

ATPM

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

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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the April, 2003 issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* This month the US returns to daylight savings time. This means an extra hour of daylight, but we wish there were more things to see. In particular, we'd like to see the details about Panther, Apple's next OS X upgrade. But Mac watchers will now have to wait until late June to take in the announcements at Apple's annual World Wide Developers Conference. WWDC is now scheduled for June 23–27, 2003 at San Francisco's Moscone Convention Center and has been pre-billed as a Panther pre-release party. Speaking of annual Apple conferences...

Is It CREATE or Capitulate?

This summer's traditional Macworld Expo has been renamed CREATE. The revamped show will not feature a keynote address by Apple CEO Steve Jobs, nor will it have a consumer product focus. The new show is being tailored to the interests of creative professionals and will highlight Mac-based solutions for the creative markets.

Over the past few years the number of companies that have chosen to forego expensive trade shows in favor of less costly marketing opportunities has continued to rise. Despite the continuing growth in the Macintosh market, it has also become increasingly difficult for Apple to maintain a product release schedule tuned to both summer and winter semi-Macworld Expo shows.

Some consider this decision to be a capitulation that the Mac maintains a relatively small market share and that the company cannot maintain consumer interest in two annual shows. Others see it as evidence that the Macintosh market is growing in new ways and that success will be found in providing more solutions to professionals and enterprise customers. The results of this summer's CREATE expo may reveal the truth.

iGore

Vice President John Nance Garner once declared, "The vice presidency isn't worth a pitcher of warm spit." But former Vice President Al Gore's eight years of vice-presidential service may have been what earned him a seat on Apple's board of directors. In March, Apple announced the appointment of private citizen Gore to the company's board. Mr. Gore is filling one of two new board seats, increasing the number of board positions from five to seven. Another new outside director will be selected before the end of summer.

ATPM's Spam Man

About This Particular Macintosh has been in continuous publication since early 1995. We've had the privilege and honor of chronicling the Macintosh experience for our readers from the days just before the Internet's mass adoption by Macintosh users, to today's mass adoption of Unix-based Mac OS X and the resurgence of the Macintosh platform in living rooms, schools, and businesses.

Over the years ATPM has been home to many bright and dedicated writers and editors who have devoted time and talent to the continuing development of our monthly Internet magazine. One constant through our years of change has been the work of Michael Tsai, ATPM's publisher.

Recently Michael stepped beyond the role of Internet publisher to create a practical solution for a problem plaguing most Mac users—e-mail spam. Michael's [SpamSieve](#)¹ product was favorably reviewed in the April 2003 issue of Macworld as an inexpensive and effective solution to unsolicited junk e-mail hassles. We salute Michael's efforts and suggest that Mac users plagued with junk mail issues give the free demo of Michael's product a try.

Hail to the Vice Chief

We have one more vice to mention. The late Vice President Hubert Humphrey once said, "The President has only 190 million bosses. The Vice President has 190 million and one." In our case, this quote might apply to one of ATPM's most important yet least acknowledged jobs—managing editor.

We take seriously the feedback from our readers and pay close attention to your questions and comments. Last month Chris Turner stepped into the managing editor's position, ATPM's number two chair. Chris views all of our readers as our number one constituency and will be working closely with Michael on each month's release.

In the Dock

Just like your Mac OS X desktop, each issue of ATPM has its own favorite items in the Dock, ready for easy reading.

This month's issue includes:

The ATPM Staff

1. <http://www.c-command.com/spamsieve/>

The Candy Apple: Ride 'Em, Cowboy!

In which we investigate why it's bad to spill drinks on your laptop.

Networks In Action: Learning to Share With Others: Sharing Preferences Overview

This article covers the Sharing pane in the Mac OS X System Preferences. Mac OS X supports a wide variety of network services, including Windows networking support and an Internet sharing application. Pictures and real-world examples are included.

What's Under The Hood: Got Vinyl? Converting LPs to CDs—Part 2

In his second installment, Bob Lewis shows you how to transfer your music from vinyl to plastic...and leave the pops and hisses behind.

How To: Making Jaguar Adopt Orphaned Printers (Hopefully)

Having problems getting Jaguar and your printer to get along? You're not alone. Sylvester Roque tells us about his experiences and the solutions he found along the way.

Cartoon: Cortland

This month, Cortland welcomes Al Gore to the fold and messes around with some older Macs.

Desktop Pictures: Hong Kong

This month's desktop pictures were submitted by ATPM reader [Janet Mobley](http://homepage.mac.com/janmobley)¹. Janet is the editor of the [North Coast Mac Users Group](http://www.ncmug.org)², and she took these pictures on a trip to Hong Kong and Macau.

Review: DriveTest 1.0

DriveTest claims to show you whether or not your hard drive can cope with your demands. Eric Blair shows you whether or not DriveTest is the right tool for the job.

Review: NetNewsWire 1.0.1

Eric Blair puts NetNewsWire to the test to see if it really can change the way you view the Web.

Review: Photo Mechanic 3

Gregory Tetrault evaluates this image-browsing and information-editing application and compares it to iView MediaPro, which he reviewed last month.

Review: Secrets of the iPod, 2nd Edition (book)

Kirk McElhearn looks at this book that tells you how to get the most out of your iPod, from the software and hardware to third-party accessories and how to use it as a Mac OS X startup disk.

Review: Studio MX

Lee Bennett and Darryl Barney take a look at Macromedia's new Studio MX—a reduced-cost bundle of their most popular Web site production tools: Dreamweaver, Flash, Fireworks, Freehand, and more.



1. <http://homepage.mac.com/janmobley>
2. <http://www.ncmug.org>

Switching to OS X

Having just read your [column](#)¹ in AT[®]PM, I want to send encouragement to make the switch. It is much less traumatic and much easier to learn than I ever dreamed.

My switch came about because I got a new iMac for Christmas, so my situation is somewhat different. We took my old B&W G3 into the store my husband bought the iMac from, where my sales representative copied my G3 hard drive to the new iMac. So, I didn't have to deal with that, although I did burn CDs of everything I didn't want to lose, just in case.

When I got the new iMac home, it took me five minutes, literally, to be on the Web and getting mail using OS X as my startup system. I am using OS X Mail and Apple's Safari Web browser, and find them stable and trouble-free, although Mail lacks a return receipt feature that I would really like to have. In that five minutes, I imported all my bookmarks and mail folders from Netscape 4.79 (which I had been using for e-mail) flawlessly. I have found only one Web site that insisted it could only work with Netscape or IE. I do have IE 5 on my hard disk, just in case.

Because OS X and OS 9 can run simultaneously on the iMac, I always start up in OS X (have now upgraded to 10.2.4). None of my software (PageMaker 7.0, Microsoft Office 98, FileMaker 4.0 are the biggies, with *lots* of other applications and fonts) is OS X native. I was a little apprehensive, but all I have to do to open an OS 9 program is to double-click on it just as if I had started up in 9. I have found a couple of programs (Roxio Toast Light, for example) that simply won't work unless I restart in 9, but they are few and far between. I certainly learned only the basics, but that is all I needed to do! I will find out all the niceties as I go along.

I am enjoying working in OS X and will upgrade my software as funds (i.e. birthday and Christmas money) come available. BTW, all my USB peripherals (Epson C80 printer, Epson 1240U scanner, Nikon CoolPix 775 camera) also worked flawlessly as soon as I plugged them in.

This was absolutely the easiest switch from Mac computer to Mac computer or OS to OS that I have ever made. And this is the best Mac computer (since 1986) that I have ever had. Plus, it is really cool looking! I guess you could say that I am a happy camper!

—*Saundra Curry*

1. <http://www.atpm.com/9.03/candy.shtml>

The 2003 "Stuff You Can't Live Without" Awards

Thank you for this great [article](#)². It's nice to have a little overview of must-have apps of today, now that there is a continuous stream of new software released for the Mac that appears to be stronger than ever before. I guess Mac OS X really started an avalanche of new developers for Mac and, though it's great to have plenty of options when it comes to software for a specific task, it's also getting more and more difficult to pick the best-of-breed. Kudos on your choices!

—*M.E.*

Kudos

This site is amazing. There are many points being discussed for which I have been searching for a long time, but it's all here. A big thanks to all at AT[®]PM!

A big thanks also to Matthew Glidden—your [articles](#)³ are really helpful. You must be a good bloke!

—*Tim Huish*

Printer Sharing

I enjoyed the [article](#)⁴ about sharing printers among Macs on a network. I wonder if you have any suggestions for a situation where two non-networked computers, one a Mac and one a PC, need to share a USB-capable printer. I inquired about using a USB hub to connect the lot of them together and was told "you can't do that."

Any information would be appreciated.

—*Jack Ladwig*

It is true that you cannot use a USB hub to do what you want. If you don't mind manually switching between computer A and B, you could use a [USB switchbox](#)⁵, which is an inexpensive solution. The only other way to share the printer would require the two computers to be networked. —*Evan Trent*

ADB Tablet on OS X

Is there a driver that allows an ADB Wacom tablet to work using Mac OS X? I have an iMate, and the Wacom works fine on OS 9.

—*Tom*

I would recommend you try the new OS X [iMate driver](#)⁶ from Griffin. You will also need to download the latest version of the [Wacom drivers](#)⁷ for OS X. With both of those installed, the

2. <http://www.atpm.com/9.03/strikes.shtml>

3. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/networking.shtml>

4. <http://www.atpm.com/8.01/networking.shtml>

5. http://www.everythingusb.com/hardware/index/Belkin_2-Port_USB_Switchbox.htm

6. http://www.griffintech.com/software/software_imate.html

Wacom drivers may recognize the ADB tablet when plugged into the iMate. If not, perhaps one of our readers can suggest a solution. —*Evan Trent*

Virtual PC Games

Is there any way to upgrade the video on [Virtual PC 5](#)¹ so that I can at least play a game like *Half Life*? It will run the program, but it's incredibly slow. Any suggestions would be wonderful.

—*Ache*

No. The only way you can play games that require a video accelerator card is to drop back to VPC 2 or 3. Those older versions support Voodoo (3dfx) accelerator cards. Read my [VPC 4 review](#)² to find out why support was dropped. —*Gregory Tetrault*

[The Object of Programming](#)³

If you want another example of object-oriented programming in AppleScript, please check out my [BBEdit Disk Browser Suite](#)⁴ and [BBEditLib](#)⁵.

—*Emmanuel*

[Converting LPs to CDs](#)⁶

This article comes at just the right time, I'm getting more interested in the music side of the computer now. On January 8, 2003, I made inquiries into Black Cat Systems for their "audiocorder" software, of which I'm still thinking about, and, recently, a friend of mine installed "SoundEdit 16" on my iMac. Now, I've got all this great information from you. Like Tony the Tiger says, "I feel great."

—*Toni Seth*

...

Mr. Lewis has the beginnings of a great article set. I think he is wise in eliminating discussion of really high-priced equipment and software. "Sticker shock" is definitely the case

7. http://www.wacom.com/productsupport/macosex.cfm?driver_id=54
1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.02/virtual-pc.shtml>
2. <http://www.atpm.com/7.04/virtual-pc.shtml>
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4. <http://scriptdigital.com/divers/bbeditdiskbrowserscripts.html>
5. <http://scriptdigital.com/divers/bbeditlib.html>
6. <http://www.atpm.com/9.03/under-the-hood.shtml>

with some programs I've reviewed. I can't wait to see his review of Amadeus II. It looks like the ideal program at an unbeatable price, especially if you are using an input device other than Griffin's iMic. Also, M-Audio now has a standalone version of the Audiophile 24/96. For the price (about \$199), you get a lot of features. I'm purchasing one myself.

I hope Apple will increase the number of bits the Audio Manager can handle to at least 24 bits. There are advantages to recording your sound at the highest bit level and sampling rate even if you must downsample to 16 bits and 44.1 kHz later. With the higher parameters, you have more information to deal with if you must do noise control and other forms of sound shaping. Thus, you are not as likely to lose information as when you are editing at lower parameter levels.

On to the next episode!

—*Maurice C. Barone*

[Building Customized Boot CDs](#)⁷

I'm wondering if there is an option for non-Apple CD-R owners using Toast. I tried, but the CD would not boot.

—*Mike Kraemer*

Creating a CD with BootCD does not require an Apple burner. Disk Copy does seem, however, to need a burner that is fully supported. Here is the process I used to burn a boot CD using Toast Titanium 5.2.

1. Launch Toast 5.2 and choose Mount Disc Image (Command-M).
2. Select the Disc Image created by BootCD. Toast will mount the image and a CD icon will appear on the desktop.
3. From Toast, choose Other and select Mac Volume.
4. When the Toast window changes to Mac Volume, choose Select. Do not use drag and drop. It won't work this way.
5. In the dialog box that appears, choose the name of the CD that Toast mounted in Step 2.
6. Clear the checkbox that says Optimize-on-the-fly and check the box that says Bootable. This does not seem to work if Optimize-on-the-fly is checked.
7. Burn the disc and be sure to choose Burn Disc and not Burn Session.

—*Sylvester Roque*

7. <http://www.atpm.com/9.03/bootcd.shtml>

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The Candy Apple

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Ride 'Em, Cowboy!

I've always been suspicious of extended warranties. My assumption was that if the product was well made, I shouldn't have to purchase what is essentially insurance against defect. I made that argument at my last new car purchase. I said, "It's a Honda. Either it'll break on the way home, or it won't break." Hard for them to argue that their product was poorly made and might need more than the standard protection.

That reasoning does not apply to more portable consumer items, though, like laptop computers. No matter how well made the product is, there's a better chance of damage to an item that can be dropped than one that is stationary, so users with lots of experience with iBooks and PowerBooks have generally recommended AppleCare protection plans.

I'm not here to counter that recommendation, but I do have a proposal worth your consideration. Even if you don't follow up on it with your laptop, it may be of use for you for some other item. It's an insurance thing called an *inland marine rider*, and its purpose is to insure things that can be moved. First an anecdote on why it's a good thing, then the details.

One of my co-workers had a second-generation iBook that he liked very much. He watched movies on it and carried it around from place to place, and even let friends play with it. Since he would never be this careless himself, he believes one of these friends accidentally spilled a glass of iced tea on the keyboard. He didn't know it was in there until the monitor started frizzing.

He sent it to be looked at by certified Apple technicians, who opened up the keyboard and pronounced it sticky. (We live in the American South. Tea is required to be heavily sweetened here. Visitors bring intravenous insulin drips to cope.) The Apple techs were the ones who suggested tea spillage. They said it was everywhere, and that cleaning would run about \$300. He was willing to pay this, until they called back and said the tea spillage had also gotten into something that would require replacing the monitor. Now the estimate was \$900, and he said to hold the phone.

He debated ditching the unit and spending the \$900 on a new iBook. On a whim, he called his insurance agent, who had a year earlier talked him into an inland marine rider on

his homeowner's insurance policy. It cost him \$15 a year, and covered his silverware and some stuff like that. His agent said if this was a portable computer, it was covered for replacement cost. New iBooks with DVD players go for \$1,300 now, and they sent a check the next day. No questions.

I have to think of this as a success story for the beleaguered consumer. Again, I'm not recommending that anyone get a rider and forego Apple's Protection Plan. I will say, though, that if I could get my insurance agent to commit to a rider that covered a laptop like my friend's did, I'd certainly think twice about that costly warranty.

Here's the deal on the inland marine rider: one story says Lloyd's of London was looking for a way to insure items that had arrived by ship but then had to be transported over land to their destination. This way they could charge even more for insuring them. This story may be apocryphal. Another version has to do with cargo being transported on barges on canals, so they came up with the idea of "floater" coverage. In its current form, the rider covers items that are mobile or in transit. One good explanation of the guidelines can be found at [Ask Alice](http://www.toolkit.cch.com/advice/02-216askalice.asp)¹.

These riders can cover everything from specialized auto tools to quilts—I found a bunch of quilting sites when I first googled this topic! These are one-of-a-kind items that must be moved now and then, and this is an inexpensive way to insure them. Just like your laptop, digital camera, and whatever other portable electronic equipment you have that should be insured but isn't. Remember that normal property insurance will cover most items within 100 feet of your house, but if they leave the house, you may need this additional rider. Ask an insurance professional to find out what's best for you, but now you have another weapon in the arsenal against tea spillage and other acts of gooberism.

Onward.

1. <http://www.toolkit.cch.com/advice/02-216askalice.asp>



Learning to Share With Others: Sharing Preferences Overview

Introduction

Mac OS X moved most of OS 9's system functions (i.e., control panels) to the new System Preferences application. Functions previously in control panels like Sharing Setup, TCP/IP, and AppleTalk now reside in the Network and Sharing preference panes. Network controls the interfaces (i.e., Ethernet and AirPort) and your Internet connection. Sharing adds functionality like Internet sharing, Windows File Sharing, and others. This article covers the Sharing preferences functions.

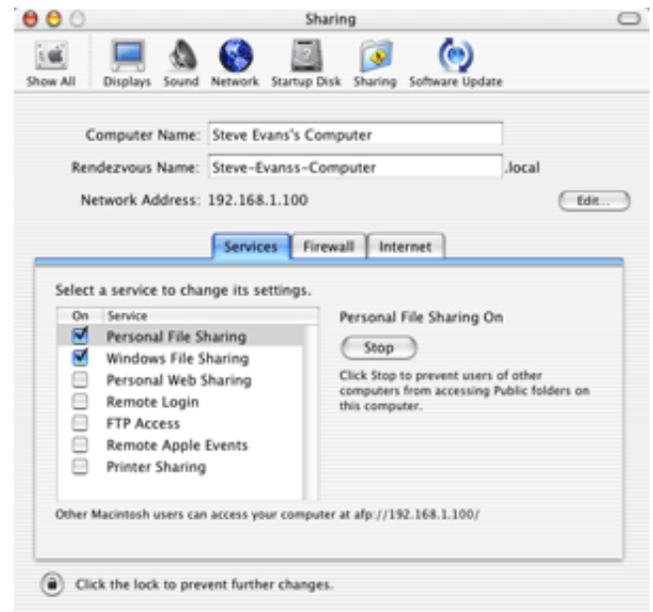
What to Do First

If you want to network with other Macs or Windows computers, do the hardware side first. The software just sits there and looks dumb if there aren't any wires connecting computer A to computer B. Want to go wireless? Install an AirPort card (or AirPort-friendly wireless card) in each computer.

This overview assumes you've already got the network hardware sorted out. If not, see [other network articles on ATPM.com](http://www.atpm.com/Back/networking.shtml)¹ or the [Three Macs](http://www.threemacs.com)² site.

First Glance

Open System Preferences and select Sharing. Better yet, drag the Sharing icon to your shortcut bar. You'll probably need it later.



