

ATPM

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

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Thanks for reading ATPM.



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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the November issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* The end of October was really spooky. No, not Halloween per se, but the announcement that the Windows version of Apple's iPod will be sold through the Dell online store. How's that for a chilling surprise?

The Dell announcement came just in time for Windows users who have longed to own an Apple iPod to celebrate All Saints Day. After all, there are many good things Windows users can now do with Apple's multifunction iPod device.

Earlier in the month Apple released its results for the fourth fiscal quarter and the fiscal year that ended at the close of September. The good news is that Apple maintained its cash and equivalents balance at about \$4.3 billion. The bad news is that one-time charges from write-downs on certain stock holdings and the costs of job reductions at the company's Sacramento plant pushed Apple marginally into the red for the quarter. For the fiscal year, Apple earned about \$65 million after taxes on revenue of \$5.74 billion.

October marked the end of iTools; Apple's formerly free service that was repackaged as a fee-based program with enhanced services called .Mac. The new fee-based service now sports an iSync feature that allows subscribers to sync their contact database with Apple's iPod and certain Bluetooth-enabled mobile phones. At the beginning of October Apple claimed the .Mac service had more than 180,000 paid subscribers.

Just in time for the 2002 holiday season, Apple Computer is opening three more retail stores on the first Saturday in November. The new retail store locations include Las Vegas, Nevada, Indianapolis, Indiana and Edina, Minnesota. By the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday weekend, Apple Computer will have open about 50 retail stores in high-traffic locations throughout the United States.

Thanksgiving is a time for fun and family and has traditionally represented the start of the Christmas holiday season. The ATPM staff wishes all of our readers and their families a safe and happy holiday season.

But just in case you get stuck in an airport while waiting for a delayed flight or at a station waiting for a snow-bound train, our latest issue makes for exceptional holiday reading and will help you pass the time on the long journey home for the holidays.

The ATPM Staff

Our November issue includes:

Beyond the Barline: Ready or Not!

David Ozab considers the reality that come January new Macs won't boot into Mac OS 9. This is a problem for him, since the high-end audio software he requires doesn't yet run on OS X.

The Candy Apple: From a Distance...

Ellyn considers the pros and cons of distance learning.

The Legacy Corner: Where to Get Free and Inexpensive Software for Legacy Macs

Like the title says, Chris Lawson examines software solutions for legacy Macs, from system software to applications. He also throws in some Mac trivia and puts out a call for topics.

About This Particular Web Site

Back after a long hiatus, this month's ATPW offers news for .Mac users and an alternative for .Mac refugees. Other sites will help you save *Farscape*, save the world from more AOL CDs, and save yourself or a loved one from self-injury.

Segments: Internet "Piracy" of Films and Broadcasts: Is It a Problem or an Excuse for Restricting Copy-rights?

Gregory Tetrault looks at threats to your digital rights. He missed an episode of *Buffy* and went to a lot of trouble to download it from a news group so that he could watch the upcoming episodes in sequence. Of course, the RIAA-like entertainment industry wouldn't like that.

The User Strikes Back: Put Your E-Mail on a Diet

We are all inundated by e-mail. Ken Gruberman is, too, but he does something about it! He shares his strategy of getting control of Outlook Express and Entourage, explains e-mail databases, and offers up some troubleshooting advice.

What's Under the Hood

Now a regular ATPM feature, Robert C. Lewis's *What's Under the Hood* has a look at some software he uses to soup up his Mac experience.

Networks in Action: Switching Between Networks in Mac OS X

Reconfigure your OS X network without restarting your brain. This article changes a Cube from an AirPort network to a Mac-to-PC Ethernet connection and back again, as a taste of working with multiple networks under Mac OS X.

How To: Adding A Graphical Favorite To the Internet Explorer Toolbar

Lee Bennett shows us how to make an IE toolbar favorite that updates its image when the site changes.

