

The possibility of the impossible.



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

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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the August issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* July was indeed a busy month for the Macintosh community. Apple released its quarterly results for the period ending in June, and many Mac users placed their orders for G5 computers that will arrive in August or September.

In the meantime, Apple used the first full month of summer to introduce a new iPod promotion with the folks at Volkswagen. People who buy a new Volkswagen Beetle get an iPod for free. They also get the iPod connection kit and an Apple Store coupon for \$100 off a purchase of \$999 or more.

Looking at it another way, buyers willing to pay \$15,950 or more for an iPod and a handy connection kit are eligible to get a Volkswagen New Beetle for free. The Apple Store coupon may entice some buyers to close the deal.

Best Buy Again?

In late-breaking news, Apple has decided to sell a limited selection of Macintosh computers in a limited number of Best Buy stores. Long time readers may remember that Best Buy sold the original Bondi blue iMac but discontinued the sale of Macs following the release of the candy-colored version of Apple's popular desktop computer. Best Buy desired to order the various colors of iMacs in different quantities. Apple would not oblige Best Buy's request.

However, Best Buy has been selling Apple's iPod digital music player for quite some time. The iPod, eMac, and iMac now come in only one color—white. Perhaps with more neutral colored products the buyers for Best Buys are less apt to see red when they think of their Apple relationship. Apple, in turn, hopes the renewed sales of Macs through best Buy will help the Mac maker's bottom line remain green.

Quarterly Results

Speaking of green, for the period ending June 28, 2003, Apple Computer reported the following quarterly results:

- During the quarter Apple sold 771,000 Macintosh CPU units.
- Total revenue for the period was \$1.545 billion.
- International sales accounted for 39% of revenue.
- Net profit was \$19 million or \$0.05 per share.
- Gross margin on products sold was 27.7%.
- Cash and equivalents stand at a strong \$4.5 billion.

What isn't mentioned in the press release accompanying the results is that interest and earnings on Apple's cash and equivalents dropped dramatically when compared to the prior year period. For the three months ended June 28, 2003, Apple earned a meager \$15 million on its cash pile. It is interesting to note that Apple's after-tax-earnings for the quarter exceeded its pre-tax earnings on its cash. This means the company earned a profit from product sales, a feat Apple has struggled recently to achieve.

Give It Back, Bud!

Considering the size of Apple's cash pile and the effect of low interest rates on its earnings, there are a growing number of shareholders who want Apple to declare a dividend and return some of the money to the company's owners. So far Apple executives have been reluctant to reestablish a shareholder dividend.

Buy Now, Pay Now!

Of course there are others who would like Apple to use its cash to finance acquisitions. What companies Apple might purchase with its formidable cash reserves is a matter of speculation. If history serves as a guide watch for Apple to use small portions of its cash to purchase needed technologies or micro-sized companies with compelling technology products.

Apple ended July trading at \$21.08, close to its 52-week high of \$21.57. At that price Apple is trading at only \$3.2 billion above its cash and equivalents balance.

Banned in Buckingham?

That's right. The iTrip offered by Griffin Technologies that allows an iPod to play through the FM band on a car radio has been banned in the UK. Apparently the product violates a long-standing UK wireless communications act. Fortunately, buyers in the US who take

advantage of the free iPod with the purchase of a Volkswagen New Beetle need not be concerned. That is unless a New Beetle buyer wishes to take his new car and new iPod to Britain for a visit with the Queen.

iTMS

Speaking of royalty issues of a different kind, Apple reported that net of royalty payments to labels and artists the iTunes Music Store came close to breaking even in its first two months of operation. Potential competitors have been eyeing the success of the iTMS and making plans to offer competing music download services.

Apple has reiterated that the Windows version of iTMS will be available before the end of the calendar year. The Windows version of Apple's successful digital music store will reportedly offers the same rights of usage to the purchased music currently enjoyed by Mac owners.

Apple's first major Windows competitor in the legal music download business is a new service offered by BuyMusic. So far the rival has had more than its share of problems, including but not limited to, the inability of music buyers to transfer purchased songs from their computers to their MP3 players.

Our Risk-Free Guarantee

Our August issue of ATPM is full of insightful articles, columns and reviews. We guarantee that this issue ATPM can be easily stored on an Apple iPod with available space. But before you store our latest issue away for safekeeping, we urge you to read through our pages. We're confident you'll find several topics that will hold your interest and enhance your digital life.

The ATPM Staff

Our August issue includes:

The Candy Apple: Making the Switch

Apple makes upgrading operating systems pretty darned simple. Then again, you knew that already.

Machine Language: Mac OS X's Quiet Little Killer Application

After growing weary of saving Web pages as archives, printing pages, creating clipping files, and using programs like Apple's Stickies and Chronos' StickyBrain, Matt Coates discovered Xnippets by MacTelligence and his quest for a great "snippet" repository came to an end.

Segments: Farewell, Casady & Greene

Eric Blair takes a trip down memory lane in the wake of C&G's demise, noting some of the quality Macintosh software the company produced in its 19 years of life.

Segments: G5s, Macs, and PCs

With the announcement of G5 processors behind us, Andrew Kator makes updated observations about Mac versus PC spats.

Segments: About Adobe, Premiere, and All That

Andrew Kator examines Adobe's recent pattern of acquisition instead of innovation and contemplates whether we're seeing the beginning of the end for Adobe.

Quick Tips in Design: Using Color

Andrew Kator returns with his second installment of design tips. This time, it's all about color, tints, and shades.

How To: FrankenMac

Sylvester Roque explores his options for replacing/upgrading his ailing CD-ROM drive.

Cartoon: Cortland

Things begin to make sense for *Cortland*, as the desktop wars continue in Matt Johnson's cartoon.

Cartoon: iTrolls

Gregory Maddux joins us with four iTrolls cartoons: "The Search for Software," "Learning the Rules," "Independence Day," and "Vidiot Professor."

Desktop Pictures: Landscapes and Cortland

ATPM reader Katherine Sears-Lent offers a third and final batch of landscape desktop pictures for your enjoyment. Katherine's photos feature Savannah and Calloway Gardens in Georgia; Sonoma Valley in California; Long Island; and Tampa, Florida. Matt Johnson contributes some desktop pictures themed around the characters in his *Cortland* comic strip.

Review: CVSTrac 1.1.2

CVSTrac is Web-based tool for tracking bugs and to-do items, which integrates with version control software and a wiki. Michael Tsai finds that it's lightweight, elegantly designed, and easier to use than competing products.

Review: iCurve

Christopher Turner reviews this stylish and ergonomic notebook stand from Griffin Technology.

Review: iPod (30 GB)

Eric Blair finds that the 30 GB iPod bests its toughest competition: the previous generation of iPods.

Review: Two Books on Using iApps

Kirk McElhearn compares *iTunes*, *iPhoto*, *iMovie* and *iDVD Bible* and *Teach Yourself Mac OS X Digital Media*, which cover Apple's iApps in very different ways.



Printing Envelopes

Is there any software available that would provide an easy and direct way of printing an address for an envelope, instead of going through the cumbersome AppleWorks program? On OS 9 there used to be a useful program available as part of an address book, but I haven't seen anything comparable for OS X.

—Marius Pope

[Check out A Sharp's Addressix.](#) —Michael Tsai

Path Finder Review

The most useful feature of Path Finder, in my opinion, is the "cookie crumb" trail it puts near the top of the window, laying out clickable buttons for each step along the path to your current view. You can drag icons onto these paths, et cetera. This is a great enhancement and pretty much brings the best of column view into whatever other view mode you are using.

Also, you can print a window listing—something you still can't do in Jaguar. This is important in a design shop.

—Anonymous

"Viruses"

I am being driven crazy by the continuing use of the plural of virus as *virii*. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the plural of virus is *viruses*.

It is bad enough the incorrect form appears in bulletin boards, newsgroups, and other such places where spelling is atrocious. It appeared in your publication ATPM 9.07 in the article [Steal This Computer Book 3.](#)

Having taken Latin in my youth (ca. 1940) I know that even if it were treated as the plural of a Latin word it would be *viri* not *virii*. *Virii* would be the plural of *virius*.

I think it would be nice if you would publish a brief note sometime somewhere in your publication pointing this out.

—Fred Pollak

Myth III Review

Oh, please. Digging up this lousy excuse for a Mac game is a disservice to your readers.

The level design is beyond contrived. The humor and attention to detail of the Bungie games is absent. The network play is notoriously poor (so much so that an independent community provided their own alternative to replace it). Finally, and most serious of all, the product is bug-ridden and lacking any substantial support (patches!) from Bold.

A far superior alternative is the new OS X-native Myth II. There is a strong community behind this game, providing excellent opportunities for net play and custom maps. Best of all, it's a mature piece of code that won't leave you cursing the time and effort you spend playing the game.

—Anonymous

• • •

Myth III utterly pales in comparison to its predecessors when it comes to gameplay. To say that it is "virtually identical" is just plain wrong. The carefully adjusted unit balance of Myth I (TFL) and Myth II (SB) is simply not there in Myth III, and there are bugs and inconsistencies too innumerable to count. The one that most stands out in my mind is that gesture clicking doesn't work correctly.

To blithely assume that net play "would be just as much fun as Myth or Myth II" is irresponsible. Net play is what has given TFL and SB such long lives. There are very good reasons you can't find anyone online for Myth III. It is riddled with bugs.

Another important omission in this article is the lack of mention of the [MythDev patch](#) released for this game that corrects some of the most egregious problems. They continue to make improvements and, someday, it may evolve into the game that long-time Myth players so much wanted to love, but make no mistake—it is not there yet, by any stretch.

I'm happy you were able to enjoy the single-player aspect of this game, Evan, but you very much misrepresent Myth III in the context of its predecessors.

—Anonymous

• • •

Myth III lacks the polish the first two had that made them so enjoyable. All the work that went into balancing, lack of bugs (and fixes), making good network levels, and creating a deep story with rich characters for the single player game made them highly enjoyable.

The blurry, terribly voice acted, and stiff video cut scenes is the highlight of what was a laughable attempt to milk the Myth series with Myth III. They don't come close to the quality of the animated cut scenes of the originals. No portion of the game really measures up to the high standards of the originals.

In fact, I'd guess the developers, Mumbo Jumbo, knew they had a lemon on their hands, considering how quickly they ran away from fixing any of even the most basic of bugs with the engine.

The one highlight of the mess is that Myth III's single player mode is decent, if a bit frustrating, with its unbalanced sections. The lack of a solid network game is utterly disappointing for the many Myth I/II fans who (basically) bought the previous games to play online and were blown away by the single player game when they got around to playing it.

—Pike

I think Myth III is an entertaining, worthwhile game. However, I do agree, as I mentioned in my review, that it does not live up to the Bungie legacy in many ways.

I have not yet tried the OS X-native version of Myth II, but I am excited to do so. Certainly it is true that there is a big support network behind it, lots of maps, multi-player games, etc. which, obviously, Myth III is lacking. And probably that level of enthusiasm and support will never come for Myth III. I still play Myth II network games because of the huge community behind it, despite the fact that Myth III looks better and has some new characters I would like to see incorporated into games.

I did not encounter any bugs or glitches during gameplay. I would appreciate feedback from readers on this matter. It is valuable to know about such things. —Evan Trent

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The Candy Apple

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Making the Switch

I made The Switch this month. Well, no, not *that* switch; I'm not ready for OS X yet. But as our publisher recommended a few months ago, I decided it was indeed time to upgrade from 9.1 to 9.2. Having done it yourselves, you know it was no big deal. I didn't know that myself, so I was relieved to see how painless it all was.

I recently bought an iPod for a friend, but as I had not paid attention to all the details I ended up buying one refurbished for Windows instead of one designed to work with a Macintosh. I called Apple for help, and the technician said I'd have no problem using iTunes to Restore Factory Settings, which would replace the Windows iPod software with the Mac software. The only snag was that I needed a particular version of the iPod updater to do this, and this updater requires Mac OS 9.2.

So, I took the plunge and downloaded the necessary installers, which took about 20 minutes on a cable connection. Then I updated to 9.2, which took about six minutes. Then I got the iPod updater and installed that, and restored the factory settings on the iPod. The whole process took no longer than half an hour, and was as painless as I've come to expect from Apple.

I spent a few seconds after the restart, deleting a couple of things from the Apple menu, but everything else was pretty much the way I'd left it. The Launcher had picked up an extra menu item, but the Help program always makes fixing stuff like that easy. Besides, that's what I get for using the Launcher anyway, right?

I have to say this experience has better prepared me for taking the real next step: OS X. I'd have done so already except I have another user to train, and we've gotten him so comfortable in OS 9 that I'm not sure how he'll feel about X. A few years ago, though, he couldn't have turned on the machine by himself. He's learned OS 9 from scratch; I suppose learning X won't be as big a leap as that.

The real question is do I upgrade my Blue-and-White G3, or bite the bullet and buy a new machine? I hate to dispose of a machine that works just fine and has all the gadgets I need on it, and I really don't want to get something new just for the sake of it being new. It's tempting now and then to think about watching a DVD movie on a cross-country flight, and if I made more flights like that I think it'd be an easy sell. One flight every couple of months isn't enough though to justify spending \$1500 on a laptop, no matter how cool and shiny it is. If I got one, there'd be the AirPort expense as well, although the coolness factor of that is just about impossible to quantify.

I tell you what. When we get to a point where I can take a laptop to the park—or anywhere—and use an affordable satellite Internet connection, with no wires or anything, I'll get an iBook. Deal?

Are we there yet?