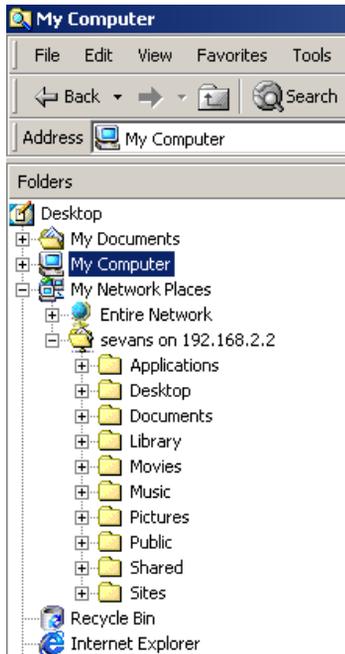
The Sharing preferences window.

Sharing shows your computer name and opens to the Services tab. Most of the action is in the Services tab. We'll start with Personal File Sharing and Windows File Sharing to get your files moving around the network.

Personal File Sharing (PFS) handles Mac-to-Mac file sharing. Type the "afp" address (in my example, `afp://192.168.1.100/`) into an Internet browser to browse the files as if they were on your own Mac. You can't access shared files from the same Mac, so only enable PFS if you're sharing files with other Macs.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/networking.shtml>
2. <http://www.threemacs.com>

Windows File Sharing makes your files available to Windows network users. Check Windows File Sharing (WFS) if you didn't already, or select the name and push the Start button. Once WFS is active, open "My Network Places" to see your Mac's files on a networked Windows computer.



My Mac appears under "My Network Places."

You can also map your Mac as a network drive. On the Windows computer, right-click on the "My Computer" icon and select "Map Network Drive." Enter your Mac's WFS address (in my example, \\192.168.2.2\sevans).



Mapping your Mac to a network drive.

For Mac OS 9, sharing files conveniently with Windows required extra software. Mac OS X includes the SMB protocol, which shares files between Windows and Unix-based systems. Using WFS means you're using Samba. *Note:* your dance skills will not improve.

Note on Multiple IP Addresses

Sharing Preferences shows your Internet IP address in its examples, which might not be your IP address for sharing files. My computer uses AirPort for the Internet connection, with the address \\192.168.1.100 (shown in the example screenshots). However, I share files to my home network using Ethernet. Its IP address is \\192.168.2.2, different from the Internet IP address.

If you use two network addresses like I do, don't try to use the Internet IP address for file sharing and vice-versa. (Nothing "bad" will happen, it just won't work.) If you use a single IP address for both Internet and file sharing, you don't need to worry about this.

Other Items in the Services Tab

Remote Login lets you connect to your Mac from networked computers using *ssh*. Enable this if you want to log in remotely from the command line.

FTP Access turns your Mac into an FTP server, providing file upload and download for any network computer with an FTP program. Sign in with your user name and your file sharing IP address (ftp://192.168.2.2/ in my example).

```
ftp> open 192.168.2.2
Connected to 192.168.2.2.
220-
      Welcome to ftp://192.169.123.160 !
220 192.168.2.2 FTP server (lukemftpd 1.1) ready.
User (192.168.2.2:(none)): sevans
331 Password required for sevans.
Password:
230-
      Welcome to Darwin!
230 User sevans logged in.
ftp> ls
```

FTP access from the Windows command line.

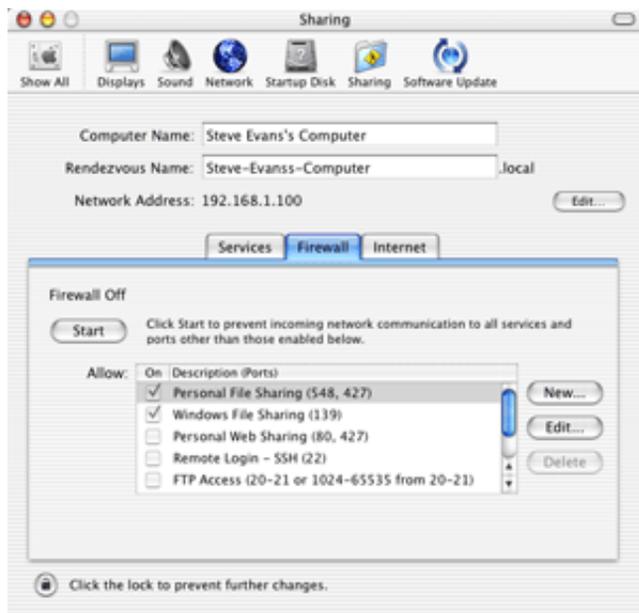
Some programs use **Remote Apple Events** to communicate across the network. I've never used this function, so I assume a program will tell you if it needs to use them.

Printer Sharing does just what it says—it makes your Mac's printer available to the network. Other Macs can add your printer from the Print Center application. Just select Add and locate your printer by network type (AppleTalk, Rendezvous, etc.). Print to it as you would a normal printer. You must install the printer software on the networked Mac before using a shared printer.

Firewall Preferences

Firewall software protects your network connection by restricting specific kinds of incoming traffic. Select Start on the Firewall tab to prevent network users from accessing the

selected services. Home users probably won't need this often, but Internet users can use it to enhance security. See the Mac OS X help files for more information about firewalls.



The Firewall preferences tab.



The Internet preferences tab.

Internet Preferences

Select Start to share your Internet connection with other computers on the network. Your Mac turns into a DHCP server, looking for other computers and assigning them IP addresses. Set the other computers to use DHCP (or "Get IP address automatically") and they'll "see" your Mac and use its Internet connection.

Note: On my Windows laptop, I sometimes have to switch the network connection from DHCP to a manual IP address and back to DHCP before it works properly. It's currently unclear to me why this is necessary, but you should try it if you have problems.

Example Setup

I frequently move files from my work laptop to my Mac. When I bring the laptop home, I connect its Ethernet port to my switch. While it's starting up, I open the Sharing preferences on my Mac. I start Windows File Sharing and share my Internet connection.

When the laptop finishes booting, I open My Network Places and confirm that my Mac appears in the list. If it doesn't, I check the laptop's network connection, then mount my Mac as a network drive. File movement is now a simple drag-and-drop from Windows Explorer. I can also browse the Net from my laptop. If I had a network game on both computers, I could set them up to play against each other. And so on.

Once I finish working with the laptop, I disconnect it and shut down the services from the Sharing preferences. I repeat the process any time the laptop returns home. Mac OS X's network services make this kind of connection a snap after years of Mac-to-Windows networking headaches.

Copyright © 2003 Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com. Matthew Glidden is the webmaster of Threemac.com, a guide to constructing and maintaining home and small-office Macintosh networks. He can also tango and juggle, not necessarily at the same time.



Got Vinyl? LPs to CDs Part 2—Recording and Editing

Thank You

Before we get started with part two, I must take a moment to thank everyone for all the great comments and suggestions sent to me. In all my years of writing articles, I have never received so many accolades from my readers. Yet I would be wrong not to credit our great copy editors at ATPM. They have the hardest task of taking my sometimes off-key writing and making it fit into the magazine like a glove. Therefore, as you thank me, I must in turn thank them. With that out of the way, let us move on to part two.

I Almost Cringed

Last month, after ATPM went to press, I purchased the February issue of a certain UK Mac magazine that happened to also have an abridged article about converting LPs to CDs. The hairs on the back of my neck stood straight up when I read the author's assertion that it was OK to use the microphone port to transfer music to your Mac. I also received one or two comments from readers to this effect.

Again, I must emphasize that you *should not* use the microphone port for this purpose. It is not well shielded, which means it can (and will) pick up any electrical noise that is produced within your Mac. You want the signal you record to be as clean as possible. [Part one](#)¹ discussed devices you can use instead of the microphone port.

The Story So Far

Last month, I said that there were no FireWire audio input devices on the market, and I was corrected by one of our readers. FireWire devices do indeed exist, but I found that they cost close to \$800. Digital video (DV) converter boxes and camcorders can also double up for audio work. If you already own one of these devices, it may make sense for you to try to use it, but that is beyond the scope of this article.

The Right Software

For the rest of this article I will look at Amadeus II, Final Vinyl (in conjunction with iMic), Spin Doctor, Peak LE, and Montage with Ray Gun Pro for recording and editing your music. The steps I am about to take you through can also apply to importing from tapes and other input sources.

Most of what I will discuss here applies to all of the previously mentioned programs. No matter which program you decide to use, make sure you take the time to read the relevant instruction manual. All of the aforementioned software comes with excellent documentation.

Preparation

Make sure the drive you are going to record on has enough space for your recording. On average, you will use about 10 MB for every minute of recording time. That adds up to between 400 MB and 700 MB in disk space per full-length album.

Take the time to quit any unneeded applications that are open in the background. Do not try to do any multitasking while recording or editing, as either process can be extremely demanding on your CPU. Although Mac OS X is supposed to share CPU time among applications, background processes can still eat crucial CPU time. OS X is good at avoiding this situation, but not perfect.

You may also wish to purchase an album cleaning solution. Normally, these solutions come with special wipes to use on your LPs. These solutions help to reduce unwanted noise by removing dust, fingerprints, and static buildup. I use Gruv Glide II on all my albums; it costs around \$25 and can be found in any [Guitar Center](#)².

Before you start recording, open your application's Preferences panel and set the input source and the bit rate. If your program allows, try to record at 24-bit to achieve a higher resolution. Set the sampling rate to 44.1 kHz. Ironically, only Amadeus II (the cheapest of all the programs) has support for a 24-bit sample size. Bias hopes to eventually add such support in a future release of Peak LE. Ideally, Apple would build a digital input port into future Macs.

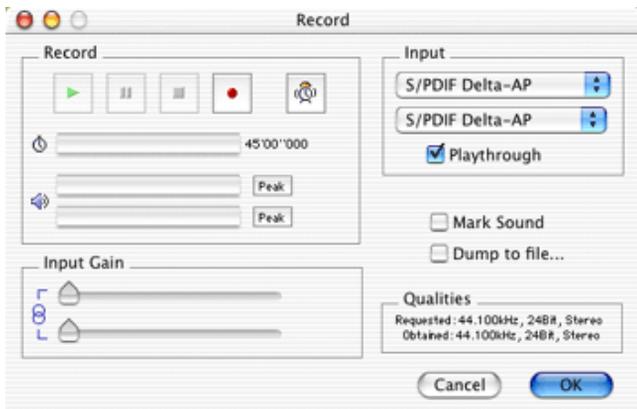
Recording

If you have done any recording using a tape deck, you will feel right at home recording to your Mac. Depending on the program, you will either work with one or two main windows for the job. The first contains the control panel, which lets you record, play, pause, fast-forward and rewind just like on a tape recorder. The other window contains the Volume Units (VU) meters. These meters show the intensity of the left and right channels of your recording.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/9.03/under-the-hood.shtml>

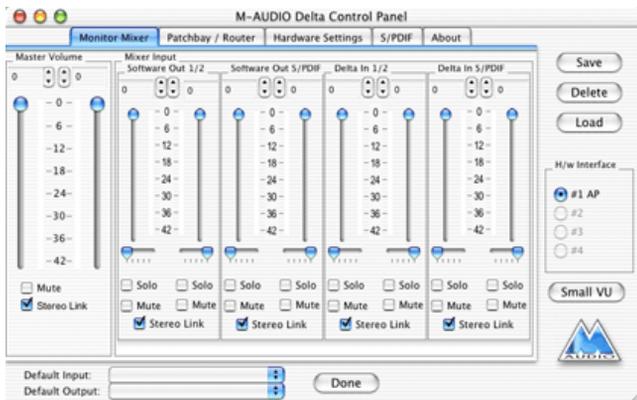
2. <http://www.guitarcenter.com>

Depending on the program, you may also find a pair of sliders for increasing or decreasing the gain of each channel. This prevents your recording from red-lining and avoids distortion. Programs that lack VU meters usually control the gain of the recording automatically. I have worked with both modes of recording, and I prefer having control over the VU meters so I can fine-tune what I record.



Amadeus II Record Window

Most sound cards and devices come bundled with software that simulates a master sound mixing board. My [Audiophile 2496](http://www.audiophile2496.com)¹ came with such software; it lets me sample and adjust the incoming signal before it reaches my recording program.



M-Audio Delta Control Panel

Once you have set all of the parameters to your taste, you are now ready to start recording. Cue your needle to the beginning of the album; this can be done with your tone arm lifter. My [Stanton STR8-80](http://www.stantonmagnetics.com/alpha44/tt_str8-80.asp)² has an on/off switch for the turntable motor, which means I can place the needle on the LP at the exact beginning.

Now, press the Record button on your Mac, drop the needle slowly onto the album or start the motor and sit back as your Mac does the rest. Once you reach the end of the first side of

the album, flip it over and continue recording. Don't worry about pressing your program's Pause button while doing this; you can delete the gap when you come to edit your recording.

Once side two of the album has finished playing, press Stop on the software control panel, save your recording as an AIFF file, and give it a name. You will also be presented with a window that shows you a 2D image of your recording, where you will do all your editing.

Editing

Now I will show you how to clean up your recording. I recommend that you make a copy of the recording at this point; this way, if you do make some glaring irreversible mistake you can revert to your original recording. Let us now look at how to use some of the editing functions of the applications I mentioned earlier.

[Amadeus II](#)³ (\$25)

The first thing to do is trim the beginning and end of your recording, and cut out the gap created when you flipped the album. Highlight these sections with your mouse, being careful not to cut into your recording, and select Clear from the Edit menu. Amadeus II lets you magnify the image of your recording so that you can fine-tune your editing to the nearest millisecond in length. Try to leave about a two-second gap both at the beginning and between sides one and two.

All of the filters I will now discuss can be selected from the Effects menu.

Denosing

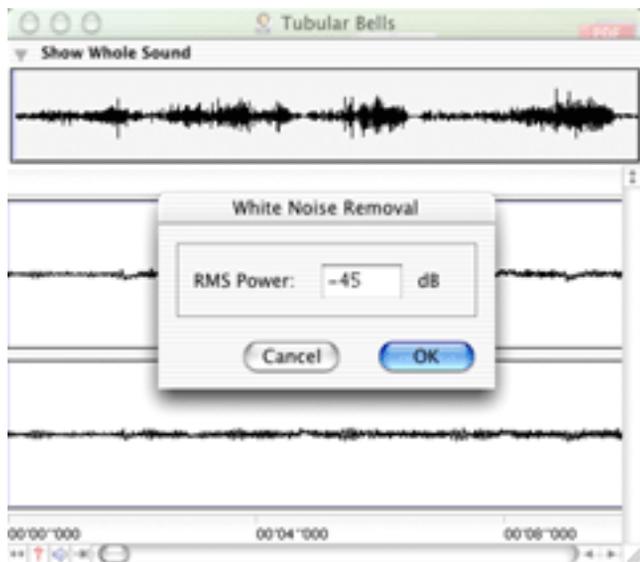
The Denosing filter is designed to suppress background noise. First, select a section of your recording that contains only noise. The best place to look is a quiet point in the recording. From the Filter menu, select Sample Noise. Amadeus will create a noise profile of the selected portion. Then select the whole recording and choose Suppress Noise in the dialog. Amadeus II will then go through the entire recording and filter out all background noise based on the section you sampled earlier.

Sometimes you may find that there is no ideal section in the recording to get a sample from. In that case, you will have to use the White Noise function. This presents you with a dialog window where you select the amount of filtering you wish to

1. <http://m-audio.com/products/m-audio/audiophile.php>
 2. http://www.stantonmagnetics.com/alpha44/tt_str8-80.asp

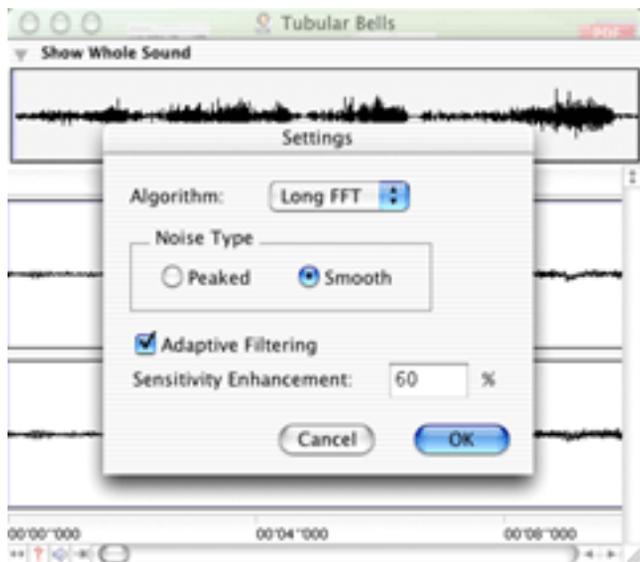
3. <http://www.hairersoft.com/Amadeus.html>

apply in decibels (db). Start with a low number of -70db and slowly raise that setting until the desired noise disappears. Go too high and you risk major degradation in your recording.



Amadeus II White Noise Window

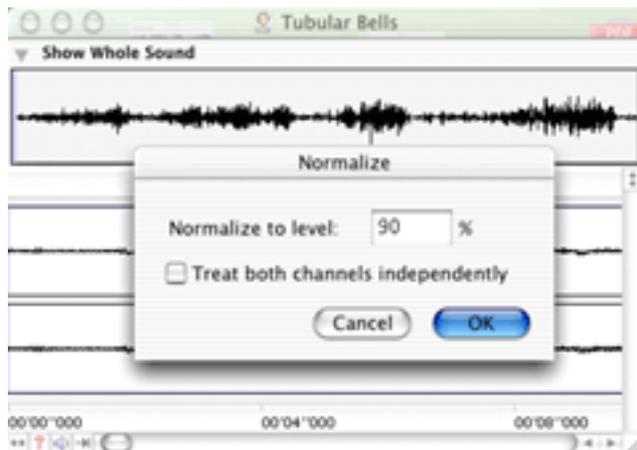
You can customize the Denoising tool by selecting Options... in the Denoising sub-menu. Those transferring tape to CD will find the extra options useful in eliminating tape hiss. In this window, set the noise type at smooth, with Adaptive Filtering checked. Select Long FFT from the pop-up menu, and select a Sensitivity Enhancement between 30% and 70% as advised by the author of the program. For more information on this, I urge you to read the documentation that comes with Amadeus II.



Amadeus II Denoising Window

Normalize

The Normalize filter is very useful for boosting the amplitude (loudness) of a recording that was recorded at too low a level. When applied, the overall volume of your recording is optimized so that its maximum possible amplitude is reached without any frequency clipping. You can apply it either to both channels as a whole or to one at a time. You can also experiment with the level you wish to apply.



Amadeus II Normalize Window

Sound Repair

The Repair filter helps to eliminate the cracks and pops in your recording. Remember how I told you to note down the times at which you heard these noises? This is where these times will come in handy. If you look at the window with the image of your recording, you will see that it is marked off in time segments at the bottom.