How To: Putting Curb Cuts and Wider Doors on the Internet: Toward Web Site Accessibility

Apple asks us to “Think Different.” But some of us have to “Work Different” because of a disability. This month, *ATPM* looks at why making a Web site accessible for persons with disabilities is a good idea—and then shows how to go about it.

How To: Troubleshooting 101

We love our Macs in part because they “just work”...most of the time. But they can also act up every now and then. Paul Conaway outlines some ideas on how to minimize problems, how to troubleshoot them when things go sour, and what resources are out there to provide help.

Cartoon: Cortland

In a quadruple installment, Matt Johnson’s *Cortland* looks at Terry’s attempts to get a copy of Jaguar without paying for it.

Cartoon: Hambone

The subject of Mike Flanagan’s *Hambone* is overpriced computers.

Desktop Pictures: Bimini

This month’s desktop pictures, a submission from reader Al Camentz, were taken in the Bahamas.

Review: FireWire DriveDock

Eric Blair reviews WiebeTech’s handy adapter for connecting a bare IDE drive to your Mac’s FireWire port. If you have a bunch of old drives laying around looking for something to do, you should check it out.

Review: Lapvantage Deluxe Dome

Christopher Turner reviews an elegant iBook/TiBook stand that elevates your Mac laptop and lets it rotate like the iMac G4. He prefers it to an HP docking station shelf part he’d previously been using, both for aesthetic and functional reasons.

Review: Watch & Smile 2.0.7

If you’d been looking on as Gregory Tetrault worked on his review of binuscan’s Watch & Smile, you wouldn’t have gotten to watch much smiling. While the slide show creation program offers some useful features, its poor interface and lack of documentation make it frustrating to use.



Anti-Virus Software

Could you tell me which virus protection software is best for my new G4 dual-processor: Norton or Virex? I've got Jaguar installed, but I'm only using Mac OS 9.2.

—*Andrea Grant*

The consensus of our staff seems to be that Virex is the better bet. More than one staff member has reported problems with Norton, especially the most recent version under later operating systems such as 9.2.

My own personal belief is that virus protection software on the Mac is more trouble than it is worth and creates more problems than it solves. I have not run any for years, and have not suffered any problems or viruses on my Mac for ages. But this is only my opinion and reflects only my own experiences... a couple other members of our staff might agree based on their remarks concerning complications arising from Norton and even Virex, but you may find the prospect of running your Mac free of any virus protection software too risky. —*Evan Trent*

Getting an LC 575 on the Net

I just discovered your great site! Well done! It is just what I have been searching for for several years now.

I have a Macintosh LC 575 and I want to go on the Net. One local possibility is my TV Cable company (Rogers), which offers high-speed cable. Is my computer too old for this? If so, do you have any other suggestions?

—*Bill Creagmile*

No your computer is not too old to access the Net. Your LC 575 can connect to a cable modem or DSL modem, however you will need to purchase and install an Ethernet card for your Comm Slot. This may mean that you will lose your internal modem, depending on whether or not you are currently using the Comm Slot for a modem. Of course, DSL or a cable modem would probably mean you won't need an old fashioned dial-up modem, but if you use your computer to send or receive faxes, for example, we would need to discuss the possibility of finding you an external serial modem to replace your internal modem.

The card you need to purchase is a Comm Slot Ethernet card,

such as [this](#)¹. There may be other, possibly cheaper, sources for the card but a quick search on the Net yielded that link and Sun Remarketing is a good reliable source for such parts. Other good places to look would be [Shreve Systems](#)² or [Small Dog Electronics](#)³ or [PowerMax](#)⁴.

In any event—the installation of the card is fairly straightforward, but if you are not comfortable opening up your computer and performing such an installation I encourage you to contact a local service center or a tech who could do it for you. The cable/DSL technician will probably not be able to...as most of them are PC people anyway.