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Machine Language

by Matt Coates, mcoates@atpm.com

Mac OS X's Quiet Little Killer Application

Ever so quietly, a little-known application has exploited a little-known feature of Mac OS X and solved one of the great problems of computing. At least for me, anyway.

The application is called Xnippets—it's a play on the word snippets—and the OS X feature is *services*. The problem requires some history:

When I collect articles and other bits and pieces of text from Web sites, text files, and e-mail, I want to be able to grab the text quickly and easily and store it in a useful format. I want a minimum of screen clutter. I want some way to organize the stuff. And I don't want to wade through a zillion features that I will never use.

Over the years, I've tried many potential solutions, but none has proved completely satisfactory. I've saved a few Web pages as archives—ads and all—but it's an awkward solution. I've printed Web pages and e-mails, cluttering my office with stacks of paper I will never get around to filing.

I've dragged text onto the desktop to create clipping files, which are nifty for quick reference but not very useful otherwise. Clipping text isn't selectable; you must drag the clipping document *itself* into an open text document, such as one created by Word orTextEdit. Too many steps.

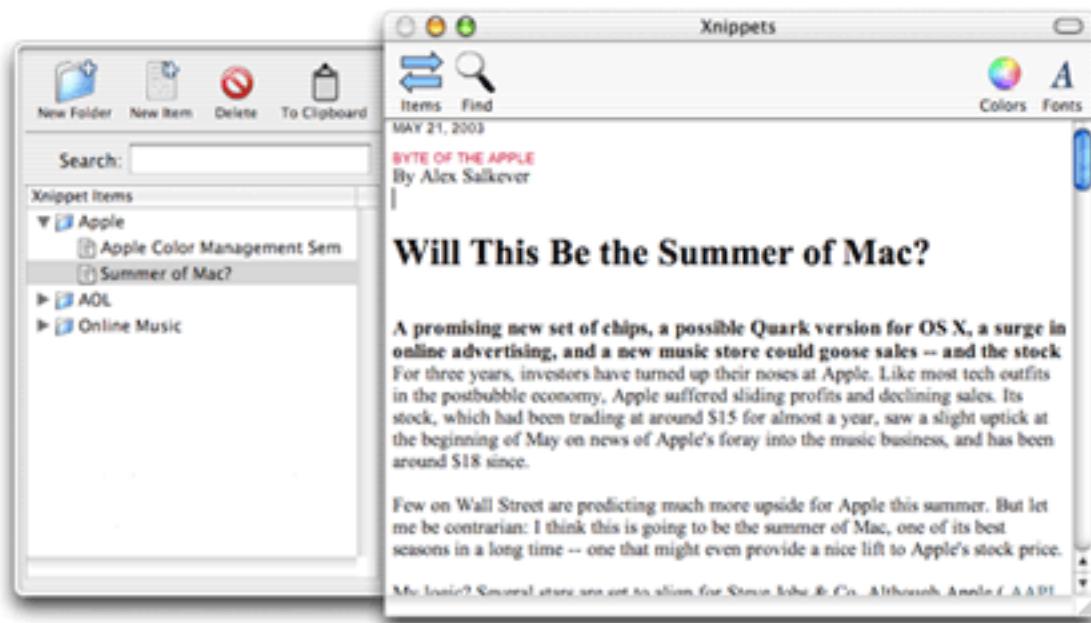
The electronic Post-It-style notes created by Apple's Stickies application had some promise. They are visually appealing—you can decorate them in a variety of colors and format the text, too. You can even make the notes translucent. But Stickies suffers a peculiar design flaw: you can't selectively open notes—either all are open or none is. If you try to close a single sticky note by clicking its close box, you are offered the choice of saving the note as a text file or deleting it; closing it in the traditional sense is not an option. The more you use Stickies, the more a flock of notes obscures your screen. They can't be organized, and getting a second monitor seems a rather ostentatious solution.

A program called [StickyBrain](#) looked like a keeper. It's an oddball thing, this StickyBrain—Post-It-like notes paired with a browser-like search engine. Information is collected from documents or the Web via contextual menus or hot keys. StickyBrain works very well; it has potential to become my filing cabinet of choice because its search engine is smart enough to let you dump everything into loosely-defined piles.

But StickyBrain is weirdly intimidating: it has too many features to keep straight and the interface needs some polishing. Although its basics can be mastered quickly, StickyBrain requires a commitment that I'm apparently not ready to make. I either forget to use it or forget what I stored in it.

The End of the Quest?

And that brings us back to [Xnippets](#) from MacTelligence, a suburban Philadelphia software company specializing in OS X applications and WebObjects development. It's the most useful text grabbing and organizing program I've found.



Xnippets has an iApps-like interface. There's a resizable main window, a sliding tray displaying list of documents, and the minimum number of buttons and controls you need to get the job done.

Xnippets is the iTunes of text. It's a collector, file cabinet, and "player" all in one. And, as with iTunes, the actual content files are tucked away out of view. When you grab text with Xnippets, a text file with a name all in numbers is created and stashed in a folder in the user's Library. You see the file's friendlier name in the sliding tray's list. Click a document name and the text appears in the big window.

You can get text into Xnippets all of the usual ways including pasting, drag-and-drop, and by typing it in. But it's Mac OS X services that makes Xnippets special.

At Your Services

Services are the forgotten feature of OS X. Although they have been around as long as the OS has, until recently there wasn't much use for them. The arrival of Safari changed that by giving applications such as Xnippets something to do.

Services allow applications to work behind the scenes with minimal action by the user. You'll find the Services menu under the first menu to the right of the Apple menu—the menu with the active application's name. Click the Services menu item, and a submenu pops out to reveal services which come with OS X and any you have installed. (In Microsoft Word and some other programs, all the services are disabled. In these cases, the developer has not put in the extra effort required to support services.)

Although there are services to perform many different functions, from opening URLs, to searching the iTunes Music Store, to sending files via Bluetooth, they are most useful in manipulating text and that's what most available services do.

Safari is not the only Web browser which can use services (OmniWeb can, although Internet Explorer cannot), but it is the services-compatible browser that almost all Mac OS X users have. Xnippets is one more reason to dump IE sooner rather than later.

Suppose while checking out a Mac news Web site you find an article you'd like to keep. Just select the text you want and choose Safari>Services>Xnippets>Save as Xsnippet. The text instantly pops up in the Xnippets window, using the first few words of the text as the document name.

You take a break from gathering information to check your e-mail using OS X's Mail. A pal has forwarded you a press release with information about a new sound card you've been waiting for. You select the text of the press release, visit the Services menu, and presto: the press release is added to your Xnippets collection. No copying, no pasting.

Xnippets' clean, straightforward interface makes it a great tool for students, researchers, and writers because all the text is in one place when you start working with the saved documents. You can organize your documents in the sliding tray into folders and change the order in which the documents and folders are listed. At last, there's no more need to wander through folders full of text files or screens full of Stickies.

Xnippets has a quality competitor called [DEVONthink](#), a similar program with more bells and whistles that sells for \$35 compared with \$15 for Xnippets. And StickyBrain will no doubt at some point take advantage of services, too.

But I'll stick with Xnippets. I owe it to the little program that brought my quest to an end. Give Xnippets a try. It's terrific software and a great introduction to the hidden powers of Mac OS X services.

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Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

Farewell, Casady & Greene

It is with profound regret that we inform you that Casady & Greene will close its doors on July 3rd, 2003, after nineteen years in the Software Publishing business. We have endured many industry downturns, but the last three years have presented a series of economic disasters from which we were unable to rebound. Please know that we are deeply grateful for your patronage and have been honored to serve you and please accept our very sincere apologies for any difficulties or inconveniences caused you by our closure.

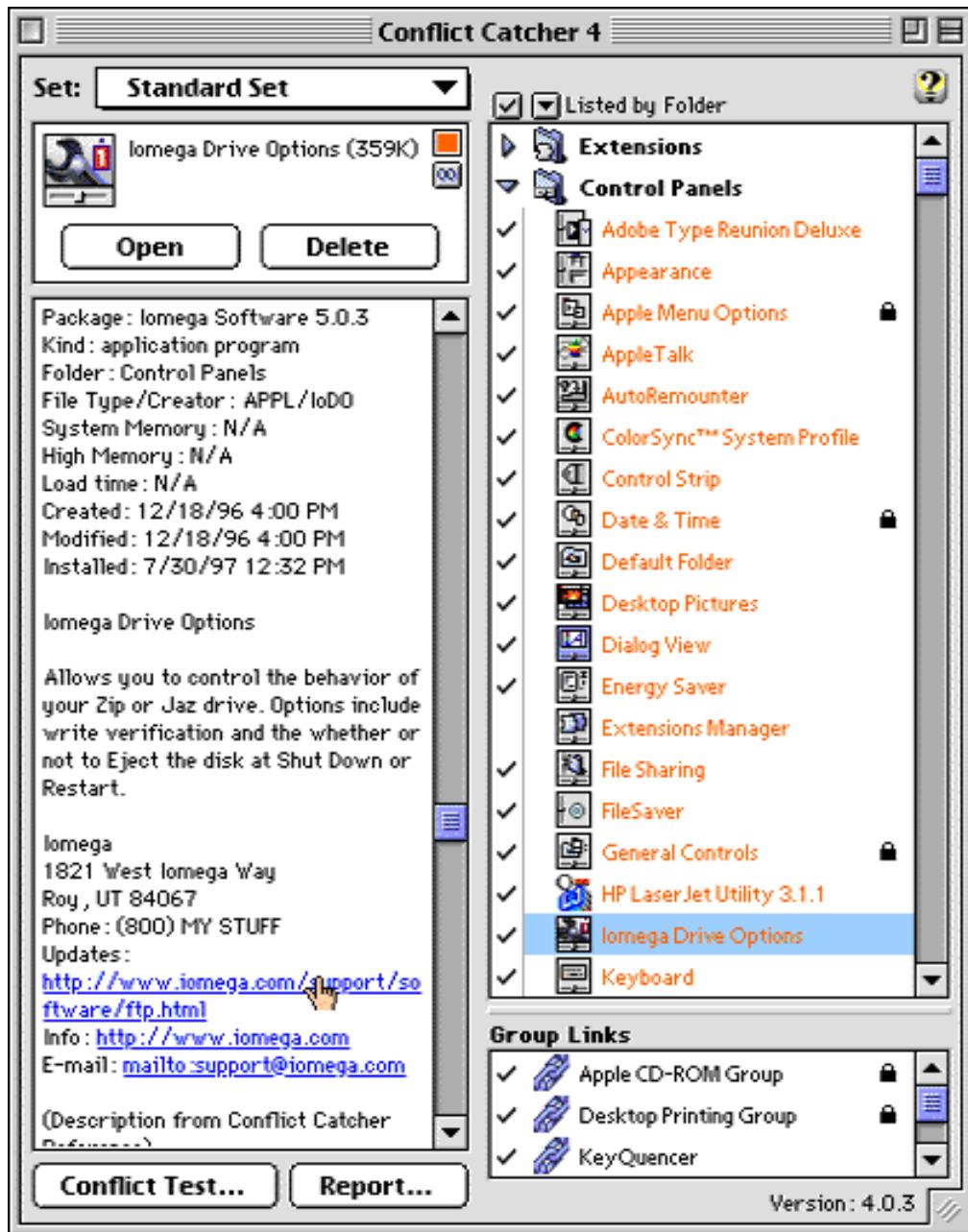
I was saddened when I originally learned of this development on [MacCentral](#). I think I've used software published by [Casady & Greene](#) almost from the first day I've had a Mac.

Those new to the Macintosh platform might not recognize the name Casady & Greene, but long-time Mac users know it as the publisher who presented programs like [Conflict Catcher](#), [SoundJam](#), and Crystal Quest to the world. That might not seem like much today, since anybody can set up a Web site and hawk their own wares. Casady & Greene, however, was in business for 19 years. Software was distributed on 3.5" floppy disks, on store shelves, and in the back of magazines. Looking back and thinking about how hard it was to find Macintosh software in stores for a long time makes what the folks at Casady & Greene were able to accomplish all the more impressive.

Of all the programs published by Casady & Greene, Conflict Catcher was easily the one I used the most. Back when I had a Performa 630 with 8 MB of RAM, I went crazy customizing it with many random system extensions (much to the chagrin of my parents, I might add). However, if I wanted to get anything productive done—like blowing away some Pfhon in a game of Marathon—the first thing I did was fire up Conflict Catcher and load up my specially prepared “Game” extension set.

