spinning ball effect in the translucent speakers...but let's save something for next Macworld.

iPod Bumps

Well, of course I'm a little jealous. My 5 GB iPod cost nearly 400 bucks last November, and now you can get one with 10 GB for that same price. Plus you'll get a free carrying case and wired remote. I'm not bitter, though—I've had mine more than six months and still haven't got it even half full. I put songs on it for walking and working out, and plenty of music isn't suited for that. So if I'm not using it to its potential, why should I mind if you get more machine for the same money?

Besides, that's just the way electronic pricing works. When video cassettes for home use first became available, they cost 20 bucks each. Now we should never pay more than a dollar apiece. (Or we should quit altogether because soon enough we'll be recording stuff on DVDs.) VCRs, camcorders, fancy stereo, and television advances—all that stuff starts off priced high at first, and then comes down later. That's the way the market works. The first buyers pay for the innovation, and the rest of them decide whether it will remain viable. If they keep buying, producers figure out ways to make things more cheaply, and the price comes down.

So we now have iPods available in 5, 10, and 20 GB versions. The scroll wheel is now a touchpad, so that's one less moving part to worry about. More to the point for Apple shareholders, the iPod will soon be available for Windows users. That means we're finally waking up and realizing that not everyone will buy an Apple CPU just so it will work with all the extra goodies. We needed to make some of the goodies work with what mainstream users have, first, and then maybe they'll see how terrific the Apple approach can be.

Somebody be sure to write in and tell me if the carrying case and wired remote are as cool as they look. I may yet have to buy something out of this Expo.

iTunes 3

The newest version of iTunes requires Mac OS X, so I won't be seeing this in use anytime soon. The major advance is something called the Smart Playlist. The idea is that Smart Playlists will update themselves based on criteria set by the user, so that when we add a song to the main library, it automatically gets added to the playlists that it matches. There's also a Most Popular playlist, where we can tell iTunes to keep track of the songs we listen to the most, and put them

all on a separate list. Since it's a free program, I'd be hard-pressed to criticize it no matter how well it works. Apple generally gives us free, useful software when we plunk down bucks for its products, so I tend to think of the software as an extension of the hardware—which might be the point, after all. As it stands, I'm completely happy with iTunes 2. I'm kind of scared the Smart Playlist will be smarter than I am, anyway.

iSync

Want to let your digital phone talk to your iPod, your palm device, or your Mac? If you have the right phone, the right Mac, the right palm device, and this software, you're ready to go. It's designed especially to easily sync calendars and address books. This is also something I wouldn't be using anytime soon (requires OS X 10.2), but I'm glad to see further evidence that Apple is pursuing the whole digital hub concept. iSync should be available in a couple of months, and I promise there will be a couple of staffers who will snatch it up and review it as soon as possible.

iCal

This is the last product I'll mention that isn't going to get downloaded to my house (requires OS X 10.2). It sounds an awful lot like Microsoft's Outlook, a shared calendar and appointment book. It fits in with all that syncing and digital hubbing.

But all three of these programs are free, and will be pre-installed on your new system in September, so if it brings in more people buying new systems, great! We heard from Macworld that the "Switch" ad campaign is a success, so whatever else Apple can do to bring in new switchers could well be worth it in the long run.

Recap

So there you have it. Another new model iMac, fancy new iPods (admit it: it's really fun to say "pod" several times a day, isn't it?), and a whole bunch of operating system stuff and software I won't be using anytime soon. I'm not in any hurry to switch to OS X right now, but if I were just getting into the Macintosh game, all these goodies sure would make me feel good about it.

Copyright © 2002 Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com.



Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by David A. Zatz, dave@allpar.com

Mac OS X 10.1.5—While We Wait for 10.2

When Mac OS X 10.0 was released, the apologists told us to forget about the beta; this was the real thing, fast and much more usable. When version 10.1 came out, we heard the same story. Now, as we wait for version 10.2 (code named “Jaguar”), we’re being told yet again that *this* is the real deal, the speedy, usable operating system we were promised. This time around, though, the rumor mill really supports the idea that OS X will have a usable interface.

The question, for those of you who have cleverly waited until now, is: is now the time to migrate to OS X? My initial advice is to always wait until a month or two after the forthcoming version (in this case 10.2) hits the shelves. If, on the other hand, you really need that killer app, here are some things I’ve learned from my transition to 10.1.5.

...

One of the terrific features of OS X is the way it handles older programs, those designed to work with OS 9. Nearly all of the older programs work very well—I’ve only discovered one exception, and it’s a niche program in any case. You can always boot right back into OS 9 after you’ve installed X, and in fact many utilities recommend this. (For example, you can run [DiskWarrior](#)¹ or even rearrange programs in the Applications folder).

From a technical standpoint, in fact, OS X is a triumph. It boots quickly, even on older machines, looks good, runs quickly, and offers such wonderful features as pre-emptive multitasking (so your programs get along nicely) and protected memory (so one program crashing doesn’t bring down the whole machine).

Being able to run older software as though you had not upgraded in the first place is a real plus, and, indeed, is probably mandatory; had Apple come out with a new OS that required an immediate investment in upgrading all your software, their market share would probably be nearly zero by now. Even Microsoft doesn’t dare start from scratch; support for its Disk-based Operating System (DOS) has waned over the course of many years, but it is still present in Windows XP!

Less mentioned, incidentally, is the fact that OS X even runs code designed for the pre-PowerPC 68K processor. Word 5.1 starts immediately and runs quickly. I found that some programs launched more quickly in Classic mode under OS X than in OS 9. However, Classic still needs to be running.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/6.03/diskwarrior.shtml>

Printing seems far, far faster than under OS 9. PDF file creation is built into OS X, but despite the fact the Quartz display system uses PDF you still need Adobe’s Acrobat Reader to view or print many PDF files.

Web browsing is arguably better under OS X, with a greater variety of browsers to choose from. Internet Explorer for OS X is no better than the OS 9 version, but many swear by OmniWeb, which is not available under OS 9. Mozilla/Netscape is slow to boot on either platform, and under Windows, for that matter. As for e-mail, Eudora’s OS X effort just isn’t ready for prime time, and Qualcomm’s recent policy of charging for minor point upgrades doesn’t make a good case for buying Eudora. Apple’s included e-mail program, Mail, is however set to surpass Eudora, and many other alternatives already exist.

You can have more than one TCP/IP connection open simultaneously, making it easier to connect to multiple networks and eliminating the need to switch configurations all the time. There’s also built-in Windows file sharing support, though shelling out the extra cash for DAVE—or waiting for 10.2, which promises improved Windows compatibility, is probably worth it. There are many other high-level OS X features that can be easily enjoyed under OS 9 with the right shareware or freeware installed.

In general, OS X has been very fertile ground for many, many programs. Java works better, and Unix software is being ported over. In addition, many key professional staples will be put onto OS X, reflecting Apple’s greater market share (and probably those companies’ reluctance to invest in a dying platform, since the death of OS 9 had already been foretold). Not to mention Apple’s slick, functional, easy-to-use new programs—iPhoto, iTunes, and iDVD to name a few, all of which are free with OS X.

On top of all that software is better support for some devices. I found FireWire support in OS X to be better than in OS 9, by a good margin, at least for the devices I use. The upgrade to OS X was far easier from a device-driver point of view than the upgrade from Windows 98 to XP.

...

Indeed, the largest problem with OS X is not application support, speed, graphics, or any of the usual issues. It is simply the user interface, which although pretty to look at is, in a word, terrible. Macs are known for their ease of use, but a clean install of OS X is harder to get along with on a daily basis than any flavor of Windows, including version 3.1.

The functionality of the Apple menu has been taken from us, leaving a non-hierarchical Dock which assumes you only use five or six programs whose icons you instantly recognize. Likewise, switching programs is no longer done from an easily accessed menu at the top right, but via the Dock or a keyboard command.

Simple things become a problem. Selecting files in the new open/save dialog boxes is painful thanks to poorly thought out (or missing) keyboard shortcuts, such as pressing the first letter of the filename, then arrowing down to select it. These might sound like trivial issues, but they quickly turn into major annoyances. Indeed, the user interface is awkward across the board, with an over-reliance on visual cues.

The desktop paradigm has been replaced by a multiple-user environment borrowed rather obviously from Windows NT, complete with a deeply buried and poorly labeled set of user folders, and a separate applications folder which, by the way, you will often not be allowed to modify. Organizing programs into sensible folders is something you're apparently supposed to do from OS 9, or after—horror of horrors—reading the manual.

It also took a while to get the hang of setting up a Secure Shell (SSH) tunnel, and Apple offered no information on their Web site about this important and common task. Under OS 9, simply use the great and flexible freeware program [MacSSH](http://www.macssh.com)¹. Under OS X, it's a simple command but it's pure Unix. ([Allpar](http://www.allpar.com)² has instructions.)

On the lighter side, there are third-party programs to deal with most of the interface issues. For example, the first program I installed under OS X was [FruitMenu](http://www.foxit.com)³, which restores the traditional Apple menu—albeit only in the native environment. You still have to populate it with the contents of your Apple menu Items folder. I used a similar program for the program switching menu on the top right—both work perfectly.

...

It's hard to make adjustments on Windows. It's hard to get even simple tasks done using Windows. The Windows interface is not meant for use by humans, but by developers. That's why installers sort programs (under Windows) by company name, and put single icons into folders. In Windows, to run Eudora, you go to Start, to Programs, to Qualcomm, to Eudora, and again to Eudora, ignoring Uninstall Eudora. Who cares that Qualcomm created Eudora, and why is Uninstall even needed?

Despite being famed for it in previous OS versions, it almost seems as though Apple was so busy getting OS X to work that they totally ignored their top selling point, ease of use. The Mac has always been about ease of use, and about

lower maintenance costs. OS X throws that out the window and replaces it with technical superiority, albeit not so much as to eliminate Windows XP as a viable alternative.

Fortunately, 10.2 is going to change all that—or so everyone is saying. The rumor sites tell us that talented Apple user interface people have worked on it, and have done more than tweaked that horrible Dock. Perhaps a *real* Apple menu will be included and an easier interface for customizing it will be provided. I certainly hope so.

Before Apple announced its user interface improvements, incidentally, switching to an Intel-based Linux system was becoming very attractive, especially with the advances in Linux windowing systems. 10.2 should move Apple back into the lead position; we should know whether or not this is the case in a month or two.

...

Given all this prologue, you can learn from my experiences in installing OS X. First, you can now more or less rest assured that it will not destroy your system. I do advise that you check out your system with DiskWarrior as well as Disk First Aid and follow all of Apple's advice.

If your disk is partitioned, or if you have two hard drives, you may want to put OS X onto a different hard drive from OS 9; this makes it easier to switch startup disks (it eliminates a small but annoying delay as the computer searches for a second system folder); it also prevents you from having to wade through all of OS X's required folders and files every time you look at your hard drive window. That's another little annoyance of OS X: it takes up too much root-level space. OS 9 requires only one folder to be at the root level.

Installing OS X is surprisingly easy and fast. Your Internet preferences will probably be easily picked up by the system, eliminating one of the most time-consuming adjustments. However, your Apple menu programs are not picked up and put into the Dock—there'd be no room for them, in my case—and some of the cosmetic settings are less than optimal. Every device I own was easily found and installed by OS X with no fuss (another thing I cannot say about Windows XP, which still requires some USB devices to be plugged and unplugged—and for me to constantly find drivers for the system).

Once again, I advise you to install FruitMenu first, for your own sanity. Also, if you are going to be using Classic (non-native) programs on a regular basis, and you probably are, set the Classic control panel so it automatically launches on startup. OS X starts up very quickly, so that doesn't add too much time. The Classic environment usually stays running in the background, but OS X puts it to sleep when it's not in use so it doesn't eat up your system resources.

Because of this, I'd advise you not to spend all your money upgrading all your software to Carbon or Cocoa versions. Wait a while and see what happens. Maybe a competitor will come in and drive prices down in the meantime—or maybe

1. <http://www.macssh.com>

2. <http://www.allpar.com/ed/2002/macssh.html>

3. <http://www.foxit.com/haxies/fruitmenu/>

open source will come to the rescue. At some point, versions that add more value—or open-source alternatives—will appear, especially now that the OS is based on BSD Unix.

OS X likes lots of RAM, not surprising considering that you will sometimes also be running OS 9. RAM is now fairly cheap, and 512 megabytes isn't such an expensive buy—but you can get by with 256 if you don't go overboard.

In short, waiting for 10.2 is probably the best bet, but if you have to upgrade before then, be heartened. You can always reboot into OS 9.

Copyright © 2002 David A. Zatz, dave@allpar.com. The Segments section is open to anyone. If you have something interesting to say about life with your Mac, write us.



Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

Why I Haven't Switched to Mac OS X

Apple, Microsoft, and numerous other Macintosh software vendors fail to understand the main reasons why the majority of Macintosh users (including people like me who normally leap at new operating systems) have not transitioned to OS X. It is certainly *not* because of [mediocre marketing](#)¹. The media has been saturated with OS X-related advertisements, forums, articles, and discussions for three years. Here's my take on this issue:

Apple saw OS X as a way to sell more computers. Apple has little interest in getting existing Macintosh users to buy OS X. Why do I make this claim? First, at \$129, OS X is expensive to Macintosh owners who are used to getting the OS at no extra charge when they buy their Macintosh computers.

Second, during the development of OS X, Apple decided to omit support for older Macintosh computers (essentially, any Macintosh that did not contain built-in USB ports). There are at least 20 million users with Macintosh computers that cannot run OS X, even if their Macs have been upgraded with G3 or G4 processors, lots of RAM, USB/FireWire PCI cards, etc. The only way those users can switch to OS X is to buy a new Macintosh. That is what Apple wants, since the profit margin on a new computer is higher than on OS X alone.

Steve Jobs announced that the useful and free iTools service will disappear on September 30. Taking its place will be the new, improved ".Mac" service. Users will pay \$99 per year for .Mac, which has some features (such as Backup) that only will work with OS X. In my opinion, this tactic will backfire against Apple. OS 9 users will not buy new Macintosh computers just to get OS X and the full features of the overpriced .Mac service. Instead, we will become angry about losing iTools and will find other vendors to replace iTools' services.

Software vendors such as Microsoft, Adobe, Deneba, etc. saw OS X as a way to make lots of money. They ported existing versions of applications to OS X, and then expected users to pay very high "upgrade" fees. Microsoft charges \$199 to upgrade from Office 2001 to Office X, even though there

were almost no feature improvements. Deneba did the same thing with Canvas 8. Adobe did the same most of its Macintosh applications.

Some hardware vendors behaved similarly. Many printers and scanners that work well under OS 9 have no OS X drivers. But, new devices from the same vendors have fully OS X-compatible drivers. There is no reason those drivers could not support older devices. Of course, those hardware vendors want users to buy new devices, not download new free drivers.

I did a rough calculation of how much it would cost me to switch one of my G3 Macintosh computers to OS X. I would need to spend over \$1000 to upgrade my major applications to OS X versions. I would have to spend another \$200–500 to replace applications and utilities that have no OS X version. My scanner with automated document feeder and my ink jet printer have no OS X drivers and would be unusable (unless I restart under OS 9). Replacing those devices would cost approximately \$600. Thus, to gain the slight advantages conferred by OS X, I would have to spend \$1800–2300. I also would need to invest substantial time to master OS X.

My situation is not unique. If Apple lowered the cost of OS X and supported older G3-based Macintosh computers, switching to OS X would be more attractive. If vendors lowered their charges for 9 to X upgrades, then the costs of switching would be substantially less. Microsoft should stop complaining about poor OS X sales and slash the upgrade prices for its OS X-compatible applications. (Microsoft should also incorporate a decent, cross-platform database application in the professional version of Office, because the lack of such a database hinders Office sales in the corporate environment.)

I would switch to OS X if the cost of doing so was more reasonable. Instead, I will do what millions of other Macintosh owners are doing: stick with OS 9 and my current hardware until they become unusable. I'll probably end up with a new Macintosh computer and OS 12 sometime around 2006.