Once you install that card you will have the hardware side of things taken care of. Your 575 doesn't have a lot of RAM, even when maxed out, so that is going to limit the speed at which Web pages display and how recent a version of a Web browser you can use, etc. But certainly you can get started and acquainted with the Net on this machine, and e-mail will work perfectly well. —*Evan Trent*

Replacement Cables

A couple of pins in my cable are broken and I have tried everything to find another cable. Do you know of an individual that has one? I have had no success contacting the original owner of SoftWorks; I thought he might have some laying around. Any suggestions? Thanks.

—*Tony Grimes, Nashville, TN*

I would suggest that you contact a company like [Black Box](#)⁵. They can build any cable you want—all they need is a pinout diagram. What you might want to consider is talking to somebody there about sending them your cable and having them either make a new one, or ideally simply terminate the cable with a new connector that has all the pins intact. That would be cheaper than building a new cable probably. They ought to be able to help out—but if not let me know and I will refer you elsewhere. —*Evan Trent*

1. <http://www2.sunrem.com/sun02.w?pt=661-0888&catcode=13340>
2. <http://www.shrevesystems.com>
3. <http://www.smalldog.com>
4. <http://www.powermax.com>
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Beyond the Barline

by David Ozab, dozab@atpm.com

Ready or Not!

In my [January column](#)¹, I made a resolution that, honestly, I had no real intention of keeping. I said, in print mind you, that I would make the switch to OS X by the end of the year. I knew that the chance of my most critical applications (all music and audio software) being compatible by then was almost as remote as my chances of having the money necessary to buy a new computer and upgrade all my software. Still I was hopeful. Little did I know at the time that Steve Jobs had made the same resolution in respect to Apple, and that, unlike me, he had every intention of keeping his word.

So ready or not, come January, all new Apple computers will no longer boot into OS 9. The news has been out for a couple of months now, and, after a couple of months hoping against all previous evidence that his Steveness might change his mind based on our opinions, the time has come to accept the inevitable.

In the Reality Distortion Field

Everyone must be ready by now to upgrade to X. The operating system's been out for almost two years, and that should be plenty of time for developers to make the switch. Obviously, some people aren't ready to let go. They've become too attached to an old familiar friend, and the time has come to move on. In January, when Apple announced that OS 9 was "dead," everyone entered Stage One of the grieving process, denial. "OS 9 isn't dead, it's still I viable OS, and *I need it!*" In September, came Stage Two, anger. "How dare they! If I want to boot my new computer into OS 9, I should be able to. After all *it's my computer!*" Now we're in Stage Three: bargaining. "Please let me boot into 9 a little longer. After all I've supported you *all these years.*" By January, we'll reach Stage Four, depression. "I need a new computer, but I *need OS 9, too.* What's the point. I might as well stay in bed." Then, finally, Stage Five, acceptance. "*I love OS X. I don't know how I ever lived without it!*" Steve, meet Dr. Phil. Dr. Phil, Steve.

Meanwhile, in the Real World

OS X is really only a few months old. Everybody willing to admit the truth will tell you that the original OS 10.0 was a beta, and 10.1 wasn't much better. Jaguar, a.k.a. OS 10.2, is the *real* OS X. So developers have had their progress in upgrading limited to some extent. As the OS has progressed,

the number of compatible applications and hardware drivers has increased exponentially. We are very close to the day when the Classic Mac OS becomes nothing more than a fond memory, but we're not there quite yet. If I were Steve Jobs (and I'm glad I'm not), I would do exactly what he did, but I would delay it about six months, so that developers had a full year with Jaguar. At that point, it is certainly reasonable to say "___, or get off the pot."

But, Again, I'm Not Steve

And, trust me, even if he read this column, it wouldn't change his mind. So we have to deal with reality. Come January, all Macs will be OS X-only (or other kinds of Unix). Classic will still work, but anything not Classic-compatible won't. So my advice is this: if you have a computer that works fine for you, keep using it. When 2002 becomes 2003, it will still run OS 9 as well as ever. After all, even Steve doesn't have that kind of power (yet). If you're ready to upgrade hardware, but not ready to give up 9, buy now.