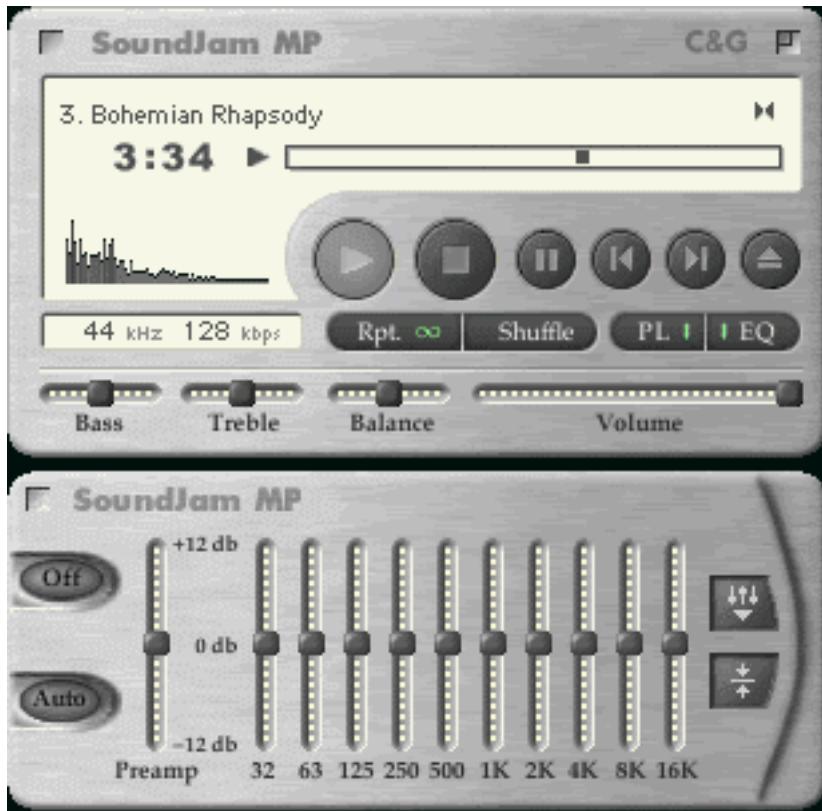
Even when I upgraded to a Power Mac G3 with 256 MB of RAM, Conflict Catcher still held an important place in my tool kit, living up to its name and tracking down the ever-present conflicts between system extensions on the Classic Mac OS. Yes, I was usually

cursing during the time it took to run conflict tests, but the satisfaction of slaughtering the offending extension(s) without sacrificing untold number of innocent bits more than made up for the time spent watching my Mac reboot.



For some reason, SoundJam never really clicked with me, but I know a number of people who swore by the music player. In the days before iTunes, there were actually a number of different MP3 players for the Mac. Programs like SoundJam, [Audion](#), MACAST, and GrayAmp were all competing for the ears of Mac users. I was more fond of Audion, but the folks at Apple had their eyes on SoundJam. The necessary papers were signed, Apple acquired the rights to SoundJam, hired SoundJam developer Jeffrey Robbin, and turned SoundJam into what we today know as iTunes.

I don't think Casady & Greene ever recovered from the switch to OS X. When you have two marquee applications like Conflict Catcher and SoundJam and cannot sell either of them to OS X users, it can't bode well for your future.



Done right, an application like Conflict Catcher could be useful on OS X. Extensions, as they were on the Classic Mac OS, don't exist under OS X, but there are a number of new things that could use managing—kernel extensions, Internet plug-ins, contextual menu

items, and [haxies](#) all come to mind. As I was reminded by [John Gruber's article](#) on Casady & Greene's passing, Jeffrey Robbin was not only the developer of SoundJam, but he was also the developer of Conflict Catcher.

Even in its waning days, Casady & Greene is still treating its customers better than many companies that, sadly, will outlive it. If you go to the Casady & Greene home page, you will find a farewell message, along with contact and support information on every Casady & Greene product. In a few cases, the Web site states that a given product is no longer supported by anybody, but the majority of the products are being supported by their original authors.

If you have a chance, read the farewell message on the Casady & Greene home page. In this day and age, where many companies go out of business and either leave their Web pages untouched or disappear from the Internet without a trace, the farewell message shows the same care that Casady & Greene put into the products they published. They actually thank and apologize to their customers for any inconvenience their closing might cause.

When Casady & Greene's farewell message was first posted, it contained no contact information for Conflict Catcher—it looked as though the venerable application's obituary would read "Check back for information. At this time Conflict Catcher does not have a support contact." That has since changed and support is available via [e-mail](#). I don't know who is sitting at the receiving end of that address, but it's nice to see that Conflict Catcher will continue in some small way.

The same day Casady & Greene announced their imminent demise, some folks were [discussing](#) the point of the [10th Anniversary BBEdit Anthology](#) on [Erik Barzeski's Weblog](#). My point of view is that 10 years is worth celebrating. Casady & Greene published quality software for 19 years. As a longtime Mac user, it's sad to see this company go, but it is also worth celebrating everything they accomplished.

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Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Andrew Kator, akator@atpm.com

G5s, Macs, and PCs

Apple's recent announcement of the G5s and their claims for the new computer's performance have refueled the twenty-year argument over platform superiority between PC and Mac supporters. In order to understand why Apple's announcements have created such heated and bitter debate, it is important to look back upon the history of the dispute.

In 1983 the typical computing experience was based upon command-line interfaces and the use of BASIC and other high-level computer programming languages. First the Lisa, and a year later the Mac, removed the need to memorize commands in order to use a computer to be productive. Throughout the rest of the 80s, many computer users didn't recognize this advancement, proclaiming that a computer that didn't use a command-line interface was a toy and therefore less powerful.

In reality, many of those presenting this argument confused the fact that it wasn't the computer that was less powerful, but they themselves who felt less powerful by not needing advanced knowledge of technical minutia in order to make the machines operate. The graphical interface made knowing commands and programming optional, so the advanced knowledge required to operate PCs no longer applied. The easy-to-use Mac interface meant non-experts could operate the computer, threatening the egos of computer nerds and tech-heads everywhere.

Obviously Bill Gates and others at Microsoft recognized the advantages of the mouse (even though many Microsoft users didn't) and how Apple had implemented the interface. Windows 1 and 2 had gained a small following, but it wasn't until Microsoft introduced Windows 3 that the PC world began to recognize the advantages Mac users had known for years.

Even with the growing similarities, Windows 3 offered something important to many PC users that the Mac didn't. Windows was still a shell over DOS, and every time Windows crashed or misbehaved, all of those people who loved the feeling of power from using the command line still got to tinker with their computers. The satisfaction derived from these

activities is similar to what is experienced by those who own old Italian cars or old VW Beetles: having to repair something on a regular basis makes a person feel needed, and when those repairs are successful there is a sense of accomplishment.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with gaining satisfaction from useful knowledge and self-reliance, but arguing that a computer that crashes more and requires more maintenance is a wasted debate. Long before OS X and its Unix stability, independent studies of computer maintenance and repair expenses repeatedly showed that, over time, Macs cost half as much as the accumulated expenses associated with PCs—even when the initial purchase price of a Mac was significantly higher.

Whenever these figures were mentioned, PC advocates would quietly slink away, only to return later with a desperate attempt to reclaim PC superiority. Some of the disillusioned souls would run into a room yelling, "Novell! You can't network a Mac!" or "You can't use a Mac to run a Web server!" Upon having the last of their myths of PC superiority shattered, the only solution for their fractured realities was to find the nearest PC, exit Windows, enter the DOS command line, and gain the rush of satisfaction from proving that they could make the computer do anything they wanted. With the introduction of OS X, Apple has offered a solution for the computer nerds and tech-heads with the system command line abilities of Unix.

Even in the face of cold hard facts, old beliefs and habits die hard. Eventually the PC crowd figured out some arguments that Mac users couldn't easily debunk, and the focus of the Mac/PC battle shifted to market share, hardware, and compatibility. The next time you hear the worn-out and pointless debate over which platform is better, remember the 20-year trend that many standards of modern computing were first introduced in Macs.

There is no difference between Mac and PC users with the exception that the Mac owners have been compromising with slightly higher prices to have access to what everyone else is going to get a few years down the road. Sometimes having that technology also means Mac owners get to be guinea pigs, testing the consumer market for new technologies. Having tomorrow's technology now doesn't make a Mac superior to a PC, it just means Mac users get to play with new things a little sooner than the average person. The joke that Apple is really Microsoft's research and development department has a lot of truth behind it.

Strangely, there is one amazing advantage Windows has over the Mac that has been overlooked by many PC evangelists. Microsoft Windows has benefited the economy by creating millions of jobs over the years for computer technicians. Needing technical skills to use their products is a large source of income for Microsoft, allowing them to create licensing programs for technical certification. Microsoft certification then feeds the revenues of book publishers, training companies, and the previously low-growth industry of paper certificate manufacturers. Of course, Microsoft technicians had to come from some other industry. The parallel between the dates of Microsoft Windows gaining popularity and Alfa Romeo and Renault pulling out of the American market suggests that Microsoft simply created flawed software in order to employ all of the Alfa Romeo and Renault mechanics that had recently become unemployed.

Rather than recognize that we live in a better world for Apple's innovation, many computer users (Mac owners included) are still battling over the differences between the platforms. Arguments between PC and Mac users sometimes reflect the same fanaticism and lack of perspective that can be heard from extremist groups, paranoid dictators, and terrorists. Over 95% of the computing world, including PDAs and Pocket PCs, use the same interface conventions first introduced to the public with the Apple Lisa in 1983. In a few generations, historians will look back at the differences between Macs and PCs and find almost nothing to distinguish the two. The innovations, ideals, and attitudes first applied to computing by Apple over the years have made everyone's computer experience a Mac experience.

Can we move on now and try to enjoy our Macs and Mac clones, err, I mean PCs?

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Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Andrew Kator, akator@atpm.com

About Adobe, Premiere, and All That

Adobe has given multiple reasons for their recent announcement to withdraw their Premiere video editing software from the Macintosh platform, including decreased market share due to competition from Apple's Final Cut Pro, Apple's advantage in creating software on their own platform, and Apple's advantage in marketing to Mac users through name recognition. The decision to discontinue Premiere was rumored on multiple online discussion forums earlier in the year, and Adobe hinted that some changes were coming when they announced that the PC platform had become the company's recommended choice over Macs for using Adobe software.

Adobe has been having more market problems aside from Premiere. Photoshop is still the king of image editing, but many of their other applications have been losing market preference. GoLive once offered powerful advantages over Macromedia's [Dreamweaver](#), and [Illustrator](#) was the professional choice over Macromedia's [FreeHand](#), but that has been changing. Adobe has disappointed many users with incremental upgrades that offer few significant new features. Macromedia, on the other hand, has been pushing product development and their products reflect the investment. Combined with Macromedia's aggressive marketing, their products are stealing serious market share from Adobe.

The classroom is another market in which Adobe has been slipping. Many Adobe products were preferred for teaching because they were considered the professional's choice, and preferred by administration because of significant educational discounts for multiple software licenses. In recent years, Adobe's discounts to educational institutions have become less attractive than those offered by Macromedia, sometimes to the point that three Macromedia licenses could be purchased for the same price as one license for the competing Adobe product. Over the years, many educational institutions have replaced their Adobe products with the Macromedia counterparts, not because of teaching preference but because of the cost savings. As more students in grade school and college have used Macromedia products, more of those students also choose Macromedia products upon graduating and becoming professionals.

The “cut and run” strategy Adobe has applied to Premiere has historically not solved many problems for other software companies, and it’s doubtful that this strategy will help Adobe here. Avid did themselves some damage in the 90s when they discontinued their software-only video editing offerings on the Mac platform, and the company is still trying to claw back some of those users lost in the debacle.

With Avid missing from the lower-end video editing market, Adobe had an amazing opportunity to take over with the obvious vacuum Avid’s withdrawal created. Apple recognized this same opportunity and introduced Final Cut Pro in 1999 (now making it four years old and less than half the age of Premiere). Premiere had a significant and established market at the time of Final Cut Pro’s introduction, and perhaps Adobe assumed they were the winner by default and therefore had nothing to worry about. While Adobe rested, Apple kept developing Final Cut Pro as though it were on Miracle Gro. In contrast to Apple, Adobe’s upgrades to Premiere were less than noteworthy, appearing as though they had lost interest in the product altogether. The most significant change over the years was Premiere’s drop in price, but even that wasn’t enough to convince people to keep from switching to the easier-to-use, more advanced but more expensive Final Cut Pro.

Even with a remaining significant share in the Mac video market, Adobe has decided to duplicate Avid’s decision rather than learn from it. It may never be possible to know all of the reasons for such a questionable decision, but looking at Adobe’s history reveals some insight into the company’s behavior. The story between Adobe and Aldus is a good example.

In the early 90s there were many software companies with innovative products. Aldus had changed the publishing industry altogether in the 80s with PageMaker, but wanted to expand their software offerings. Aldus achieved this by absorbing successful smaller companies or licensing their software for distribution. Silicon Beach Software, remembered for such greats as SuperPaint, Super 3D, and SuperCard, was incorporated into Aldus along with Altsys’ FreeHand and CoSA’s After Effects.

Adobe had been looking longingly at PageMaker for years, with the understanding that should Adobe combine the PageMaker layout software with their PostScript printing language, they would truly be king of the publishing markets. Because Aldus had been struggling with profits, the company finally decided to entertain Adobe’s buyout offers

and in 1994 the companies were merged to create Adobe Systems. This was a great achievement for Adobe, since not only did they acquire PageMaker but they also obtained many other software titles that competed with Adobe's existing products.

This Microsoft-like move would have been a complete coup of most of Adobe's competition except for one problem. Altsys had specifically stated in their contract with Aldus that the FreeHand software must continue to be developed, and it was obvious that Adobe would squash FreeHand in favor of Adobe's own Illustrator software. Eventually things were settled with a 13% devaluing of the Aldus offerings in the merger and Altsys selling FreeHand to Macromedia. Many of the consumer products that were similar to Adobe's professional offerings were discontinued within a few years.

This is just one example of Adobe using acquisition as their answer to competition. Another software title now associated with Adobe, GoLive's CyberStudio, was purchased by Adobe in 1999, renamed to Adobe GoLive, and Adobe's PageMill product was discontinued in favor of the superior recent acquisition. Adobe's own official published history, the book [Inside the Publishing Revolution: The Adobe Story](#), proudly reports Adobe's history of acquiring competing technology through buyouts and mergers. Between 1991 and 2003, over 23 companies were absorbed by Adobe using this business strategy. Adobe has innovated some great original products, but much of their history is buying the competition's technology rather than inventing their own competitive solutions.