1. <http://www.macnn.com/news.php?id=15247>

Copyright © 2002 Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com. The Segments section is open to anyone. If you have something interesting to say about life with your Mac, write us.



Go with the Flow

Welcome back to *Roll Your Own*, where we take you through the beginnings (and eventually, the more advanced topics) of programming your Macintosh using AppleScript. I apologize for missing last month, but our family was a bit busy with a new addition, [Tiana Lia Ross](#)¹, born June 10, 2002, 10:44 AM, 6 lb. 1 oz., 19.5 in. Mommy, Daddy and big brother Kieran are happy to have the little one to hold at last.

[Last time](#)² we covered variables and how they help to store information in your program. This time, we'll delve into the topic of flow control, which allows the computer to make decisions for you.

Before we get into the meat of this month's column, a word or two about learning AppleScript syntax: I've mentioned in earlier columns that this series isn't meant to go into the details of AppleScript, so we're going to go through some of the topics here rather quickly. We'll cover the general programming topic in detail, but only scratch the surface when it comes to all of the ways AppleScript allows you to implement that topic. If you're interested into the details of the AppleScript language, a great reference is [AppleScript in a Nutshell](#)³, by Bruce W. Perry from O'Reilly & Associates. O'Reilly is a great technical publisher with many offerings on a wide range of computer topics, including about a dozen books dedicated to the Mac. (In case you're wondering if this is a self-serving plug, rest easy, my book is not being published by O'Reilly.) In addition to a print version, *AppleScript in a Nutshell* is also available online for a monthly fee through [Safari Tech Books Online](#)⁴. Safari allows you to subscribe to technical references by paying a monthly fee. The fee can be as little as \$9.95 per month for 5 points (most books are worth 1 point). I've been subscribing to the service for about four months now, and have found it to be a great tool.

If you aren't able to either purchase AppleScript in a Nutshell or a Safari subscription, Apple does provide a free manual which explains all of the AppleScript syntax called *The AppleScript Language Guide*, available both as a group of [Web page](#)⁵ and as a [PDF document](#)⁶. Although it's not as well written as *AppleScript in a Nutshell*, since this reference is free

and available on the Web, when I suggest taking a look at the deeper AppleScript documentation, I'll provide links to the appropriate sections of this book.

Back to Programming...

Flow control is the ability in a program to jump from one line of code to another without executing the lines between the two. For the most part, when a program runs, it executes each line in turn, performing the actions in sequence. But often you want to execute some lines of code out of order or conditionally. Other times you want the same code to execute repeatedly with slight variations. Both of these cases are why programming languages provide flow control. AppleScript makes use of a number of commands that allow us to control whether some statements are executed, and when.

Truthfully, we've already seen an example of flow control. In our prior sample applications we had a `repeat` loop. The `repeat` loop allows us to execute one or more lines of code as many times as necessary. But there are other kinds of flow control tools provided by AppleScript.

The first, and probably most useful, statement that we'll cover is the `if` statement. The `if` statement is followed by a boolean test. The test expression needs to return a boolean value. (Remember, a boolean value is one that is either true or false.) If the test turns out to be true, then the code after the `if` statement is executed. Type the following code into Script Editor and run it.

```
(6 / 2) is equal to 3
```

When you run the above program, the word `true` should appear in your result window. That's because the line `(6 / 2) is equal to 3`, is a boolean expression, which in this case returns true. Change the program to read as follows:

```
2 is equal to 3
```

The line is still a boolean expression, but this time the expression is false, so running the program will show `false` in the result window.

Here's the simplest example of an `if` statement:

```
if (6 / 2) is equal to 3 then beep
```

1. <http://homepage.mac.com/chivalry/Events4.html>
2. <http://www.atpm.com/8.06/roll.shtml>
3. <http://www.atpm.com/7.10/as-nutshell.shtml>
4. <http://safari.oreilly.com>
5. <http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/Carbon/interapplicationcomm/AppleScript/AppleScriptLangGuide/index.html>
6. <http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/Carbon/pdf/AppleScriptLanguageGuide.pdf>

Here we are testing to see if the expression (6 / 2) has a value of 3. If it does, then the system will beep. If the expression had evaluated to `false`, then the above line of code would do nothing.

Many programming languages have an equivalence between boolean values and numbers. For instance, FileMaker Pro and C both use 0 to indicate false and any positive value to indicate true. The following code in FileMaker Pro would work perfectly:

```
Set Field [ myField, 1 ]
If [ myField ]
    Beep
End If
```

This code will work because FileMaker interprets a 1 as true. AppleScript doesn't work this way. Similar code in AppleScript will produce an error

```
set myVar to 1
if myVar then beep
```

AppleScript provides a number of comparison operators that programmers can use to build test expressions, and many of these operators are equivalent. If you don't like to type as much, you could have written our first `if` statement program as follows:

```
if (6 / 2) = 3 then beep
```

Here's a list of the comparison operators that AppleScript provides. As you can see, many of them are equivalent to each other, so I've grouped the synonyms together. Check out your [AppleScript reference](#)¹ for a detailed description of each of these operators.

```
=
equals
equal
is
equal to
is equal to
```

```
≠
is not
isn't
is not equal
is not equal to
isn't equal
isn't equal to
doesn't equal
```

```
<
is less than
less than
comes before
is not greater than or equal to
is not greater than or equal
isn't greater than or equal to
isn't greater than or equal
```

```
<=
≤
is less than or equal to
is less than or equal
less than or equal to
is not greater than
isn't greater than
does not come after
doesn't come after
```

```
>
is greater than
greater than
comes after
is not less than or equal to
is not less than or equal
isn't less than or equal to
isn't less than or equal
```

```
>=
≥
is greater than or equal to
is greater than or equal
greater than or equal to
is not less than
isn't less than
does not come before
doesn't come before
```

```
begins with
begin with
starts with
start with
```

```
ends with
end with
```

```
contains
does not contain
is contained by
is in
is not contained by
is not in
isn't contained by
```

```
and
or
not
```

If your desire is to write programs that are readable by the average person, you would probably use the English versions of the operators. Some of the operators are only available in English versions, such as `contains` and `begins with`. Most of these operators are pretty self explanatory, such as the `=` and the `<=` operators, and the synonyms for them make sense.

Those last three operators listed, `and`, `or` and `not`, are of great assistance in building complex boolean expressions. Often the test you wish to make is more complex than can be expressed with a single operator. Perhaps you wish to

1. <http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/Carbon/interapplicationcomm/AppleScript/AppleScriptLangGuide/AppleScript.103.html>

perform an action only if `var1` is greater than `var2` and `var3` is equal to `var1`. By using the `and` operator, you can accomplish this sort of test:

```
set var1 to "Chuck"
set var2 to "Adam"
set var3 to var1
(var1 is greater than var2) and (var3 is equal to var1)
-- result: true
```

Make a practice of using parentheses when building complex boolean expressions like this. In this case, the expression will work without the parentheses, but they certainly help make it clear exactly what is being tested.

The `and` operator returns true only if both of the tests on either side of it return true. If either one returns false, so does the entire operation.

```
set x to true
set y to false
x and x
-- result: true
x and y
-- result: false
y and x
-- result: false
y and y
-- result: false
```

The `or` operator, on the other hand, will return true if either of the expressions it is comparing are true.

```
set x to true
set y to false
x or x
-- result: true
x or y
-- result: true
y or x
-- result: true
y or y
-- result: false
```

Lastly, we have the `not` operator. Whereas all of the operators we've seen so far work on two expressions, the `not` operators works on only one. It simply reverses the value of a boolean.

```
set x to true
set y to false
not x
-- result: false
not y
-- result: true
```

We've covered a lot of material so far, and before you continue, I would recommend that you experiment with the operators available to create boolean expressions. Set some variables and compare them, then see what happens in the result window. It is important that you thoroughly understand how to build boolean expressions, because you'll be needing them throughout your programming career. Even if you later decide to change languages, the logic of using these boolean operators will be useful in whichever language

you later tackle. Because of how important this will be to your future programming life, take the time to make sure you understand what we've gone over so far before continuing.

Don't worry, I'll wait...

Welcome back! OK, now that we have a solid foundation of what comparison expressions are, we can use them to tell our computer to make decisions. We've already checked out a simple `if` statement, and now we're going to build on that. Remember from above that our simple `if` statement looked like this:

```
if (6 / 2) is equal to 3 then beep
```

This takes the form of

```
if [test] then [statement]
```

This is as simple an `if` statement as you can get. You need at least this much for it to work, but you can provide more to increase its power. The first thing you might notice is that only one statement is being executed. Usually we want a number of statements to execute if the test proves to be true. In such a case, our `if` statement is going to look like this:

```
if [test] then
    [statements]
end if
```

We can place as many statements between the `if` and `end if` statements as we like. They will only execute if the test evaluates to true.

```
if (6 / 2) is 3 then
    beep
    display dialog myVariable
    beep
end if
```

Often if a condition is true you want one set of statements to execute and if not then a different set of statements. AppleScript provides the `else` command for just such occasions. It takes the form:

```
if [test] then
    [statements]
else
    [statements]
end if
```

One set of those statements will execute, never both and never none.

```

set myVariable to (6 / 2)
if myVariable is 3 then
    beep
    display dialog myVariable
    beep
else
    display dialog "myVariable is not 3"
end if

```

From here it just gets even more complex. Let's say that if a condition is false, then you only want to execute the `else` block of statements if a different condition is true. We have the `else if` statement to cover such ground.

```

set myVariable to 5
if myVariable is 3 then
    beep
    display dialog myVariable
    beep
else if myVariable is 5
    display dialog "myVariable is 5"
end if

```

That second statement block, `display dialog "myVariable is 5"` will only execute if `myVariable` actually is 5. If it is 3, the second `if` never even gets evaluated. You can have as many of these `if...else if...else if...end if` blocks as you need, and when we get to building user interfaces and need to check which button was clicked by the user, such statements come in quite handy.

By using nested `ifs` and `else ifs`, you can create as complex a test as needed for your program to know what to do. Be careful, however. Be sure to document your code well, as many nested `ifs` are difficult to decipher later. One way I use comments in my code to help me with nested `ifs` is to place a comment at the end of the `end if` statement like this:

```

if myVariable is 3 then
    beep
    display dialog myVariable
    beep
end if -- myVariable is 3

```

The comment after the `end if` statement makes it clear which `if` block the `end if` is closing. Read the AppleScript documentation on [if statements](#)¹ for more detailed information on the `if` statement.

Another kind of control statement is the [repeat statement](#)². The `repeat` statement allows you to execute a block of code over and over again however many times you need to. We saw the `repeat` statement in previous columns when we wrote a program to sum up all the values to a given point. As a refresher, here is the program that used it:

```

display dialog "Please enter a positive number:" ^
    default answer "" buttons {"OK"} default button 1
set theNumber to the text returned of result
set sum to 0
repeat with i from 1 to theNumber
    set sum to sum + i
end repeat
-- Report the results of the process to the user.
display dialog "The sum of the first five number is " & ^
    sum & "." buttons {"OK"} default button 1

```

The `repeat` block of this program executes the number of times entered by the user. This is just one version of the `repeat` loop, and it takes the form of

```

repeat with [variable] from [integer] to [integer]
    [statements]
end repeat

```

This block of code will set the variable to the first integer. Each time through the loop, the variable will be incremented by 1. If after incrementing the variable it is greater than the second integer, the loop doesn't execute and the program continues with the code found after the `end repeat` statement.

Like the `if` statement, the `repeat` statement comes in a number of flavors, including the simpler:

```

repeat
    [statements]
end repeat

```

This code simply executes forever, unless one of the statements within the `repeat` block has an `exit repeat` statement. Be very careful with this simple version of the `repeat` loop. It's easy to forget to have the `exit repeat` statement or to have code which never executes the `exit repeat` statement, and then you get an infinite loop. The only way to stop an infinite loop is to force the program to quit or, if the program is running within Script Editor, to press Command-Period. Here's a simple example of such a `repeat` block.

```

set i to 1
repeat
    display dialog i
    if i is equal to 10 then exit repeat
    set i to i + 1
end repeat

```

This code is equivalent to:

```

repeat with i from 1 to 10
    display dialog i
end repeat

```

The fact that these two code fragments are equivalent brings up a good point. There is almost always more than one way to accomplish your programming task. Which `repeat` loop you use in this case is perhaps a matter of preference, although to me the second one is simpler and easier to understand.

Another version of the `repeat` statement is the `repeat while` flavor:

1. <http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/Carbon/interapplicationcomm/AppleScript/AppleScriptLangGuide/AppleScript.b5.html>
2. <http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/Carbon/interapplicationcomm/AppleScript/AppleScriptLangGuide/AppleScript.b8.html>

```
repeat while [booleanExpression]
  [statements]
end repeat
```

This version will execute the statements within the `repeat` block until the `booleanExpression` evaluates to `false`. If the `booleanExpression` is `false` to begin with, the statements in the loop won't execute at all. Using this version to perform the same loop as above, we would have:

```
set i to 1
repeat while i is less than or equal to 10
  display dialog i
  set i to i + 1
end repeat
```

Similar to `repeat while` is `repeat until`, which will execute the loop until the boolean expression evaluates to `true`. We'll see an example of this type of loop when we improve our program later.

There's one version of the repeat loop that is specific to lists. Remember that a list is a collection of objects surrounded by braces and separated by commas, such as `{1, 3, 5, 10}`. It is often useful to do something with each item in the list, and there is a version of the `repeat` loop to handle this. It takes the form

```
repeat with [variable] in [list]
  [statements]
end repeat
```

Since most of our example `repeat` loops have had the same output, we'll continue that theme with this one.

```
set myList to {1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10}
repeat with i in myList
  display dialog i
end repeat
```

Like our prior loops, this one displays ten dialog boxes with the first ten numbers in them, only this time we are iterating through a list instead of counting.

Before we leave the syntax of flow control and begin improving our program to sum numbers, we need to cover one more command, the `try...on error...end try` block. Like `repeat` and `if`, it has many different forms which are covered in the [AppleScript documentation](http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/Carbon/interapplicationcomm/AppleScript/AppleScriptLangGuide/AppleScript.c0.html)¹. For now we're only going to cover the simplest form, which looks like this:

```
try
  [statements]
on error
  [statements]
end try
```

There are many times when you'll be programming and you know that under certain conditions the statements you're going to execute will produce an error. Using a `try` block you can capture the error and handle it yourself rather than having AppleScript choke on it. Here's an example:

```
try
  set myVar to "AppleScript" as number
  beep
on error
  display dialog "Can't coerce that string into a number."
end try
display dialog "This is outside the try block."
```

What the above block does is first attempt to coerce the string "AppleScript" into a number. Well, this isn't something that AppleScript can do, so an error is produced. If we had tried to execute the statement outside of a `try` block, AppleScript would have halted execution of the program and displayed an error message. By enclosing the attempt in a `try` block we can handle the error ourselves and then act appropriately, allowing the program to continue. With the program above, the final line of code will execute even if there is an error.

One thing to take note of is that the above code will never beep. When the error is detected, execution of the `try` block stops at that point and continues after the `on error` statement.

You can also execute the `on error` block by manually raising an error within the `try` block, as you'll see in our sample program.

The `try` block is quite useful in catching user errors and handling them elegantly rather than having the user have to put up with a system error. We'll go into more detail with it in a future column, but for now we'll use the simple version of it in our updated program.

Now that we have all this syntax under our belts, let's put it to use. If you remember our program that sums up numbers, the first thing it does is get a number from the user. But what if the user doesn't enter a number? What if instead of entering "5", they enter "five"? As our program currently stands, it would crash because it can't count to "five."

Here's the edited version that checks for the type of data input by the user. It adds not only an `if` statement, but an additional `repeat` loop. Because the complexity of the program has increased, I'm beginning the practice of including comments with every line of my full sample programs. Remember that the `-` character is entered by typing Option-Return in Script Editor and indicates that the following line is a continuation of the current line.