I may do both. My G3 works just fine (640 MB of RAM doesn't hurt), and it will remain my "music computer" for the foreseeable future, but I also was contemplating buying an iBook by June. With an impending move (to who knows where) coming this summer, I desired the one thing my G3 lacked, portability. In addition, I figured I could make the upgrade to X in two steps: First, I would run X, along with my non-music applications, on the iBook for about six months to a year. By then, I would have the money, and the software would be available, to buy a new dual-processor desktop. Now I may need to move up the iBook purchase, though I can't really afford it. I'll decide by next month.

Who's Ready?

Well I'm not really ready, and neither are a lot of users. But many software companies are. I've mentioned Bias (Peak and Deck), Bitheadz (Unity Session), and PropellerHead (Reason) in earlier columns. In addition, Steinberg's Cuebase SX and Emagic's Logic 5.4 have been released in the last month. Emagic has also released a developer kit for porting VST plug-ins to OS X-compatible Audio Units, and is partnering with Digidesign to ensure compatibility between Logic and the upcoming Pro Tools 6 for OS X. Coda's Finale 2003 is Classic-compatible. Native Instruments has released Traktor DJ Studio 2.0, and will hopefully follow up with OS X versions of Reaktor, Absynth, and their specialized software instruments (FM7, Pro-52, Kontakt, etc.). I'm sure there's

1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.01/barline.shtml>

other OS X music and audio software out that I've forgotten. Maybe that's a good sign. I'd rather have too much than not enough.

Who's Not?

MOTU's DP 3 (announced in July) is still pending. So are U&I's unique software package (Artmatic and VTrack are first up this fall, I'm hoping on Metasynth soon after), and,

most significantly for me, Cycling 74's Max/MSP. That one, I must admit, has always been a deal-breaker. Back in the mid-nineties, when Apple looked shaky, my overriding reason for sticking with Macs was Max. Now it's my overriding reason for sticking with OS 9. When Max/MSP makes the jump, I will have no more reasons to hold off upgrading to OS X. I hope that day comes soon.

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



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

The Candy Apple

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

From a Distance...

For the past couple of months, I've been having my first experience with distance learning and I'm very impressed with the kinds of experiences it makes possible. I've been a big fan of bulletin board-style message boards for a couple of years anyway, and that's one of the facets of this course I'm working with that has me so excited. It also includes chat, e-mail, a calendar, assignment posts, and the syllabus.

The course is engineering ethics, and it's part of the distance learning effort at my local state-supported [university](#)¹. I'm a teaching assistant—I have little background in engineering, but am reasonably well-grounded in ethics. Most of the students at this school are commuters anyway, so it makes sense to offer certain types of courses online rather than in person. This course is reading- and discussion-based (there's no hands-on element), so there's no need to require in-person attendance. The students read the textbook material, discuss issues in pre-determined groups, and then write summaries of their discussions so we'll have something to grade. They also have a few quizzes—multiple-choice with radio buttons.

One of the foundational ideas that makes this work is that learning can occur in almost any environment. Certain types of learning happen better in certain types of environments, but the basic, fundamental thing we're doing when we learn is asking our brains to process things in new ways. If the kind of learning we're doing has to do with thinking in conversational, dialogue-encouraging ways, then this venue is as good as a classroom to accomplish that. A phone meeting would work, too, but the method we're using online has the advantage of not being time-sensitive.

It is precisely this insensitivity to time that makes this kind of course also very practical. Students can post comments at any time of the day and I can read them at 3 AM after work. We're all happy, especially the majority of us who have full-time jobs and are squeezing in schoolwork as a sideline. This venue allows us to do things when it's convenient.