Adobe pulled Premiere from the Mac market because the Apple is too big for Adobe to buy, and Adobe doesn't recognize any other solutions to compete against Final Cut Pro. They are facing similar problems with competition from Macromedia, but let's hope they don't decide to wimp out there as well. No longer certain of how to develop new products from scratch, Adobe is lost without being able to buy their way into winning their markets. Let's hope this is something they can resolve by regaining the spirit of innovation that created the company and brought us PostScript, Photoshop, and Acrobat, and that the slide Adobe has already started does not signify their continued loss and does not turn the company into a footnote in software history.

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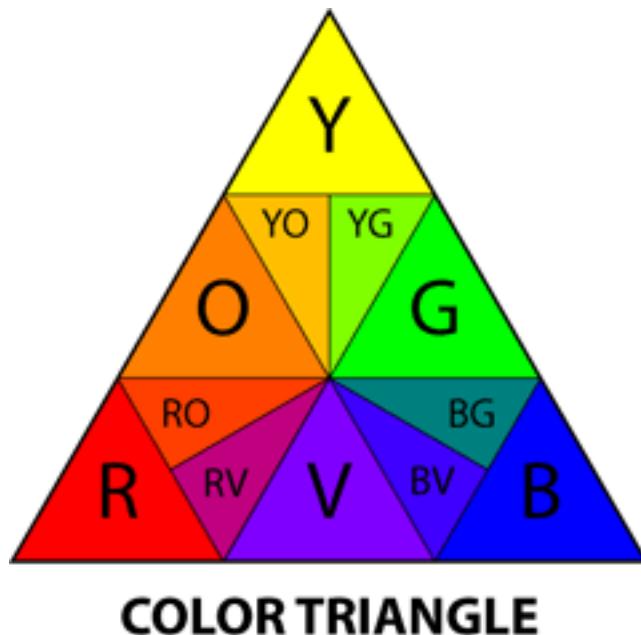
Quick Tips in Design

by Andrew Kator, akator@atpm.com

Part 2: Using Color

Color is all around us, and it's probably for that reason that most people don't think much about it. Many people haven't had to think about color since their days in grade school when they made projects out of colored construction paper and watercolor paintings to bring home to their parents.

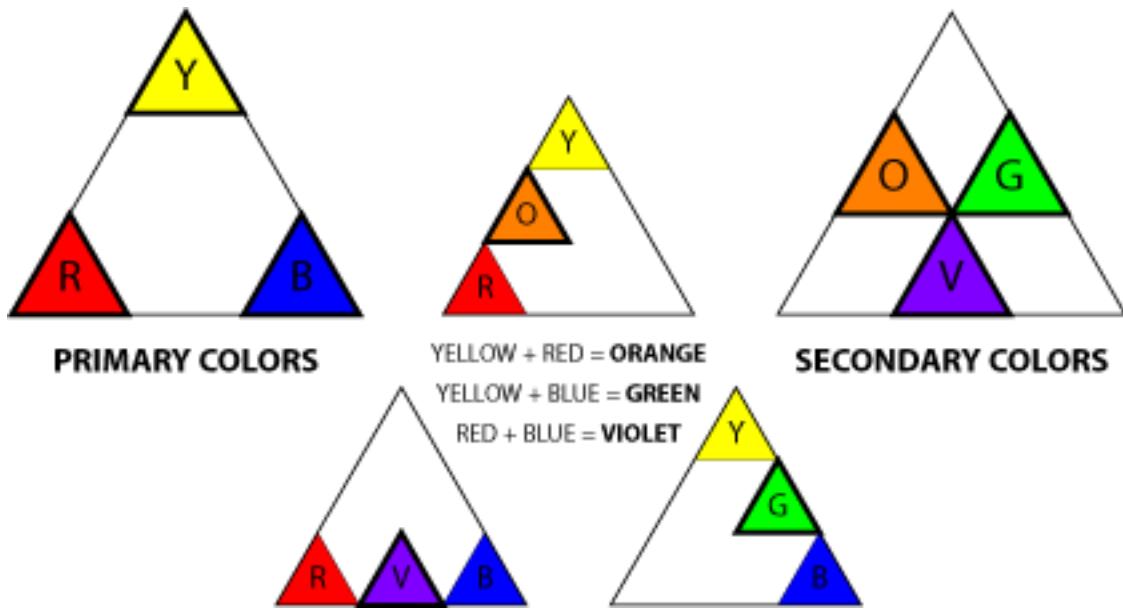
Fortunately for us, techniques for using color have been broken down almost into a science. Hundreds of years and generations of artists and designers have explored color and how it can be used to achieve a specific desired result. There are literally dozens of books about color and how to use it, and there are many ways to apply color technique.



Primary and Secondary Colors

You may remember someone (probably in grade school) teaching you about color, and the concepts of primary and secondary colors. These are the basic colors just about everyone is familiar with.

The primary colors are yellow, red, and blue. These are considered the foundation of color because when mixed together and in different combinations, all other colors can be created from using these three primaries. Notice that the primary colors are located on the corners of the color triangle. The primary colors are the “cornerstones” from which all color principles are based.



Secondary colors are created when equal amounts of any two primary colors are mixed together. (You may remember having difficulty with this in grade school. That may have been from the use of “student grade” materials which use fewer and cheaper pigments, sometimes achieving unpredictable and disappointing results.) The secondary colors orange, violet, and green are located on the sides of the color triangle.

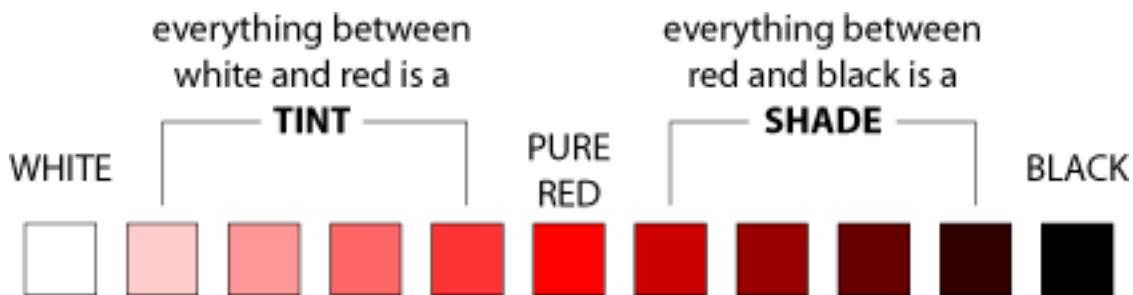
Any pure color is also referred to as a hue. Each color is a hue. Changing hue means changing the color itself.

Primary and secondary colors can be used in an image to attract attention and create energy, but be warned that overuse of these colors may give a design a simplistic, childish, or even amateurish look. Children's toys often use primary colors to keep attention focused, but many people carry those associations into adulthood and don't react positively to pure primary/secondary color usage.

It has been suggested on many occasions that an artist's sophistication and career development can be observed through their use of color. The argument is that visually using mainly primary and secondary colors suggests that the responsible party has not had the time to experience, develop, and explore color and its infinite possibilities. That doesn't mean these colors shouldn't be used, but it is something to be aware of and to watch out for when designing for some audiences.

Tints and Shades

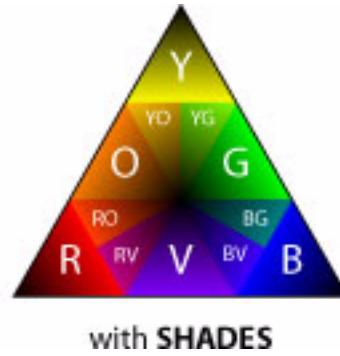
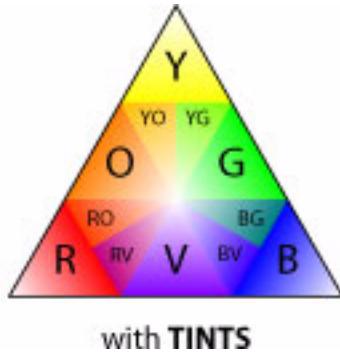
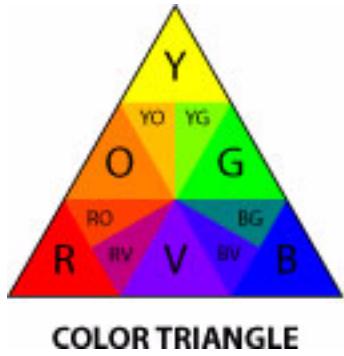
When white is added to a color, the color is diluted and produces a *tint* (also referred to as "pastels"). A *shade* is created when a color is mixed with black.



Brilliance and luminosity are terms used to describe the amount of black mixed with the color to create the shade. "Zero brilliance" or "zero luminosity" is black.

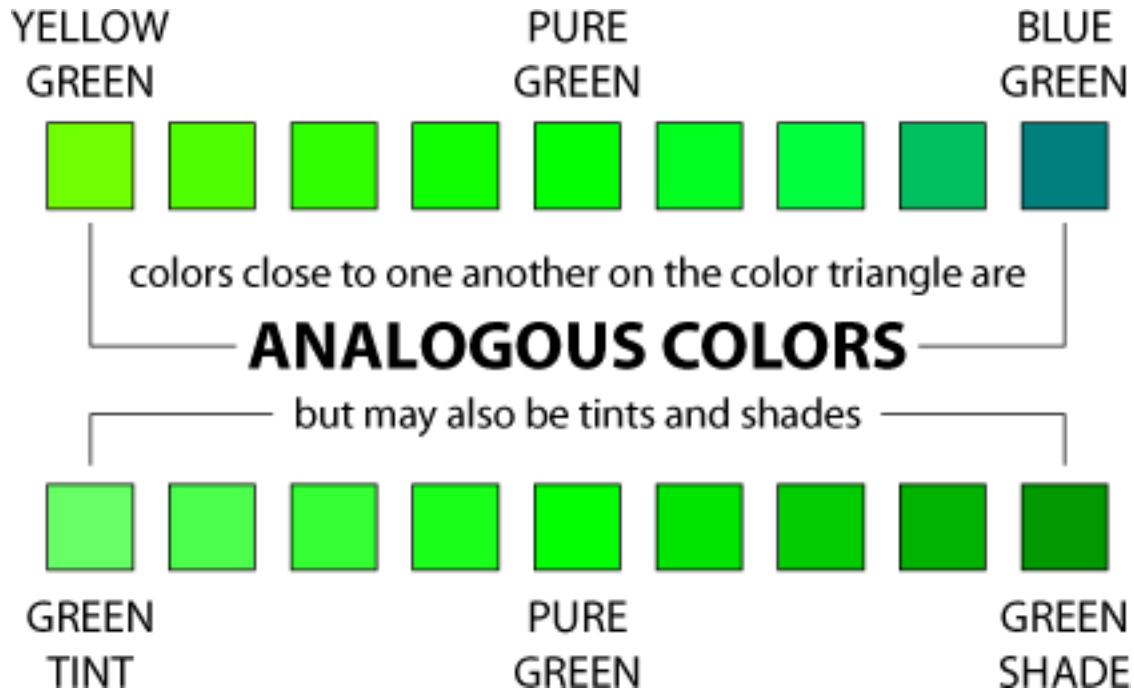
Whenever a color is "diluted" by mixing white or black into it, the color loses *saturation*. The color pink is created by mixing red with white. Technically the color pink can be described as "a tint of red" or "low-saturation red."

The effect of tints and shades upon the observer varies based on how they are used, but both are visually weaker and have less energy than does pure color. Traditionally, products targeted to women include more tints, while products for men are often more saturated. Whether this is the development of social conditioning or is based on physical gender is difficult to tell, but it does appear to work when targeting a gender-based audience.



Analogous Colors

The term analogous means “like” or “similar.” Analogous color can be used to create subtle differences in an image or design. These subtle differences create a peaceful and more harmonious feeling from an image.



In the [previous article \(Using Value\)](#) we created a simple logo with type and value changes. The same design can be used but with color applied. Many times designs may match colors used in existing publications and products, and for this example blue is used by the institution and is the required color in the design.

Using blue as a starting point, analogous tints and shades can be applied to create many different options. The result is that each variation creates a unified feel (some more than others). This is a particularly good method for applying color to designs which have limitations on reproduction. For example, the design may appear not only on paper but on T-shirts and coffee mugs. The cost of reproducing a design multiplies for every additional

color used. If only blue and tints of blue are used in the design, only one ink needs to be used in printing the design on a T-shirt. Shades will require the use of two inks, both blue and black.

ANALOGOUS TINT & SHADE VARIATIONS



Analogous hues can also be used to create different results. Using different (but similar) colors adds more visual interest to the design. Be careful when using analogous colors not to make the variations too similar, since the results may not appear in reproduction.

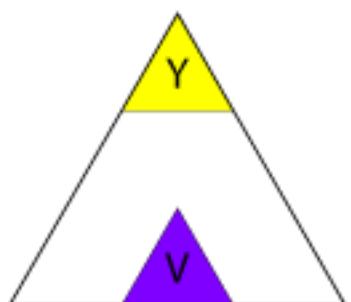
ANALOGOUS HUE VARIATIONS



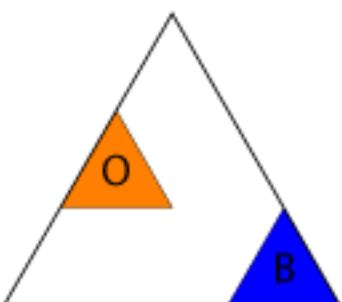
Complementary Colors

Find a primary color on the color triangle. Draw a line directly opposite the color and you have discovered the complementary color.