1. <http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/Carbon/interapplicationcomm/AppleScript/AppleScriptLangGuide/AppleScript.c0.html>

```

-- Get the number to sum up to from the user.
display dialog "Please enter a positive number:" default
answer ¬
    "" buttons {"OK"} default button 1
-- Get the data entered by the user into the dialog's
field
set theNumber to the text returned of result
-- Assume that invalid data was entered
set isValidEntry to false
-- Repeat the following block of statements until we've
made
-- sure that the user has entered valid data.
repeat until isValidEntry
    -- Attempt to coerce the data entered by the user into a
number.
    try
        -- If a non-numeric entry was made by the user the
        -- following statement will produce an error.
        set theNumber to theNumber as number
        -- If the data entered by the user is a number but
        -- isn't an integer, manually produce an error.
        if class of theNumber is not integer then error
        -- If no error was produced, set the isValidEntry
        -- variable to true so that we can exit the loop.
        set isValidEntry to true
    on error
        -- If an error was produced, alert the user and ask for
        -- valid data.
        display dialog "That is not a valid entry. " & ¬
            "Please enter a positive integer:" default answer ¬
            "" buttons {"OK"} default button 1
        -- Get the data entered by the user.
        set theNumber to text returned of result
    end try -- set theNumber to theNumber as number
end repeat -- until isValidEntry
-- Initialize sum to 0.
set sum to 0
-- Sum up the numbers.
repeat with i from 1 to theNumber
    set sum to sum + i
end repeat -- with i from 1 to theNumber
-- Report the results of the process to the user.
display dialog "The sum of the first " & theNumber & "
numbers is " & sum & ¬
    "." buttons {"OK"} default button 1

```

Wow, our program is getting more complex (and better) every time! Here's what it is doing.

As before, the first command prompts the user to enter a number. We then immediately store what the user entered into a variable. Next we initialize another variable called `isValidEntry` to `false`. We only want to sum up the numbers if the user enters an integer, so we use this variable to test if that has occurred.

Next we enter a `repeat` loop. Since the `repeat` loop says `repeat until isValidEntry`, and `isValidEntry` is `false` to begin with (because that's what we set it to), we know that this `repeat` loop will execute at least once.

As soon as we enter the loop, we begin a `try` block. The first line of the `try` block attempts to coerce the user's entry into a number. If the user entered something like 5 or 6.3, this will work fine and the execution continues. If the user entered their name or today's date, or anything but a number, the line `set theNumber to theNumber as number` will produce an AppleScript error, and execution of the program will hop over to the `on error` section.

If we passed the first line successfully, we know that `theNumber` is in fact a number, but it still needs to be an integer for our sum to work. So we use an `if` statement to check the class of `theNumber`, and if it isn't an integer, we manually call the `error`, the execution of the `try` portion halts and moves to the `on error` portion.

If both of the first two statements in the `try` block execute successfully without producing an error, then we set the `isValidEntry` variable to `true` so that the `repeat` loop won't execute again. The `on error` portion of the program will only execute if an error was produced by one of the first statements in the `try` portion. If we get to this part of the program, then the user either didn't enter a number or the number wasn't an integer. We inform the user that there was a problem with her entry the last time and again ask for an integer, storing the data entered by the user into the variable `theNumber` again. Since `isValidEntry` hasn't been set to `true` in this case, we go back up to the `repeat` loop and begin the process of testing the user entry again. The `repeat` loop ensures that before we continue, and attempt to sum up the numbers, we have a valid number to sum up to. The rest of the program is the same as before with the added comments.

Finishing Up

Well, we've covered a lot of material today. We learned how to build simple and complex boolean expressions, how to conditionally execute part of the program, how to capture errors and how to loop through code repeatedly. Next time we're going to go into more detail with the `try` block by testing for the type of error that occurred, and we'll cover a more general programming topics, such as algorithms and flowcharts. As always, feel free to e-mail me with questions or suggestions. Until then, happy programming!

Copyright © 2002 Charles Ross, cross@atpm.com. Charles Ross is an independent programmer and author. He's written articles for ISO FileMaker Magazine and is currently writing a book on creating applications with AppleScript.



Macworld Expo New York 2002 Wrap-up

Without a doubt, Macworld New York really snuck up on me this year. When I got back from my vacation at the beginning of July, I flipped through the information that was included with my Macworld pass and I realized I had about one week to get my act together and figure out how to get to New York. After a quick phone call to a friend, the two of us decided our best option was to get up at the crack of dawn on the 17th and subject ourselves to the five-hour trip into New York City.

After [last year](#)¹, I was really curious about how the show would go and whether or not there would be any significant announcements. Unlike last year, there was not much in terms of rampant speculation from the various rumor sites, so people's expectations about product announcements were not out of line. Even though you could argue that there were fewer announcements at this year's keynote speech, the feeling of disappointment that seemed so prevalent last year was not present.

The 17" iMac

I can't recall any previous Macworld Expo keynote where Apple's announced only a single update to a single computer. Often times, the Macworld keynote will be used to announce minor changes to one or more types of Macintosh and a more major upgrade to another Macintosh line. That wasn't the case this year, as the only upgrade announced by Steve Jobs was the release of the 17" iMac.

The 17" iMac certainly looks like a nice addition to the Apple family. Along with the increased viewing area (1440 x 900 pixels), the 17" iMac adds the NVIDIA GeForce4 MX and an 80 GB hard drive to the previous high end model, the SuperDrive 15" iMac.

It's certainly been said before, but as the iMac family has aged, its target audience has dramatically shifted. Just last year, Apple released iMacs that ranged in price from \$999 to \$1499. With the 17" iMac selling for \$1999, the flat panel iMacs range in price from \$1399 to \$1999. In terms of market placement, the flat panel iMac has almost become the G4 Cube. Fortunately, Apple seems to have a better idea as to who will be buying the flat panel iMac than they did with the G4 Cube.

Apple is by no means abandoning the low end, though. Along with selling the eMac, Apple very quietly updated the CRT iMac during Macworld. The first thing most people will notice is that Indigo is out, Snow is back. This means that the

CRT iMac matches the color scheme of Apple's other consumer computers, making it look less like the bastard stepchild of the Apple product line. Also, the iMac now uses a 600 MHz G3 processor. The CRT iMac is far from state-of-the-art—it is only available with a CD-ROM drive—but with prices ranging from \$799 to \$1024, it certainly presents a viable option for anybody who wants to get a Mac (or add a second Mac to their collection) without breaking the bank.



The newest member of the iMac family.

iPod

Apparently, iPods breed like rabbits. It seems like whenever I turn around, there's some new model of iPod, along with some new feature that moves the iPod further away from being just an MP3 player. This time around, there is a 20 GB iPod joining the family. This model takes the \$499 price point, with the 10 GB model now costing \$399 and the 5 GB model setting a new low for the iPod at \$299. The 10 and 20 GB models also include a wired remote, carrying case with belt clip, and a new scroll wheel that is similar to the touch pad on a PowerBook. Oh, and all three models with also be available for Windows users starting in August.

As for features, the latest version of the iPod includes a both a clock and a calendar for keeping track of where you are and where you need to be. In month view, the calendar looks very similar to the calendar on the Palm OS—any day with an

1. <http://www.atpm.com/7.08/macworld.shtml>

event scheduled will have a small mark next to the date. You can use the scroll wheel to go to any date and view a more detailed schedule.



The iPod's new calendar feature.

The other main feature of the new iPod is support for content from [Audible.com](http://www.audible.com)¹. Audible.com sells things like audio books, recorded interviews, and news in a format designed for use on computers and digital music players. Although other MP3 players already included Audible.com support, nobody has supported it on the Mac...until now.

I got a chance to play with the 10 GB iPod on the show floor. I immediately noticed the new scroll wheel. Although I use a PowerBook on a daily basis, I was not comfortable using the solid-state scroll wheel on the iPod. This is probably because I'm used to physically turning the wheel, and tried to

operate the new scroll wheel in the same way. I'm sure the new scroll wheel will grow on me once I remember to use less force.



The 10 GB iPod and remote, complete with fingerprints.

The remote is a bit larger what I've seen on other MP3 players, but it also seems sturdier. There are nice, big buttons for play and volume, which should make it simple to operate without looking. Since the remote has the same metallic appearance as the back of the iPod, it picks up fingerprints like crazy—by the time I got to the iPod display, the remote was completely covered in fingerprints and smudge marks.

The Cat's Out of the Bag

As they have done the past three years, Apple used the Macworld New York keynote to announce the shipping date for the next version of the Mac OS. Unlike the last two years, though, Apple announced that OS X 10.2, also known as Jaguar, will be shipping on August 24th at a cost of \$129.



Anybody want to bet this poster didn't cause a few questions to be asked before the show floor opened?

1. <http://www.audible.com>

There has been extensive coverage of Jaguar's features over the last few months, so I'm not going to take up space discussing all the announced advancements. However, there is something I would like to say—based on what will be included in Jaguar, this is not your traditional .1 upgrade. I have to think the decision to call this release 10.2 was a marketing decision designed to let Apple use the OS X moniker as long as possible.

iApps

Apple's stroll through their iApps included both something old and two things that were very new. For the old, Apple introduced iTunes 3. Most of iTunes' new features revolved around compatibility with the new iPod features, but there are a few music management features that could have wider appeal. First, Apple has moved the music library from the Documents folder to the Music folder. All I can say is, "About time." Second, iTunes can now automatically update the layout of your Music folder when you add new songs to iTunes. Furthermore, iTunes folder layout scheme is actually understandable by the average human being, as opposed to the mess that is the iPhoto Library. Probably the biggest feature of iTunes 3 is Smart Playlists. Smart Playlists differ from normal playlists in that you don't add the songs yourself. Instead, you specify a set of rules and iTunes selects songs based on your settings. The best way I can think of describing Smart Playlists is that they are to iTunes as mail filtering rules are to your basic e-mail application.



It's an iMac running iCal, iChat, iTunes, and...Backup...One guess who launched the wrong application while trying to get the ultimate iApp picture.

Apple's new iApps, iCal and iSync, are a bit more exciting. They both extend Apple's digital hub strategy in a new direction. [iCal](http://www.apple.com/ical/)¹ is a multi-user calendar application, kind of like Palm Desktop's calendar module on steroids. Along with

keeping track of the calendars of everybody in your house, iCal can publish calendars online and link to other people's calendars.

[iSync](http://www.apple.com/isync/)² is Apple's solution for linking Macs to Bluetooth-enabled cell phones and Palm organizers, along with improving iPod support (actually syncing contacts instead of dragging and dropping them by hand). The combination of iCal, iSync, and the new Address Book lets you use your Mac as a central repository for contact and scheduling information for all of your mobile devices—no more keeping two or more devices up-to-date by hand. As somebody who nearly spent \$100 on a cell phone-to-computer connection kit a few years back, I'm thrilled by the fact that Apple will provide this service for the cost of a Bluetooth adapter.

One thing that disappointed me about Apple's application announcements is that nothing was said about some of Apple's most recent acquisitions: Emagic and Nothing Real. Although Apple revealed the status of Shake several days after the keynote, it would have been nice to hear about these major acquisitions during the keynote event.

.Mac

Possibly the biggest announcement to come out of the keynote speech was the death of iTools and the birth of .Mac. .Mac bundles the familiar iTools options with increased iDisk and e-mail storage, virus and backup software, and enhanced features for iCal and iSync. All this can be yours for \$99 a year, or \$49 for the first year if you are an existing iTools user.

At first, I was disgusted by this decision, but I have mellowed as I've had time to think about it. That is not to say I don't have any complaints about the new system. In fact, I have two main complaints.

First, many people use iTools only for a convenient e-mail address. I don't know if I can justify \$99 per year if I just want to keep my existing e-mail address. I would love it if Apple would provide a low-cost, e-mail-only, .Mac account.

Second, the death of iTools means that iPhoto's useful Homepage feature will be neutered, since I expect many of the beginner users of iPhoto won't be willing to pay \$99 a year so they can conveniently display photos of their kid's school play.

I don't mind iCal and iSync having additional features that require .Mac, but it seems less than honest that the iPhoto's Homepage button will suddenly stop working on October 1st, considering that the automatic publishing of photo albums was touted as a major advantage of iPhoto.

Will I subscribe to .Mac? I don't know. At \$49, it is certainly a lot easier to swallow than \$99. I may try it for a year simply because I don't want to switch e-mail addresses again so soon—for various reasons, I lost two of my primary e-mail addresses over the course of a week and I decided to actually start using my mac.com e-mail address. Is .Mac for

1. <http://www.apple.com/ical/>

2. <http://www.apple.com/isync/>

everybody? I don't know. I don't think I will have my dad, who is becoming an iPhoto nut, subscribe, so take from that what you will.

Mingling with the Masses

As OS X has become more popular, more and more Unix users have been paying attention to Apple. I think this influenced the products displayed on the show floor, at least to some degree. It seemed like there was much more network-related and rack mountable hardware being shown than I can ever remember at previous shows. Some of these products were designed to complement Apple's Xserve while others were designed to compete with it. In either case, it's good to see these people taking Apple and OS X seriously and it can only help Apple gain customers in new areas.



So the only problem is the IT guys keep drooling all over the inside of the new Xservers...

I stopped by the Kensington booth because I really felt like I should take a look at their [StudioMouse](#)¹. I mean, it seems like they are going all out advertising this thing, so giving it the once over was the least I could do. So, a couple of quick comments. First, it's larger than I expected—the pictures made me think it was going to be more of a laptop/portable mouse, but it actually is full size. Second, I was expecting the scroll sensor to be similar to a PowerBook's track pad, but it's not. You need to apply some force to get your scrolling to register—probably more force than you would use to click a mouse button. Having played with the StudioMouse for less

than five minutes, I don't want to say too much more, but hopefully we will be able to bring you a more complete review in the coming months.



El Gato's EyeTV got plenty of attention during Macworld.

While I'm on the topic of Kensington, I just wanted to mention their [FlyFan](#)². Building on the idea of the FlyLight, the FlyFan gives your laptop a USB-powered fan. When most computer users think of fans, they think of the things that keep their computers running cool. That's not the case here—the FlyFan is designed to keep *you* cool. Is it useful? I don't know, but the FlyFan was easily the most amusing product I saw at Macworld.

Of course, if you want a product that you know is going to be useful, you should know that Alsoft announced DiskWarrior 3.0. Shipping in early September, DiskWarrior 3 will bring my favorite disk repair utility to OS X. In fact, DiskWarrior 3 will be OS X-only. This is a result of DiskWarrior's newest feature, hardware testing. Under OS X, DiskWarrior will be able to warn you if you if your hard drive is on its last legs.

Apple may be the company that pioneered the idea of the Mac as a digital hub, but that hasn't meant that other companies haven't jumped on the bandwagon. El Gato Software's EyeTV attempts to bridge the gap between the Mac and the television. While there are other products that let you watch TV on the Mac, the EyeTV uses the Mac to augment the TV experience. The EyeTV provides a channel guide, the abilities to pause live TV, skip commercials, and record your shows to video CDs (with the help of Toast). Think of it as TiVo Jr. for the Mac.

1. http://www.kensington.com/products/pro_mic_d1477.html

2. http://www.kensington.com/products/pro_mob_d1471.html

Long time Mac retailer [Other World Computing](http://www.macsales.com)¹ was present with a customized Power Mac G4. Considering OWC specialized in all sorts of upgrades, I suppose I shouldn't be surprised, but I didn't see the BlueMac upgrade listed anywhere on their Web site...



Now where do I get *that* upgrade?!?

By the way, as an informative note, if you go to Macworld and want to win anything, you should try to hunt me down. Apparently, I'm a good luck charm at these shows. Five years ago, the friend I was attending the show with [won a computer](http://www.atpm.com/3.08/page10.shtml)². After this year, I think we can officially call it a trend. It all started at the SmartDisk booth, where they were giving out a 20 GB FireFly drive after lunch. The only catch was that you needed to be present to win. After about half a dozen names were drawn from the hat and disqualified for not being present, the fellow standing in front of me won the drive. You see, after the first few names came and went, I made a few smart aleck remarks and received a few joking replies from this gentleman. If it weren't for his responding to me, I'm fairly certain he would not have won.