Referring to your notes, scroll to the first time you heard a pop. Zoom in as far as you can on that section of the recording. You may have to scroll around a bit before you find the pop, but it will stand out like a sore thumb in the form of a spike shaped like a "V." It may appear in either or both channels. Highlight a small portion before and after the spike, not exceeding 40–50 milliseconds either way. Then select Open Repair Center, click Repair, and the pop is history.

You can also set the Repair Center to do the repairs automatically. To do this, you will have to tinker with the sensitivity slider so that it catches all the pops. After you have fully applied this filter I recommend that you play back your recording, to make sure you have nailed each defect.



Amadeus II Repair Center

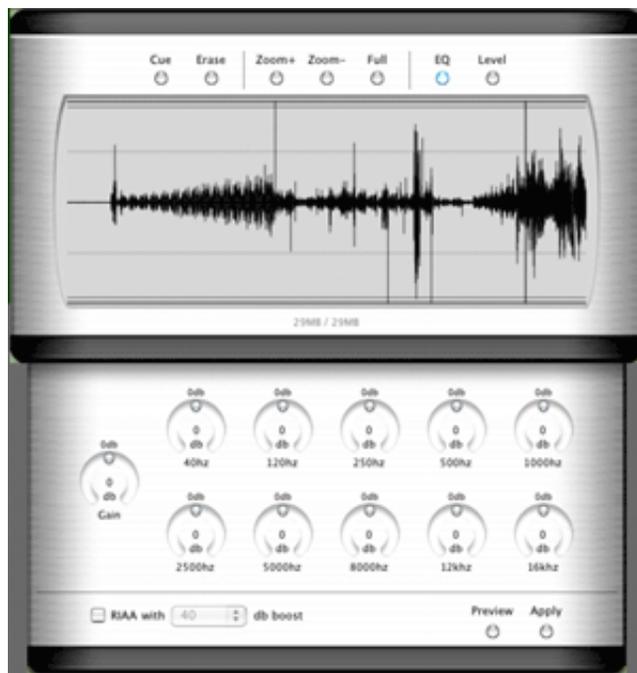
[iMic with Final Vinyl¹](#) (\$35)

At first, I was skeptical of how well the iMic would perform. To test its abilities I recorded the same album at 16-bit with Amadeus II and Peak LE through my Audiophile 2496, and again with Final Vinyl through the iMic. To my delight, I found that the Final Vinyl recording came out sounding almost as good as the recordings produced by the other two programs. I am still of the opinion that using the digital sound card produced a better sounding and clearer recording, but at \$35 the iMic does offer an inexpensive way to do the job.

With Final Vinyl, as with other programs, you can listen to audio input and adjust the levels before you start recording. One feature unique to Final Vinyl however is the ability to boost your signal, as a substitute for a phonograph pre-amp. I am surprised that this feature is not found in other audio programs.

Although Final Vinyl is excellent software for recording, its editing functions are not quite up to scratch. I read the manual and tried to edit my recording, only to come away a bit frustrated. The manual is not clear on how to use Final

Vinyl to clean up your recording. It lacks the required filters to clean up your recording, but it does include an 8-band equalizer to tweak the different frequencies.



Final Vinyl

Bear in mind that this is version 1.0 of Final Vinyl. In the ReadMe, Griffin Technology even admits that they plan to add many more features in future updates. In the meantime you can always use Amadeus II, Spin Doctor, or Montage with RayGun to do your editing.

[Peak LE²](#) (\$99)

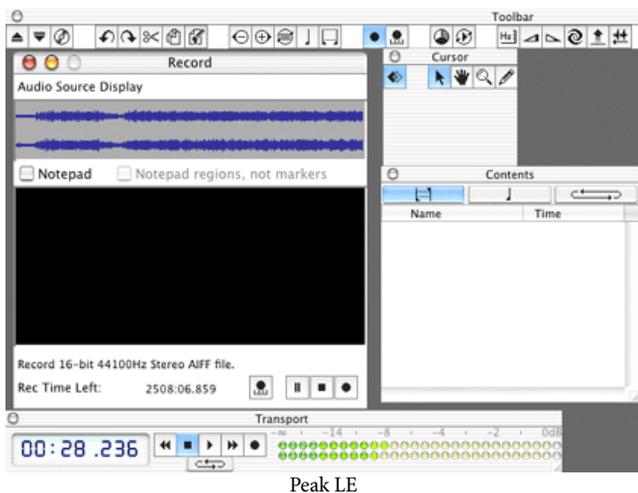
Peak LE, like Final Vinyl, is a great tool for recording, but not for editing. As Photoshop users rely on third party plug-ins to manipulate photos, Peak LE has third party plug-ins to handle automatic pop and click removal. Peak does however include a pencil tool that you can use to manually remove pops.

Under OS 9.x, Peak LE works with a filter program called RayGun by Arboretum Systems, Inc. As I write, the only way you can use RayGun in OS X is within another program

1. <http://griffintechology.com/products/imic/index.html>

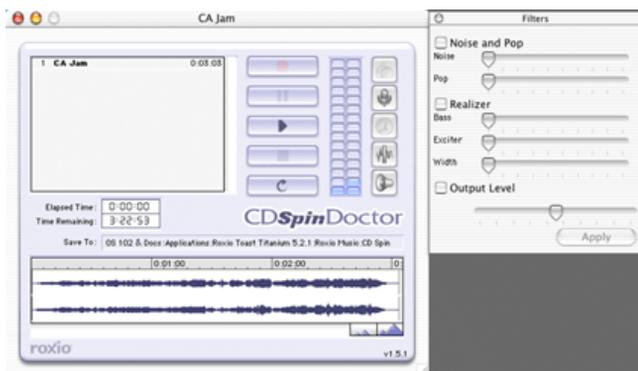
2. <http://www.bias-inc.com>

called Montage, also by Arboretum. I spoke to Bias, and they told me that Arboretum is in the process of writing a plug-in version. For now, though, you will have to use Amadeus II, Spin Doctor, or Montage with RayGun to benefit from automatic removal of clicks and pops.



CD Spin Doctor¹ (Bundled with Toast w/Jam, \$199)

Recording with CD Spin Doctor is straightforward, but I do recommend that you check your sound levels beforehand. You can use the gain control to change the intensity of the signal. The filters bundled with Spin Doctor do an excellent job of cleaning up audio from your LPs or tapes. The Filter window can be broken down into three main sections: noise and pop, realizer, and output level.



CD Spin Doctor

The noise filter eliminates unwanted hum and background noise while the pop filter removes cracks and pops. Those working with tapes will find the noise filter most useful for removing hiss. You control the intensity of these filters with a set of sliders. The best way to eliminate hiss is by finding a point in your audio where it is most prevalent and highlight that section. Then, move the noise filter slider to the right in

small increments. Each time you do so, press Play to hear how that section sounds. Once you have removed the hiss to your liking, highlight the whole recording and click Apply.

The pop filter is used in the same way as the noise filter. To use this filter, you will have to refer back to those notes you took while you were dubbing to keep track of where the pops and clicks occurred. If you did not keep such a timesheet, then you will have to listen to the entire recording to locate each flaw.

To remove a pop, go to the point where it occurred and magnify that section. As I mentioned earlier, the pop will show up as a pronounced spike in the form of a “V.” Highlight the exact section where the pop occurs. Using the slider, make changes just like you did with the noise filter. Make sure you pre-listen to your changes until you get it just right. In most cases, I was able to rid myself of *almost* every snap and pop on my album with this filter.

I say almost because there was one glitch that I could not quite correct in Spin Doctor. The flaw was more like a skip in the music, and attempts to remove it resulted in distortion rather than restoration. I decided to switch back to Amadeus II and Montage with RayGun Pro; both were able to identify and rectify this one unusual defect. Spin Doctor does an excellent job in removing pops and clicks from your recording.

Realizer attempts to enhance the sound of your music in much the same way as an equalizer does. It has three bands you can adjust; as always, listen to any changes before applying them. Finally, the output filter tries to compensate for changes in audio levels resulting from the use of other filters.

Montage 1.0 with Ray Gun Pro² (\$269)

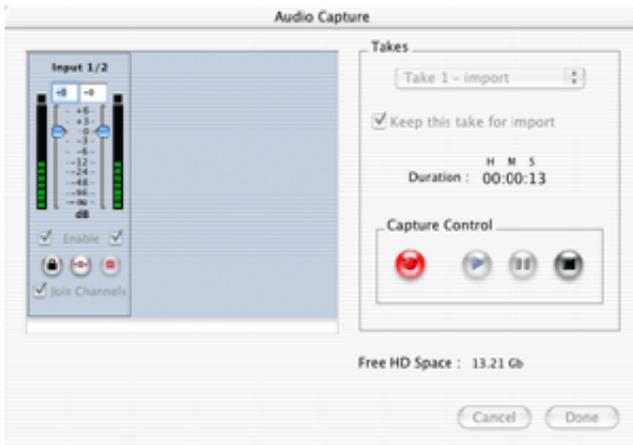
Montage is a fully-featured multimedia editor. It is the perfect blend for those looking for a package that deals with audio, movie, and text editing. By itself, Montage costs \$149. Arboretum’s audio restoration filter Ray Gun Pro (RGP) costs an additional \$149, and both bundled together cost \$269.

The PDF manual is well done. I ended up printing out about 70 to 100 pages of the manual so that I did not have to go switch back and forth between reading and using the program. Montage also comes with an excellent tutorial to help you dive right in.

1. <http://www.roxio.com/en/store/index.jhtml>

2. http://arboretum.com/products/montage/montage_main.html

Recording in Montage is straightforward. From the Record/Playback menu, select Audio Capture.... From the resulting window you can adjust the gain of the left and right channels. Once satisfied with the levels, press Record.



Montage Record Window

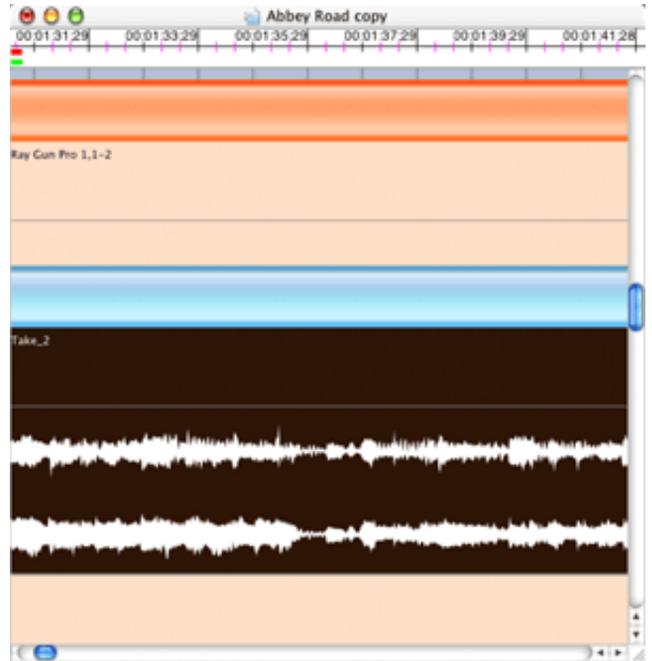
Using RGP filters, you can clean up unwanted noise in your recording. To access RGP, select Process from the menu, then in the Audio Effect sub-menu scroll to the bottom and select Ray Gun Pro.



Montage Menu Selection for Ray Gun Pro

Upon selecting RGP, your audio window will be placed into a RGP capsule. Scroll up to the top of the RGP window and double-click on the dark tan bar. That will call up the RGP

filter window. RGP is composed of five modules that can be used separately or in any combination. These filters include Pop, Rumble, Hum, Noise, and Enhancement.



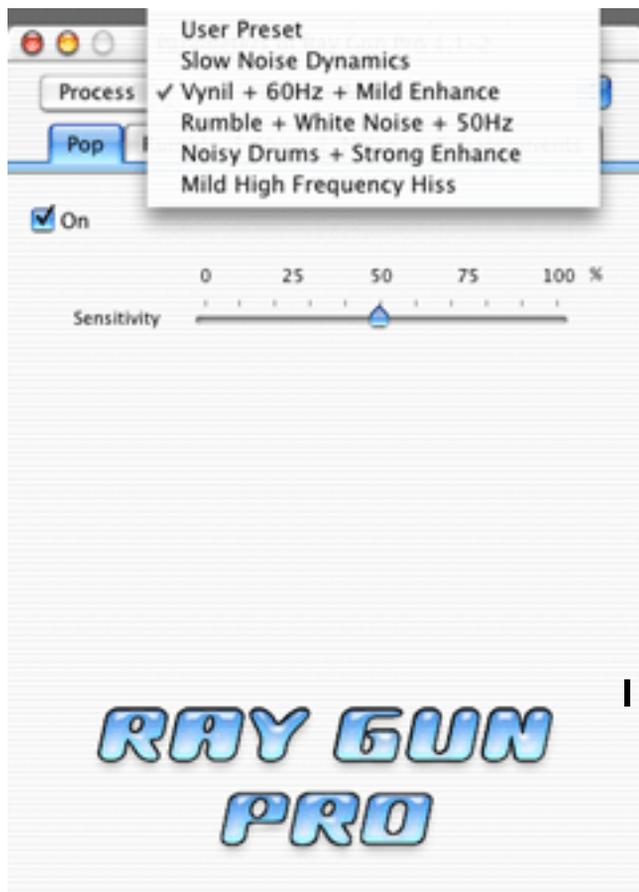
Montage Audio File in Ray Gun Pro

Other features in this window include a Process/Bypass button and a menu with five presets to get you started. The Process/Bypass button lets you turn the filters on and off so you can hear how they are affecting your music. The presets include Slow Noise Dynamics, Vinyl+60Hz+Mild Enhance, Rumble+White Noise+50Hz, Noisy Drums+Strong Enhancement, and Mild Frequency Hiss. If you decide to make any changes in the presets, the menu will change to User Preset. In the release current at press time, User Preset settings cannot be saved. Future updates of Montage will include the ability to create and save your own presets; Arboretum expect an update in the near future.

Pop

True to its name, the Pop filter removes any unwanted pops and clicks you may have in your recording. The intensity of the filter is controlled by a slider that goes from zero to 100%.

In general, I found settings between 50–75% to be a good range to work with. Anything above 75% will have a negative effect on the audio. The preset for vinyl is 50%.

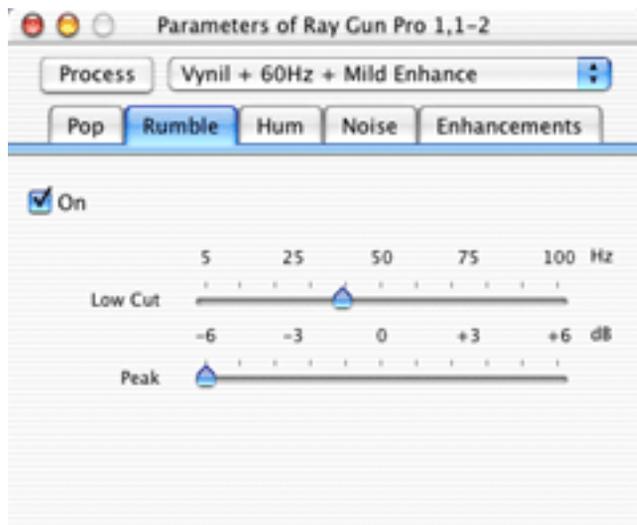


Montage Pop Filter with Preset Menu

Rumble

Rumble is a problem unique to LPs. The Rumble filter is a low pass filter that is designed to cut out everything below an adjustable frequency cutoff. It consists of a Low Cut and Peak slider. The Low Cut slider controls frequencies of the low pass filter ranging from 5 to 100 Hz, while the Peak slider adds

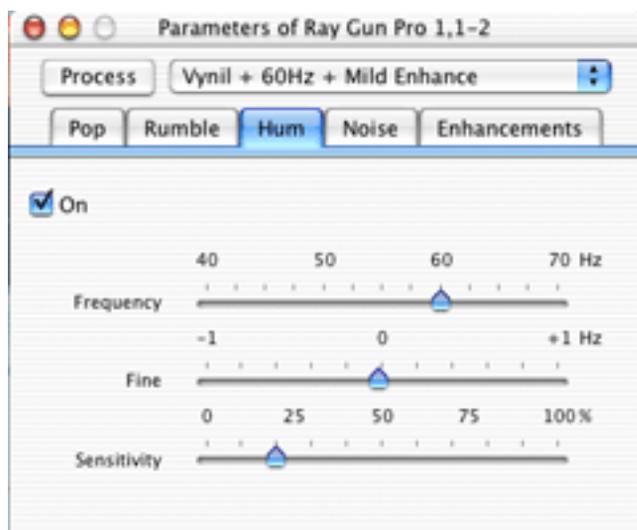
tone to compensate for the loss of signal and ranges from -6 to +6 dB. The presets for vinyl are about 40 Hz for the Low Cut and -6 dB for the Peak filter.



Montage Rumble Filter

Hum

Hum is a 60 Hz hum (or buzz) caused by alternating current interference. The Hum filter is composed of three sliders: Frequency ranging from 40 to 70 Hz, Fine ranging from -1 to +1 Hz, and Sensitivity going from 0 to 100%. The presets for Vinyl are 60 Hz for Frequency, 0 for Fine, and 20% for Sensitivity.



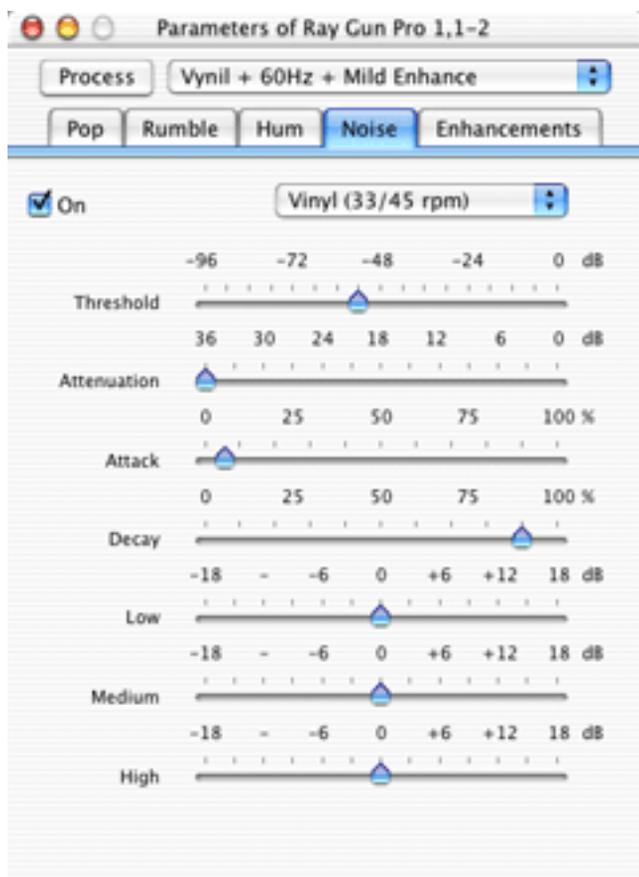
Montage Hum Filter

Noise

This particular filter is very similar to the Denoising filter found in Amadeus II. It acts as any other audio compressor would to try to eliminate noise produced by tape hiss,

computer fans, and other types of sound that exist across the entire recording. Of all the filters, the noise filter is the most complex. Arboretum goes on to recommend that you should use either a good set of headphones or a high quality monitoring system when using this filter.