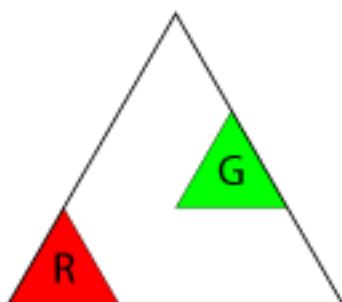
PRIMARY COLORS AND THEIR COMPLEMENTS



YELLOW / VIOLET



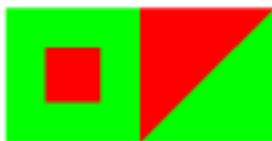
BLUE / ORANGE



RED / GREEN

Complementary colors have many uses. As opposites on the color triangle, the colors react off one another visually when placed alongside each other. This effect has been described as creating energy, or a visual “vibration,” that can be used if those results are desired. Others find the results outright heinous, so it’s important to be aware of how complements effect one another. Either way, complements definitely demand attention.

WHEN USED TOGETHER, COMPLEMENTARY COLORS REACT VISUALLY

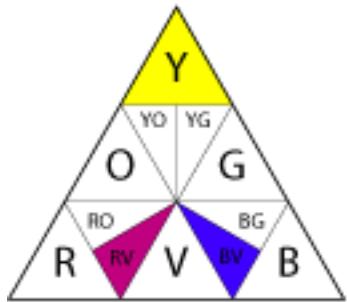


Another use of complementary colors is in traditional media. If we were to mix paint using two complementary colors, we would end up with gray. Interestingly, the resulting gray isn’t the same as would occur when mixing white and black to create a value. Mixing complements produces a chromatic gray that is considered to be more visually interesting than a value.

The next time you’re in an art museum, look closely at the gray on a painting and you may be surprised to find it is actually composed of colors rather than black and white. The common CMYK printing process (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black—the printing equivalents of the primary colors), while very versatile, just isn’t capable of completely

reproducing all of the nuances of color. This is one of the reasons why reproductions (posters and prints in books) often lose some of the feeling and impact that can be seen in the original.

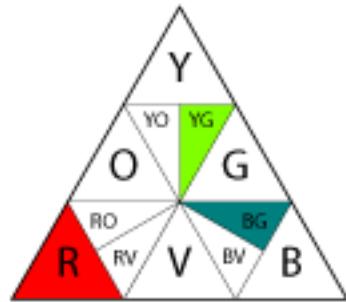
PRIMARY COLORS AND THEIR SPLIT COMPLEMENTS



YELLOW / RED-VIOLET
YELLOW / BLUE-VIOLET



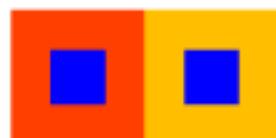
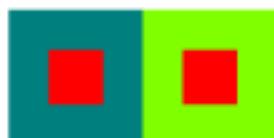
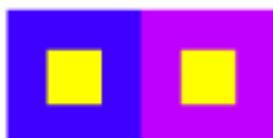
BLUE / YELLOW-ORANGE
BLUE / RED-ORANGE



RED / YELLOW-GREEN
RED / BLUE-GREEN

Split complements are a variation on the concepts of complementary color. Split complements are analogous colors on either side of the complement. Because the split complements are close in color to the complement, they still carry some of the visual energy that is observed in complementary colors but without as much of the harshness.

SPLIT COMPLEMENTS STILL REACT VISUALLY BUT ARE LESS DRAMATIC



Applying the concepts of complementary colors to the logo creates drastically different results from what was achieved previously. The logo takes on a completely different feel based on how the concepts are used.

COMPLEMENT & SPLIT COMPLEMENT VARIATIONS



Setting either the descriptive text or the acronym as blue and then applying complementary color concepts to the remaining text creates an effect of separation. The results attract attention but are not unified and visually break down the balance of the original design. Because the acronym and descriptive text are divided by the use of color, the results attract attention to the separate parts. While that isn't the desired result for our example, it does show how complements might be used in other applications.

COMPLEMENT & SPLIT COMPLEMENT VARIATIONS ON ACRONYM ONLY



In the second example, the descriptive text remains black and complementary color concepts are applied only to the acronym. The results are improved, keeping the design more unified and the type more legible. The use of complements show an increased energy over the logos that used analogous colors.

This is when color usage may become tricky. The Department of Physics, Computer Science & Engineering may enjoy the increased energy from the complementary color usage, but the results also resemble the logo designs from some sports teams. If the client

wanted to suggest a greater excitement in their public image, these examples might be their preferred choice. These might also be suited for recruitment purposes by attracting attention and suggesting energy.

On the other hand, the Department of Physics, Computer Science & Engineering may not find the results appropriate for their public image and decide that the analogous color examples are more representative. When using color in design it is important to know the desired end result to use color most effectively.

Psychology of Color

There are theories as to why we react to color the way we do, many based on what color means in nature. Bright colors, like the yellow on a bee or a flower, attract attention but can suggest different meanings. For the bee, the yellow is there to warn others to pay attention or they'll get stung. For the flower, the yellow is there to attract others so that the flower will be pollinated. Either way, yellow is a color that demands a reaction from earthly observers.

One method for applying color is by dividing it into warm and cool colors. The primary color yellow is "hot," red is "warm," and blue is considered "cool." The "warmth" of secondary colors can vary based on how close they are to yellow and red. Yellow-green is "warmer" than blue-green, and draws more attention from the observer.

The technique of using warm and cool colors can be used in an image to draw attention to a specific area or to suggest space. Warm colors advance, and cool colors recede.

Applying Color Theory to a Photograph

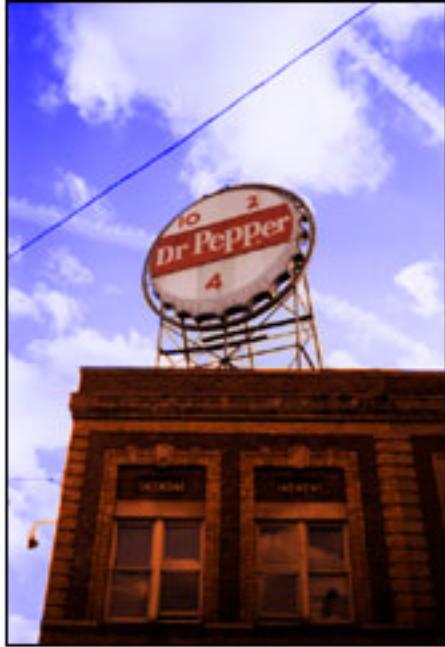
Many people are unaware that the professional photographic images they see on a daily basis have been modified to produce greater impact. With color theory it's possible for anyone to "dress-up" their photos to create more dramatic results.

With the photograph at hand, it often helps to take a look at the colors already present in the image before making changes. Working with the existing color will allow the modifications to fit more seamlessly within the image.

Many landscapes, either in print, television, or motion pictures, have been modified to create greater impact. The blues in the sky and/or water are often exaggerated, and other colors may be applied to further emphasize the changes. Because many landscapes contain blue from either the sky or from water, blue is a good base color to begin modifying a landscape. Cranking up the amount of blue is a simple modification that just by itself can create dramatic results.



*original photo with
levels corrected*



*increased blue in sky, applied
complement orange 15% to
sign, 40% to building*

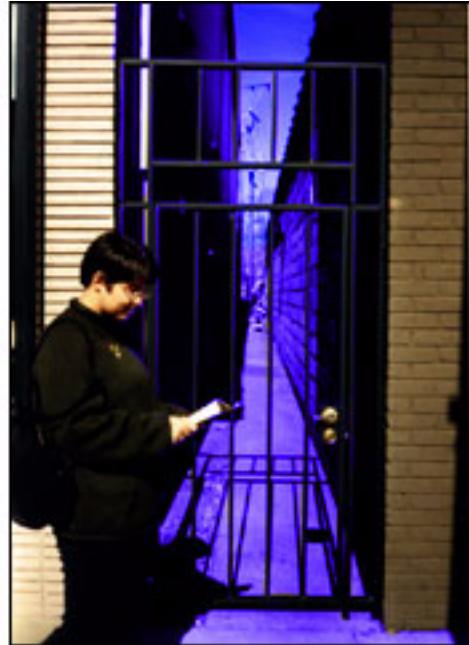
With blue increased, the options for making a foreground subject stand out are relatively simple by applying complementary colors or split complements. In our landscape example, the most direct method of applying blue's complement orange also worked with the existing red hues that were natural in the photograph. The "warmer" nature of tinting the foreground orange also made the subject more immediate to the observer. With careful application of this technique, the observer wouldn't be aware the image was modified unless they had the original available for comparison.

In our second example we have a photograph with a woman walking past an alley. There is already an abundance of yellow in the image, so yellow will be our starting point for the modifications. Blue-violet is a split-complement to yellow and presents contrast between the alley and the foreground's already yellowish tones. Further contrast was created by slightly increasing the yellow in the foreground, but only by 15% so as not to make the woman look jaundiced.

The results in this example are obvious, but not necessarily negative. Most viewers will be able to notice the modifications, but that isn't necessarily a problem if the modifications encourage the viewer take more interest in the image.



*original photo with
levels corrected*



*Increased yellow in foreground
by 15% and applied split
complement blue-violet to alley*

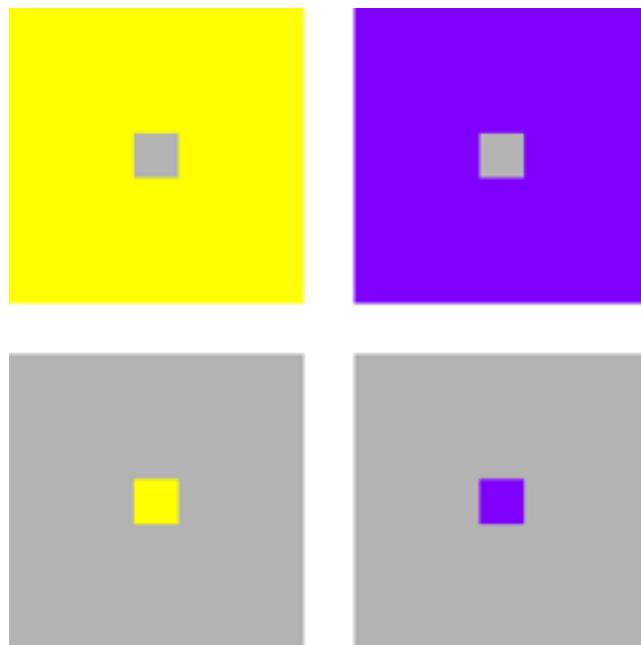
These are simplified examples of how color theory can be applied to photographs, but it's easy to find other methods to apply to your own work. Looking more closely at the media will lead to discovery and many more ideas of how color can be applied to images.

Interaction of Color

When is yellow not yellow? When does gray change and look more like a color? In our example there are four boxes. Depending on which box you look at, the colors can appear to change even though they are all the same.

The gray box within the yellow square looks darker than the same gray box within the violet square. Stare at any of the examples and you may notice the gray doesn't appear to be "just gray" anymore, but instead takes on some of the appearance of the complementary color of the color next to gray (the gray next to yellow can appear more violet).

Even though color is based on scientific principles, how our brains interpret color is an entirely different thing that can't always be explained as easily.



The same yellow, violet, and gray were used, yet they appear to change relative to how they are used together.

Color Processes

The discussion of color thus far has been based upon the principles of reflective color, meaning when light bounces and reflects off an object. Things change when the color is emanating from light. When light is used to create color, yellow is no longer a primary and is replaced by green. Instead of mixing yellow, red, and blue to create color, light uses red, green and blue (RGB). This is the same technique used in televisions, which is why if you look very closely at a CRT screen you can actually see the separate RGB pixels. The RGB color mixing process is the most common option available in computer software, primarily because most computers present information to users with CRT screens or LCD's, both of which use RGB color mixing.

Another color process that is widely used is CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black). This is the process used for most print reproduction, whether it is a color inkjet printer or large printing presses for books and magazines. CMYK color mixing is a common option in most computer graphics software.

RGB and CMYK are just different methods for creating color. All of the principles of color still apply. Many beginning users of computer graphics software are frustrated by the RGB and CMYK color mixing restrictions. Some software (Painter is one example) is targeted to users of traditional media, like oil painting or watercolor, and offers different color mixing tools that more closely resemble the color triangle presented here.

Even though this discussion has covered some of the basics of color theory, it's important to remember that color, like all visual tools, is subjective. How people react to the same image differs greatly from person to person. By using some of the principles discussed, it is possible to use color to more consistently affect how viewers react to visual work and to communicate a specific message.

The next article will build on what has already been presented in a discussion of Perspective and the Illusion of Depth.

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How To

by Sylvester Roque, sroque@atpm.com

FrankenMac

Act One: FrankenMac Takes III

I was all set to write some boring missive this month about the pitfalls of sharing files and hard drives between Macs and Windows, but then something went horribly wrong. While researching the article FrankenMac began having increasing difficulty with his CD-ROM drive. It was past time to remedy the situation. A problem that began as a minor inconvenience a few months ago was becoming a major pain. Before I go on, let me first introduce you to FrankenMac.

After being conceived by his Cupertino-based parents—I'm told they were likely engineers of some sort—FrankenMac began life as a Blue-and-White 300 MHz G3 with one hard drive, an ATI graphics card, CD-ROM drive, and some miscellaneous ports thrown in for good measure. By the time I met FrankenMac, his previous caretaker had added additional memory but he had not yet been cruelly contorted into what he is today. That was my fault.