Twice in 5 years...I suppose you pass that off as coincidence. Of course, simple coincidence doesn't explain what happened a short time later in the gaming area. Ambrosia Software was giving out Escape Velocity: Nova T-shirts to people who could correctly answer EV:N trivia. Once again, I was standing next to a friend and we both raised our hands to answer the question. Who gets picked and wins the shirt? Yup, my friend.

So, if you want free stuff at Macworld, just try and track me down. Of course, if you win anything good, I'm going to want a cut. How's 10% sound?

1. <http://www.macsales.com>
2. <http://www.atpm.com/3.08/page10.shtml>

Game On

It seems like every time I go to Macworld, the gaming area gets larger and larger. In case you are wondering, this is a *good* thing. This year was no different. With the exception of Blizzard, every major Mac game company was present at the show. The front section of the gaming area held the various exhibitors and the rear section contained Macs demo-ing just about every game shipping and in late development for OS X. The two spaces were separated by the presentation area, where various companies showed off their games and interacted with the crowd.



Freeverse has some fun at the expense of an absent Blizzard.

It was really impressive to see some of the smaller gaming companies make it to Macworld. Feral Interactive was there with Black & White, Championship Manager, and Formula 1 Championship. Ambrosia Software was highlighting Escape Velocity: Nova and the recently released pop-pop (complete with pop-pop trading cards). Freeverse was showing off KickOff 2000 and WipeOut 2097, both of which they are publishing for Virtual Programming. The Omni Group was off in a different section of the show floor showing off their

productivity applications, but their work could be seen at the MacPlay booth, where games like *Fallout* and *Soldier of Fortune II* could be seen.



I went to Macworld and I'll I got was a butt-whopping playing pop-pop!



The MacPlay bunker...er, booth.

With the exception of Blizzard, all of the big publishers were there as well. MacPlay probably had the most impressive booth at the show, celebrating the release of *Soldier of Fortune II*. They also had an impressive number of new releases, many from their Value Series. I have to admit, the Value Series seems to have a solid mix of titles, some of which have been available for a while (like *Majesty*) and some which have been developed specifically for the Value Series (like *Fallout*). According to the information MacPlay gave out at

Macworld, they will update the Value Series every 90 days, so this could be a good way to pick up some quality games at fairly low cost.

Although Aspyr Media's booth wasn't nearly as impressive-looking as MacPlay's, their selection was top notch. The latest incarnation of the *Sims* series, *The Sims Vacation*, was there, as was the recently announced Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon* (in a very early alpha stage). I think the biggest crowd in the Aspyr booth was gathered around *Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast*. There's something about the idea of wielding a light saber that just has a universal appeal.



Check out that light saber action.

At the Apple-run demo section, *Jedi Knight* and *Warcraft III* seemed to have the two biggest crowds. This makes sense, since both games have a fair bit of history attached to them. It's actually too bad that Blizzard couldn't make it to the show—they simultaneously shipped what looks to be a best-selling game for both Macs and PCs and the game garnered a mention during Steve Jobs keynote. Oh well, maybe next year.

Wrapping it Up

After the last two Macworld New Yorks, I'm starting to wonder if Apple is de-emphasizing this particular show. There have been few major hardware announcements and some large developers (this year, Adobe and Macromedia come to mind) don't bother attending. Of course, the fact that the American economy is basically bottoming out might have something to do with the changing nature of Macworld, so I am going to withhold judgment on this topic for another year or two.

Unlike last year, though, when I headed out of New York City, I didn't find myself wondering why I bothered to make the trip. I actually had strong feelings about some of Apple's announcements, both positive and negative.

Visiting with vendors, I could see that the promise of OS X is being fulfilled—there is no more waiting for the world to get ready for OS X. For the most part, the applications are here and they are going to keep coming.

Finally, Apple has given us three important milestones in the immediate future: the release of Jaguar (August 24th), the release of iCal and iSync (sometime in September), and the final passing of our iTools accounts (September 30th). I think the combination of these three events really put the pieces in place for Apple to be ready for when the country's economy rebounds, and people are once again willing to spend money on things they might not necessarily need, but really want.

Copyright © 2002 Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com.



Cartoon: Hambone

by Mike Flanagan, sensible@sensible.screaming.net



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

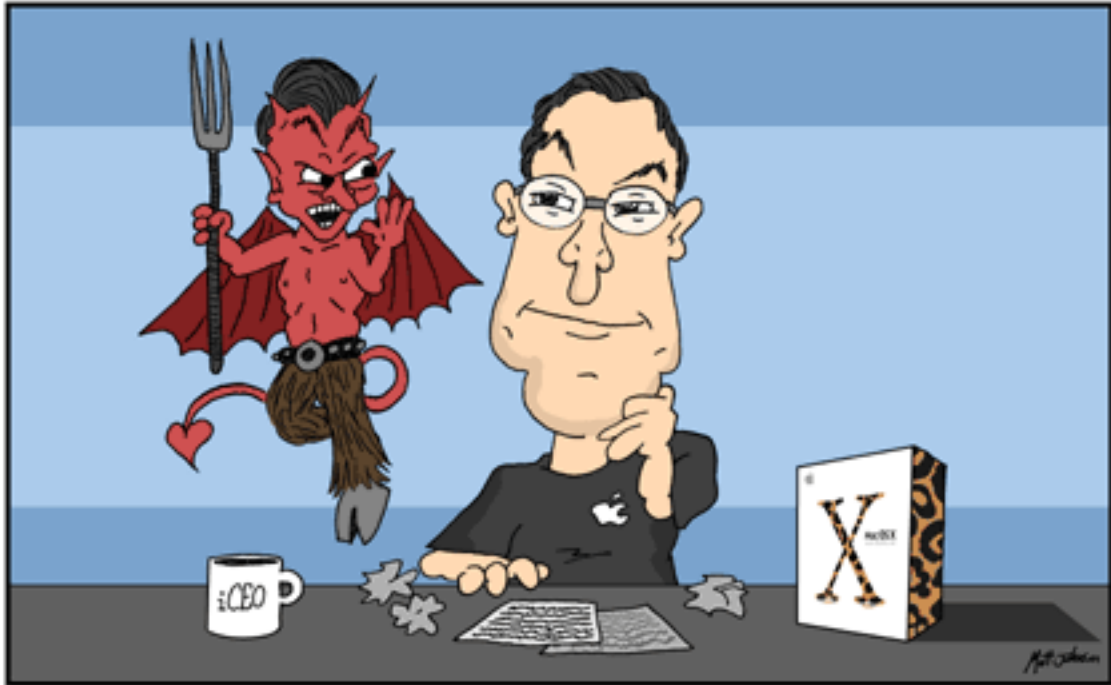


Cartoon: Cortland

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

Cortland

by Matt Johnson



"Here's an idea! why don't you recycle a bunch of old software, like Newton's handwriting recognition, AOL Instant Messenger, and spring-loaded folders into a 'new' operating system, and then charge \$130 for it... with no upgrade discounts!"

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



Extras: Desktop Pictures

[Oregon's Southern Coast](#)¹

These pictures, submitted by Contributing Editor David Ozab, were taken by Julia Harris during their trip down the southern coast of Oregon over the July 4th weekend. During the trip, they visited Cape Arago, Bandon, Cape Blanco, Port Orford, Gold Beach, and Brookings.

arago1.jpg–arago5.jpg: The Cape Arago Loop (arago2.jpg features the Cape Arago Lighthouse).

bandon1.jpg–bandon5.jpg: From the Coquille River Lighthouse through the Bandon beach loop.

blanco1.jpg–blanco2.jpg: Cape Blanco, the farthest point west in the continental US.

portorford1.jpg–portorford4.jpg: Along the beach at Port Orford (portorford2.jpg is the view from our motel room).

gold-beach-bridge.jpg: The bridge across the Rouge River at Gold Beach, about one mile inland.

north-of-brookings.jpg: Meyers Creek State Park Viewpoint, just north of Brookings.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the [desktop pictures archives](#)².

Downloading all the Pictures at Once

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

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, feel free to send it to editor@atpm.com and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue. Have a regular print but no scanner? Don't worry. E-mail us, and we tell you where to send it so we can scan it for you. Note that we cannot return the original print, so send us a copy.

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.1.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.0.x

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

Mac OS 8.5–9.x

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

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

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

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1

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

Random Desktop Pictures

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

1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.08/oregon-southern-coast/>

2. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/desktop-pictures.shtml>

DeskPicture

An alternative to Mac OS's Appearance control panel is Pierce Software's DeskPicture, [reviewed](#)¹ in issue 5.10 and available for [download](#)².



1. <http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml>
2. <http://www.peircsw.com/DeskPicture.html>

Review: Shareware Roundup

by Brooke Smith, bsmith@atpm.com

Scrabble and Boggle

It's summertime and although you might be outside catching those UV Rays (don't forget the sunscreen), there's nothing wrong with an hour or two indoors building your vocabulary with the help of some word games. In this *Shareware Roundup*, I'll give you the word on Scrabble and Boggle.

X-Words Deluxe 2.1

Developer: [Andrew Trevorrow & Freeverse Software](#)¹

Price: \$19.95

Requirements: Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited



X-Words is just like Scrabble, only better, because the developers have included challenging variations, or scenarios, on the standard Scrabble game.



Here's the Antique Scenario (i.e., regular Scrabble) game that I was playing against Jen 4 (the computer).

Antique Scenario

As in the board game, use seven letters (using most or all of the letters means more points) to create words either horizontally or vertically on the board with no empty squares in between. The first word spelled must cover the center square. If you get a blank tile, you can make it any letter. Once

the word is completed with the blank tile on the board, a small popup window will ask you to indicate which letter you'd like to make it.

There are also three other scenarios: CrossWords, Pirate's Booty, and Race to the End. In the first two, the object of the game is like the Antique Scenario, but there are added bonus words. Spell out these words (if you can) during game play and you'll get bonus points. In Pirate's Booty the bonus words all have to do with seafaring. There are even forbidden squares for an added challenge. For example, in Pirate's Booty, you can't place letters on the water squares or on any of the "picture" squares, e.g. the sun or the seagulls.



Here's a screenshot of Pirate's Booty.

1. <http://www.freeverse.com/xwords.mgi>

If you like the challenge of these Scenarios, you can keep them while playing without the Bonus Words. Under the Scenario menu, choose Edit Scenario then Bonus Words. Click on the Enabled box to turn these words on or off without deleting them.

For an even harder challenge, try Race to the End. Start in the upper left hand corner and build words until you get to the lower right hand corner. This one's tough!

This was truly a fun set of games. Slick graphics, a nice interface, and cool sounds add to the enjoyment. The scenarios give X-Words that extra challenge for veteran Scrabble players. Well worth it.



Watch the turns!

CrossCards 2.1

Developer: [Andrew Trevorrow & Freeverse Software](http://www.freeverse.com/crosscards.mgi)¹

Price: \$14.95

Requirements: Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited



If you like X-Words, but need a little break from all those words, try CrossCards. It's the same premise as X-Words, but instead of creating words, you're creating your best poker hand. Place five playing cards in a row (either horizontally or vertically) to form any legitimate hand—royal flush, straight flush, five of a kind, straight, flush, or full house. The better the hand, the more points you accumulate.

Again, as in X-Words, there are various scenarios that keep the game challenging.



Very similar to X-Words, except the letters are now playing cards.

1. <http://www.freeverse.com/crosscards.mgi>

Great graphics and overall ease of play. But don't forget to get back to the word games!

Ortograf 1.0

Developer: [Gilles Blanchette](#)¹

Price: \$20 (\$35 Canadian)

Requirements: System 6.0.7 or later and 2 MB of RAM

Trial: Feature-limited



This is certainly the oldest of the games in this review, but it's still enjoyable. The interface is simple and basic, and the green board looks like the original Scrabble board. As in X-Words, it's hard to win against the computer in Ortograf, even in the beginner option. But that's what makes it challenging, forcing you to unscramble letters and create words.

Originally in French, this is the first release of the game in English. To play the demo version, you must type in a six-digit code (given) and hit OK. There are a few restrictions in the demo version. Before each game, 20 letters are removed from the letter "bag" and you can't save or open a game. The computer can play only in Beginner's mode. (Intermediate, Expert, and Champ will work with the full version.) And the other games—Duplicate, Belgian, and Prepared—will end after four moves. So if you're curious about these, you'll need to register.

How to Play

Select New Game from the File menu, then choose your players. Next, go to the Rack menu and click on your name. Seven tiles will appear in the Rack "window." Spell a word and don't forget to cover the center square (it has the star on it) on the first move of the game. Close the Rack window and then

choose Rack again and click on Mac (or the next person clicks on her name if you're playing with a friend). A new Rack (with seven new letters) will appear for the Mac or the human player.

I found Ortograf a bit frustrating: on first glance it's not as intuitive as I would have liked. For instance, to get the letters I had to go to the Rack menu to click on my name to show my seven wooden tiles. I just didn't find that this was very self-evident. It took me a few minutes to figure it out. Once I created my word, I then had to close that Rack window, and because I was playing against the computer, go back to the Rack menu and choose Mac so the computer could take its turn. (Later, I found out that one of the preferences allows you to set the "Period of inactivity before computer takes its rack." I've now put this to two seconds! Don't forget to do this.)

Despite my refusal to read the instructions, Ortograf is still good and there are lots of preferences: the "Period of inactivity..." I mentioned, "No time limit to play a turn," "No lost turn on invalid word," and lots of others. It may not be the smoothest playing game, especially when you compare it with X-Words for the same price, but it still does the job. And it's designed by one of my countrymen. Vive le Canadien!

C.DEV Boogle 2.0

Developer: [Crystal Development](#)²

Price: \$10

Trial: Nagware



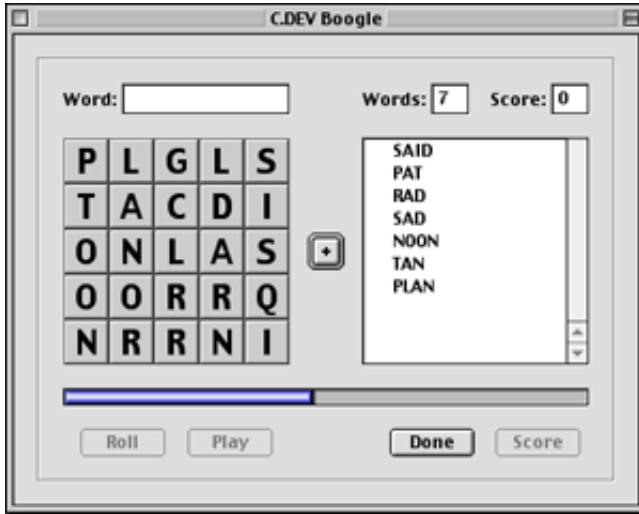
In Boogle, 25 lettered cubes are in a grid. The object is to create as many words as possible (with letters adjacent to each other) before the time (three minutes) runs out. Just like the original board game (Boggle), but without the annoying sound of the shaking lettered cubes in the plastic covered tray (although you can click on the sound option to hear it if you

1. http://www.ortograf.com/an_index.html

2. <http://orders.kagi.com/?C1E>

like). Boogle 2.0 is lots of fun and keeps your word vocabulary challenged. Oh, and if you want to hear something funny, wait until the timer runs out and a little computer voice says “Your time is up and the lid is on the box.”

And if you want to fancy up the interface, try New Game (Theme) from the File menu. Choose from six schemes already loaded or download new ones from [Kaleidoscope](http://www.kaleidoscope.net)¹.



Here are the words I've found so far.

This is a fun game. There are three difficulty levels: Beginner, Novice, and Advanced. You can also look at the statistics (which you can reset): Total Words Guessed, Average Points Per Game, and Average Points Per Word. You can also Rotate the letters so you can see a different angle of the board as well as pause the game.