Due to the complexity of this filter, an extra menu is included with preset values. These presets include, Vinyl (33/45 rpm), Vinyl (78 rpm), Tape (Type I Ferro), Tape (Type II Chrome), F.M. Radio (USA), F.M. Radio (Europe), and White Noise. I suggest that first time users try with the presets before experimenting with the sliders.



Montage Noise Filter

The Noise Filter is composed of four main sliders: Threshold, Attenuation, Attack, and Decay. Threshold is the overall level at which noise reduction works best. The Attenuation slider determines how much noise to pull from a signal; too much of this filter will begin to clip the higher frequencies in your recording.

Last, the Attack and Decay sliders complement each other. These sliders control the on/off switch speeds for the compressor, determining how fast to apply noise reduction once levels pass the Threshold level (Attack) and how quickly to fade back (Decay).

Apart from the four main sliders, there are Low, Medium, and High (dB) sliders that act as a gain control to help compensate for the other sliders. Once again, go with one of the presets before going on your own with this filter.

Finally, the Enhancement filter is a three-band equalizer used to adjust the Bass (dB), Treble (dB), and Stereo (%). While the Bass and Treble adjust the gain of these frequencies, the Stereo alters your sound by widening or narrowing the spatial recording without a change in the overall volume.

Next Month

When I first started writing this article, I thought (Ha!) that I could cover this whole topic in the space of one article. Boy, was I ever wrong. After three weeks of hard work, I have finally completed what is now part two of this series.

Next month, I will look at how to break your recording up into individual tracks, organize them into a playlist, and finally burn them to CD. I will also explain how to use iTunes to convert your tracks to MP3 so you can download them onto your iPod. Sadly, that last part will be mostly theory since I do not own, and cannot afford, an iPod. Sigh.



Making Jaguar Adopt Orphaned Printers (Hopefully)

When I first read the feature list for OS X, I almost shorted out the keyboard drooling. I mean, improvements to multitasking, network support, memory management, and a host of other features—what is not to like?

Despite the many great reasons to purchase OS X, I adopted a “wait and see” attitude, until I could gauge OS X’s stability. No matter how much I wanted the new features, without a stable operating system a computer is little more than a pile of silicon chips, wires, and other sundry parts.

After purchasing OS X, several more months went by before it became my primary OS. This time, the wait was not due to concerns over stability. In tests on my system, things had gone remarkably well. The problem was difficulty printing. There was no OS X driver available for my Epson Stylus Scan 2500 printer/copier/scanner. That was a big problem because, with the exception of a few games, most of the work done on my Mac needs to be printed. I know it is a refurbished printer, but it is a real workhorse and I have had it for less than four years.

Well, since I use OS X every day, and print documents almost every day, it is safe to conclude that I have solved my printing problems. Perhaps my experiences will help you as you attempt to solve your problems. Let us look at the options in the same order that I explored them. For me this also puts the options in order from least to most preferable. For purposes of this article, I will assume that you have checked your printer manufacturer’s list of available drivers recently. If you are running Jaguar and you have not checked for an updated driver since 10.0, it is time to check again.

Initially, few of the applications that I used regularly were OS X–native. I spent most of my time learning the new system. Any actual “work” that I did involved launching an OS 9 application in Classic. I usually booted directly into OS 9 to print.

This process worked well enough but I did not like it. Having to reboot the system was an annoyance. Classic ran well when I needed it to, but I was in a hurry to move all of my operations to OS X. Every minute that I spent running some form of OS 9 was time spent that did not fully take advantage of the new features I wanted. Solving my orphaned printer problem became very important.

A Little Carbon and a Little Cocoa

Over time, I have gradually upgraded my critical applications to OS X. During this process, I had an interesting mix of Carbon and Cocoa applications in use. Because these

applications behave a little differently, the methods that I used to print from them were a little different. Let us examine the difference between these two types of applications and how it affects printing if you do not have an OS X printer driver. For purposes of our discussion, let us simplify things a bit.

Most *Carbon* applications are capable of running under OS 9 or OS X. In essence, which interface the user sees and the options they have access to depend upon the operating system used to boot the machine. Users booting from OS 9 see the OS 9 environment and the printer drivers installed there. Launching the same application under OS X produces the OS X environment and its options. Photoshop 7 is an example of one application that behaves in this way.

These applications are great if you have an orphaned printer. Under most circumstances it is possible to complete your work under OS X and then reboot, launch the application, and print under OS 9. Having to reboot is something of an annoyance and on some systems is rather time consuming, but it is better than not printing at all.

Cocoa applications run exclusively under OS X. Launching these programs usually results in some variation of the Aqua interface. Even if you have an OS 9 printer driver installed on your system, you will not be able to access that driver from Cocoa applications. Using an orphaned printer under these circumstances takes some thought. Let us look at the options in order from least to most preferable.

Making OS X Adopt Orphaned Printers

One of the options that I tried involved looking for an OS 9 mate to the OS X application that I wanted to use. Once I found a mate, I would do all of my work in the OS X application and then boot into the OS 9 version of the same program to print. For example, if I used the OS X version of GraphicConverter to create a file, I could use the OS 9 version of GraphicConverter to print the same file.

Usually the file types were compatible and the process worked, but as I mentioned earlier I did not like it. Rebooting the system was only part of the problem. This solution means wasting hard drive real estate by keeping two copies of an application around. If you use some of the larger programs or have a large number of programs, this may mean losing a significant amount of drive space. Obviously, this might be a concern depending upon the capacity of your hard drive.

One variation on this technique involved saving the file in a common file format and printing from within an application which is not a direct mate to the OS X application that created the file. Suppose, for example, you have the OS X version of GraphicConverter, an OS 9-only version of Photoshop, and an orphaned printer. One solution is to use OS X version of GraphicConverter to save the file in a format that Photoshop can read. Printing the file still requires a trip to OS 9.

The major downside to this technique is that you must be aware of the various file types available to save the file in and which OS 9 program can read the resulting file to open and print it. Additionally, saving the file in the wrong format may mean that some formatting is lost.

No Programs in Common?

Right about now you are saying, “OK, smart guy, what do I do with an orphaned printer if I want to print a file but can’t find a common file type to bridge the gap between the two operating systems?” Well, I stumbled upon a solution to this problem recently on a bulletin board.

One of the features that I like about OS X is the ability to create basic PDFs without the need to have the full version of Adobe Acrobat. Now, Acrobat is almost a necessity for creating complex PDFs, but for basic printing, here is a cheaper option. This trick relies on PDF creation features built into the system software. To accomplish this task, while in OS X use the Print dialog to save the file as a PDF. The file can then be printed using Acrobat Reader under OS 9. While I have not tested this method extensively, correspondence with users who have used this method more than I have indicates that this is not a great solution if you need very accurate graphic printing.

Finally a Member of the Family

Using any of the above techniques will mean that your orphaned printer is not quite a full-fledged member of the OS X family because the actual printing is accomplished under OS 9. There are some ways however in which orphaned printers can almost become full-time productive members of the OS X community.

After a few months using a variety of the techniques discussed above, I was getting a little frustrated. One day, out of sheer desperation, I searched the discussion board on the Apple Web site. I also searched the boards at MacFixIt, OS X FAQ, and a few other sites that I do not remember. Somewhere in all of that reading and posting I discovered that some users had found a way to hack together the driver for a printer that was supported by OS X to make the driver operate a printer that was not supported by OS X. Finally, there was some hope.

A few days after my initial post, I got lucky on two fronts. First, I found the directions to hack a driver that would work with my Stylus Scan 2500. Second, I found someone who had completed the hack successfully and was willing to send me

the driver that he was using to operate his Stylus Scan 2500. This was quite a break for me because I was wary of trying to hack the driver myself. I installed the driver, rebooted the system and lo and behold it worked. Most of the printing features worked well. The only feature I seem to have lost is the ability to check the remaining ink levels.

If you choose to go this route in your search for a driver, check discussion groups devoted to your printer manufacturer. Sometimes what you find there will surprise you.

The hacked driver worked well and finally I no longer needed to use OS 9 to print. This was great, but with the upgrade to Jaguar, presented me with an additional option and I have been using this method since about October of 2002.

My CUPS of Tea

With the official release of Jaguar in August of 2002, Apple included access to a printing method commonly referred to by long-time Unix users as CUPS. Short for Common Unix Printing System, CUPS is a cross-platform printing solution for all Unix environments. Since OS X has a Unix core, it is possible to implement this feature on your beloved Mac.

I am still digesting some of the details about CUPS. If you are interested in more detail, check out this [overview](#)¹.

Now despite the fact that I tinker with Macs a lot, I must confess to being a little afraid of tinkering with Unix. Don’t get me wrong, I plan to learn at least the basics, just not right now. What I needed was an easy, preferably GUI way to access this feature. Once again, the Mac community has come to my rescue with a nifty piece of programming called Gimp-Print. This piece of software uses a standard OS X installer program to install all necessary files.

The current version of Gimp-Print is a file that is roughly 10 MB. Before you [download the current version of Gimp-Print](#)² check out this [FAQ page](#)³. It contains, among other things, answers to common questions about the program, a list of supported printers, and a link to the download. The list of supported printers is organized by manufacturer. If your printer model is not listed, scroll toward the bottom of the list of supported printers. The manufacturer’s names are repeated with a list of additional printers that are partially supported. Most of the major manufacturers have at least some of their models on one of these two lists.

Initially some users had reported that print jobs sent to Carbon applications such as AppleWorks or Photoshop failed, while printing to the same printer from Cocoa applications such as TextEdit was successful. This is usually due to an incomplete installation that was performed manually. This issue is usually resolved if the pre-built OS X installer package is used.

1. <http://www.cups.org/overview.html>

2. <http://gimp-print.sourceforge.net/MacOSX.php3>

3. http://gimp-print.sourceforge.net/p_FAQ_OS_X.php3#getMoreInfo

In testing using my Epson Stylus Scan 2500 I have found this software to yield results virtually identical to the OS 9 driver that I was forced to use. It has proven to be an easy to install and remarkably stable option. The other thing that I like about this option is that a few mouse clicks lets configure my iBook for use with a different printer without installing a completely new set of software. In fact, over the Christmas 2002 holiday I began using this driver with my wife's Epson C80. A quick trip to Print Center allows me to choose a printer.

The only flaw that I have experienced so far with this system is that I do not have the ability to check remaining ink levels on the 2500. On the C80 I can, because when I removed the somewhat ornery Epson C80 driver, I left the utility that checks ink levels behind.

•••

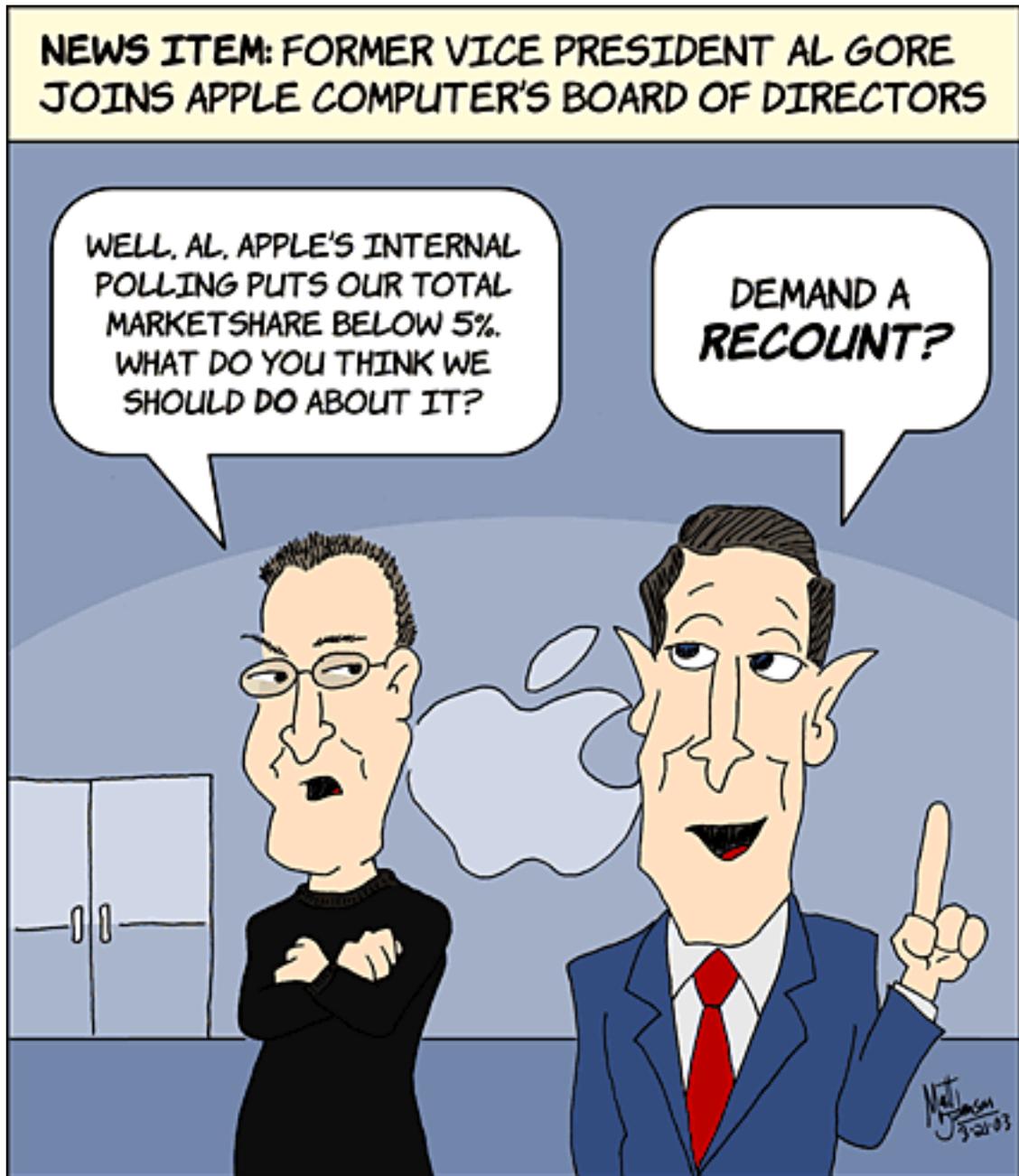
I hope that at least one of these ideas will help you breathe new life into a previously orphaned printer. It is at least worth a try before purchasing new equipment.

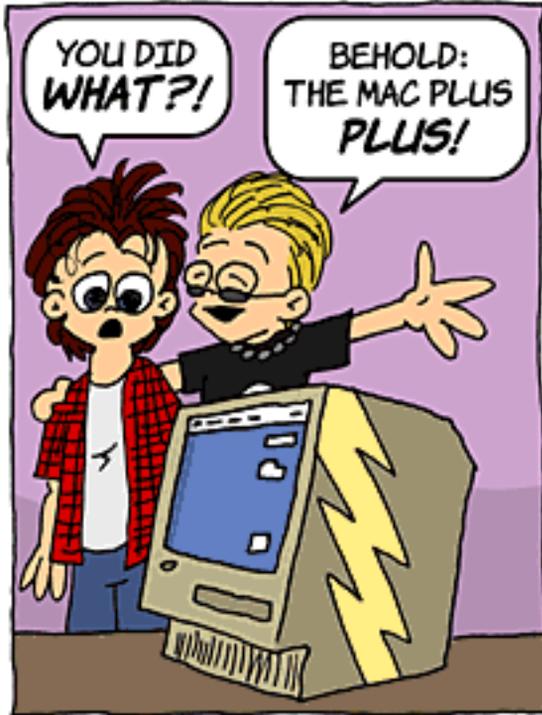
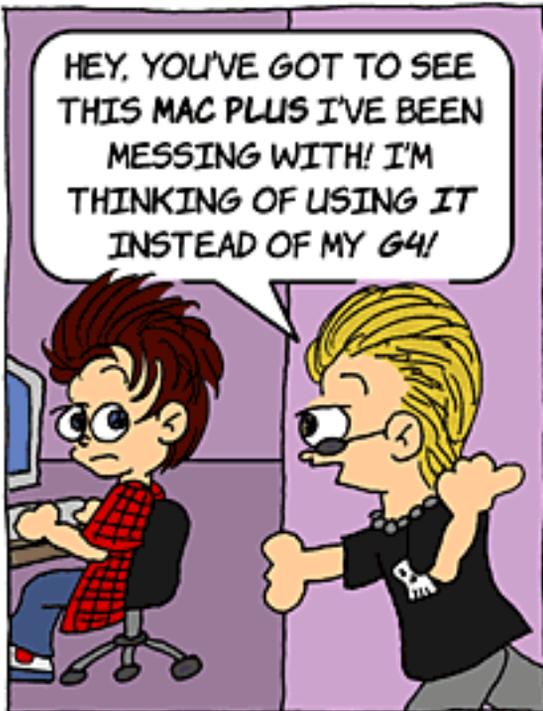
Copyright © 2003 Sylvester Roque, sroque@atpm.com. Sylvester Roque is a long-time Mac user who currently works as a speech-language therapist in the public school system. His hobbies include finding new uses for old Macs and listening to great blues.