FrankenMac as I know him today wasn't born until last year. By then my normally mild-mannered friend was running OS X, becoming a little older and not quite as nimble as he had been in his 8.6 days. Rather than abandon an old friend, I decided to try to breathe new life into him. A couple of lab trips later and FrankenMac emerged with an additional hard drive, ATI Radeon 7000 video card, a total of 768 megabytes of memory, and a 500 MHz G4 processor upgrade. The whole project cost me just a shade less than \$500. That's not exactly cheap, but I couldn't really afford a new G4 at the time either.

Act Two: FrankenMac Needs a Drive—Too Many Choices

I have known this day was coming for a while, and had already been doing some homework on finding the necessary replacement part. I knew that I had several options open to me. The only illogical option was to carry on as was with no changes. Having

eliminated that option due to a lack of patience, I was left with the following options: replace the existing CD-ROM drive with a new one, replace it with a CD-R/CD-RW drive, replace it with a Combo drive, or replace it with the equivalent of a SuperDrive.

Let's look back upon my experience and see if there are some things that I have learned that can save you a few steps.

In your quest for answers to these questions you will find the [XLR8YourMac Drive Compatibility Database](#) invaluable. This database consists of reports from various users who have already walked this path, and mentions which specific models of drives have been tested with which Mac models. If you are planning on buying and using a drive model originally intended for PC users, this database is a must.

First Things First: Will the new drive replace your existing drive?

One of the first decisions to make is whether the new drive will replace your existing internal drive or be used as a secondary drive. The answer to this question will dictate some of your options. For example, if this is to be a primary drive, it is probably best to select an internal drive. Many Macs have difficulty booting from external drives and some may not boot from external drives at all. This may not be a big deal now, but it might become one the next time you need to boot from a CD for troubleshooting purposes.

Does the drive have the right interface?

In short, will the computer be able to communicate with the drive once it's installed? If you are not sure about this, check the relevant documentation. The [AppleSpec Product Specification Page](#) may also prove useful but as a general rule does not usually specify the interface type for CD drives. You are left with the impression that it is the same as the hard drive. Frank has an IDE drive, so I'm good to go.

Will the drive boot your Mac or not?

Keep this question in the back of your mind all the time. I would hate to see you settle upon a drive and install it only to discover that it won't boot your system when you need it most. While searching the database I discovered reports from several users regarding drives that would not boot their Mac but performed flawlessly otherwise. I suggest checking this issue under both OS 9 and OS X. A quick trip to the aforementioned Drive Compatibility Database gave me some starting pointers.

Will the drive fit in my machine?

This is generally not an issue for Mac towers such as the Blue and White G3 or many of the G4 systems, but for iMacs this might pose a problem.

Once the first few questions have been answered, you come a long way toward narrowing your range of choices. Now let us move on to some other questions that apply to most of the drives you will encounter. We must choose carefully; Frank's wellbeing and my remaining sanity are at stake here.

Inside or Outside: Pick One

Someone said that to me one day at school, and it applies to choosing a replacement CD drive. If you are not planning on using the new drive as a boot drive, you will have to choose whether you want to buy an internal or external drive. If you are going to use an internal drive, make sure it uses the right interface and that you have a drive bay available that permits the drive door to eject. Many Mac towers only have two drive bays matching this criteria: one holds the existing CD drive while the other holds the Zip or other removable drive. An external drive avoids these issues and can usually be shared relatively easily among several computers.

Pick an Interface

Choosing an external drive requires an additional decision regarding how the drive will connect to the computer. While most current internal drives connect to the computer via the ATAPI/IDE interface, most current external drives connect via USB or FireWire. Some manufacturers have produced drives that offer both USB and FireWire ports in the same enclosure. As a general rule I have obtained the fastest write speeds out of FireWire drives; if however you plan to share the drive with a PC, a USB or a combination USB/FireWire drive may be the best choice unless your Wintel computer supports FireWire.

Pick a Media Type

One of the other important decisions you will make is on the type of media do you want access to, and what you plan to do with the drive. Unless your Mac is very old indeed it came with at least an integrated CD-ROM drive. These drives are great for playing music or loading software, but you cannot use them to make CDs of your own. The good news

is that CD-ROM drives are cheap right now, and the newer ones are likely to be much faster than the one that shipped with your Mac. I have recently seen these drives routinely selling for roughly \$50.

If that sounds like a good price to you, don't rush out and buy one just yet. Roughly \$75 will get you a CD-R or CD-RW drive. Both drive types let you write or "burn" information to a CD. The critical difference is in the number of times you can write to or "burn" a disc. CD-R drives can write to a disc once, while CD-RW drives can write to a CD-R disc once or write to CD-RW discs many times if you are using CD-RW media.

I'll Have a Combo With My Mac Please

Being an observant Mac user, you may have noticed that some Mac models today are shipping with "combo" drives. These drives have all the functionality of a CD-RW drive, with the added benefit that they can read some data DVDs and play many DVD movies. If your primary concern is burn speed, a stand-alone CD-R/RW burner may be your best bet. CD-R drives are routinely burning at 48–52x these days while "combo" drives are burning CDs roughly in the 16–20x range.

"Combo" drives are very flexible in terms of the types of media they support, and can currently be had for roughly \$100–\$120. Before you buy a "combo" drive however, you should look at the issue of how information on the DVD will be decoded. The video on most DVDs is actually in a compressed format; in order for such DVDs to be played this video must first be decompressed by the hardware. Many of the current video cards perform this decompression but older video cards may not. I am still looking at the issue of how well software decompression works.

The current king of the castle is the DVD burner. Apple refers to their version of this drive as a SuperDrive. These drives are capable of reading from and writing to all of the media types I have discussed thus far. If you do not have one of Apple's systems with a SuperDrive, read on, intrepid explorer; you may not be out of luck.

Several third-party drive manufacturers are currently selling drives capable of burning DVDs. These DVDs will play back in computer systems that have DVD-ROM or "combo" drives attached, and will play in some stand-alone DVD players. You may be able to add a DVD burner to your system; that's what I did, and that's how FrankenMac came to fall in love with DVD.

The Finale—FrankenMac Learns to Love DVD

I had been thinking about putting a DVD burner in FrankenMac for some time. To be honest, I had been drooling over one of these things since I first heard about them. Now that I have finally done it here are some things you need to know before you buy one.

CD burning programs such as [Toast](#) or [Dscribe](#) will burn a DVD to be used for data purposes. Making a disc that will play on stand-alone DVD players requires some additional preparation. To prepare this type of DVD you need something like [iDVD](#), or [DVD Studio Pro](#). Some third-party burners are also coming supplied with mastering software. I haven't used these programs before so I can't be of much help; besides, Frank is still sick and I'm not too well myself, so let's press on.

If you are planning on using iDVD to prepare discs for stand-alone playback, there are a few things you need to know. I don't want you to buy a DVD burner only to discover that you must spend a fortune for additional software if I can help it, so keep the following in mind. It won't guarantee that iDVD will work, but it will increase the odds.

If your Mac did not ship with a SuperDrive you may not have iDVD as part of your software installation. It is available as part of the [iLife package](#). If you are going to purchase an external SuperDrive, try to find one that comes supplied with Mac software; otherwise DVD Studio Pro may be your only option, as iDVD will not work with external DVD writers.

Even if you put in an internal drive, iDVD expects to work with a G4 processor. There have been one or two contributors to the Drive Compatibility Database who installed third-party drives only to discover that iDVD did not work because they did not have a G4. iDVD does however seem to work with many G4 upgrade cards. I almost made this mistake, but one of our intrepid ATPM editors pointed this issue out to me. Fortunately, Frank has a G4 upgrade card that should work.

The Recovery of FrankenMac

Well, there you have the questions I asked and answered in my quest towards recovery. I also looked at drives which employ buffer underrun prevention technology, which cuts down on the number of "coasters," or incomplete CDs, caused by the burner not being

fed data fast enough. Most of the current drives on the market support this technology. I finally settled on the Pioneer DVD/DVR 105 DVD burner. This is the retail version of one of the drives employed as an Apple SuperDrive. Frank loves to watch DVDs now.

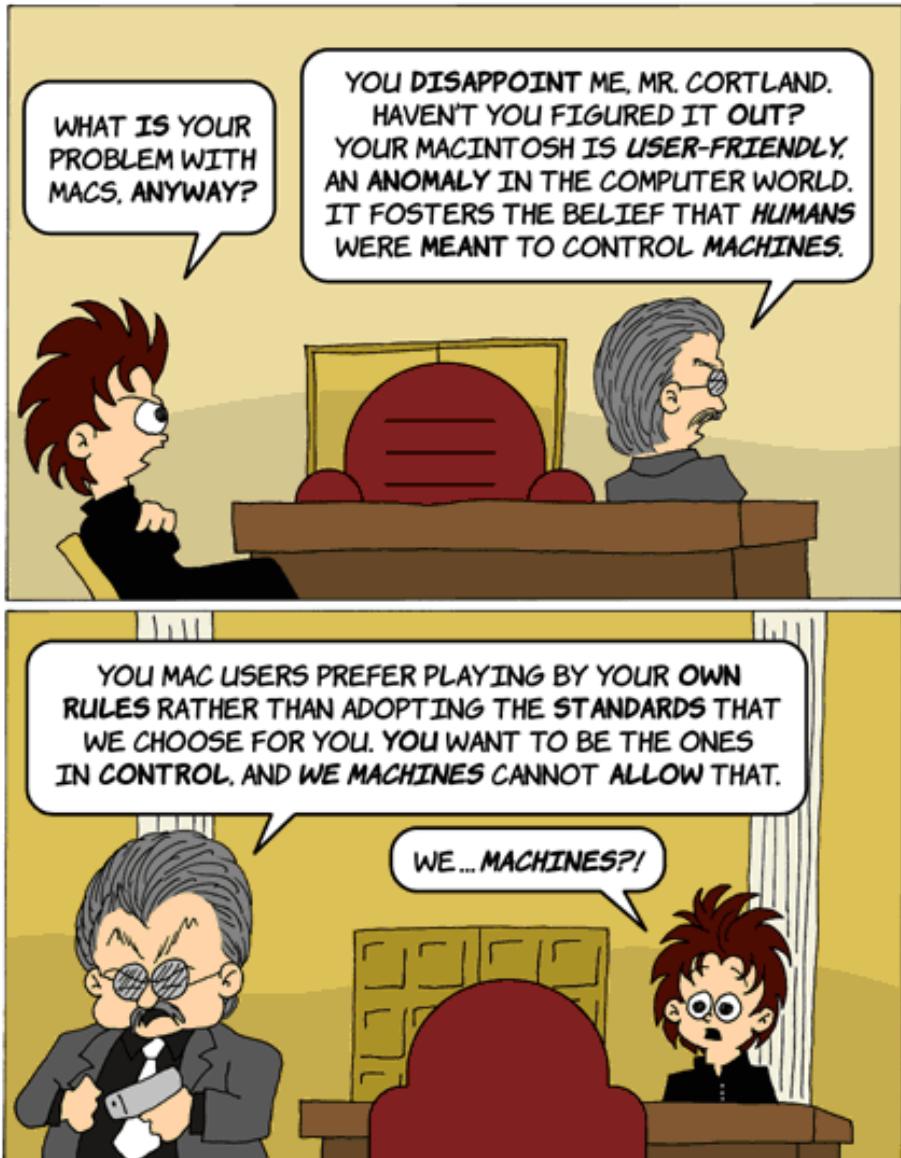
I haven't tried burning DVDs yet because I picked up the wrong type of DVD media when I went to the store. That's another story I'd love to tell you, but Frank wants to watch another DVD. Next time I'll tell you about some of my other projects.