Here is the Deep Kiss scheme.

Overall this is a very good game. There are lots of stats and it plays smoothly. Just remember to register because the annoying reminder will appear every once in a while during play time and you'll have to wait 10 seconds before you can return to the game.

1. <http://www.kaleidoscope.net>

Boogle Slimline 1.0

Developer: [Crystal Development](http://www.crystaldevelopment.com)²

Price: \$10

Trial: Nagware

The read-me describes Boogle Slimline as “Boogle without the fat.” This basically means that it doesn't take up as much RAM as the other version and it can fit on a floppy, making it portable (for those coffee breaks at work). Basically you just play the game!

You can add the Play Sounds if you want and there's a High Score tracker. Under the File menu you can still Rotate the letters or pause the game. But there are no statistics.

However, although the read-me says you can get a fancy interface with schemes from Kaleidoscope, I couldn't see this in the actual game. This is just for the full version of Boogle (see review above).



2. <http://orders.kagi.com/?C1E>

The best part is that if you already have the full version of Boogle, you don't have to pay the shareware fee for Slimline. Not too shabby.

Copyright © 2002 Brooke Smith, bsmith@atpm.com. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Review: 24U Appearance OSAX 2.0

by Michael Tsai, mtsai@atpm.com

Developer: [24U s.r.o.](http://www.24u.com)¹

Price: \$29

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 (similar to 24U Appearance OSAX 1.2.2, which works on Mac OS 9)

Trial: Fully-featured (14 days)



What Is It?

Appearance OSAX extends the ways in which your AppleScripts can interact with the user. Normal AppleScripts can present simple dialog boxes that contain either one to three buttons, a text field, or a list of items to select. With Appearance OSAX installed, your scripts can employ alerts, fancy dialogs with many types of fields, floating message and progress windows, and notifications that cause Dock icons to bounce.

How Do I Use It?

Since Appearance OSAX is a scripting addition, it must be installed in the ScriptingAdditions folder. You can then view its dictionary of commands using your favorite script editor. There is no graphical user interface for Appearance OSAX. Instead, you type its commands into your script. AppleScripters commonly use the built-in `display dialog` command. To access Appearance OSAX's additional features, simply use `display better dialog` instead.

Scripts that use Appearance OSAX commands like `display better dialog` require Appearance OSAX to run. Fortunately, you don't need to buy a copy of Appearance OSAX for every machine that your script will be deployed on. If your script is distributed as freeware, you can distribute Appearance OSAX with it for no additional charge. Otherwise, you need to pay \$149 or more to bundle Appearance OSAX.

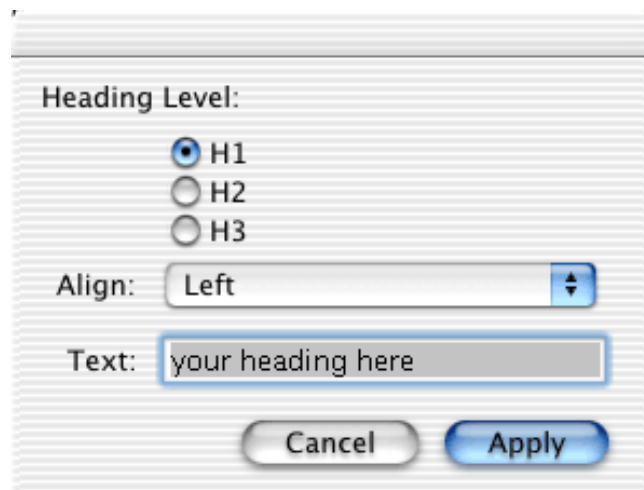
An Example

Suppose we want to write a script to help write HTML headings. The script will ask the user whether he wants a first-, second-, or third-level heading, how the heading should be aligned, and what the text should be. The script will return an HTML fragment such as `<H1 ALIGN="Left">your heading here</H1>`.

We could do this with AppleScript's `display dialog`. We could have one dialog that displayed three buttons for the different levels. A second dialog could display a list of the different alignments. A third could display a text field for the

heading text. It's quite simple to write an AppleScript for these three dialogs, but the user experience would not be very good.

Instead, we'll create a single dialog using Appearance OSAX.



A dialog box created with `better display dialog`.

We'll create the radio buttons, the popup menu, and the text field as `better dialog field` records.

```
Class better dialog field: Field definition record for display better dialog command
Properties:
  kind text field/password field/check box/radio button/popup menu [r/o] -- kind of the field to display
  name string [r/o] -- name of the field
  value string [r/o] -- default value for text and password fields and pop-up menus
  selected boolean [r/o] -- true to make the checkbox or radio button selected by default
  menu items list [r/o] -- list of pop-up menu items
```

Each field of the dialog is a `better dialog field` record.

The AppleScript to create the dialog is:

1. <http://www.24software.com/infoOSA2.php>

```

set h1 to {kind:radio button, name:"H1"}
set h2 to {kind:radio button, name:"H2"}
set h3 to {kind:radio button, name:"H3"}
set levelButtons to {h1, h2, h3}

set alignMenu to {kind:popup menu, name:"Align:", ~
    menu items:{"Left", "Center", "Right",
"Justify"}}

set textField to {kind:text field, name:"Text:", ~
    value:"your heading here"}

display better dialog "Heading Level:" ~
    buttons {"Apply", "Cancel"} default button 1 ~
    cancel button 2 fields levelButtons & {alignMenu} &
{textField}
set theResult to the result

```

A normal `display dialog` returns a dialog reply record that says which button was clicked or which text was entered. Since Appearance OSAX dialogs have multiple fields, the corresponding `better dialog` reply is a bit more complicated. For the above example, it might look like:

```

{ button returned:"Apply",
  choices returned:{"H1", "Left", "your heading here"},
  -- (omitted) fields returned: a list of all the
    better dialog fields you passed in
}

```

In most cases, though, you would only care about the first two items of the record, which button was pressed, and which choices the user made. For our example, the code to extract the user's choices and generate the HTML might look like:

```

if button returned of theResult is "Apply"
    set theChoices to choices returned of theResult
    set theLevel to item 1 of theChoices
    set theAlignment to item 2 of theChoices
    set theText to item 3 of theChoices
    return "<" & theLevel & " ALIGN=\\"" & theAlignment ~
        & "\">" & theText & "</" & theLevel & ">"
end

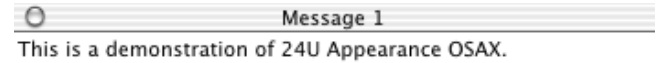
```

What Else Can It Do?

`display better dialog` supports up to 10 fields and five buttons. Besides the fields demonstrated above, you can have password fields (text fields that hide what you type) and checkboxes. Appearance OSAX also supports simple alert windows, which can display more text than `display dialog` and also support an alert icon, a help button, and up to three named buttons. As with the dialog example above, you can choose the default and cancel buttons for alert windows. These respond to the Return and Escape keys, respectively. You can also choose whether dialogs and alerts are displayed in movable windows. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be possible to make an Appearance OSAX dialog "give up" after a set number of seconds without any user interaction, as is possible with `display dialog`.

Appearance OSAX supports message windows and progress indicators. The layout of the progress indicator window is fixed, but you can set the text of the title and the

two messages as well as the names of the buttons. If the user clicks on one of the buttons in a progress indicator, Appearance OSAX calls the `handle floating window` handler in your script. With this mechanism, you can handle simple user interaction (like pausing) quite succinctly.



With 24U Appearance OSAX you have a chance to display short or long text messages in floating windows. This feature is especially useful for displaying long messages (like this one) that don't fit in the standard dialog obtained by the "display dialog" command.

Message windows can display a lot of text and don't interrupt the user.



Progress indicators are easy to use and provide a better user experience than the sequence of auto-vanishing modal dialog boxes that many AppleScripters use.

What About AppleScript Studio?

By now you may be wondering why anyone would want to use Appearance OSAX now that AppleScript Studio is available. Indeed, AppleScript Studio is both cheaper (free) and more flexible than Appearance OSAX. Every interface you can create with Appearance OSAX will be a variation on the features I mentioned above. But with AppleScript Studio you can use the full palette of Cocoa widgets and control them at a finer level. You can position controls any way you want right down to the pixel. With Appearance OSAX, dialogs are static; you present the user with a dialog and get a response back. With AppleScript Studio you could make a live dialog that, for instance, let the user pick an HTML tag and then displayed the attributes relevant to that tag.

Nevertheless, these features of AppleScript Studio can get in the way if you don't need that much control. With Appearance OSAX, you can simply list the fields you want in a dialog and trust that they will be displayed in a suitable manner. There's no need to use Interface Builder to construct the dialog button by button, making sure that you leave the proper amount of space between each control. AppleScript Studio is even further behind if you want to construct your interface dynamically. It's difficult to add or remove buttons or fields at runtime. With Appearance OSAX, this is easy; you don't even have to do anything different from the normal `display better dialog` command.

Likewise, AppleScript Studio provides many handlers that let you do complex user interaction. It goes far beyond the limited `better dialog` reply that Appearance OSAX

supports. Still, most of the time all you want to know is the current value of each field, and for that the `better dialog reply`'s simplicity is hard to beat.

Distributing software is a draw. AppleScript Studio applications may be distributed for free, but they only work on recent versions of Mac OS X. Appearance OSAX scripts require that Appearance OSAX be licensed and installed, but there is also an Appearance OSAX for Mac OS 9. I'm not sure how compatible scripts are between the two versions of Appearance OSAX, though. 24U ignored the e-mails I sent to their technical support address, so I can't give you their take on this either.

To develop with AppleScript Studio, you need to install the Mac OS X developer tools. Project Builder and Interface Builder are industrial-strength tools, and with their power comes a lot complexity. Much of it isn't relevant to AppleScript development, though you will be exposed to all the same. In fact, to use AppleScript Studio effectively you essentially have to learn AppleScript, Cocoa, Project Builder, and Interface Builder. AppleScript Studio comes with a 300-page manual to help you do this.

Appearance OSAX, by contrast, is pure AppleScript. You can use it with whatever AppleScript environment you are currently using; there's no need to learn about "building," or "projects," or ".nib" files. All it comes with is a few sample scripts and a dictionary, but that's all you'll need. If you know AppleScript, I think you'll be able to pick up Appearance OSAX in a matter of minutes.

Conclusion

I found Appearance OSAX to be nearly perfect at what it does. It's easy to learn and use, and I think the widgets it provides are adequate for the automation and integration tasks that AppleScript was originally intended for. The bundling terms are reasonable. It beats AppleScript Studio hands down on the simple stuff. That said, if you use AppleScript to write applications rather than scripts, you won't be happy with Appearance OSAX. That's when you should turn to AppleScript Studio or Cocoa.

Copyright © 2002 Michael Tsai, mtsai@atpm.com. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Review: Locator 0.7.2

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

Developer: [Sebastian Krauss](#)¹

Price: free

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1



Call me a luddite, but I've always disliked Sherlock. Sure, it finds files for me, but it sure takes its time at it. Good ol' Find wasn't instantaneous, but it was pretty close. Sherlock offers other features, like various kinds of finds over the Internet, but it also pollutes your screen with advertisements.

I Want It All

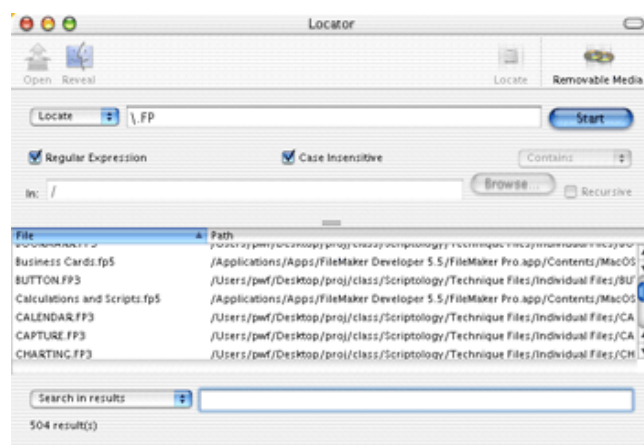
Since OS X runs on Unix, there are a lot of possibilities for an improved Find feature. Why not throw in regular expressions as an option, so those familiar with the syntax can take advantage of it and perform some really powerful searches? It'd also be nice to be able to do a second search within the results of the first. Searches should be able to be case-sensitive, if desired. And with all the hype about OS X being so modern, how about speeding things up a bit? I'm running the latest OS on the greatest hardware; how come I'm always waiting for the computer to catch up?

Here's a simple example. OS X, sadly, did away with file types and creator codes. The only way to know which file belongs to which application is to look at the three letter extension at the end of the filename. But some applications handle multiple file extensions. Files ending in .FP3 and .FP5 belong to FileMaker Pro. Users of versions 4 and 6 will sometimes name files with .FP4 and .FP6 as well. What if you want to find all the FileMaker Pro files on your computer? Open Sherlock, click Custom, ride the drop-down menu to "Edit," check the box next to "file name," type ".FP" in the box, click OK, then wonder why it's not working. Wait, you have to hit that round green button. Sherlock spins a while (16 seconds, in my case), eventually locating the files you wanted, plus perhaps some extras that don't belong to FileMaker.

And I Want it Now

Someday, Apple might get its act together with Sherlock. Until then, doing the same search with Locator is much easier, and personally, I find the user interface to be far friendlier than Sherlock's, since it doesn't require all that pointing and clicking.

Locator is a GUI for the Unix program `locate`. It searches a database to quickly find files you ask for. (The database should update itself automatically, periodically; but you might need to update it yourself if you're looking for a particularly new file. You can do this by running the `locate.updatedb` command from the Terminal, or, conveniently, by selecting Rebuild Locate Database... from Locator's Database menu.)



Since it accepts regular expressions, I can do the same search I did above with Sherlock by opening Locator (it opens faster than Sherlock does, too!) and typing `\.FP` in the text space and hitting return. The search takes considerably less time than did Sherlock's (just 3 seconds), and, interestingly, it finds 504 results, 26 more than Sherlock managed. (19 of these are files contained within FileMaker Pro.app; I haven't identified the others. The option to not show hidden files and package contents doesn't prevent .app contents from showing.) I can also narrow my search to `\.FP[3-6]` in order to avoid getting documents containing .FPA, for example.

From there, Locator really does Sherlock one better with its Search in Results capability. I'm really only interested in the FileMaker Pro files I created, not the templates and sample files that shipped with the program. Ride a drop-down menu to Exclude from results, type `/FileMaker Developer 5.5/`

1. <http://www.sebastian-krauss.de/software/>

(surprisingly, it's not necessary to escape the spaces or the decimal) and files whose path contains that folder are taken out of the search results list as you type. Those last three words make me smile. Now *that's* how a modern OS should work.

Other Features

Locator also shows me the path to each file it found, without my having to click on it. Some people might prefer Sherlock's way here, showing the kind of document, date modified, and size; I'd like to see that as an option in a future release of Locator. Also, Locator lacks a horizontal scroll bar, so you won't be able to see the full path of files buried deep on your hard drive.

When you double-click on one of the documents located, it will reveal the file's location in the Finder. It'd be nice have an option in Preferences to open the document when you double-click, but until then, there's an Open button you can press, as well as a key sequence you can use to achieve that result. Clicking on Locator's Dock icon will bring up a list of the first 30 files found (the number is configurable), and a preference setting lets you decide whether a selected item will be opened or revealed in the Finder. That preference is modifiable from the program's Dock menu, so it's easy to change without heading back to the Locator program.

Locator also has the ability to index removable media. Don't know on which of your 20 pictures CDs you put the pictures from your last vacation? Once they've all been indexed by Locator, you can do the find and see, for each filename it locates, which CD it's on. Better still, Locator counts remote volumes as removable media, so if the file you're searching for is on your file server rather than your local computer, Locator can still find it for you. Unfortunately, you can't use regular expressions for searching removable media, nor is it possible to search removable media and your local machine at the same time. Hopefully, these features will be added in a future release.