I guess what strikes me as neatest about distance learning is that it allows us to explore things at our own pace, which requires discipline; but it also creates a community of learners, which encourages us to participate in a social group. Both approaches are good ones to cultivate.

I'd toyed with the idea of a distance-learning program for an advanced degree of my own, but decided I didn't want to give up the experience of interaction with a professor I'd met

in person. The kinds of courses I take lend themselves to individual and distance work, but not everyone has that same advantage. I don't know that we want to be quick to discard the idea of classroom meetings for most courses; part of what we're learning is how to function within a specialized community.

One place where distance learning would be very appropriate is in certain kinds of workplace courses. Say I'm a safety manager for a large manufacturing plant; I need to make sure all the employees there get certified on a particular safety issue. They'll need one hour of instruction time with a teacher, and then a test, to be sure they've understood the material. I'll have to make sure that employees from all three shifts can arrange to attend a course.

Instead of working through all these logistics for what amounts to a rote memorization exercise that most people will understand quickly, why not try something easier? Why not put the material on an intranet Web site and allow the employees to read it on their own shifts, when they can arrange the time as a normal part of their schedules? They can take the test whenever they want, immediately after reading the study material or several days later, if they need time to let it sink in.

For certain types of college courses, I believe we could go this route already. It requires more upfront time for the professors, but far less time down the road. A worthwhile investment of energy to get it set up properly, and then just check in to be sure folks are participating.

We already have the model in place for long-distance paper courses, in which students study a Bible chapter or a period of history and then take a test. Students have been doing this kind of distance learning for a long time. Our newest incarnation allows them to learn at their own pace without giving up the sense of community. What's not to like about that?

Distance learning isn't right for every course, but it sure is convenient for the ones where it fits.

1. http://www.uncc.edu/disted/visitors/visitors_main.htm

Onward.

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Where to Get Free and Inexpensive Software for Legacy Macs

Trivia

First, this month's Obscure Mac Trivia that Nobody Really Knows™: name the two Apple-authored Macintosh software components that have Monty Python–inspired icons. Bonus points: what are the icons?

This Column

Once upon a time, one of my fellow staffers here at ATPM had this great idea for a column. Then I took a three-month break for the summer so I could get my affairs in order before starting grad school. Then I took a two-month break to get my affairs in order when I started grad school. Now I have the evening free and an editor breathing down my neck, and lo and behold, I still have the e-mail from nine months back suggesting that I write a column about where to get free and inexpensive software for legacy Macs. So without further ado, I present:

Where to Get Free and Inexpensive Software for Legacy Macs

Yes, I know, it's a terribly creative title. Bear with me. And thank Greg T. later. ;)

The single most important free software package for your legacy Mac is the operating system. Apple is generous enough to provide three of the six major legacy releases for free download: [System 6](#)¹ (6.0.8 is recommended for all System 6 users), [System 7](#)² (be sure to apply the tune-up as well), and [System 7.5.3](#)³ (a 19-part disk image that requires about 40 MB of disk space in addition to the space required for the OS). I'm not going to get into a discussion of which OS version is best for which Mac; that [topic](#)⁴ has [already](#)⁵ been [covered](#)⁶ several [times](#)⁷.

Once you have an OS on your Mac, you'll need some software to make it useful. TeachText and SimpleText are basic word processors, but do you really want to be limited to

plain text format and 32K file sizes? [WordPerfect 3.5e](#)⁸ or [WriteNow 3.0](#)⁹ can help you turn that Mac into a novel-writing machine for the 21st century. Alternatively, you can use the highly rated (though perhaps quirky) [Nisus Writer](#)¹⁰ for your word processing needs.