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Cartoon: Cortland

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

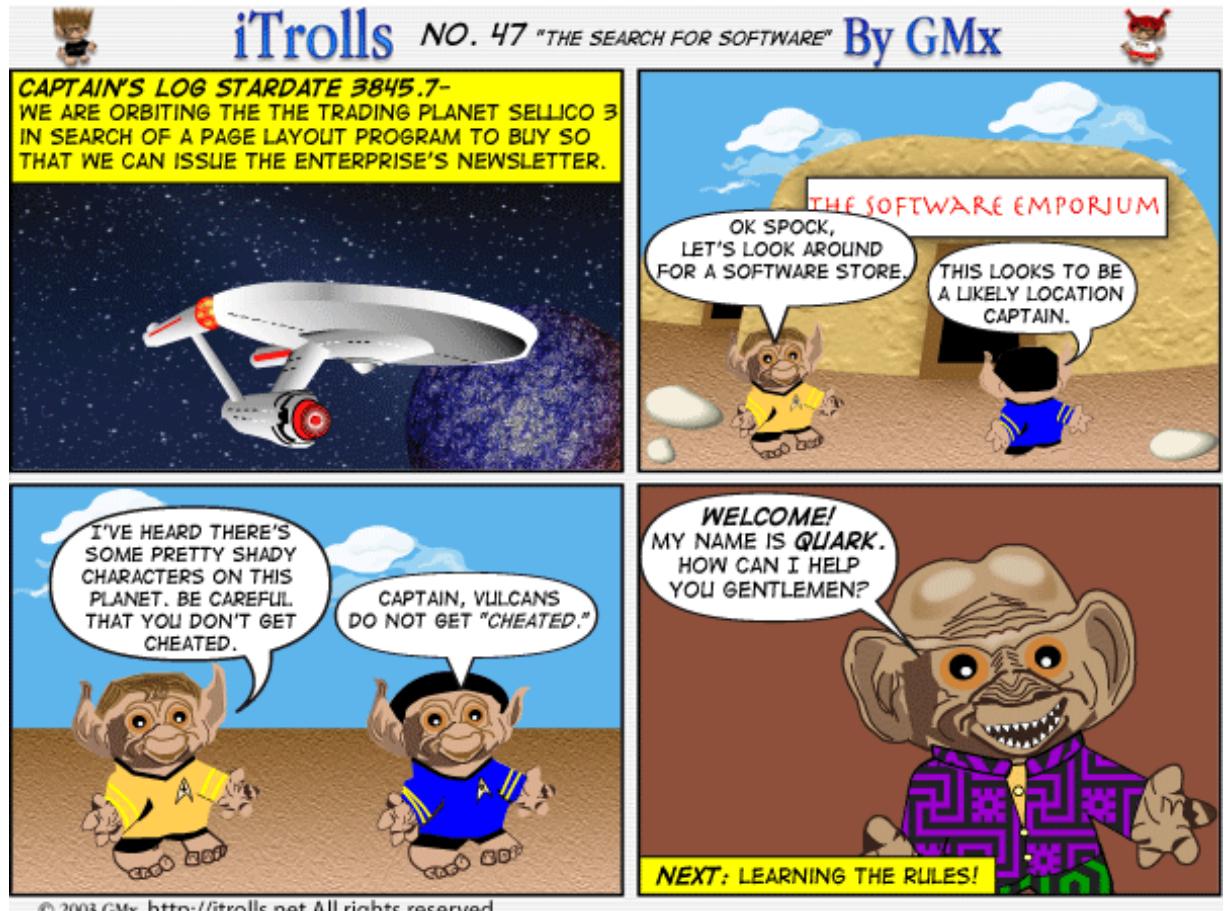


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Cartoon: iTrolls

by GMx, <http://homepage.mac.com/gregmx>



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iTrolls NO. 48 "LEARNING THE RULES" By GMx



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iTrolls NO. 56 "INDEPENDENCE DAY" By GMx



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iTrolls NO. 58 "VIDIOT PROFESSOR" By GMx



HELLO, I'M JOHN SCHMEER
PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF
VIDIOT PROFESSOR.



DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE
UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMPUTER?
OVERWHELMED BY MANUALS WITH
WITH CONFUSING THINGS SUCH
AS WORDS AND SENTENCES?



THAT'S WHY I MADE VIDIOT
PROFESSOR. JUST PUT THE CD
IN THE CD DRIVE AND LITTLE
MOVING PICTURES WITH SOUND
TELLS YOU EXACTLY WHAT TO DO.



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Extras: Desktop Pictures

Landscapes—Part 3 and Cortland

Landscapes

The pictures presented here are the third in a series from ATPM reader [Katherine Sears-Lent](#). She writes:

When I moved to Savannah from New York last year, I got a better digital camera (an HP Photosmart 315). I know it is a cheap camera. Now I am expecting another baby so I am shopping around for a better one. I heard that the key to taking reasonably good pictures is to take as many as possible, so I use a 128 MB CF in my camera! I use iPhoto on a 1 GHz Titanium PowerBook.

I mostly enjoy pictures of close-up leaves and flowers and landscapes.

Many of the pictures are from Savannah, GA. Some are from the downtown area, (interesting compositions I see around—particularly of old places). There are pictures of Marshlands and Oaks dripping with Spanish moss taken at Oatland Island Nature Preserve in Savannah.

Some of the landscapes are from Calloway Gardens, GA. They have a butterfly aviary there and lovely orchids and other flowers.

Some of the flowers and one of a grape orchard are from Sonoma Valley, CA during a day of winery tours.

There are a couple with snow, and one out on the water that were taken on Long Island NY, and some flowers and foliage in Tampa, FL.

Cortland Desktop Pictures

Cortland cartoonist [Matt Johnson](#) writes:

I used MaxScreenSaver and Snapz Pro to grab a shot of that green waterfall code, and then found a free Matrix font by searching on Google. I added a few layer effects in Photoshop and that was that. Special thanks for A. Lee Bennett, Jr. for the initial suggestion.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

Downloading all the Pictures at Once

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

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

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

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.1.x 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](#) in issue 5.10 and available for [download](#).



Review: CVSTrac 1.1.2

by Michael Tsai, mtsai@atpm.com

Developer: [D. Richard Hipp](#)

Price: free (under the [GPL](#))

Requirements: Mac OS X, Cygwin, Unix, or Linux



Overview

CVSTrac is a Web-based issue tracking tool that integrates with the [CVS version control](#) system, popular among Mac OS X and Unix users. An “issue” can be anything you want: a bug report, a feature request, a technical support incident, a to-do item, or simply a chunk of text that means something to you. CVSTrac is designed for software developers, but it’s also useful for tracking information in other domains. Developers can think of it as a lightweight product that combines the basic features of [Bugzilla](#) and [CVSweb](#). Non-developers can think of it as a Web-based information management and collaboration tool along the lines of [Inspiration](#), [Slacker ToDo Lists](#), and [ToDo X](#).

Installation and Setup

Although there are [some](#) stand-alone commercial issue tracking tools, most of the free ones are Web-based. To use them, all you have to do is type the URL into your Web browser. [Setting them up](#), however, is another matter. Even the [simpler](#) products typically require a series of steps:

- Set up a Web server and configure it to use a scripting language such as PHP.
- Install a database server such as MySQL or PostgreSQL and make sure it’s hooked up to the above scripting language.
- Install the files for the issue tracking tool, and possibly some libraries that it needs.
- Create an empty database and fill in the configuration information so that the issue tracking tool can access the database.
- Install a separate tool such as [CVSweb](#) or [Bonsai](#) if you want to access version control information.

CVSTrac, in contrast, is a single file that includes a built-in Web server and database engine. Although you can [build your own copy](#) of CVSTrac from its source code, it's much easier to download a pre-built version for [Linux](#) or [Mac OS X](#), the latter hosted by yours truly.

There are several different ways to [install](#) CVSTrac, depending on how you want to use it. First, you type a command into Terminal to create a new database. If you have administrative access to the machine that will be running CVSTrac, you can set it to respond on a particular port. If you're running CVSTrac on your Web server, you can set it to run as a CGI script; this doesn't require any special access to the server. Finally, you can run it on your own Mac using CVSTrac's built-in Web server, by typing a command into Terminal.

A CVSTrac database is a single, ordinary file so it is easy to back up. There's no need to use a special "dump" utility, as with fancier database servers. If you want to use CVSTrac on the road, all you have to do is copy the database file onto your PowerBook and run CVSTrac there. Of course, you can also run CVSTrac on an Internet-accessible server so that multiple users can access it, from around the globe.

Web Interface

Once you've created a database and started up CVSTrac, you can access it by typing a URL such as "<http://localhost:8008/MyDatabase/index>" into your browser. CVSTrac uses the user accounts you've set up in your CVS repository. You have to type a password to log in, but the HTTP connection is not encrypted. I've used CVSTrac from Safari, Internet Explorer, and iCab, but I couldn't get the login function to work from Camino or Mozilla.

Some applications, such as e-mail, don't work very well from Web-based interfaces in my experience. They feel clumsy. However, although I've occasionally wished for a real Mac interface, I've mostly found CVSTrac's Web interface to be a plus. The information it presents is highly intertwined, so hyperlinks are natural. The Web browser is actually a very flexible interface. You can open several windows to look at different things simultaneously, or use a single window. Each screen has a permanent URL that you can bookmark. You can use the browser's Find command to help navigate within a page, and with Safari each text field has built-in spell checking and auto-completion. Browser text fields do leave something to be desired, but since they're just plain text it's easy to copy and paste into BBEdit when you need fancy editing commands.

The Web interface is simple and clean compared to other systems I've used. The different fields and option are presented clearly, and often with some help text. The look of the Web interface is not very customizable; you can only adjust the header and footer. On the other hand, I was happy with the default look. Since CVSTrac is open-source, further customization is possible by editing its source code. However, this may be more difficult than with other products because the source is in C rather than in a scripting language like PHP or Perl.

Tickets

A ticket in CVSTrac is essentially a to-do item. It has a summary, a description, and various other pieces of information. Each ticket can be categorized as a bug report, an enhancement request, or as some other custom type. It can also be assigned a severity and a priority. The severity indicates how important the ticket is (does it represent a crashing bug, or a spelling mistake in a dialog box), and the priority indicates when the ticket should be resolved. The priority and severity are represented on a numeric scale, and CVSTrac explains what each number means next to its pop-up menu. This is a great help when there are multiple users, as it ensures that people assign the numbers based on the same scale.

CVSTrac tickets do not have as many fields as in similar products, and I see this as a [plus](#). It has all the essential fields, plus five custom ones.

The description field of the ticket is plain text, but CVSTrac has some simple markup that you can use to add styles and links. Put asterisks around a phrase and it will be displayed in bold. Indent some text, and it's displayed in a fixed width font. Start a series of lines with “*:” or “1:” to create bulleted or numbered lists. Create hyperlinks to other tickets or to CVS check-ins. You can also attach files and images to the ticket, and they will be stored in the database. Resource forks are not preserved, however. Images may be displayed inline. Clicking on the name of an attached file lets you save it to disk. CVSTrac remembers the name of each file, but for some reason it saves the files as “attach_get” by default.

After [creating](#) a new ticket, you can [view](#) it in a more compact form without all the text fields and pop-up menus. You can [edit](#) tickets as many times as you want, and CVSTrac remembers the complete change history.

CVS

CVSTrac includes a great CVS [repository browser](#). Clicking on a file shows its [revision history](#). You can easily see any version of the file, as well as a list of the [other files](#) associated with each check-in, and the [differences](#) between pairs of revisions. By default CVSTrac uses the rcsdiff program to compare revisions, and you can also customize the command that it uses. For instance, I set it to [convert](#) the output of rcsdiff to HTML. Normally, added lines are prefixed with "+" and deleted lines are prefixed by "-", but with HTML I could make it so that the deleted lines were colored red and new ones were colored blue.

If the CVS commit message includes text like "#28", CVSTrac will link the number to the corresponding ticket. I found CVSTrac's repository browser easier to use than CVSweb, although CVSweb has a few more features such as the ability to make tarballs. My only complaint is that CVSTrac is not very flexible in letting you decide which modules of the repository to view. It either shows every module, or only those modules whose names start with a particular prefix.

Timeline

The [timeline](#) shows a chronological list of check-ins, tickets, and any other changes to the database. There are various options to control which events are displayed.

Reports

[Reports](#) let you display lists of tickets that meet particular criteria. For instance, you could have a report that lists open bugs in order of priority, or one that lists all the recent feature requests. CVSTrac comes with lots of reports that you can use. I didn't like the colors it used to show the priorities of the tickets, but they were easy to customize. You can use the [SQL](#) database language to create your own custom reports. Unfortunately, there is no way to share custom report formats among different CVSTrac databases. Each time you start a new project you'll have to paste in the SQL queries for all your favorite reports.

Wiki

In addition to tickets, CVSTrac lets you enter information in [wiki](#) form. A wiki is a collection of hypertext documents written in plain text. This doesn't give you as much layout control as with HTML, but it makes it much easier to create and edit simple documents. ([VoodooPad](#) is a stand-alone Mac program that lets you create wikis.) CVSTrac wikis use

the same simple markup language as tickets, and wiki pages can have links to tickets, check-ins, and Web pages, as well as other pages in the wiki. CVSTrac remembers all the [changes](#) you make to a wiki page, giving you a kind of unlimited undo.

Most issue tracking tools don't have wikis, but I've found CVSTrac's to be very useful. It's great for recording ideas, notes, results of experiments, and other types of information that don't fit the ticket mold.

Search

[Searching](#) is CVSTrac's weakest feature. On the plus side, it's very easy to use. You just type in a few words and specify whether CVSTrac should search the tickets, check-ins, or wiki pages. It then shows you a [ranked list](#) of results. The problem is that often times you get too many results back and there's no way to winnow them down, as in tools like [Bugzilla](#). All is not lost, though, as you can use CVSTrac's custom report feature and some SQL to do complex searches.

Notification

Unlike some other systems, CVSTrac does not automatically send out e-mails when tickets are created or modified. However, it does let you run a custom shell command each time a ticket is modified; you could use this to roll your own e-mail notification system.

Conclusion

Larger teams might prefer a tool with more fine-grained access control for multiple users and one that integrates with their customer support ticketing system. However, I think CVSTrac is ideally suited for individuals and small teams. It's a huge improvement over using low-tech "TODO" files, as many people do, and vastly superior to anything you'd make in FileMaker or Excel.

CVSTrac doesn't have as many features as some competing products, but it's easier to install and use, and the features it does have hang together well. I don't know of any other product that integrates ticketing, repository browsing, and a wiki. CVSTrac does that

and does it well. This is not the stereotypical open source project with an amalgam of geeky features. The developer has shown enormous restraint in keeping it simple, and the result is one of the most elegant pieces of open source software that I've seen.

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Review: iCurve

by Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com

Developer: [Griffin Technology](#)

Price: \$40

Requirements: Any notebook computer, though it is designed specifically for a PowerBook or iBook.

Trial: None



Run, do not walk, or click, to your nearest Griffin Technology retailer and buy an iCurve. You will not regret it. Thus concludes the shortest product review in ATPM history.

Now, you don't think our friendly neighborhood publisher is going to let me get away with that, do you?

Let's face it, a lot of Mac users care about style. Whether it's the curves of the hardware, the GUI of the operating system, or that one application with a little something special interface-wise, one thing that sets Mac users apart is style. The myriad offerings from Apple since Steve Jobs' return, coupled with the promotion of Jonathan Ive, are testaments to the power of style.