ID3 tags from your MP3 files can also be indexed; that's much nicer than giving all your MP3's tremendously long filenames with artist, album, and song.

Conclusion

Locator started off as just a GUI to a single Unix program, and it's evolved to offer some very useful additional features, while maintaining a far greater ease of use than Sherlock offers. Even if you aren't familiar with or interested in learning regular expressions, Locator is worth checking out for its Dock menu and removable media indexing capabilities, and, of course, its tremendous speed relative to its 19th century competitor.



Copyright © 2002 Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Review: MacReporter 1.1.1

by Joseph Henry, josephahenry@charter.net

Developer: [Inferiis](http://www.inferiis.com)¹

Price: \$12

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1

Trial: Feature limited (only fetches half the news)



Give Me My Mac News and Coffee, Now!

7:00 AM—Either the alarm goes off or my 9-month-old son does.

7:10 AM—After changing a very wet diaper and handing my son off to his mom I hit the power button on my G4.

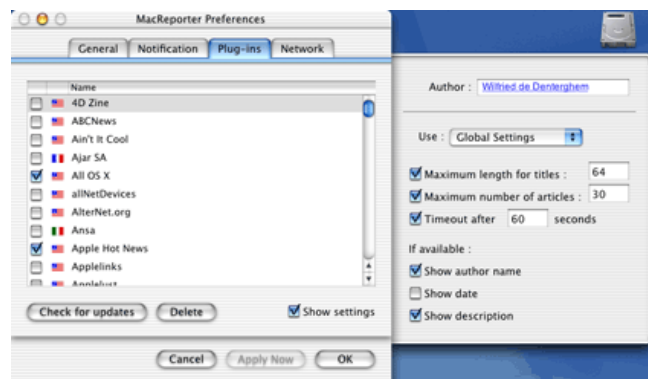
7:12 AM—My Mac has booted and I am sitting in front of the monitor, bowl of cereal and cup of coffee in hand(s), ready and waiting to hit the Net.

7:14 AM—MacReporter has gathered Mac news from all my favorite Mac related Web sites and displays the “new” news for me right there in my Dock.

7:15 AM—I’ve got my coffee, cereal, my G4, and all the latest Mac headlines ready and waiting for me. Life is good.

That’s my early morning ritual. It’s a good one and fits me well, but it wouldn’t be possible without MacReporter, a nifty little piece of shareware from Inferiis Software that gathers Mac-related news from all over the Internet and delivers it to your desktop. I don’t know how I ever lived without it.

MacReporter uses site-specific plug-ins, much like Apple’s Sherlock, to survey Web sites and fetch news. Just tell MacReporter which sites you want news from and lickety-split it fetches it for you.

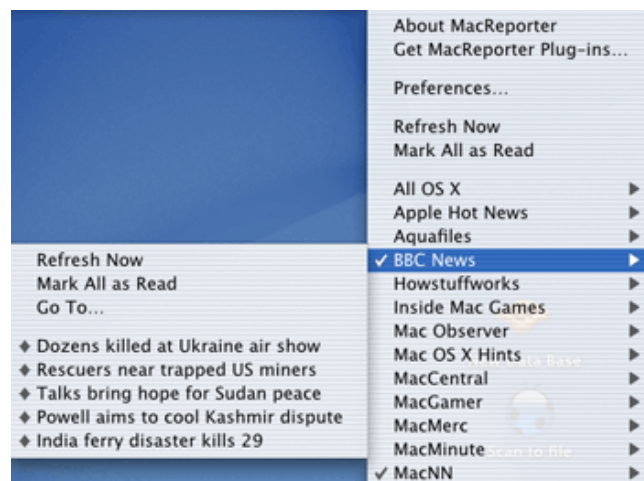


MacReporter’s Plug-in Preference Tab

Currently there are 184 service plug-ins available, pretty much covering the mainstream Mac news outlets as well as many non-computer related sites like ABC News and *Popular Science*. On the off chance your favorite Mac (or non-Mac)

site isn’t covered, just e-mail Wilfried de Denterghem, MacReporter’s creator, and he might write the necessary plug-in (registered users only).

Once MacReporter has found your news just click and hold on its Dock icon and a menu will appear listing your chosen sites with a brief description of each site’s news stories (usually the headline).



Clicking on MacReporter’s Docking

Select a story and it will open in your default Web browser. Sweet! A number displayed on the Dock icon also tells you how many new stories MacReporter has found since it last checked, but which haven’t been read yet.

The latest version (1.1.1) added a slick “auto-update” feature that automatically checks for and downloads new plug-ins. I just updated and MacReporter found six more sites to add to my plug-ins. According to MacReporter’s documentation broken plug-ins from earlier versions have also been fixed (I could never get news from Aquafiles).

One of the nicest things about MacReporter is that you can tweak it so your news is delivered exactly how you want it. For example, you can tell MacReporter how often you want it to check for new stories. You can also specify how MacReporter notifies you of new headlines. About the only thing MacReporter can’t do is make your coffee for you.

1. <http://www.inferiis.com/products/macreporter/>

OK so now your hooked. Hold on, you haven't heard the best part. Inferis is only charging \$12 for this gem. You can download a demo version and try MacReporter out for a week. When the trial period is up, you can register it. Registering is well worth it and gives you:

- The automatic net-update feature

- Full content (unregistered copies only fetch half the news)
- The right to request new plug-ins
- Free technical support and upgrades

After using it for the last six months I can honestly tell you I would gladly pay more for MacReporter. It truly is one of those "must have" Mac titles.

Copyright © 2002 Joseph Henry, josephahenry@charter.net. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Review: Three Periodic Table Programs

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

The Atomic Mac 5.4.0

Developer: [Black Cat Systems](http://www.blackcatsystems.com)¹

Price: \$25

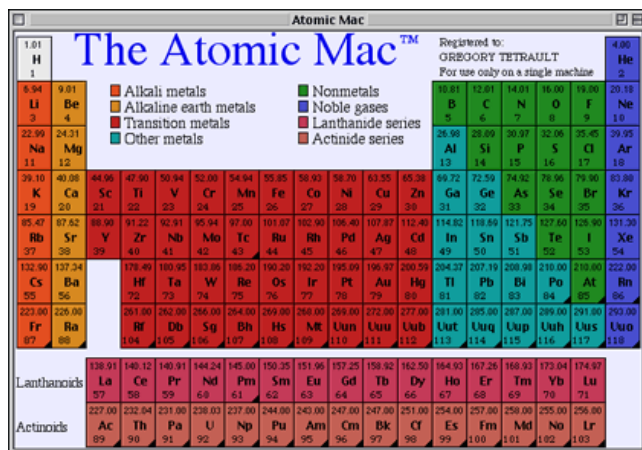
Requirements: Mac OS 8.6 with CarbonLib 1.1 or Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited



This colorful application displays a wealth of information about every element.

Clicking on an element in any view of the periodic table pops up an element information window with six tabbed views.

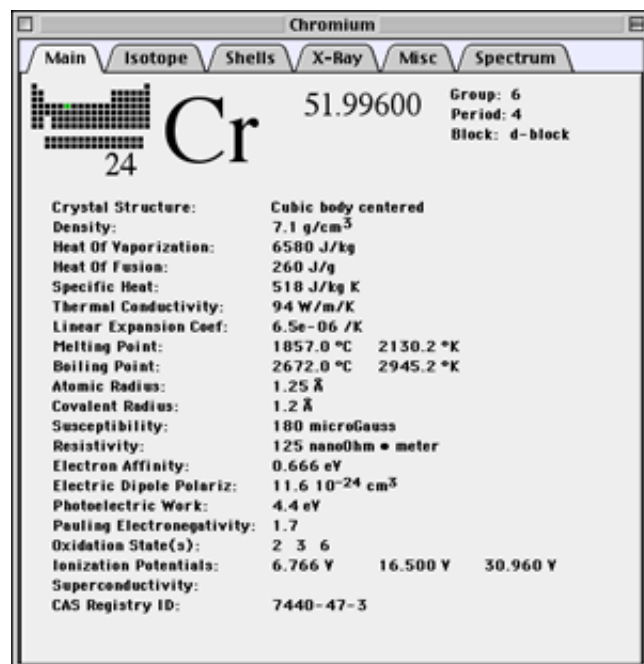


Atomic Mac in normal view.

Density	Photoelectric Work Function
Heat of Vaporization	Electronegativity
Heat of Fusion	Crystal Structure
Specific Heat	Abundance in Earth's Crust
Thermal Conductivity	Abundance in Earth's Sea
Linear Expansion Coefficient	Abundance in Solar System
Melting Point	Number of Isotopes
Boiling Point	Number of Naturally Occuring Isotopes
Atomic Radius	Number of Stable Isotopes
Covalent Radius	Photon Interactions
Magnetic Susceptibility	Visible Light Spectra
Electrical Resistivity	Magnetic Dipole Moment
Electron Affinity	Electric Quadrupole Moment
Electric Dipole Polarizability	Nuclear Spin
State (gas, liquid, solid)	

The Atomic Mac's information for each element.

The Main tab displays physical constants for the element. Note the miniaturization of the periodic table next to the element's symbol. The Isotope tab displays information on the isotopes. The Shells tab gives the electronic configuration



The Atomic Mac element window.

1. <http://www.blackcatsystems.com/software/atomic.html>

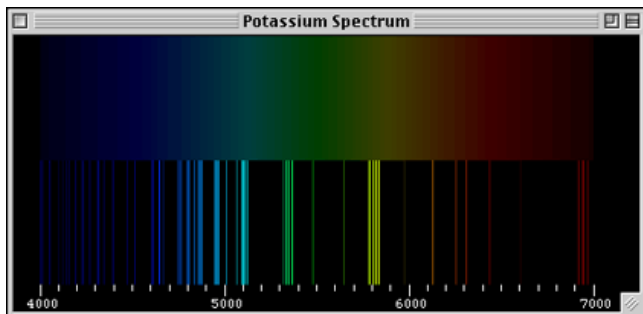
of the native element and displays a shell diagram.

24 **Cr** 51.99600

Electronic Configuration:
 $1s^2 2s^2 2p^6 3s^2 3p^6 3d^5 4s^1$

The Atomic Mac electronic configuration window.

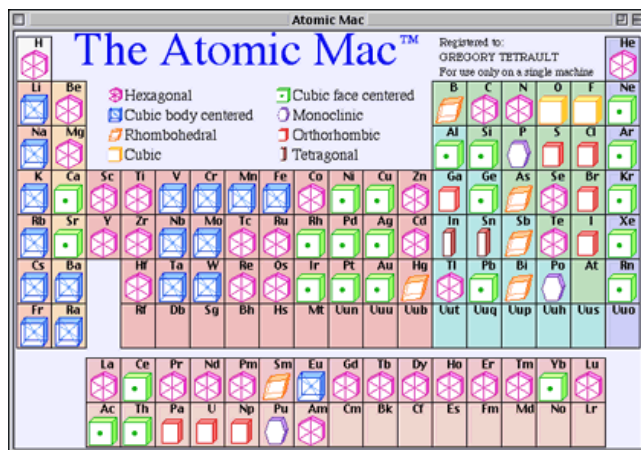
The X-ray tab gives binding and fluorescence emission energies (in Angstroms). The “Photon Attenuation” button displays a graph of photon data versus MeV. The Misc tab gives information about the discovery of the element, its abundance in crust, oceans, and solar system, and its physical appearance. The Spectrum tab shows a table of photon emission wavelengths and their relative intensities. Clicking the “Visible Spectrum” button generates a window that displays the emission lines below the visible light spectrum.



The Atomic Mac element spectrum display.

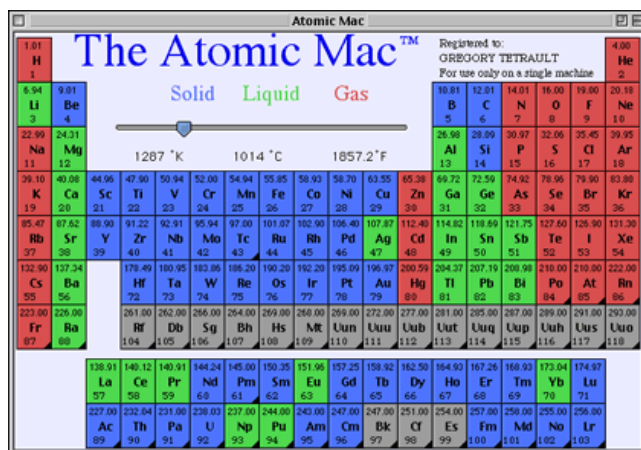
The above features alone make The Atomic Mac a wonderful resource for students and chemists. However, The Atomic Mac also visibly displays characteristics for all elements using color gradients and other imagery. The View

menu lists all the available information choices. Choosing “Crystal Structure” generates a beautiful display with the most common crystal type for each element.



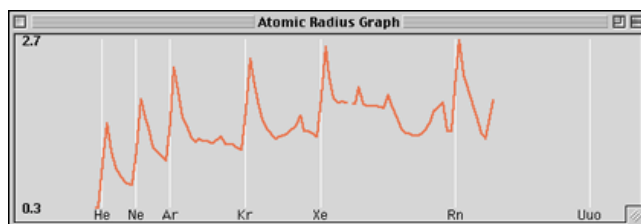
The Atomic Mac “Crystal Structure” view of the periodic table.

The “State” window contains a temperature slider. Moving the slider adjusts the temperature, which dynamically changes the physical state (solid, liquid, or gas) of all the elements in the periodic table.



The Atomic Mac physical state view of the periodic table.

You can also generate a graph of whatever physical property is shown on the periodic table. This view can add to your understanding of how properties such as density or atomic radius change across the periodic table.



The Atomic Mac graph of atomic radii.

The Atomic Mac allows you to have multiple element windows open simultaneously. You are restricted to one periodic table window. You can always print the frontmost window, whatever its type. The only drawback I found is the

inability to export textual information on an element or property. The Atomic Mac is a joy to use. I highly recommend it.

Periodic Table 3.1

Developer: [Synergy Creations](http://www.synergycreations.com)¹

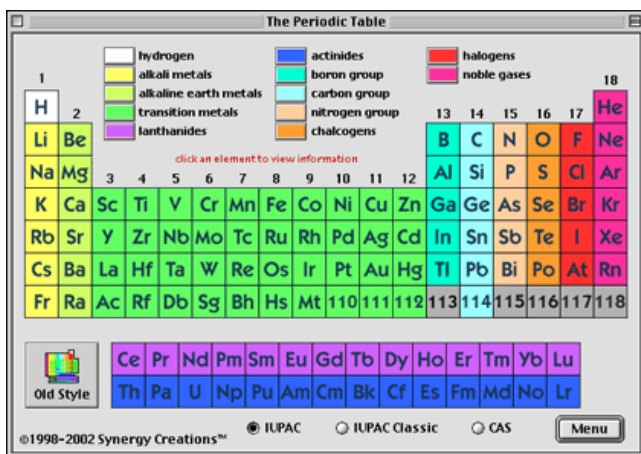
Price: \$15

Requirements: PowerPC-based Mac with Mac OS 8.1 or Mac OS X

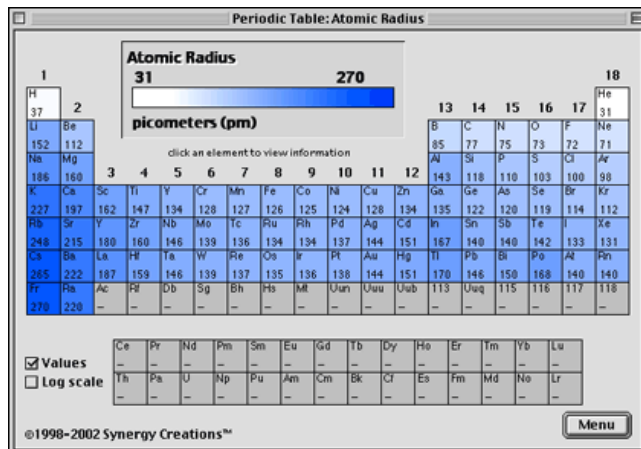
Trial: Feature-limited



From this window, you can do two things. First, you can click on a property or information button and display a periodic table showing the properties via color coding.