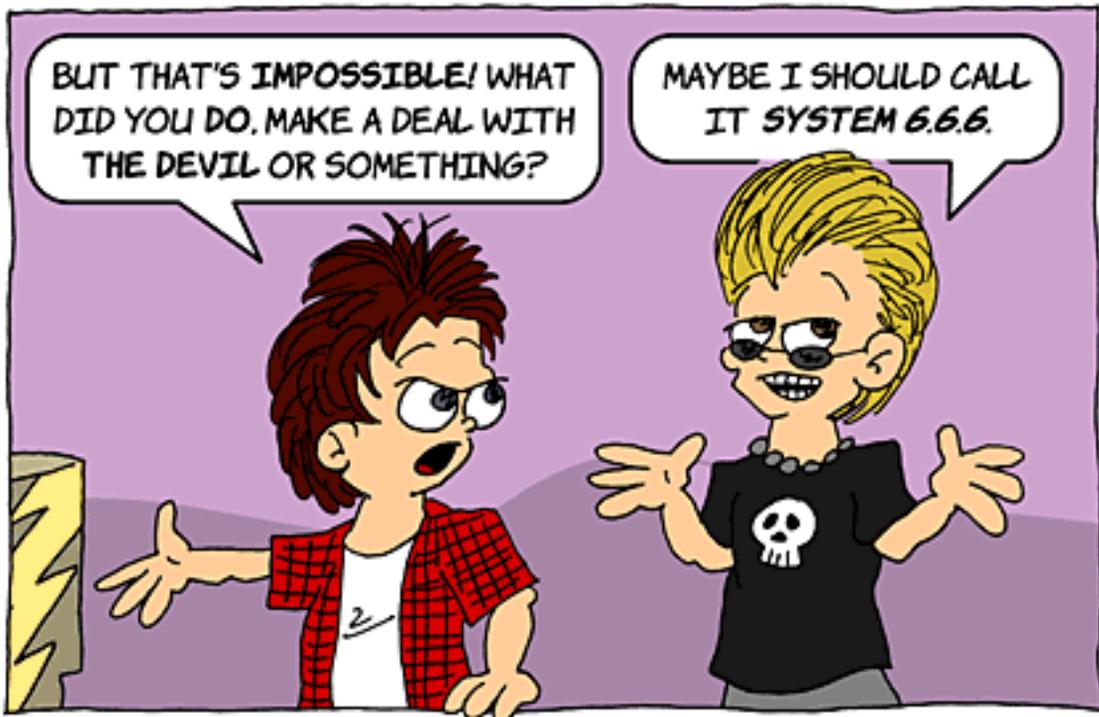
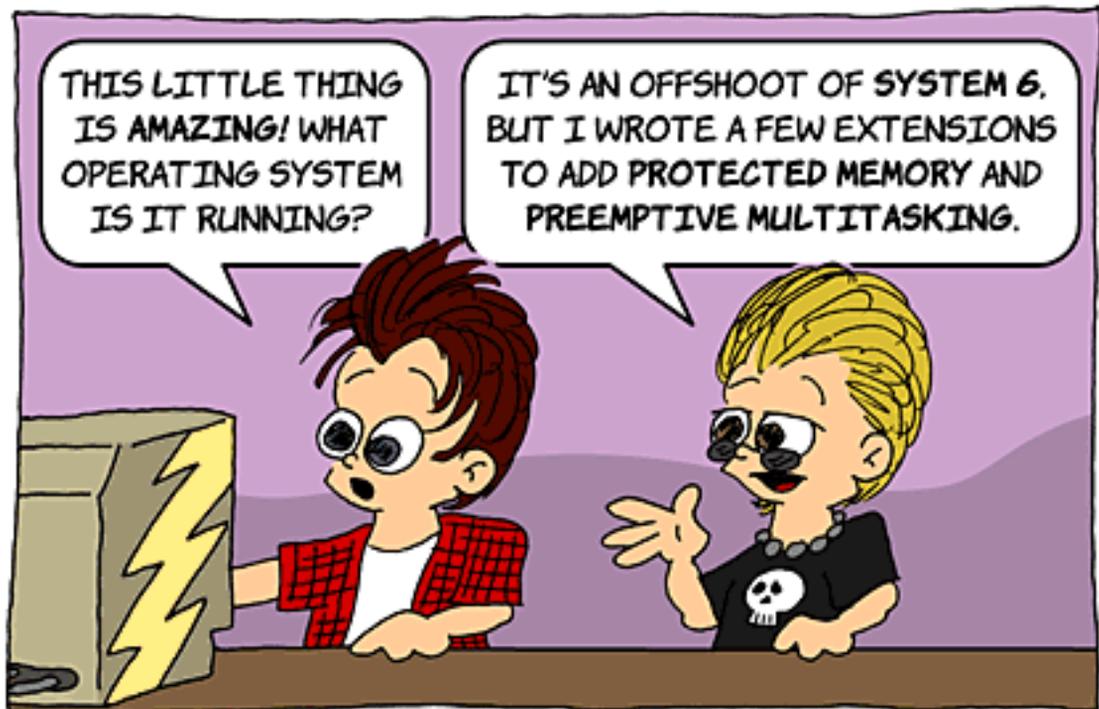


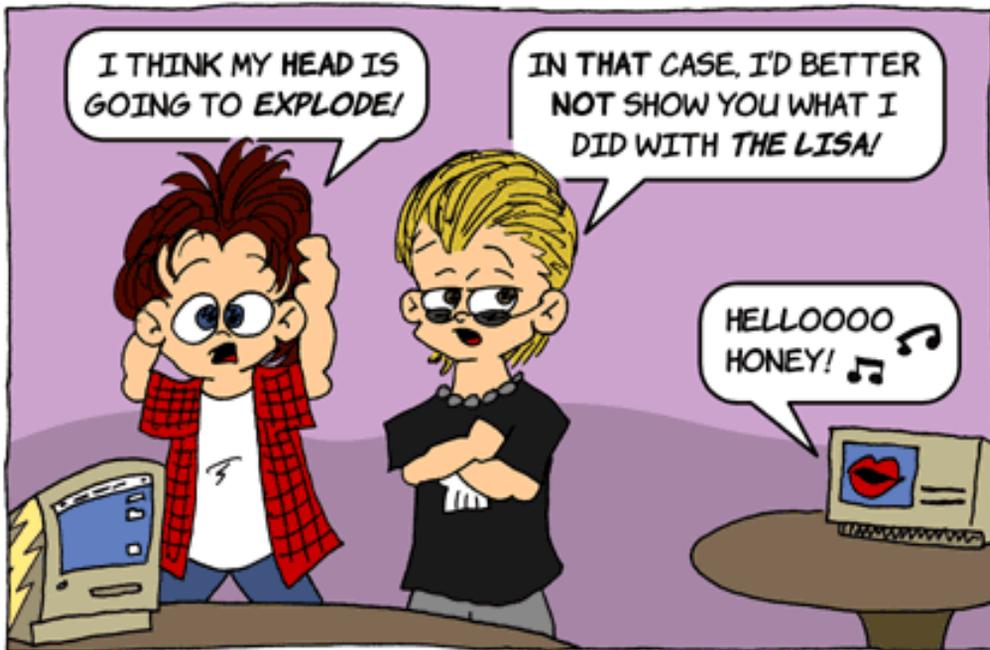
Cartoon: Cortland

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com









Hong Kong

[Hong Kong](#)¹

This month's desktop pictures were submitted by ATPM reader [Janet Mobley](#)². Janet is the editor of the [North Coast Mac Users Group](#)³, and she took these pictures on a trip to Hong Kong and Macau.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the [desktop pictures archives](#)⁴.

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 and 10.2.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 (10.1.x) or Screen Effects (10.2.x) button. Then click on Custom Slide Show in the list of screen savers. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, you're all set. Otherwise, click Configure to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

Mac OS X 10.0.x

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

Mac OS 8.5-9.x

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

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

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

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1

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

Random Desktop Pictures

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

DeskPicture

An alternative to Mac OS's Appearance control panel is Pierce Software's DeskPicture, [reviewed](#)⁵ in issue 5.10 and available for [download](#)⁶.



1. <http://www.atpm.com/9.04/hong-kong/>
2. <http://homepage.mac.com/janmobley>
3. <http://www.ncmug.org>
4. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/desktop-pictures.shtml>

5. <http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml>
6. <http://www.peircesw.com/DeskPicture.html>

Review: DriveTest 1.0

by Eric Blair, ebclair@atpm.com

Developer: [FWB Software](#)¹

Price: \$24.95

Requirements: Mac OS 8.6 with CarbonLib 1.6 or Mac OS X

Trial: Fully-featured (no time limit)



One of the things that Apple wants people to know is that a megahertz rating is not the only thing that determines the overall performance of a computer. Oftentimes, the speed of a hard drive greatly affects how fast your computer can work—a slow drive can prevent your computer from quickly accessing the data it needs to continue. Furthermore, different tasks access hard drives in different ways. If you need maximum performance out of your computer, then you need to find the proper hard drive. FWB DriveTest is designed to help you find a hard drive that suits your needs.

DriveTest does two things: it benchmarks your hard drive and tests the validity of reading and writing to your drive.

Main Interface

For some reason, DriveTest's main interface reminds me of [Toast Titanium 5](#)². I think it's probably because of the curved lines surrounding the interface.



Unlike Toast, though, the DriveTest interface feels very unfinished. One of the Mac's greatest strengths is in maintaining a consistent user interface between applications. DriveTest is already starting on the back foot by making their application harder to learn.

The buttons are very un-Mac-like. When you click a button, there is no visual indication that the button is depressed. Since the buttons are drawn above the surface with a drop shadow, it only seems logical that they would depress when clicked.

Also, the buttons trigger their action as soon as you click on them, not when you release the mouse button. Every well-designed Macintosh application I can think of waits until the user releases the mouse button before triggering an action.

DriveTest violates another user interface standard by reassigning the keyboard shortcut Command-? to the "About Drive Tools," menu item. Again, every other well-designed application uses this for the Help command, if one is present. DriveTest does indeed have a Help command, but it has no keyboard shortcut. Also, according to Apple's guidelines, the name of the Help command should be "DriveTest Help," not "Show Help."

DriveTest also falls victim to the same window closing bug as [SMART Toolkit](#)³: the close box is active even though the option is grayed out in the File menu. Once again, if you close the window, you must relaunch the application.

Finally, there is a blank menu to the right of the Help menu. Its presence doesn't hurt anything, but it should not be there.

Benchmark

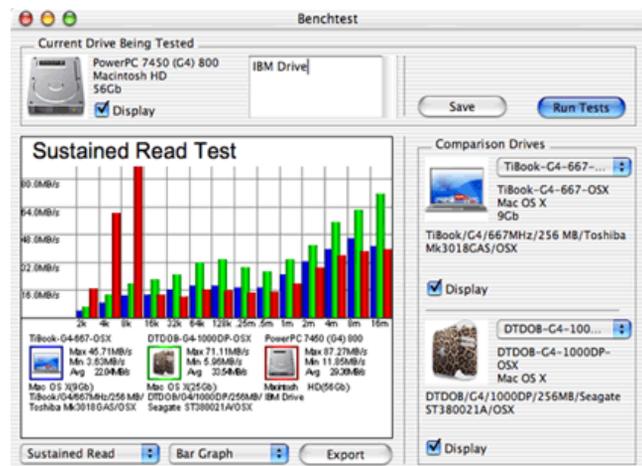
Benchmark runs a series of four tests on your hard drive: Sustained Read, Sustained Write, Random Read, and Random Write. Together, the tests measure the effects of a

2. <http://atpm.com/7.07/toast.shtml>

1. <http://fwb.com/html/drivetest.html>

3. <http://atpm.com/9.02/smart-toolkit.shtml>

drive's transfer rate, cache size, rotational latency, and seek time. The results can be displayed as either a bar graph, a line graph, or a table of results.



Comparing an 800 MHz PowerBook G4 to a 667 MHz PowerBook G4 and a Dual 1 GHz Power Macintosh G4.

You can export your results as either a JPEG file or a text file. The JPEG option saves whichever data you happen to be viewing at a given time, while the text option attempts to recreate the raw data tables for each of the four tests.

After using the text export feature, I feel that it has two major shortcomings. First, while the four benchmarking tests use data sizes ranging from 2K to 16 MB, the text export fails to export any results for the 8 and 16 MB tests. If you want to preserve these results, or just share them with others, you'll need to add these data points by hand.

Second, the resulting text file is poorly formatted. On export, a tab is placed between each data point and table heading. Unfortunately, each entry is necessarily the same width—the test size column ranges between 2 and 4 characters and the drive names are far longer than any other entry. On the one hand, the file imports nicely into Excel as a tab-delimited file. On the other hand, you need to add the necessary tabs or spaces by hand to make the file easily readable in a text editor. Since a text editor ships with every copy of the Mac OS and Excel doesn't, DriveTest's text export feature should create files that anybody can easily read.

Sustained Read Test			
	DT-G4-500-OSX	DTDOB-G4-1000DP-OSX	PowerPC 7450 (G4) 800
2k	1.04	2.24	6.26
4k	2.37	5.00	22.50
8k	3.64	7.27	32.73
16k	3.75	8.18	5.00
32k	4.62	9.23	4.44
64k	5.29	12.00	6.00
128k	5.58	12.63	5.71
256k	6.10	10.91	5.37
0.5m	6.10	9.86	5.62
1.0m	8.00	12.63	7.35
2.0m	10.75	15.65	10.75
4.0m	13.58	20.57	13.33

An example of a poorly-generated text file from DriveTest.

If you want to keep your data in DriveTest for comparison with other drives, you can save your results as a DriveTest file. This saves the name of the drive, the test results, any notes you've entered about the drive, and the drive icon. In the future, you can view the results against other drives that you test.

For some reason, both Save and Export exist as buttons in the Benchmark window but not in the File menu. At the very least, Save should be available there with a keyboard shortcut of Command-S.

DriveTest also includes results for 15 test machines that you can use as a comparison for your own hard drive. These comparisons continue the trend of strange design decisions throughout DriveTest.

Each comparison machine has an icon associated with it, similar to drives you have tested and saved. Unlike your saved drives, though, the icons don't represent the drive tested. Instead, they often represent the computer tested. Sometimes, the icons are faithful to the original design of the computer. Other times, they seem to be artistic modifications of the original computer. Finally, some icons make no attempt at representing the computer—I fail to see why a hard drive with what appear to be a cracked casing represents a Power Macintosh G4.



Some of the drive icons included with FWB's sample results.

It's possible that the people responsible for generating these tests were actually using these as drive icons, but they were poor choices for a commercial product. When you combine this with the occasionally confusing naming scheme used with sample results, it can be difficult to determine what computer is represented by the results. I wasn't able to ascertain the model of at least two of the included results without going to the [Apple History](http://www.apple-history.com)¹ Web site.

Finally, the included test results are getting a bit dated—I believe every product line they include has been updated at least once since DriveTest was released. According to DriveTest's documentation, "Update test results will be posted on line as soon as they become available." However, products like the original "mirrored drive door" Power Mac G4 were released and discontinued without DriveTest seeing any updates from FWB.

1. <http://www.apple-history.com>

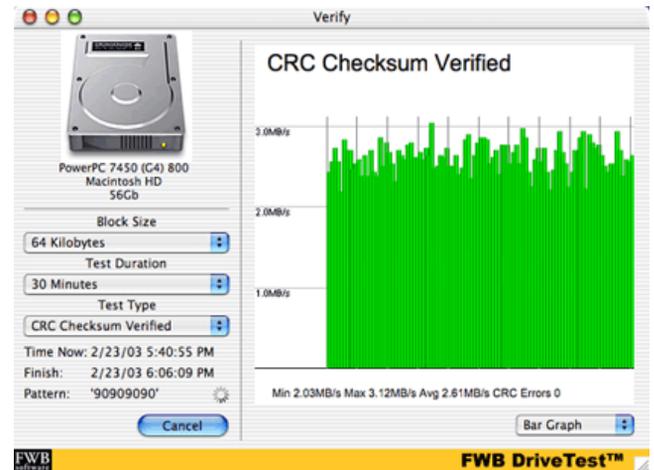
Verifying

In many ways, DriveTest's Verify feature is the opposite of the Benchmark feature. While Benchmark tests a number of drive conditions very quickly, Verify focuses on a single case for an extended period of time—Verify lets you see whether or not a drive can sustain its performance over time.

There are four types of verification tests. Raw Read Speed and Raw Write Speed focus on how quickly your drive can accept and retrieve data, respectively. Raw Throughput tests both reading and writing speed. CRC Checksum Verified also tests both reading and writing speed, but it also checks if any data corruption has occurred.

For each test, you set the duration and the block size. The test duration can range from one minute to one day and the block size ranges from 2K to 16 MB. Typically, you base these selections on how the drive will be used. For instance, a hard drive that is constantly streaming Digital Video should be tested with both a long test duration and a large block size

while a hard drive used for a low-volume e-mail server would probably call for a shorter duration test with smaller block sizes.



Verifying a hard drive with the CRC Checksum Verified Test.

Conclusion

DriveTest claims to benchmark and verify your hard drives. It accomplishes this. However, its interface is definitely lacking. Fortunately, DriveTest has a very liberal demo version, so you can decide for yourself if its functionality makes up for its problematic interface.

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Review: NetNewsWire 1.0.1

by Eric Blair, ebclair@atpm.com

Developer: [Ranchero Software](#)¹

Price: \$39.95; free (Lite version)

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2

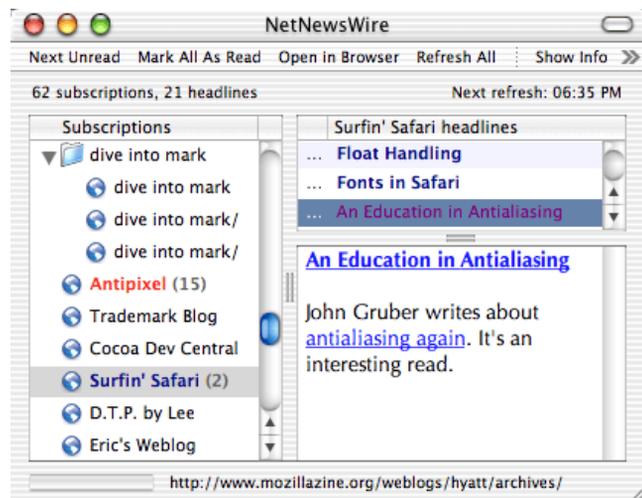
Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)



A few months back, Michael Tsai [introduced](#)² many ATPM readers to [Really Simple Syndication](#)³ (RSS) and NetNewsWire Lite. The RSS format defines a specific set of rules for describing the content of a Web site. Although an RSS feed can look rather [intimidating](#)⁴ at first, an aggregator like NetNewsWire can easily parse the contents of the feed and generate a summary of the Web site.

That's all sounds nice and good, but what does it mean for the average user? After you set up your RSS subscriptions in NetNewsWire, it periodically checks for new articles, downloads them, and displays them in an easy-to-read format. As a result, you can always see the most up-to-date articles from your favorite Web sites without spending countless hours typing in URLs.

Since Michael's article first appeared, Ranchero Software has released the full version of NetNewsWire, which includes some advanced news reading features, a Weblog editor, a Notepad, and AppleScript support. This review will focus on the full version of NetNewsWire, but will also note some of the differences between the two versions.



NetNewsWire's three-pane interface.

News Reading

NetNewsWire uses a three-pane interface, similar to many e-mail applications. The left pane shows all of your subscriptions, the top right pane shows the headlines for the selected feed, and the bottom right pane shows the content associated with the headline.

The similarities don't end there; you can check for updates to your subscriptions manually or at regularly scheduled intervals.

When NetNewsWire downloads new headlines, it displays the number of unread articles in the dock and highlights any feeds with unread articles. By default, feeds with less than ten unread articles are highlighted in bold blue. Feeds with ten or more unread articles are shown as emboldened red. You can also choose to have the number of unread articles per feed shown in the Subscriptions pane.