So it should come as no surprise that the iCurve, from Griffin Technology, is the epitome of style for PowerBook and iBook users, as far as notebook stands go. Made from clear acrylic, with a slick, swooping style, the iCurve is designed to position your PowerBook more ergonomically for a desktop environment. As I mentioned in a [previous notebook-](#)

[stand review](#), more and more Mac users are moving to a PowerBook or iBook as their main system, but want to use a full-size keyboard and mouse, and perhaps even a larger-size monitor, when they're not traveling about.



The iCurve blends form and function into a healthy computing environment for Mac portable users. Its open design not only allows unrestricted airflow, cutting down on how often your PowerBook's fan might kick on, but it provides a convenient place to slide your

full-size keyboard onto when you're finished using it, clearing valuable desk space. In addition, the iCurve's height is perfectly suited to match the PowerBook's display with any of Apple's LCDs, as shown in this press photo.



Personally, I don't use an external monitor with my 15" PowerBook G4/500, but I do utilize a full-size keyboard and mouse. For me, the iCurve is the sum of style and function; I've received many compliments, "wows," and a few "gee whizzes" from my co-workers as the iCurve floats my PowerBook above my desk's surface.

Another plus I noted with the iCurve is that most external drives will easily fit between its legs. My PowerBook has only a DVD-ROM drive, so at home my LaCie CD-R sits under my iCurve for easy access when I need to load or burn a second CD.

You can type directly on your PowerBook's keyboard while it rests on the iCurve, but I wouldn't recommend it. If you're a hard typer, you may find that the iCurve bounces too much for your liking. In addition, on the iCurve, as with the Lapvantage Dome, the keyboard is really too high for long typing bouts.

When I first received my iCurve, I was a bit thrown by how easy it would be to turn. One advantage of the Lapvantage Dome is that its base rotates quite easily, allowing one to pivot the screen—in a completely wireless situation—a full 360 degrees in the horizontal plane. Never fear, however. The iCurve's acrylic surface slides quite easily on most surfaces, so it's not a real issue with this stand. Purists might be concerned with scratching on the bottom of the iCurve from prolonged use in this regard, but I haven't noticed any significant markings. The iCurve ships with a pack of rubber feet that you can stick to the bottom of the stand if you prefer it to be immobile.





Griffin Technology has a proven winner in the iCurve. Heck, I like it so much, I have two! Now my PowerBook rests comfortably at an ergonomically pleasing height both at the office and at home. The iCurve supports any portable in Apple's lineup, including the 12" and 17" PowerBooks. You can order online from Griffin or drop by your local Apple Store to pick one up.

Copyright © 2003 Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com. Managing Editor Christopher Turner is really enjoying the Macintosh road warrior lifestyle and can't wait for the PowerBook G5 12" with DVI out and a PC Card slot. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Review: iPod (30 GB)

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

Developer: Apple Computer

Requirements: Macintosh with built-in FireWire and Mac OS X 10.1.5; or PC with FireWire or USB 2.0 and Windows ME.

Recommended: Mac OS X 10.2

Price: \$500

Trial: None



In the world of sports, it is often said that defending a championship is harder than winning it in the first place. Most everyone wants to be the best at what they do. Furthermore, they know that to be the best, you have to beat the best.

It's been almost two years since Daniel Chvatik [poked and prodded](#) the original iPod and proclaimed it to be "Excellent." Since that time, Apple has tweaked the iPod here and there, adding a solid-state scroll wheel, larger drives, and some new software features, but mostly keeping the iPod the same. While competitors were playing catch-up with the original iPods, Apple was quietly working on the next generation of iPods.

If you want to know the ins and outs of the iPod, I suggest you read Daniel's review. For the most part, I will be focusing on what Apple has come up with in the mean time.

3G iPods

First and foremost, the iPod is a portable music player. The first and second generation iPods were already widely considered the best portable music players available. How was Apple supposed to improve on something that did a relatively narrow task so well?

After using a 30 GB iPod, I see that the answer is "Add More." After doing that, "Add Less."

The first difference that most people will notice is that the front of the iPod has been redesigned. I was actually a little surprised when I saw this because the four control buttons around the central scroll wheel had become a bit of trademark of the iPod.

Instead, the new iPods have four touch-sensitive buttons between the screen and the scroll wheel. The buttons are, from left to right, previous track, menu, play/pause, and next track.



Some people voiced concerns when they saw the iPod's new button layout. There were concerns that it would not be as easy to operate one-handed. I have fairly normal-sized hands and haven't found this to be a problem. Also, the buttons have enough of a lip around them so you can usually feel for a particular button without pressing the wrong one.

The four new buttons also work in concert with the iPod's backlight. When the backlight is on, the button labels glow red. When the backlight turns off, both the screen and the button labels slowly fade to dark instead of cutting out immediately. It's a nice effect.

Once you get beyond the redesigned front panel, you will start seeing some of the other changes Apple made to the exterior of the iPod. On the top of the iPod, the headphone/remote control port has been redesigned, the hold switch is smaller, and the FireWire port is gone.

Looking at the bottom of the iPod reveals the Dock connector that replaces the FireWire port. The Dock connector has several advantages over the FireWire port it replaces. It's smaller, which means it fits easier onto the 10 and 15 GB iPods (which are slimmer than the 30 GB model). It connects to the new Dock, supports audio-out, and supports syncing via USB 2.0 (Windows-only).

Software-wise, the new iPods runs version 2.0 (2.0.1 as of this writing) of the iPod operating system. New features of 2.0 include support for AAC files, On-The-Go Playlists, Notes, customization of the main menu, and two new games. Since ATPM first reviewed the iPod, Apple also added Contacts, a Calendar, an Alarm, and [Audible.com](#) support.

As most of you probably know, AAC is the format that Apple uses to distribute songs via the [iTunes Music Store](#). In theory, AAC files sound better at lower bit rates than MP3 files, so it is possible to store more songs on your iPod if you encode your music as AAC files. As you would expect, the iPod supports both the protected and unprotected flavors of AAC.

The On-The-Go playlist lets you generate a temporary playlist as you listen to your iPod. You just scroll to a song, album, or artist and hold the center button for a few seconds and the selection is added to your playlist.

There is only a single On-The-Go playlist on your iPod and it is erased whenever you sync with iTunes, so you should still create your permanent playlists at your Mac. Once a song is added to your On-The-Go playlist, it can only be removed by clearing the whole playlist or syncing your iPod. Since you can easily skip any song you don't want to hear, this isn't major.

Notes is a light-weight text reader for the iPod with some surprising features. It supports some basic formatting via HTML tags. You can also link to other notes, folders, or songs. In the case of songs, the linking can be by track name or a number of different attributes.

Main menu customization lets you decide what is shown at the root level of the iPod. If all you care about is listening to music, you can hide any of the other options. If you really like Games but don't care about any of the other items in Extras, you can add Games to the main menu and hide the Extras item. The only item that can't be removed from the main menu is the Settings command.

The two new games are Solitaire and Parachute, joining Brick, which was first present in the iPod as an Easter Egg. Solitaire is actually Klondike, which seems to be the version of solitaire that everybody knows. It's a little odd to play with a scroll wheel, especially when you're moving from one side of the screen to the other, but it is a good way to pass the time. In Parachute, you attempt to shoot down helicopters and paratroopers who are trying to destroy your base. Combined with Brick, these games provide some level of entertainment, but they do tend to pause from time to time when you are changing tracks.

I've covered the "Adding More," so now on to the "Adding Less." Even with these new hardware and software features, Apple managed to reduce the size of the new iPod. Though a hair taller (.08 inches, to be exact), the 30 GB iPod is .03 inches narrower and .05 inches slimmer than the original iPod. It also comes in at 6.2 ounces, slightly less than the original iPod's 6.5 ounces. These are the measurements from Daniel's review of the 5 GB iPod. If I remember correctly, the 20 GB iPod was slightly larger than the 5 GB model to account for physical differences in the hard drives, but I don't have those figures handy.

One side effect of the iPod's trimming is a shorter battery life. The original iPod was rated to get 10 hours out of a charge whereas the newer iPods are only rated for 8 hours. This rarely bothers me since I usually make it through a whole day at work without recharging—the only times I really need to reach for the charging cable at the office is when I forget to charge the iPod the previous night.

The Dock

The Dock is easily one of the more talked-about features of the new iPod. At the bare minimum, the Dock lets you get your iPod off the table while you are charging it so you won't scratch up the metal backing. I also find it easier to put the iPod in the Dock and remove it as opposed to connecting and disconnecting the Dock cable directly to the iPod.

This is partly because the Dock is stationary and I don't have to hold it while I'm inserting the iPod, and partly because the Dock cable has two release buttons you need to press to disconnect it from the iPod (or the Dock, for that matter).

A docking station alone would be welcomed by many iPod owners for the reasons I mentioned, but Apple went one step farther by adding a Line Out jack to the rear of the Dock. The Line Out jack makes it simple to connect your iPod to your existing stereo system or powered speakers without having a cable dangling from the top of your iPod. Also if you can keep a Dock next to your stereo, you never need to plug and unplug cables when you want to grab your iPod and go.

Since the Dock connects to your computer via the same cable as the iPod, you can also plug the Dock directly into the wall. This is useful if you will be using the iPod as a stereo component for an extended period of time.

The one problem I've had with the Dock is the port layout on the back—I do not think it's possible to unplug the Dock cable while something is connected to the Line Out jack. There just isn't enough room to fit your finger between the jacks to press the release on the Dock cable.



Conclusion

When the original iPod was released, I was skeptical. It sounded like a good idea, but I wasn't sure if it would fly with a price tag pushing \$400. It turned out Apple was right and people came flocking. Now, whenever a new music player comes along, reviewers inevitably see how it stacks up against the iPod. Occasionally, the players have something the iPod lacks, like an FM tuner or built-in car adapter, but the reviewers almost always proclaim that the challenger falls short of the iPod.

Now, in that fine tradition, I declare that the 30 GB iPod not only challenges the original iPod, but bests it. It only took two years for somebody to beat the best, but it appears that Apple once again has a winner with the newest iPod.

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Review: Two Books on Using iApps

by Kirk McElhearn, kmcelhearn@atpm.com

iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie and iDVD Bible

Author: Bob LeVitus and Dennis Cohen

Publisher: Wiley, 2003

Price: \$40

Trial: 2 sample pages at [Amazon](#)



Teach Yourself Mac OS X Digital Media

Author: Robyn Ness et al

Publisher: Sams, 2003

Price: \$30

Trial: 99 sample pages at [Amazon](#)



One of the advantages of the Macintosh is the suite of multimedia applications included with each Mac: iTunes, which lets you rip and play MP3 files, burn CDs, and purchase music on-line; iPhoto, which lets you import, edit and store digital photos; iMovie, which lets you import and edit digital video; and iDVD (included only with Macs that have a SuperDrive), which lets you author and burn DVDs using your videos, photos, and music.

These powerful tools are relatively easy to use, and, in their latest incarnations as the iLife suite, offer tight integration. Yet as with all such programs, many users only scratch the surface. Good books help them discover functions that they might not be aware of, and offer tips that make using these programs easier and more powerful.

The two books reviewed here examine the iApps, and the *Teach Yourself* book also looks at Photoshop Elements, a low-priced program that gives you a great deal of power in working with photos and other graphics.

iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie and iDVD Bible, by Bob LeVitus and Dennis Cohen offers thorough coverage of all four of the iApps, working through the basics and more advanced functions of each program. Their coverage is complete, well-written, and clear, with lots of

concrete examples of using these programs alone or together. After looking at each of these programs individually, a chapter examines how they work together, and another chapter talks about programs that go even further than these four programs (such as Final Cut Pro, for advanced video editing, and DVD Studio Pro for professional DVD authoring).

Teach Yourself Mac OS X Digital Media, by Robyn Ness is really a compilation of material from Sams' Teach Yourself series. This has advantages and disadvantages: the book opens with a 200-page section that is a general introduction to Mac OS X. If you are already familiar with the operating system, you'll find this superfluous. It then examines the iApps in about 200 pages; much less than the LeVitus and Cohen book, and in some cases this coverage is inadequate. It is true that iTunes is a simple program, but *Teach Yourself Mac OS X Digital Media* spends a mere 14 pages talking about it, whereas the *Bible* devotes just under 100 pages to it. The same is the case for the other programs; the *Bible* goes much deeper into using these applications, and takes the time to give thorough coverage of them.

Teach Yourself Mac OS X Digital Media offers what is almost an entire book on Photoshop Elements, which is an excellent program that many users will find essential if they want to go beyond iPhoto's more limited retouching tools. However, I find it annoying that there is a mixture of OS X, OS 9, and Windows screen shots throughout this section.

The *iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie and iDVD Bible* delivers on what its cover says: it is a bible for these four programs, nothing more, nothing less. But *Teach Yourself Mac OS X Digital Media* is not as clear: it spends 200 pages on Mac OS X, yet offers a good presentation of Photoshop Elements. So, if you want a book that covers only the iApps, the *Bible* is probably the better bet. If you're a more general Mac user, and don't have any books on Mac OS X, you might find the Ness book more useful in the long run. In addition, if you want a book that helps you with Photoshop Elements, this is a good compromise. Whichever you choose, these are both clear, well-written books. If price is an issue, it's true that the Ness book gives more bang for the buck; at \$10 less you might be tempted to choose this book, especially with its higher page count. But think carefully about your needs before choosing; the books may look similar but cover Apple's iApps in very different ways.

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