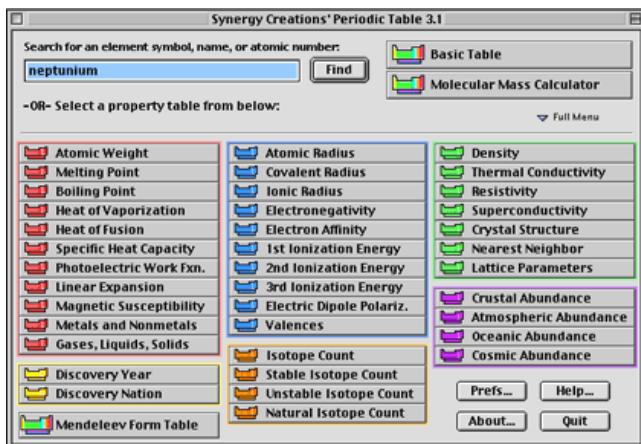


Periodic Table 3.1 window.

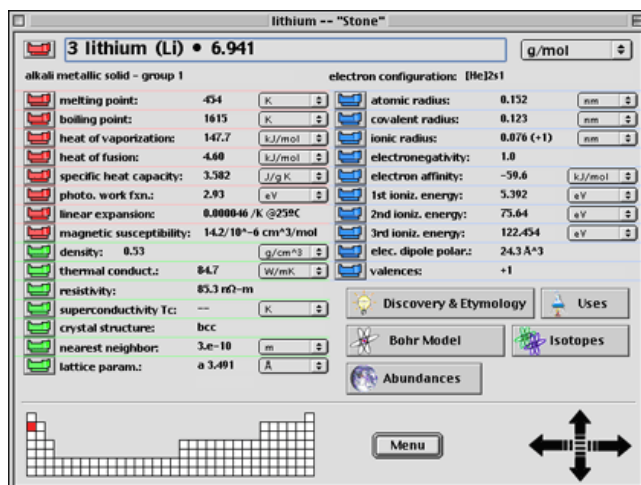


Periodic Table 3.1 diagram showing atomic radii.

Second, you can enter the name or abbreviation for an element and press the Find button. This displays (after a 4- to 6-second wait) an element information window.



Periodic Table 3.1 table selection (menu) window

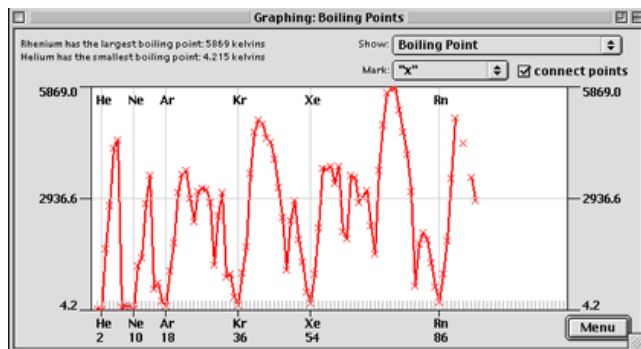


Periodic Table 3.1 element information window.

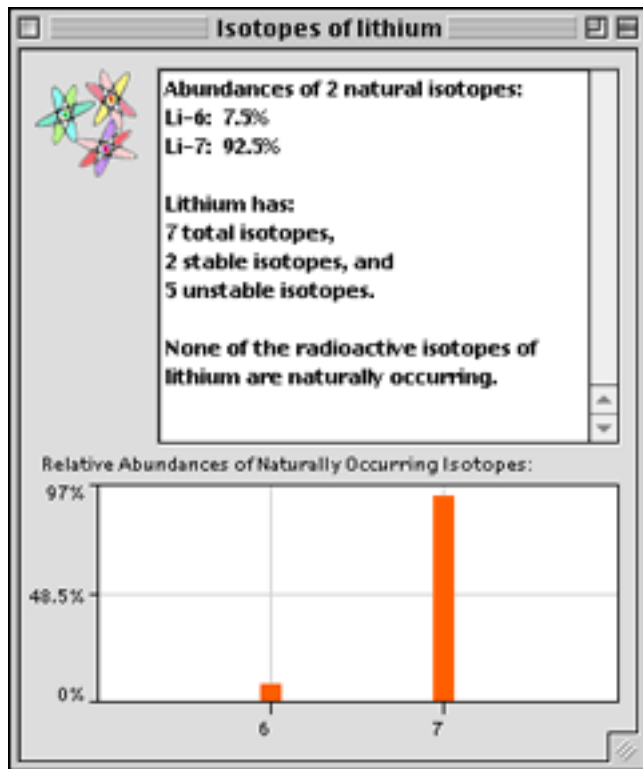
1. <http://www.synergycreations.com/pt.html>

All common physical constants and properties are displayed for each element. When you click on a button (with a periodic table icon) adjacent to any description (such as atomic radius), a new window appears displaying that property for all elements. (This is the same window that appears if you click on a physical property button in the "Table Selection (Menu)" window.) Only one of those windows can be displayed. Clicking on a different property replaces the periodic table display window. The element window also has information buttons: Discovery & Etymology, Uses, Bohr Model, Isotopes, and Abundances.

Periodic Table can display graphs of most of the physical properties.



Periodic Table 3.1 graph of boiling points.



Periodic Table 3.1 window displaying isotopes for an element.

These windows can be resized (within limits) and repositioned. Only one of these windows may be displayed at a time. A popup menu at the top of the graph window lets you switch between available properties for graphing.

The periodic table views let you click on an element to display its information window. However, there is a delay before the information window appears (5 to 6 seconds on my system), with no hint (such as a spinning ball cursor) that anything is happening. The element information window of Periodic Table 3.1 has an interesting function: navigation arrows in the lower right that move you through the periodic table. You can be looking at information on hydrogen and then easily move downward to lithium and sodium to see similarities and differences. I liked this feature.

Periodic Table 3.1 allows you to set preferences regarding the initial display, the preferred units for physical properties, and the element marker used in the graphs.

Periodic Table 3.1 has some excellent features. However, it is less polished than The Atomic Mac and can suffer from window clutter. Like The Atomic Mac, it cannot export textual information on an element. (You can copy the bits of text displayed in the small information windows such as "Uses.") It also has no printing capabilities, a significant drawback. (You can work around this by performing screen or window captures and printing the resultant PICT files.)

PTE 2.8.1

Developer: [Koingo Software](http://www.koingosw.com)¹

Price: \$11.71

Requirements: PowerPC-based Mac with Mac OS 8.0 or Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited (cannot view all element info)



1. <http://www.koingosw.com/products/pte.shtml>

PTE is the least expensive but also the least polished looking of the periodic table programs I reviewed. It also contains less information than the other two programs. The periodic table itself makes limited use of color in the element type or in the background. The color key is a separate window.

PTE 2.8.1 window.

PTE color key for main periodic table.

When you move your cursor over an element in the periodic table, information about that element displays at the bottom of the window. Clicking on an element pops up an

information window. This window contains Print and Copy buttons, a nice set of features. Multiple element windows can be opened simultaneously.

PTE element window.

PTE's File menu can display a table of polyatomic ions. You can also toggle the periodic table to a tabular view. This table can be sorted by any property (e.g., name, symbol, atomic number, melting point, etc.). Double-clicking on any row in the table pops up the element's information window. You can print the table, but you cannot copy or export information from it.

Name	Formula	Charge
Ammonium	NH ₄	+1
Bicarbonate	HC ₀₃	-1
Carbonate	C ₀₃	-2
Chromate	Cr ₀₄	-2
Cyanide	CN	-1
Dichromate	Cr ₂₀₇	-2
Hydronium	H ₃₀	+1
Hydroxide	OH	-1
Nitrate	N ₀₃	-1
Nitrite	N ₀₂	-1
Permanganate	Mn ₀₄	-1
Phosphate	P ₀₄	-3
Sulfate	S ₀₄	-2
Sulfite	S ₀₃	-2

PTE polyatomic ions table.

Summary

All three programs contain enough information to meet the needs of students and scientists. The Atomic Mac wins my vote as the best of the bunch. It has slightly less information than Periodic Table 3.1, but it has a beautiful and easy to use

interface. It is, however, the most expensive of the three programs. Periodic Table 3.1 has the most information and was also attractively designed. However, the excessive delays at displaying element information windows and the inability to print any window detract from its usefulness. PTE 2.8.1 is inexpensive but contains the least information. However, it is

extremely easy to use, has enough information to satisfy most users, and is the only program that supports the copying of element information for use in other applications. The tabular view of the entire periodic table with the ability to sort on any property is a nice feature missing from its competitors.

Copyright © 2002 Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Review: pop-pop 1.01

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

Developer: [Ambrosia Software](#)¹

Price: \$25

Requirements: G3-based Mac with Mac OS 8.6 or Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited (limited number of levels/plays)



I never really liked Asteroids much when I played it on my Atari 2600, but when I downloaded Ambrosia's Maelstrom years later I fell in love with the game. The company has a way of taking an old idea and making it fresh, addictive, and fun to play. So when I found out they were making a Breakout clone, I was excited.

There are a few shareware versions of Breakout already out there, but none of them have really added much to the game, and after a few plays I never felt hooked. pop-pop is different. Let's put it this way: it is not a game to start playing half an hour before you plan to go to bed.

The Basics

Super Breakout, on my Atari, was a pretty basic game. What they say about Othello—"a minute to learn, a lifetime to master"—fits here as well. As with [Pong](#)², you play by bouncing a ball off a moving paddle. Instead of bouncing the ball towards an opponent, you bounce it towards a brick wall, trying to remove the bricks from the screen. Hitting more than one brick before the ball returns to your paddle earns you more points. Miss the ball too many times and the game is over.



Super Breakout, image courtesy of www.atariage.com

2. <http://www.atpm.com/7.10/pong.shtml>

1. <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/games/pop-pop/>

Puzzle

pop-pop's one-player mode, Puzzle, challenges the player to knock out all of a number of targets, found among the bricks at random. In fact, there are a great number of different puzzle boards, with different configurations of bricks and targets. Scoring is pretty traditional, but you advance to the next round when all the targets are eliminated, regardless of blocks left on your screen.



That alone seems pretty tame, so to spice things up a bit all of the bricks drop down a layer over time. If you miss the ball, the bricks drop down a layer, and the bonus score multiplier, based on how many targets you've hit, gets reset to one. If any brick falls too far, the game is over. There's no limited number of "lives" however, as long as you can keep up with the dropping bricks.

But wait, there's more! As you play, sometimes an item will fall from a brick you hit, that can either help or hinder you if you catch it. There's also a magnet you can use to pull the ball toward your paddle, at the expense of points.

There are four levels of difficulty available in Puzzle mode, which offer increasingly difficult play boards for you to work on. Easy and Normal are good starting points. There are some puzzles in Hard (the second-hardest level) that I have a

hard time imagining anyone being able to beat. Maybe I just need more practice, but none of the puzzles in the Expert (hardest) level seem unbeatable.

Challenge

Challenge mode lets two players compete head-to-head on a screen that reminds me of something out of [Burning Monkey Puzzle Lab](#)¹. Each opponent chooses a cartoony character to play, and each character has a different power which lets it throw a distraction of some sort at his opponent.



Your opponent can be either the computer (you get to pick a level of difficulty), another person at your computer (not available in OS X), or another person over the Internet. If you have a firewall, you may need to adjust it for Internet play; with [NetBarrier](#)² set to Client-only mode, for example, it's not possible to make a connection to another game.

Playing over the Internet is my favorite way to go. You can even search for Internet opponents within the game itself. Although I have cable Internet access, it seems to work all right for dialups as I played a game against someone on dialup and it worked fine, at least on my end. You can chat with your opponent if you like, but in practice most conversations consist entirely of “gg,” short for “good game.”

Network play with an evenly-matched opponent can take a really long time; I had a single match that took some 52 minutes. I lost. By then, I was just happy that *someone* had lost, as the fun had long since worn off. (And no, I didn't throw the game, my opponent beat me fair and square.)

I think an improvement to make the game increasingly difficult over time would be welcome, to prevent overly long matches. Perhaps after ten minutes of play, the bricks could start dropping faster, or the occurrence of power-ups could become increasingly rare.



Navigation and Controls

I was surprised, when I hit Options, to notice that pop-pop recognized my graphics tablet as a tablet, rather than as just a simple mouse device. But tablet support isn't perfect. In between games, when you have a yellow pointer to move around, it ignores the tablet. Playing with a tablet can be a bit difficult, too; I tend to end up pushing the pen off the top of the tablet. (My fault, not Ambrosia's.)

Game play works just fine with my trackpad, and with a Kensington TurboMouse trackball under OS X. A keyboard option is available as well, but I expect any player using the keyboard would be at a strong disadvantage against an opponent armed with a mousing device.

Navigation between games in Puzzle mode needs a little re-thinking. If you get a high score when the game ends, you're prompted for your name (it would be nice if the score was time-stamped), which is added to the list. You'll most likely want to play again, but you can't do so from that screen. You have to click a small “back” button at the upper left of the screen, then mouse over to select which level you want before you get to play another game. Also, in dialog boxes where the only option is “OK,” hitting return or enter does not count as acknowledgement; you must move the mouse and click “OK.” Not huge problems, obviously, but there's room for some cleaning up here.

When you start the game, it changes your screen resolution. Unfortunately, this tends to cause problems with your desktop after you've quit and your resolution has returned to normal. When playing in OS 9, my icons are left in their proper places, but my pop-up folders get pushed to the left of the screen, and my application palette (fixed on the lower right of my screen, via Prestissimo) disappears. In OS

1. <http://www.atpm.com/6.10/bmpl.shtml>
2. <http://www.atpm.com/7.08/netbarrier.shtml>

X, icons are not returned to their proper places; in fact, they tend to pile up on top of each other: expect to spend several minutes re-positioning your icons every time you play pop-pop under OS X. The workaround (available under either OS) is to play pop-pop in “Windowed” mode. The game appears in a window and your screen resolution is not changed. Thoughtful of Ambrosia to offer this option, but really a pity it’s necessary.

Conclusion

pop-pop is a great game. It’s challenging, fun, and addictive, as well as attractive to look at. Internet play works well. Most of the people I found to play against online were using the unregistered version of the game; one even asked me for my registration code. If you use pop-pop (or any shareware program, for that matter) for a while and find you’re enjoying it, please consider paying for it.

Copyright © 2002 Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you’re interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Review: Tinderbox 1.1.3

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

Developer: [Eastgate Systems, Inc.](http://www.eastgate.com/)¹

Price: \$95; \$545 (10-user); \$1395 (50-user); \$2495 (100-user)

Requirements: "Modern" Macintosh with 11 MB RAM and 5 MB disk space

Recommended: G3-based Mac with Mac OS 8.5 and more than 16 MB of RAM or Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited

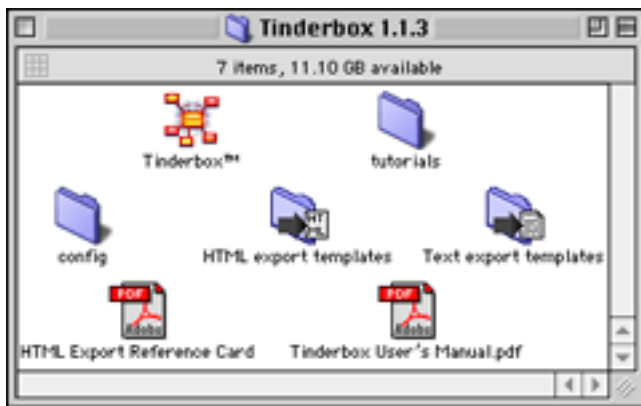


Overview

Description from Eastgate Systems: "Tinderbox is a personal content management assistant. It stores your notes, ideas, and plans. It can help you organize and understand them. And Tinderbox helps you share ideas through Web journals and Web logs."