For the times when you know you saw an article on a specific subject but can't remember where, NetNewsWire has a Find feature. It works mostly like you would expect, highlighting the next article that contains the search term. Unfortunately, the search term is not highlighted in the article itself, so you might have to skim through longer articles to find it.

Subscribing to Feeds

NetNewsWire offers several ways to subscribe to news feeds. The first is the Subscribe command, which displays a sheet that asks for the RSS URL for the new feed. If you know the full address to the RSS feed, you can enter it here. Otherwise, you can just enter the address for the Web site's home page and NetNewsWire will try to find the site's feed based on some standard naming conventions.

If you're using a Web browser and see a page you want to subscribe to in NetNewsWire, you can use the "Subscribe in NetNewsWire" item in the Services submenu. This seems to use the same RSS Discovery feature as the aforementioned Subscribe option.

A more interesting approach to subscriptions is the Sites Drawer. The Sites Drawer links to a very large number of RSS feeds, broken down into categories such as Fun, Macintosh, and Science. There are also categories for different languages.

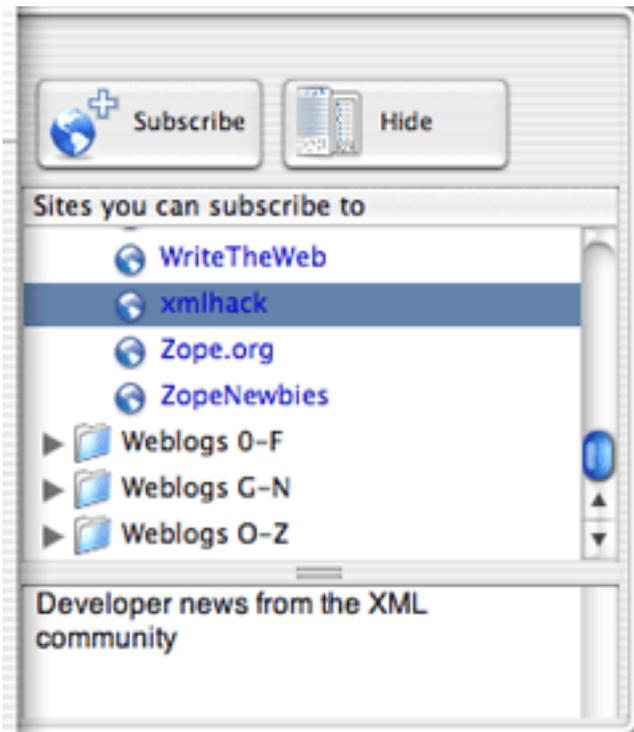
2. <http://www.atpm.com/8.10/paradigm.shtml>

3. <http://backend.userland.com/rss>

4. <http://www.atpm.com/rss/index.xml>

1. <http://ranchero.com/netnewswire/>

Personal Weblogs are divided up alphabetically. The bottom of the Sites Drawer contains a brief description of the selected feed.



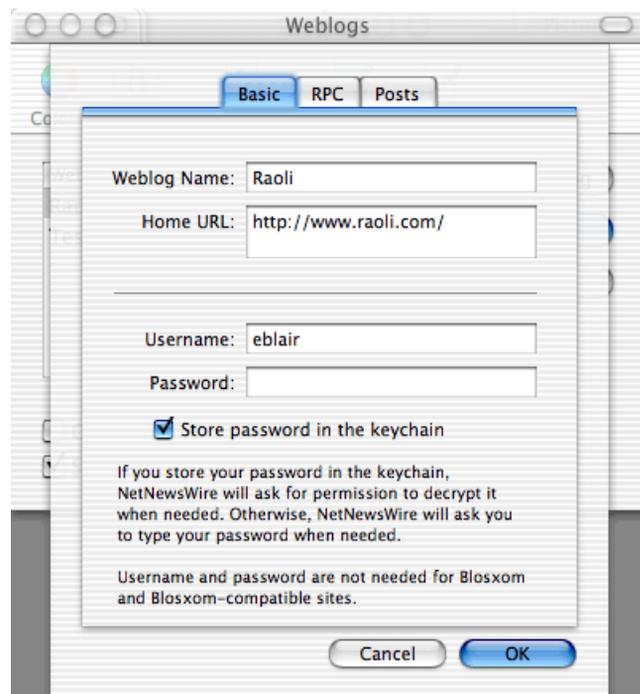
NetNewsWire's Sites Drawer.

Looking for a single site in the Sites Drawer can be a bit daunting, but it can also yield unexpected surprises. About a month or so ago, I was looking for something in the Weblogs categories when I stumbled across the Weblog of an old college friend. Prior to this, I hadn't even realized he was running a Weblog.

Weblog Editing

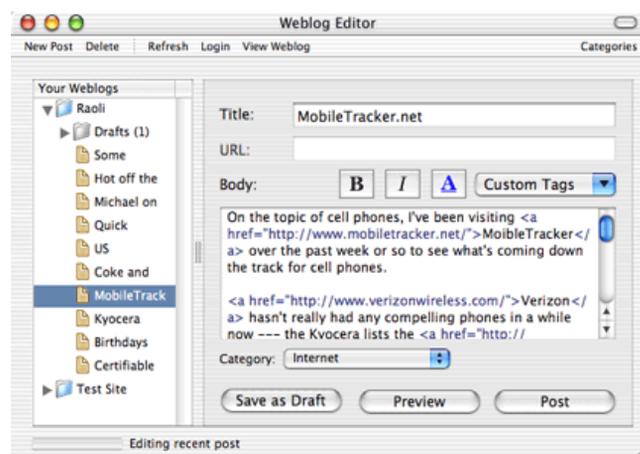
One of NetNewsWire's main attractions is that you can use it for editing your own Weblog. NetNewsWire supports most, if not all, of the major Weblogging packages, so there's a good chance it will work with whatever system you are using. If you use a different system, you might still be able to use NetNewsWire with your Weblog, depending on what interfaces your system supports.

You can edit as many Weblogs with NetNewsWire as you want. In the Preferences, you tell NetNewsWire where your Weblogs are located and supply any necessary information for accessing their content. You can also set some preferences for how you want your posts formatted.



Adding a Weblog to NetNewsWire.

NetNewsWire's Weblog Editor gives you the same basic editing options for each of the supported Weblog systems. You can type the body of your entry, save it to your hard drive as a draft, preview the post, and post it to your Weblog. You can also edit previously posted entries.



Editing a Weblog entry in NetNewsWire.

Different Weblog systems support somewhat different features, so the interface of the Weblog Editor is slightly altered depending on the configuration of the selected

Weblog. If you are using a system that supports titles for entries, the title field will show. For systems that support URLs associated with entries, the URL field is activated. For systems that support categories, there will be two ways to select categories.

The Weblog editor has some very basic HTML features. It has buttons for bold and italicized text and a button to create hyperlinks. You can also add custom HTML tags to a pop-up menu, and you can of course write your own HTML in the entry body instead.

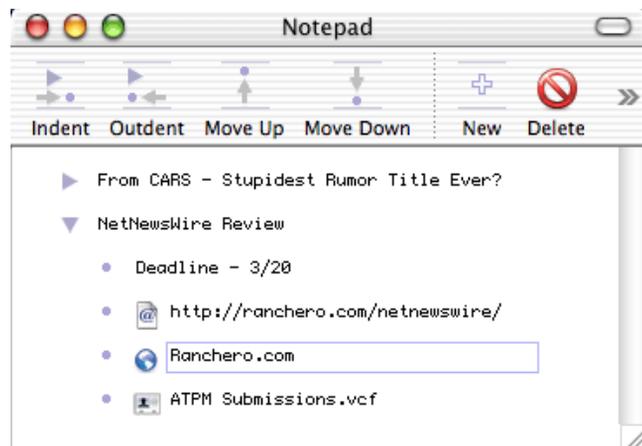
Personally, I only use the Weblog editor for short, simple entries. If I'm writing something longer or something that contains HTML code or entities, I'll do my writing in [BBEdit](#)¹ first so I can easily validate my code before posting.

One of NetNewsWire's nicer touches is the Post to Weblog option. If you see an interesting article from another RSS feed, choosing Post to Weblog will create a new entry in the Weblog Editor. This new entry contains the originally selected article and a link to the source.

I just wish I could customize this feature. When I cite another source, I like to put the citation and link at the top of the article and block quote the original text. I can certainly do this by hand, but it would be great if I could edit a Post to Weblog template and have this happen automatically. This would give me one more reason to do my editing in NetNewsWire.

Notepad

NetNewsWire's Notepad is a lightweight outliner for keeping track of whatever you want. Typically, I use it to jot down notes about topics I'd like to post on when I have more time.



The NetNewsWire Notepad.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.12/bbedit.shtml>

Since you can't have multiple Notepads or do things like printing your outline, NetNewsWire will not replace a fully-featured outliner like OmniOutliner. However, it handles most of the basic outlining tasks and has one feature I believe OmniOutliner is lacking: linking.

If you drag a file to the Notepad, a Notepad entry with an icon is created. Double-clicking the icon opens the file. You can also drag entries from the Address Book to the Notepad to get a vCard for the appropriate person, or link to URLs by dragging them over from a Web browser. If you decide that an item needs a link at a later date, you can assign one from the Attachment Info inspector.

Unfortunately, the Notepad doesn't auto-detect links in entries. For instance, dragging a URL from BBEdit just inserts the text. If you want to link to the specified Web site, you must add the link by hand.

Full versus Lite

If you're interested in reading syndicated versions of your favorite Web sites in lieu of trekking all over the Internet to see if they're been updated, but don't need NetNewsWire's Weblog Editing or Notepad features, you should look into its freeware sibling, NetNewsWire Lite. It supports most of NetNewsWire's features, with the following exceptions:

- No Weblog Editor;
- No Notepad support;
- You must be connected to the Internet to read feeds;
- Headlines don't show dates, subjects, or creators;
- No Find command, and;
- No AppleScript support.

Conclusion

When I say that NetNewsWire has changed the way I view the Web, I'm not exaggerating. I subscribe to more than sixty Web sites right now, most of which I'd never heard of prior to using NetNewsWire. Not only that, but there's no way I could remember all of those links. Now, I just start up NetNewsWire when I boot my computer and let the information come to me.



Review: Photo Mechanic 3

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

Developer: [Camera Bits](http://www.camerabits.com)¹

Price: \$150

Requirements: PowerPC-based Mac with Mac OS 8.6 or Mac OS X 10.1, CarbonLib 1.3.1, QuickTime 3, 20 MB of application RAM, 800x600 resolution. Card reader with software that can mount a card on the desktop.

Recommended: Mac OS 9 users should give Photo Mechanic more application RAM to improve image display speed.

Trial: None



Overview

Photo Mechanic is an image-browsing and information-editing application. It is designed to import digital images and their associated information from card readers and from computer files. Photo Mechanic contains many image-related data and information fields, including all IPTC fields and Global Positioning System values. What is unique about Photo Mechanic is that it does not create separate catalog files. Instead, it adds a "cbtn" resource to each image file.

Installation

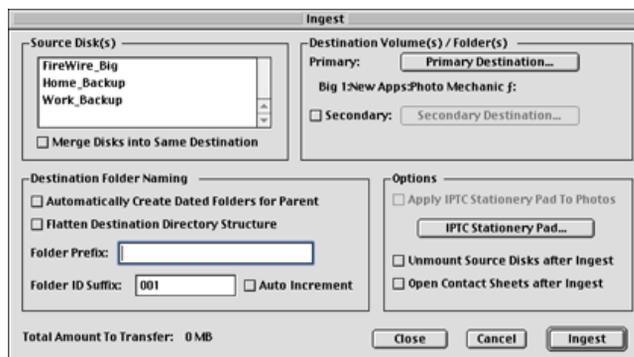
An Installer VISE file is on the CD or can be downloaded from the Camera Bits Web site. The installer lets you choose the location for the Photo Mechanic folder. When you first launch Photo Mechanic, you must enter your registration information.

Using Photo Mechanic

Photo Mechanic is designed primarily to work with card readers that allow Compact Flash Cards, Memory Sticks, Secure Digital Multimedia Cards, or SmartMedia Cards to be mounted on the desktop. Images can be imported directly from compatible cards for loading into Photo Mechanic catalogs and (optionally) storage on a hard drive. You create a catalog by selecting either Open Contact Sheet... or Ingest Disks... from the File menu. Open Contact Sheet... should be renamed Create Contact Sheet, since that is its function. You use the resulting Open dialog box to select a disk or folder containing images you wish to catalog.

Ingest Disks... lets you import all the photographs from a card reader or any drive connected via FireWire or USB. The resulting catalog window (Contact Sheet in Photo Mechanic's terminology) takes up most of the screen. Each photo is

assigned a block that is approximately 210 pixels high and 180 to 200 pixels wide. You have no control over the layout of the contact sheet.



Ingest Disks Options



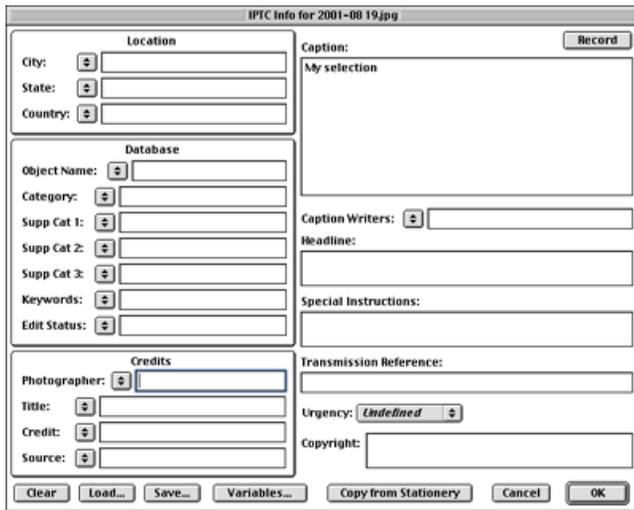
Catalog Window

Photo Mechanic supports most high-end digital cameras, meaning that it can work with RAW image files, generate low-resolution previews, and capture EXIF information.

You can add and edit text information for images individually or in batches. Photo Mechanic supports IPTC tags, GPS, and EXIF information fields. Photo Mechanic's IPTC Stationery Pad lets you create lists of choices for most of the fields so that data can be entered via pop-up menus. You

1. <http://www.camerabits.com/PM3.html>

can also load IPT files into the IPTC Stationery Pad. This allows workgroups to have identical labeling information. EXIF information is edited or added via a small window in the upper right corner of the image editing window.



IPTC Information Editing Screen

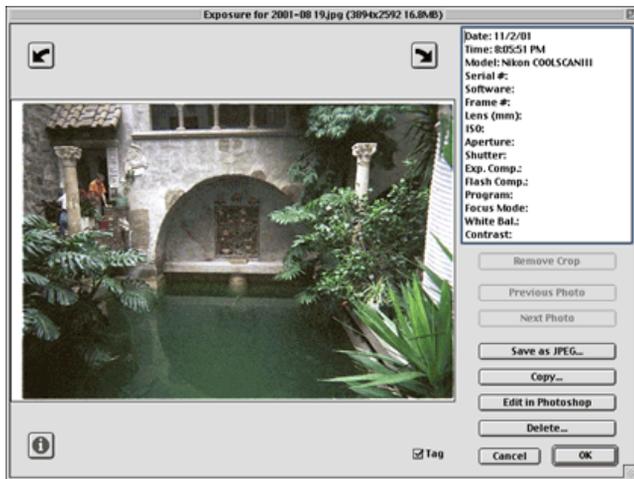
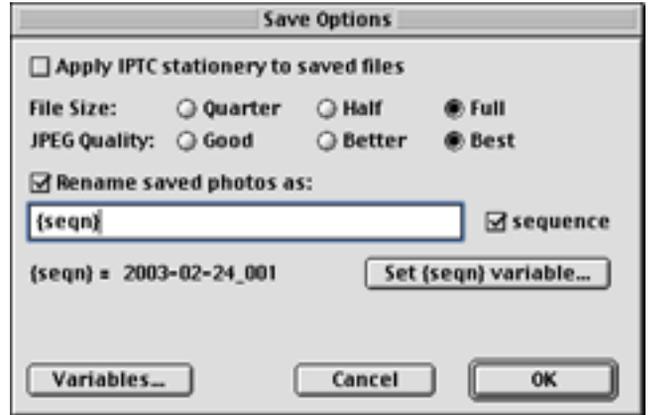


Image Editing Window with EXIF Information Fields

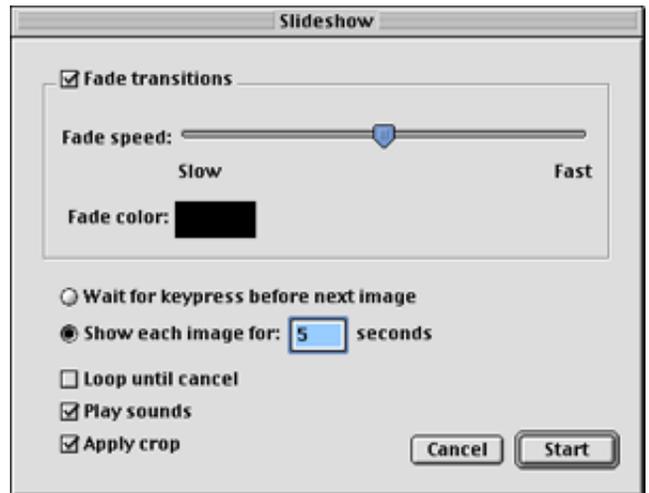
Photo Mechanic has only a few image manipulation tools. You can rotate the image in 90-degree increments using the rotate arrows or Rotate menu items (in the Image menu). You can also crop the image. Rotation and cropping changes are not saved unless you choose Save Photos as JPEGs... from the File menu. Photo Mechanic includes an Edit Image item in the Image menu. This opens the selected image in Adobe Photoshop or Photoshop LE for advanced editing. Double-clicking on an image or its thumbnail also opens it in Photoshop.

Photo Mechanic has tools for sequentially labeling images. This allows you to select and sort images based on whatever criterion you prefer, and then name them sequentially.