As long as you have a reasonably recent (read: made since 1990 or so) Mac, you can browse the Web with [iCab](#)¹¹ just as you would with a modern computer. Tip: turn off multiple connections for best results, and put the cache on a RAM disk if possible. Don't like iCab? There are a host of alternative old browsers listed at [the pickle's Low-End Mac FAQ](#)¹² and [Gamba's browser page](#)¹³. The pickle's FAQ has information on setting up older Macs to use Eudora for e-mail, and [Gamba's site](#)¹⁴ also includes links to archives of the now-defunct Daystar software drivers archive and Vieuxmac ancient OS archive. Also in the same vein is Marten van de Kraats' [System 6 Heaven download page](#)¹⁵, which contains not only links to, but also mini-reviews and/or synopses of, almost every System 6–compatible program still publicly available.

Know of more? Got your own favorites? Hit the [Post a Comment](#)¹⁶ link below and let the world know about them.

Trivia Answers

The Killer Rabbit is part of AppleShare's File Sharing Extension and appears on AppleShare PDS files with AppleShare 3.0 or System 7 installed. The Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch is likewise part of the File Sharing Extension and replaced (“killed,” if you will) the Killer Rabbit on later OS versions. For more information, or to argue with me about the answers, read what [MacKiDo](#)¹⁷ says.

1. ftp://ftp.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/English-North_American/Macintosh/System/Older_System/System_6.0.x/
2. ftp://ftp.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/English-North_American/Macintosh/System/Older_System/System_7.0.x/
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4. <http://lowendmac.com/macdan/md041.shtml>
5. <http://lowendmac.com/macdan/2K0905cl.html>
6. <http://lowendmac.com/macdan/010226cl.html>
7. <http://macfaq.org/software/macos.shtml#Q1.1.3>

8. <http://acmfiles.csusb.edu/corel/wpmac.html>
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11. <http://www.icab.de>
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13. <http://home.earthlink.net/%7Egamba2/browsers.html>
14. <http://home.earthlink.net/%7Egamba2/>
15. <http://www.euronet.nl/users/mvdk/compatible.html>
16. <http://www.atpm.com/8.11/legacy.shtml#comments>
17. <http://www.mackido.com/EasterEggs/Monty.html>

What Kind of Legacy?

Want to contribute to *Legacy Corner*? I need topic suggestions. Get your name in the (virtual) lights by being the first to suggest a column topic for next month! (Hey, I'm

working on a shoestring here. You expect me to be a full-time PhD student in organic chemistry *and* think of creative things to talk about that haven't already been said about 68K Macs?)

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About This Particular Web Site

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

[The Source for All Things .Mac](#)¹

I've got to admit, the thing I find most interesting about this site is its URL. I typed it into my browser fully expecting some sort of error, only to find a page full of information and news for subscribers to .Mac. In addition to news, there are links to mac.com homepages and pictures, with viewer ratings, providing a central place from which to show off your Web site.

[MyRealBox](#)²

Just for balance, here's a page for people who aren't .Mac users. If like most people (myself included, can ya tell?) you find \$50-\$100 a little steep for an e-mail address that offers no support to balance out the unscheduled downtime, this is the place to go. You can obtain an e-mail account that offers Web access as well as POP and IMAP servers, and an SMTP server for sending. There's even a calendar feature, though I've not used that. The best part is that it's free. The next best part is that in the two months I've been using it, my myrealbox.com address has attracted no spam and experienced less downtime than my (free) mac.com address did.

[Farscape Cancelled](#)³

I expect this falls in the "I'm always the last to know" department, and most of you will either find this old news or irrelevant, but just in case: *Farscape*, the only show on the [SciFi Channel](#)⁴ worth watching, has been axed; the channel has decided not to renew the series for a fifth season. In the

1. <http://dotmac.info>
2. <http://www.myrealbox.com>
3. <http://www.farscapeweekly.com/cancelled.htm>
4. <http://www.scifi.com>

noble and probably hopeless tradition of the original *Star Trek* series, fans are fighting to save the show. This site gives the mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers for the network and some of its advertisers. If you like the show, make yourself heard.