Installation

Simply place the folder containing the Tinderbox application in whatever location you wish.

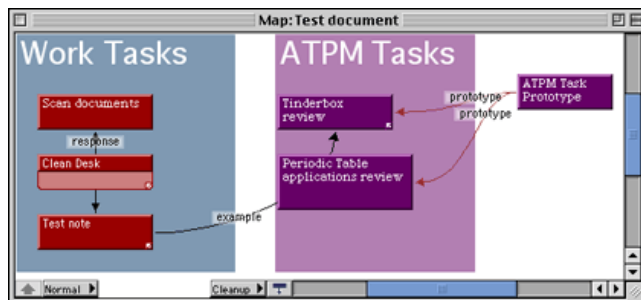


Tinderbox Folder

Using Tinderbox

The basic unit of Tinderbox is the Note. Notes have titles and may contain text and graphics. (Movies and sounds are not supported.) Notes are created and displayed within a Tinderbox window. The window types are Map, Chart,

Outline, Treemap, Explorer, HTML, and Nakakoji. The Map window allows you to arrange and organize multiple notes visually.



Map View Window

Notes can be created by double-clicking a blank area of the Map or Outline window, by choosing "Create Note..." from the Note menu (Command-K), by clicking the "Create Note" button (asterisk button) on the Toolbar, or by dragging a text file onto any view window.



Toolbar Palette

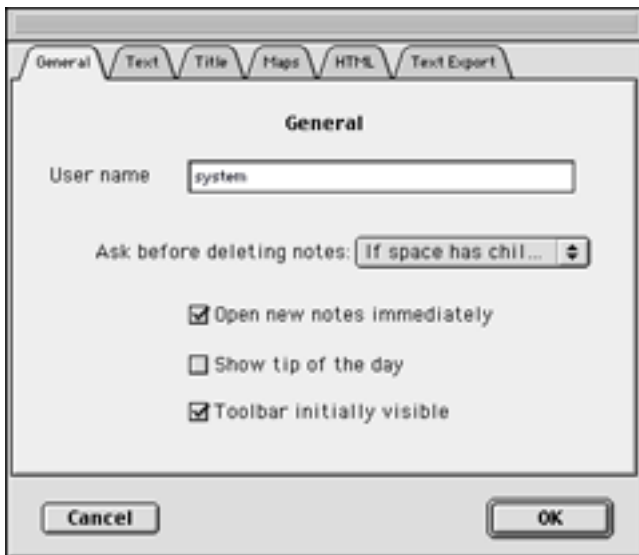
1. <http://www.eastgate.com/Tinderbox/>

The Create Note dialog box is used to assign a title, color, prototype (template), sorting characteristics, and other attributes.



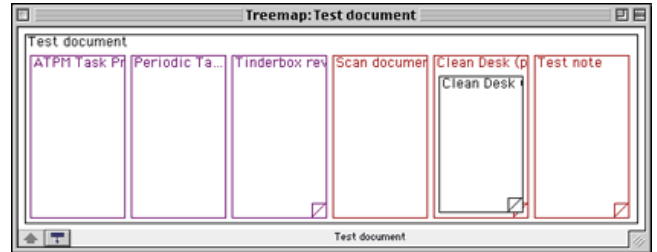
Create Note Dialog Window

When the dialog box is closed, an empty note window appears with a blinking text cursor. Text characteristics will be based on the chosen prototype or on the default settings (modifiable via the “Tinderbox Preferences...” dialog box).



Tinderbox Preferences Window

Notes may be linked to one or more other notes. Links are visible as arrows in the Map and Treemap views. Each link is labeled with a category or description. Built-in descriptors are: agree, disagree, clarify, example, exception, note, note+, prototype, response, update. Links can be created in the Map window by selecting a Note tile, clicking on the arrow button at the bottom, and dragging to another Note tile. Links may also be established by selecting a note and clicking on the “Make link” button at the bottom of any of the View windows or by selecting a note and using the “Create Link...” menu item (Command-Option-L).



Treemap View Window

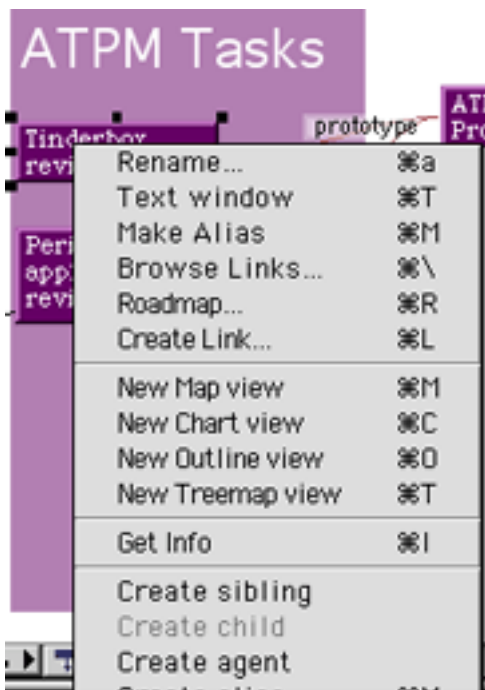
Hierarchies are established by dragging a ‘child’ note into a ‘parent’ note. These relationships are easiest to follow in the Outline, Explorer, and Chart windows. Background “Adornments” are used to highlight and organize Note tiles in the Map view. Prototype (template) Note tiles can be used to create groups of notes with identical size, color, and text characteristics. Alterations to the Prototype affect all linked Note tiles. Groups of notes may receive similar attributes without linking to a Prototype by using Stamps. Each Tinderbox Stamp contains a single attribute. Stamps are created by selecting “Edit Stamp...” from the Value menu. Each document’s stamps appear within the Value menu. Multiple stamps can be applied to groups of notes.

A feature useful to many owners of Tinderbox is the ability to assign actions to a note, including the displaying of Web page or e-mail content. The Web page content can appear within the note as HTML code, or the note can launch a Web browser to display the page.

Tinderbox also uses Agents. Agents are filters that select notes based on the content of Note titles and their text, on note linkages, and on note relationships. Actions can be assigned to Agents so that all notes that meet the selection criteria can be acted on simultaneously.

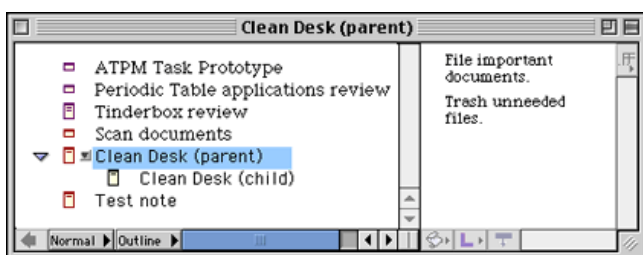
In the Outline and Chart views you can see the relationships among Note tiles. Note titles can be rearranged by dragging. The Note menu contains commands for moving

notes, promoting or demoting notes, and creating or editing links between notes. Note characteristics can also be modified via a contextual menu (Control-click or click-and-hold).



Note Contextual Menu

You can also expand or collapse outline levels for a single note or for the entire set of notes. The Explorer view uses a split window format. The Outline, Map, or Chart view appears in the left pane, and the contents of the selected Note appear in the right pane. The divider between panes may be repositioned, and the entire window is resizable.



Explorer Window in Outline mode

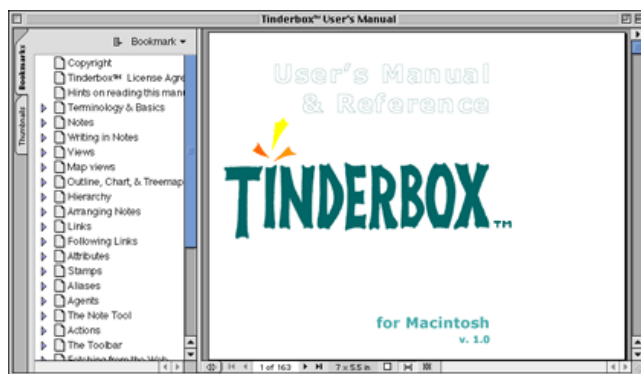
The HTML Export and Nakakoji (text export) views are used to format notes for export. Pre-built templates are available for both formats, and new templates can be created. HTML export maintains links between notes and will place images appropriately.



Text Export Window

Documentation

The application comes with a 163-page (7" x 5.5") PDF manual. You need Adobe Acrobat Reader 5 to view the manual. The manual gives brief descriptions of how to use Tinderbox, but detailed examples are absent. It does not even include a listing of all the actions and agents, much less a description of how to use them. Tinderbox supports AppleScript, but nothing about AppleScript is in the manual.



Tinderbox PDF Manual

Technical Support

Eastgate Software has telephone, fax, e-mail and snail mail addresses for feedback. There is no specific mention of technical support in the application and its PDF manual. The Eastgate Systems Web site has frequently asked questions pages for making notes and Weblogs with Tinderbox.

Eastgate Software offers training in Boston and New York. On site (individual or corporate) training can be arranged. Eastgate Software also maintains a listing of qualified consultants.

Problems, Bugs, and Omissions

Tinderbox is unstable and crashed numerous times during my review. Most crashes simply quit the application. However, a hard crash occurred after an image file was pasted into a note.

There is no easy way to change the font and formatting of a note. You must use the Get Info function, scroll down to font, click the Edit button, and type in the name of the font you wish to use. Deleting a prototype note causes related notes to lose their formatting. Changing the text font in other views is sometimes impossible, even when the Font menu appears to be active.

The height and width attributes do not work correctly in Map View. The displayed size at Normal magnification is approximately half the size listed under HTML height and width.

Tinderbox did not display its HTML export templates, even though the folder was selected in the template popup menu. Instead, Tinderbox displayed the contents of the folder containing the “HTML export templates” folder. (I could sometimes work around this by placing an empty folder in the “HTML export templates” folder and selecting it in the template popup menu.)

Occasionally, Tinderbox responded sluggishly to mouse clicks and drags. The Edit menu’s highlighting flickered intermittently.

Strengths

- Free-form notes easily can be organized, linked, and placed into hierarchies.
- There are multiple ways of viewing related information.
- You can export all or some notes in HTML or text formats using modifiable templates.
- Links to static or active Web pages (URLs) can be created.
- Agents effectively turn a Tinderbox file into a database of notes.

- Actions can automate processes based on content.

Weaknesses

- Cannot directly select links and cannot control the path of the links in Map view.
- Cannot create styled outlines within Tinderbox.
- Unusual interface, nonfunctional font menus, and difficult modification of text attributes in various views.
- Instability.

Alternatives

[Inspiration](#)¹ (Inspiration Software, \$69) has many features of Tinderbox (including URL links) and has better outlining capabilities. It is also less expensive than Tinderbox (\$69 vs. \$95 for single user). I [reviewed Inspiration 6](#)² last year and prefer it to Tinderbox.

[HyperCard](#)³ (Apple Computer, Inc., \$99) can perform many of the tasks done by Tinderbox. It works even better for concept mapping when supplemented with a program such as [HyperGASP](#)⁴ (Caliban Mindwear, \$75).

Summary

I found Tinderbox to be both intriguing and frustrating, intriguing because of its many ways of displaying relationships among bits of information (Notes) and because of its potential power for organizing and acting on information (Attributes, Agents, and Actions), frustrating because its interface is not intuitive and because it has a steep learning curve (and a mediocre manual). I would recommend it to users who need to organize many pieces of independent information and who have the patience and ability to become a Tinderbox power user. Tinderbox users should remember to save all open files often in case of crashes.

-
1. <http://www.inspiration.com/>
 2. <http://www.atpm.com/7.03/inspiration.shtml>
 3. <http://www.apple.com/hypercard/>
 4. <http://www.CalibanMW.com/>

Copyright © 2002 Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you’re interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

What Is ATPM?

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

Are You Looking for New Staff Members?

We currently need several [Contributing Editors](#) and a [Publicity Manager](#). Please [contact us](#)¹ if you're interested.

How Can I Subscribe to ATPM?

Visit the [subscriptions page](#)².

Which Format Is Best for Me?



The [Online Webzine](#) edition is for people who want to view AT^{PM} in their Web browser, while connected to the Internet. It provides sharp text, lots of navigation options, and live links to AT^{PM} back issues and other Web pages. You can use Sherlock to [search](#)³ all of the online issues at once.



The [Offline Webzine](#) is a HTML version of AT^{PM} that is formatted for viewing offline and made available in a Stuffit archive to reduce file size. The graphics, content, and navigation elements are the same as with the Online Webzine, but you can view it without being connected to the Internet. It requires a Web browser.



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



The [Screen PDF](#) edition is also saved in Adobe Acrobat format. It's a one-column layout with larger text that's optimized for reading on-screen. It may be viewed online in a browser, or downloaded and viewed in Adobe's free Acrobat Reader on Macintosh or Windows. PDFs may be magnified to any size and searched with ease.

What Are Some Tips for Viewing PDFs?

- You can [download](#)⁴ Adobe Acrobat Reader for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 5 has better quality and performance. AT^{PM} is also compatible with Acrobat Reader 3, for those with 680x0 Macs.
- You can zoom the PDF to full window width and scroll through articles simply by single-clicking anywhere in the article text (except underlined links).
- You can quickly navigate between articles using the bookmarks pane at the left of the main viewing window.
- For best results on small screens, be sure to hide the bookmarks pane; that way you'll be able to see the entire page width at 100%.
- Try turning Font Smoothing on and off in Acrobat Reader's preferences to see which setting you prefer.
- All blue-underlined links are clickable. Links to external Web sites are reproduced in footnotes at the bottoms of pages, in case you are reading from a printed copy.
- You can hold down option while hovering over a link to see where it will lead.
- For best results, turn off Acrobat's “Fit to Page” option before printing.

Why Are Some Links Double-Underlined?

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

What If I Get Errors Decoding ATPM?

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

How Can I Submit Cover Art?

We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for AT^{PM}, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming

1. editor@atpm.com

2. <http://www.atpm.com/subscribe>

3. <http://www.atpm.com/search>

4. <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>

5. <http://www.aladdinsys.com/expander/index.html>

issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to editor@atpm.com for more information.

How Can I Send a Letter to the Editor?

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

Do You Answer Technical Support Questions?

Of course. Email our Help Department at help@atpm.com.

How Can I Contribute to ATPM?

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

Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

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

Hardware and Software Reviews

ATPM publishes hardware and software reviews. However, we do things in a rather unique way. Techno-jargon can be useful to engineers but is not always a help to most Mac users. We like reviews that inform our readers about how a particular piece of hardware or software will help their Macintosh lives. We want them to know what works, how it may help them in their work, and how enthusiastic they are about recommending it to others. If you have a new piece of hardware or software that you'd like to review, contact our reviews editor at reviews@atpm.com for more information.

Shareware Reviews

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

Which Products Have You Reviewed?

Check our [reviews index](#)¹ for the complete list.

What is Your Rating Scale?

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

Will You Review My Product?

If you or your company has a product that you'd like to see reviewed, send a copy our way. We're always looking for interesting pieces of software to try out. Contact reviews@atpm.com for shipping information.

Can I Sponsor ATPM?

About This Particular Macintosh is free, and we intend to keep it this way. Our editors and staff are volunteers with "real" jobs who believe in the Macintosh way of computing. We don't make a profit, nor do we plan to. As such, we rely on advertisers to help us pay for our Web site and other expenses. Please consider supporting ATPM by advertising in our issues and on our web site. Contact advertise@atpm.com for more information.

Where Can I Find Back Issues of ATPM?

[Back issues](#)² of ATPM, dating since April 1995, are available in DOCMaker stand-alone format. In addition, all issues since ATPM 2.05 (May 1996) are available in HTML format. You can [search](#)³ all of our back issues.

What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

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



-
1. <http://www.atpm.com/reviews>
 2. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/>
 3. <http://www.atpm.com/search>