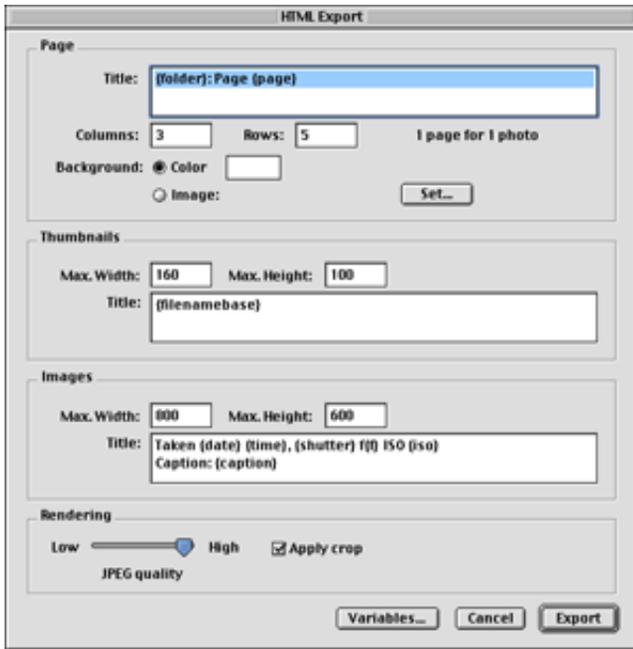
Options for saving images with sequential labels.

Photo Mechanic can play slide shows of selected images. Slide show options are limited compared with other applications. Options include playing attached sounds, showing cropped images, and selecting the delay time between images. Slide shows cannot be saved.



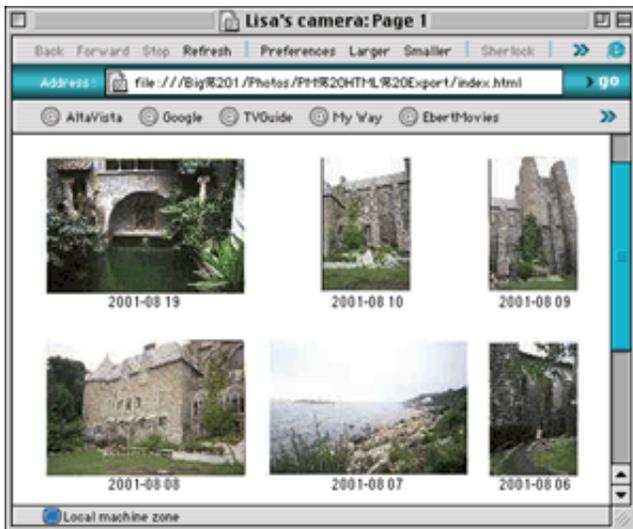
Setting-up a slide show.

Photo Mechanic can export images as HTML or XML files.



Options for exporting images as HTML pages.

Photo Mechanic creates a thumbnail image page (you select thumbnail size) and individual pages for each image (you set the image dimensions and JPEG quality). Photo Mechanic creates individual JPEG files for each thumbnail and image. Each image page gets its own HTML file containing an image placeholder, navigation controls, and text information (you choose which fields) for its respective image.



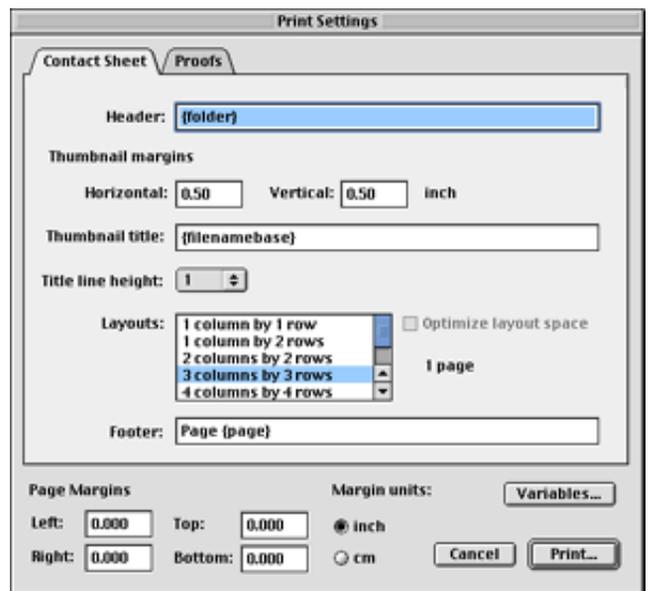
Thumbnail image HTML page.

[Catalog](#) [Next](#)



Individual image HTML page.

Photo Mechanic lets you print contact sheets. However, its layout options are limited to equal numbers of columns and rows (for example, a 4x3 layout is not allowed). You can adjust the margins and the spacing between images, and you can choose what information will appear in the headers, footers, and image captions. However, you cannot choose the font or font size of any of the text information. The heading is Geneva bold at 14 point and the remaining text is Geneva at 9 point.



Options for printing contact sheets

Problems and Bugs

I encountered no problems or bugs while testing Photo Mechanic.

Omissions

- You cannot import images directly from digital cameras.
- The main window is not resizable, and you cannot modify the on-screen layout of contact sheets.
- There is no way to change the image-editing application from Photoshop to something else.

Documentation

The application comes with a nine-page (8.5" x 11") PDF Read Me file and a 34-page Photo Mechanic 3.0 User's Guide. The User's Guide has bookmarks and a hyperlinked table of contents. It has no index. The User's Guide and Read Me documents, in combination, fully describe the use of Photo Mechanic. However, a revised, unified User's Guide incorporating the additions and changes of the current version would be welcome.

Technical Support

[E-mail support](#)¹ is available. There is no online support. Telephone support may be available at the main toll number, but I did not check this. I also did not test the rapidity or accuracy of e-mail support.

Alternatives

- [iView MediaPro](#)² (\$90)
- [QPict](#)³ (\$35)
- [Image Viewer 6.1.2](#)⁴ (\$35)

Summary

Photo Mechanic performs as advertised. However, it is an expensive application with a limited feature set. I prefer iView MediaPro: it is more flexible and powerful than Photo Mechanic (it lacks only pre-built fields for GPS data) and costs \$60 less.

-
1. <mailto:support@camerabits.com>
 2. <http://www.atpm.com/9.03/iview.shtml>
 3. <http://www.atpm.com/8.07/qpict.shtml>
 4. <http://www.imageviewer.com/index.html>

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Review: Secrets of the iPod, 2nd Edition (book)

by Kirk McElhearn, kmcelhearn@atpm.com

Author: Christopher Breen; published by [Peachpit Press](#)¹.

Price: \$21.99

Trial: None



Oh, I wish I had an iPod. Well, not really. You see, while the geek in me wants one for the tech toy it is, I don't have much use for it. I work at home, and my only commute is from the first floor of my house to the second floor. That's about 18 seconds, so an iPod wouldn't serve much purpose.

But I understand why so many people have bought them, and why they are so attached to them. Reading Christopher Breen's *Secrets of the iPod* really tempts me, if only to discover all the neat things he presents in the book.

Breen goes through every nook and cranny of the iPod—the hardware, the software, and a whole slew of accessories. Anyone who uses an iPod will certainly discover some things they didn't know as Breen gives tips and tricks for getting the most out of the device. He naturally talks about copying music to the iPod, but also shows you how you can copy contact information, calendars, and more, using it as a poor man's PDA.

The iPod is the natural extension to Apple's iTunes, and Breen goes over everything you need to know to use the two of them together. He also shows how to use available Windows software for the iPod, so that PC users aren't left out in the cold.

But the iPod does much more. Sure, it plays music, that's the main reason for having one. But you can also [download](#)² audio books. It can be a portable FireWire hard drive. And by using a program to clone your Mac OS X startup volume, you can even use it to boot in OS X. It's great as a backup device, if you have room after putting a few days' worth of music on it.

I generally shy away from books devoted to just one hardware device, but I can see that iPod users would really benefit from this book. It's concise and to the point, and Breen's no-nonsense writing helps iPod owners do everything possible with their device. This book is an excellent way to learn everything about your iPod, and enjoy it as well.

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

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1. http://www.peachpit.com/isapi/st~%7BFDA3F69E-3F97-478E-B1B2-4C9FC8041841%7D/session_id~%7B6B30911C-FDE8-4FC2-A7CB-F035735252CF%7D/product_id~%7BD13A37AE-7A8C-4A1A-85FE-A225B09AB841%7D/books/product.asp

Review: Studio MX

by Lee Bennett and Darryl Barney, lbennett@atpm.com

Developer: [Macromedia](#)¹

Price: \$899; \$499–699 (upgrade, see [Macromedia's Web site](#))²

Requirements: G3-based Mac with Mac OS 9.1 (with MRJ 2.2 and CarbonLib 1.3) or Mac OS X 10.1, 96 MB application RAM, 16-bit color, 1024x768 resolution, 510 MB available disk space.

Recommended: 128 MB application RAM

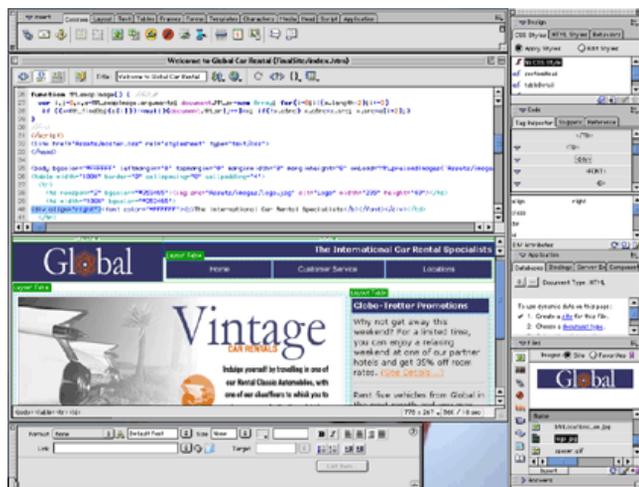
Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)



Studio MX is Macromedia's new bundle of its popular animation, vector graphics, and Web development software, combining Flash, FreeHand, Dreamweaver, and Fireworks. The MX package also represents version upgrades for all of these tools, although the review copy we received still included FreeHand 10. Purchasing Studio MX now will include FreeHand MX (version 11) according to the Macromedia Web site. The new version's features are listed near the end of this review.

The key feature of Studio MX is the interoperability among the applications. This enables a user to effortlessly manipulate a project with any of Studio MX's tools. The seamless transfer capability provides the benefits of an all-inclusive single application without becoming a bloated, one-size-fits-all application (ahem, Netscape).

According to the Studio MX manual, each Studio MX application provides "a common interface and default location for the Tools panel so that you can seamlessly work with tools, color palettes, and other features to build images and move them across the products."



Whether you prefer raw HTML editing, WYSIWYG editing, or both, Dreamweaver caters to individual taste.

Dreamweaver

Dreamweaver is Macromedia's premiere Web content editing tool. It supports development in HTML, XHTML, XML, ASP, ASP.NET, JSP, PHP, and Macromedia's own ColdFusion. Included with Studio MX, ColdFusion is a scripting environment to build dynamic Internet applications with aided integration with other Web-based development platforms.

Web developers can choose the style of editing they prefer, as Dreamweaver works as both an HTML code editor and a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor. Both modes can be used interchangeably with a common, drag-and-drop toolbar to add the desired functions to the Web page.

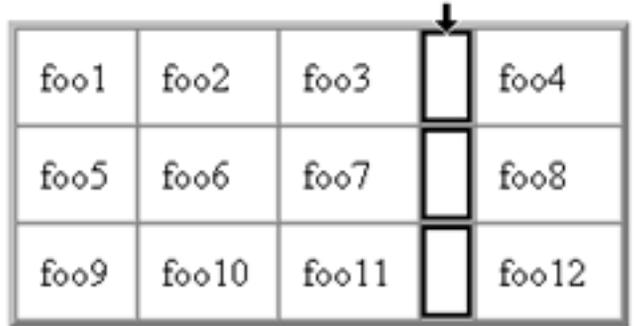
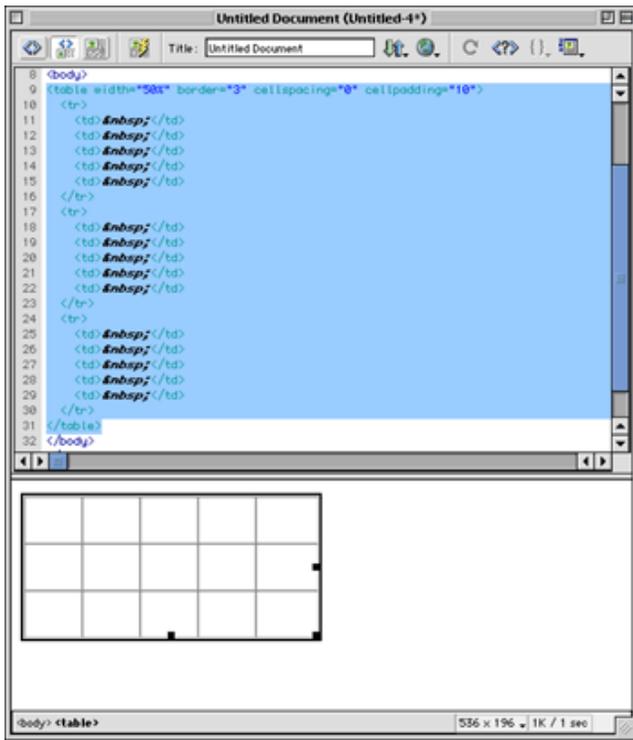


Dreamweaver makes creating elements as uncomplicated as possible by letting you work visually and by code, simultaneously. This example shows the steps to create a table. First, click the Insert Table button from the toolbar.



Define initial values for the table's look.

1. <http://www.macromedia.com/software/studio/>
2. http://www.macromedia.com/software/studio/productinfo/upgrade/store_plus.html

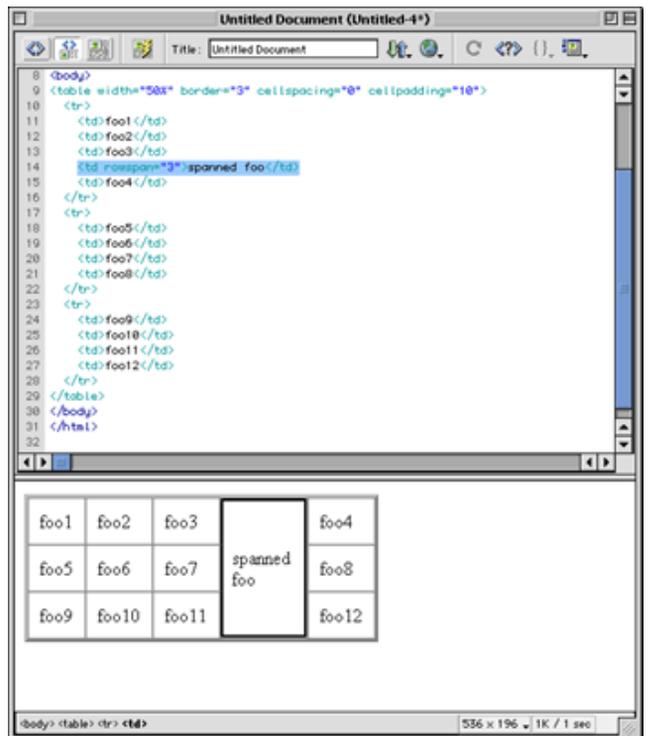
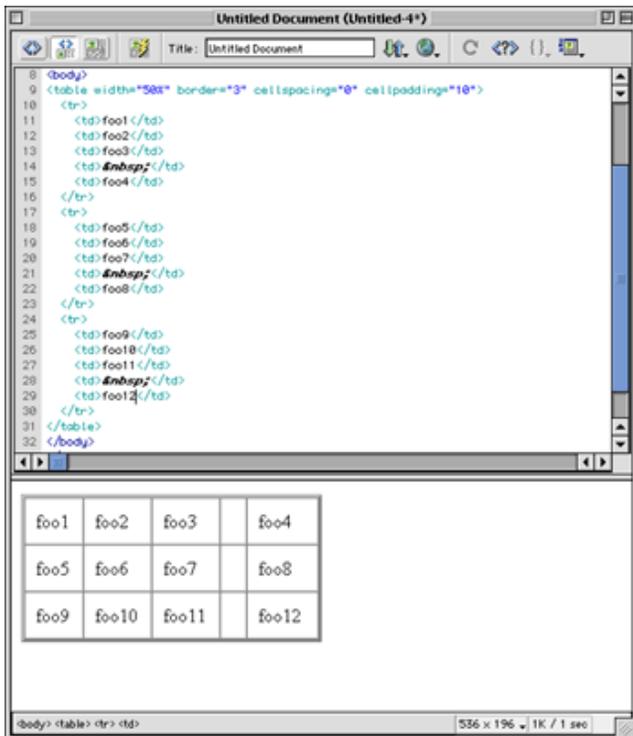


To join cells into a rowspan or colspan, first select the cells to be joined. An entire row or column can be quick-selected, as shown.



Click the merge button under the Column section in the Properties palette.

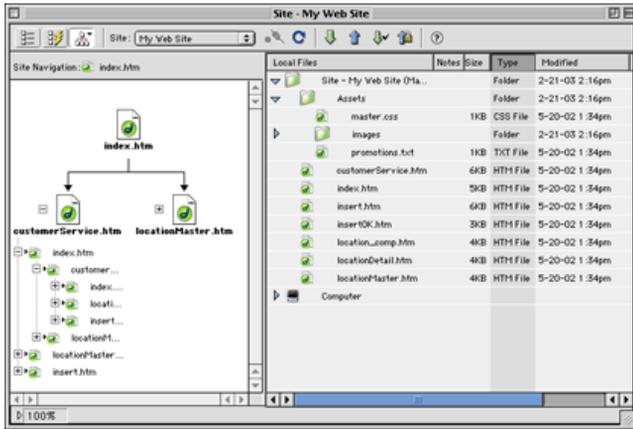
Fine-tune the table's look either by changing attribute values in HTML view, or by stretching the table's sides and corners in WYSIWYG view.



Your cells are now merged and you can add content as normal.

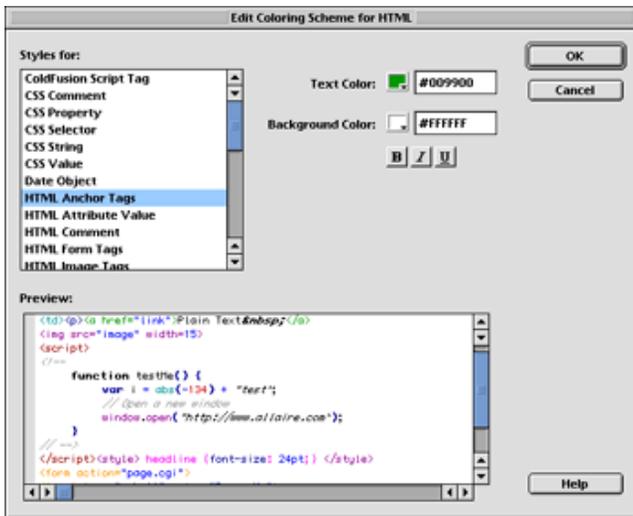
Adding cell content in one view automatically updates the other view.

Another major feature of Dreamweaver is site management. With just a few clicks, developers can upload and maintain their Web site files and modify any element of a Web document with ease.



Built-in site management helps keep your remote site synchronized with your local files and can display your site in a hierarchical tree format.