[No More AOL CDs](#)⁵

Aesthetically, this site is pretty bad. Rather than designing a decent looking page, they put "Join the world's ugliest petition" up near the top of the page, adding redundancy to injury. So why am I writing about it? Am I just in a mood for bashing? No. Well, OK, maybe. But here's the idea: AOL CDs are spreading like the flu, just as ubiquitous and just as unwanted. The creators of this page aim (ha!) to collect a million of them and send 'em all back home. Pictures of things to do with unwanted CDs (wall papering, dog food) decorate the site.

[Self-Injury Information and Support](#)⁶

On a more serious note, I've seen all sorts of statistics about how common self-injuries are: which age groups they most greatly affect, how many people die of them each year, how many people will try it at least once in their lifetimes...but statistics are just that. This site offers help. If you or someone you care about is prone to self-injury, you should visit this page. It offers information about why people do it and how to help yourself or someone you care about get better. There's a message board and a link to an IRC channel where you can find someone who cares and, just as importantly, doesn't judge.

5. <http://www.nomoreaolcds.com>
6. <http://crystal.palace.net/%7Ellama/psych/injury.html>

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Internet “Piracy” of Films and Broadcasts: Is It a Problem or an Excuse for Restricting Copyrights?

The U. S. entertainment industry pays lobbyists and publicists to address the issue of digital rights management (DRM) and the threats to the industry posed by Internet-enabled piracy (see next paragraph). The entertainment industry’s campaign resembles that made by the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) about music piracy, which many people believe is more about loss of control over distribution than about copyright violations. The entertainment industry’s stated goal is to prevent piracy (and resultant loss of revenues) so that it can continue to make movies and TV shows, and release them in digital formats (HDTV and DVD).

Fritz Hollings, often referred to as the Senator for Hollywood, aided their cause by proposing two bills: the Security Systems Standards and Certification Act (SSSCA) and the Consumer Broadband and Digital Television Promotion Act (CBDTPA). Both bills would require the use of government-approved copy protection and digital rights management systems in all relevant equipment (including personal computers). The required hardware would contain chips that recognize flags embedded in commercial media (DVDs, digital tapes, SACDs, etc.) or within digital broadcasts. The chips would identify the digital rights restrictions based on the flag and would limit your abilities to store or copy the media or the broadcast. Under the proposed law, the DRM chip would have to be installed in all computers, DVD recorders, hard drive recorders (like TiVo), video recorders, DVD players, etc. You can read more about these DRM proposals at the Web site of the [Electronic Privacy Information Center \(EPIC\)](http://www.epic.org/privacy/drm/)¹.

My recent experience with video “piracy” shows that the entertainment industry’s claims about the dangers of digital piracy via the Internet are illogical.

I have been a [Buffy the Vampire Slayer](#)² fan since it first appeared on the WB network. I lost interest last year when *BTVS* almost became a UPN soap opera, but I enjoyed this season’s first two episodes. I attempted to record episode 3 on my VCR, but something went wrong, and I had an hour of blue screen. (An experience that reminded me of using Windows.) Current *BTVS* episodes are not rebroadcast until

reruns appear in November or December. Since I didn’t want to watch episodes out of sequence, I decided to download a digitized copy from the Internet.

My first task was to find a copy of season 7, episode 3 (“Same Time, Same Place”). I used Hogwasher (a news group reader I recently [reviewed](#)³) to find newsgroup names containing “buffy”. Of the 11 groups listed, `alt.binaries.multimedia.buffy-v-slayer` looked the most promising. I found an MPEG version of the episode. It was comprised of 37 parts, and each part had approximately 22 subparts. I selected them all for download, but ran out of hard drive space (although I had nearly 1 GB free on the selected partition). It turns out that Hogwasher keeps the files in its database (until it is compacted), so I needed twice as much space as expected. I downloaded the remaining parts to another hard drive. Downloading was complete after around 90 minutes (using a high speed cable connection). I now had 37 files with “.rar” extensions. I tried to decompress and combine the files using the shareware application MacRAR 2.5.1, but it just gave me error messages. I searched the Internet for other Macintosh utilities that can combine .rar files, but I had no success. (StuffIt Expander now has the ability to handle .rar formats, but I did not know that.)