One of the most unique options in Dreamweaver is the integration with its supported coding languages. No matter which language you use, your work will be color-coded and numbered. Basic templates are included for all languages, allowing you to drag-and-drop objects from multiple scripting languages into a Web page.



Separate color coding schemes visually identify each programming language used in a document. Every scheme is customizable.

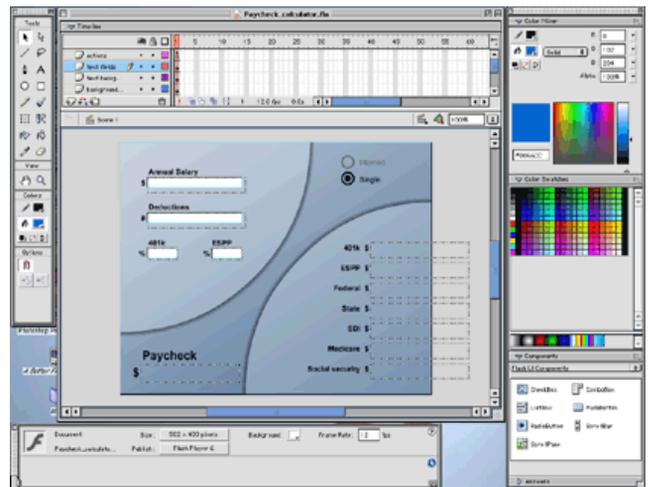
Flash

Flash is used to create multimedia and user interfaces for the Web. The files that are created are generally very small in size, permitting even dialup viewers to experience design without huge wait times. This is accomplished by the use of vector-based graphics. Bitmapped images can also be used in Flash documents that are also optimized for speed. Web site

graphics were essentially based only on bitmapped images until Macromedia Flash became one of the first successful implementations of vector-based graphics on the Web.

The free Flash Player plug-in is installed by default in nearly all current Web browsers, and is easily downloaded and installed in most other browsers. This large user base makes Flash an attractive option to create visually rich and bandwidth-friendly presentations of Web-based information.

With the included tutorials and samples, you'll be animating in minutes. Flash uses a very intuitive menu system to provide access to everything you need for your project. If you're already comfortable with using time-line-based editing for video in such applications as iMovie or Final Cut Pro, you should be right at home in Flash.

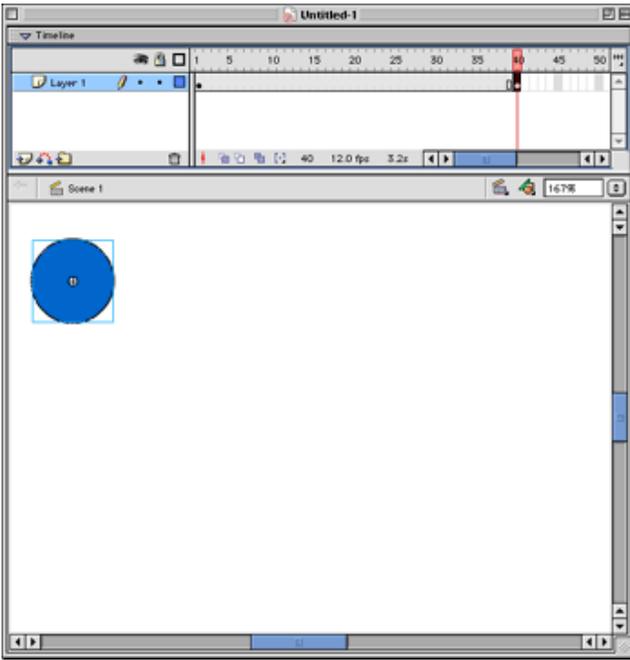


Create your Flash animation using objects and functions from easily-accessible menus surrounding your stage area.

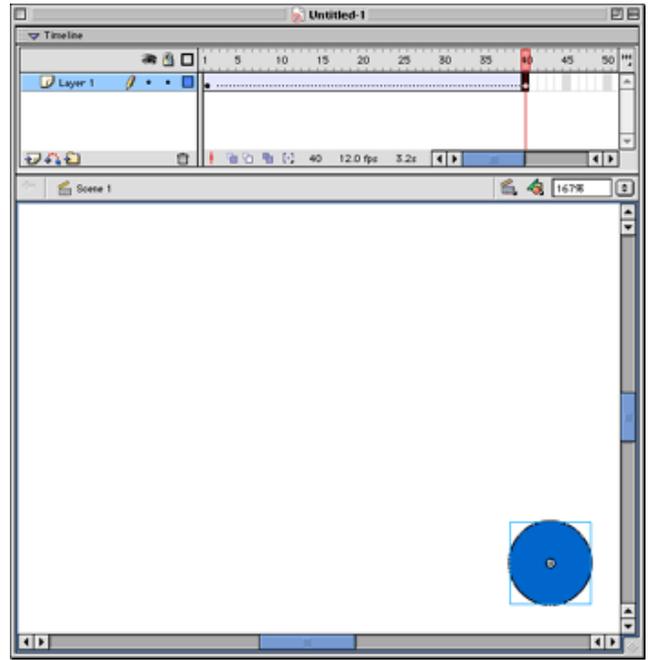
One of Flash's most often used functions is Motion Tweening to animate an object. The following screen shots demonstrate how to create a simple animation:



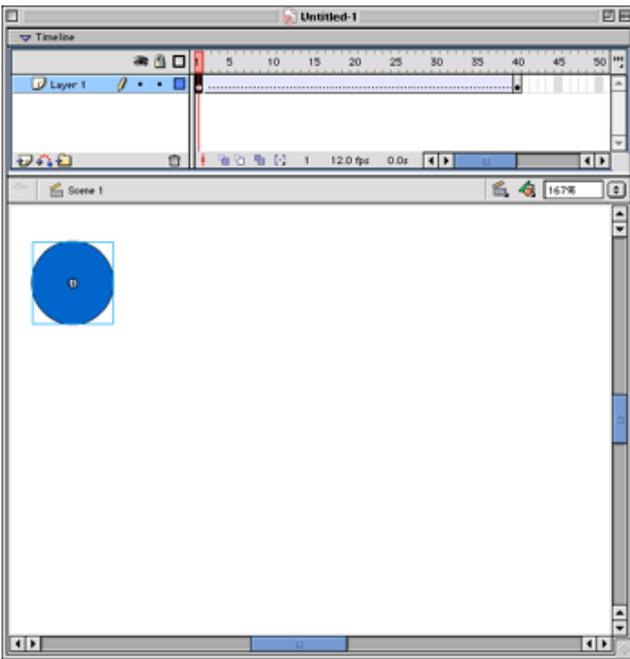
Step 1: Convert a selected graphic into a symbol with the Convert to Symbol command in the Insert menu and set the Behavior to Graphic.



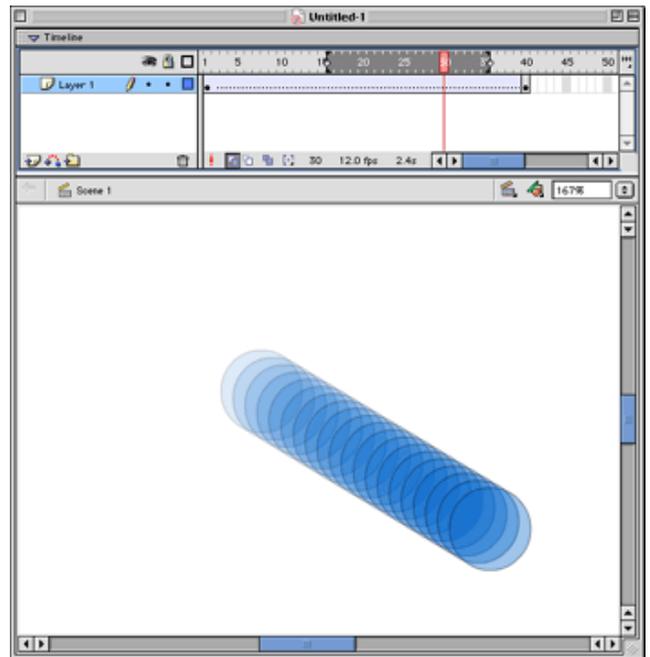
Step 2: In the Timeline, select the frame that will be the last frame of the animation and select Keyframe from the Insert menu. The clip's length will be indicated as a light gray bar in the Timeline.



Step 4: Click back to the last frame of the animation (the keyframe). With the pointer tool, drag the object to the desired ending location of its animation. To move the object in a straight line (45-degree increments), hold the Shift key while dragging.



Step 3: Click the first frame of the animation and select Create Motion Tween from the Insert menu. The clip will change color to blue with a dashed line, indicating that the object has been attached to the keyframe you defined in Step 2.



Step 5: Test your animation by pressing the Return key. This snapshot has the Onion Skin option enabled (the darkened button at the bottom of the time line) which displays a range of steps of your final animation. The range can be changed by dragging the left and right sides of the darkened area at the top of the time line.

Your objects aren't limited to moving in a straight line. Objects can also be animated to follow a nonlinear path as well as change color, size, rotation, etc. as it progresses along the time line.

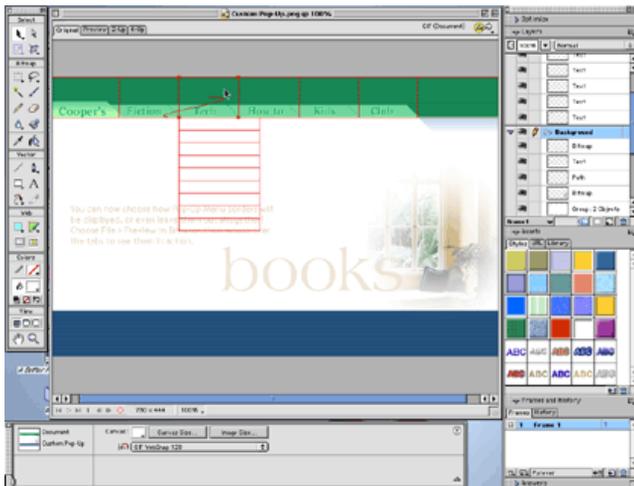
A new feature in Flash MX is the close integration with Components (see bottom right of the above illustration). Components are objects such as check boxes, drop down lists, submit buttons, and text fields. These allow easy creation of oft-used interfaces in the Flash document.

Third-party applications such as [Swift 3D](http://www.swift3d.com)¹ allow Flash to handle three-dimensional input and create even more visually rich designs.

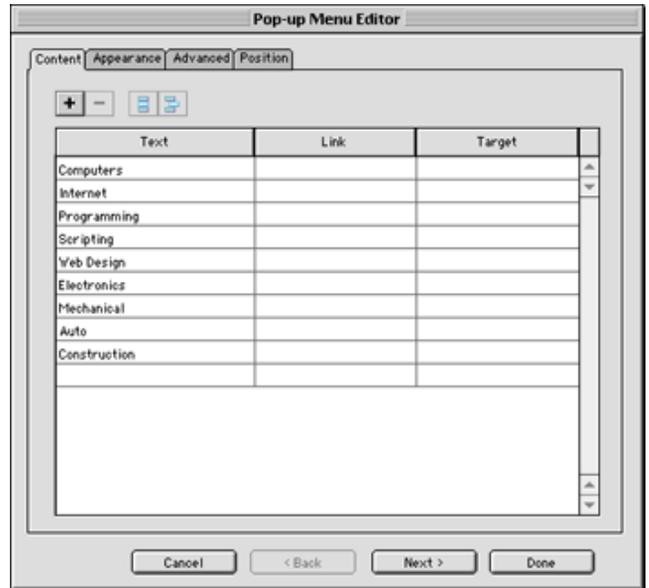
Fireworks

Popular for creating rollover and pop-up navigation effects for Web pages, Fireworks includes tools for building vector or bitmapped graphics, layering interactive effects, then integrating the finished effect into a Dreamweaver or Flash project. The built-in styles help you quickly create interactive menus without any knowledge of the scripting languages required to make them.

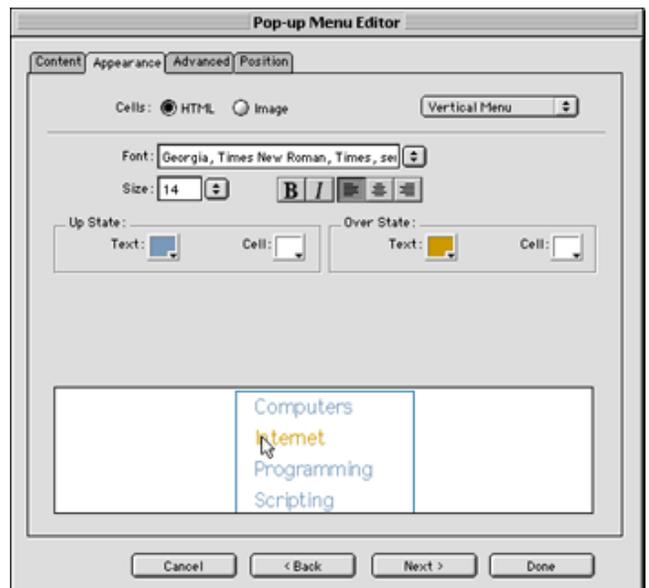
You can start by using templates to create navigation buttons, or by importing your own graphics created in another image editing application.



To create an effect, simply follow the instructions of the step-by-step interface which will guide you through the process of creating a rollover and/or pop-up menu.

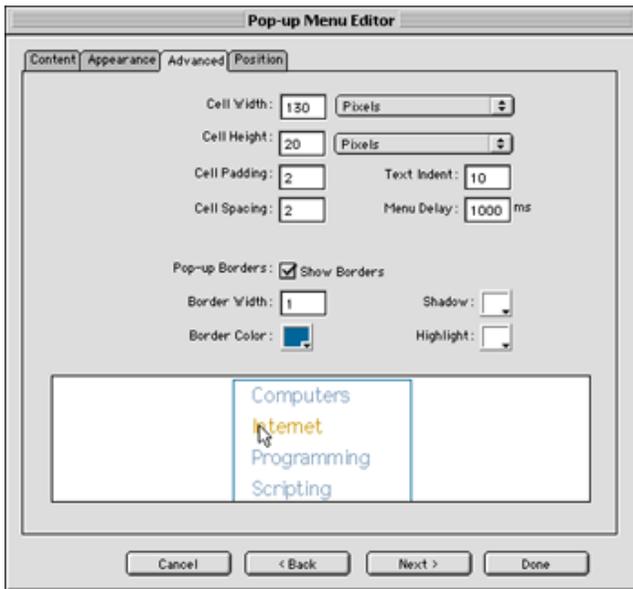


Step 1: Define menu items in the order you want them to appear, along with corresponding links and, if required, targets. Use the provided buttons to set up nested, hierarchal menus.

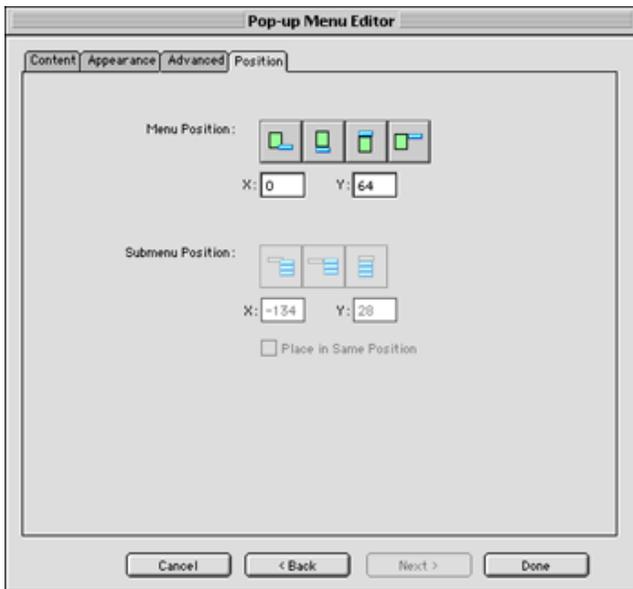


Step 2: Customize the menu's look by choosing HTML-created or image-created buttons. Image-created buttons provide a selection of bevels and background textures to choose from.

1. <http://www.swift3d.com>



Step 3: Fine-tune the look of your menu by adjusting the size, padding, and spacing of each button (cell), how far to indent text from the edge of the cell, how long the menu should remain visible after the mouse pointer has moved away, and settings for borders around the menu.



Step 4: Finally, define where the menu should appear. Four preset buttons are provided for common menu positions plus three default submenu positions. X and Y values let you make fine adjustments.

FreeHand

FreeHand was originally positioned as a vector-based illustration package intended for creating graphics for desktop publishing projects. Today, its capabilities reach far

beyond the print industry. AT^{PM} previously [reviewed FreeHand 10](#)¹ in the July 2001 issue and, like Studio MX, gave it an Excellent rating.

“FreeHand has outgrown its category so much that it would be unfair to compare it to [Adobe] Illustrator.” —Jamal Ghandour

As previously mentioned, the review copy of Studio MX was sent with FreeHand 10. A page on Macromedia’s Web site lists the [top 10 new features](#)² of FreeHand MX as:

1. Unlimited stroke, fill, and effect attributes to a single vector or text object.
2. New Object Panel providing stacking control of multiple attributes.
3. Live Effects apply distortions and effects without altering the original object.
4. Ability to reshape rectangles, ellipses, and polygons while maintaining control and editability of graphic primitives.
5. An updated workspace designed to integrate with other Studio MX products.
6. Flash MX integration.
7. Action Tool enabling drag and drop of Flash MX actions among objects, symbols, and pages.
8. Connector Lines Tool to quickly map information architecture, data flows, and site maps.
9. Additional new or enhanced creative tools including Extrude, Blend, and Eraser, plus alpha channel support for imported bitmaps.
10. Fireworks MX integration.

Conclusion

In reviewing Studio MX, we felt the most important aspect that merits praise was not the exceptional capabilities of any one of the applications, which can be purchased individually. Rather, at \$899, Macromedia is wisely offering the products as a single, reduced-cost package (saving about \$700). Purchasing comparable Adobe products would total at least \$1,200. Adobe’s Web Collection package is a \$999 alternative that also includes Photoshop and Acrobat, but not LiveMotion—Adobe’s answer to Flash. Indeed, LiveMotion projects are typically finished as QuickTime or Flash files! Also, the Web Collection package is simply a bundle of the included Adobe products. While Adobe has been singing about the integration between the latest versions, we feel

1. <http://www.atpm.com/7.07/freehand.shtml>

2. <http://www.macromedia.com/software/freehand/productinfo/newfeatures/>

Studio MX's integration is superior, practically making it a must-have for the Web developer looking to have support for the widest array of coding languages.

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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.

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



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What Are Some Tips for Viewing PDFs?

- You can [download](#)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.

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

Do You Answer Technical Support Questions?

Of course. E-mail 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?

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What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

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



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