I gave up on the utility search and launched Virtual PC. I had an evaluation copy of WinRAR 2.9.0 that I thought would work. I put all 37 parts into one Macintosh folder which I then “shared” with Virtual PC. WinRAR successfully combined the .rar MPEG segments in about 10 minutes (not a bad time for an emulated Windows 95 system). I quit VPC and launched the recombined episode with QuickTime Player 6.0. The movie appeared in a small window. I doubled the window size (to approximately 8 by 6 inches) without losing image quality. Unfortunately, the audio was not synchronized with the video. I watched the episode (which I would rate 6 out of 10) and then trashed all the associated files (to regain disk space).

So, let’s look at this logically. I confirmed one of the entertainment industry’s biggest fears: I downloaded and viewed a “pirated” copy of a show. The pirated version did not include advertisements, another entertainment industry

1. <http://www.epic.org/privacy/drm/>
2. <http://www.buffy.com>

3. <http://www.atpm.com/8.10/hogwasher.shtml>

complaint. (One of their spokespersons went so far as to say that it is piracy to watch a broadcast show without viewing the commercials!)

But, how did my actions differ from my original plan of watching a videotaped episode? The episode had been freely broadcast and had been recorded legally by thousands of fans. I never watch commercials, even on live broadcasts, so my “piracy” had no impact on the sales of products advertised during the live broadcast. Instead, I went through much trouble just to watch a low quality, low resolution, 43-minute television show.

I dread to think of the effort needed to acquire a full-length, DVD-quality movie via the Internet. The download size would be 10-fold greater, the movie would take up more than 4 GB of hard drive space, and I would need an expensive DVD burner and a \$4 blank DVD disk to create a bootleg copy of the DVD. Why would I or anyone else go to so much trouble when commercial DVD movies can be purchased for \$6 to \$22? (My average purchase price for the scores of DVDs I own is approximately \$13.) It is possible that someone could mass produce pirated DVD movies, but they would have to sell them for \$6 to \$10 just to get a reasonable return on their investment (while running the risk of a hefty fine and a jail sentence). Plus, how many people would purchase bootleg movie DVDs of unknown quality just to save \$5 to \$10?

The entertainment industry’s recent efforts to thwart digital piracy occur when DVD player sales and DVD movie sales are higher than ever. Movie theater attendance remains

high, and is higher than twenty years ago. In the 1980s, the entertainment industry claimed that cable TV and video cassette recorders would result in the widespread bankruptcy of movie theaters. Instead, movie theater attendance continually increased (despite big increases in ticket prices).

Looking at all the factors objectively, I see no logical reason for implementing hardware-related anti-piracy measures to “protect” the entertainment industry. Their arguments have less merit than those of the RIAA regarding audio CDs. Existing laws already protect against blatant piracy (selling illegal VCR, VCD, or DVD copies of movies and TV shows). Requiring new computers, DVD players, video recording devices, digital broadcast receivers, etc. to include digital rights management hardware would infringe on our legal rights to make personal copies, would add unnecessary costs and delays to new hardware, and would do little to prevent commercial piracy, especially in countries that would not require DRM hardware.

It is my belief that the primary reason that broadcasters and others in the entertainment industry are advocating digital rights *restrictions* is to increase their control of media. If they can prevent the recording of broadcast shows or the playing of “pirated” media, then they can force customers to either view the shows during live broadcasts or wait for authorized (and costly) DVD releases. Their proposed actions would restrict our fair use rights and prevent us from “time-shifting” and viewing shows at our convenience.

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



Switching Between Networks in Mac OS X

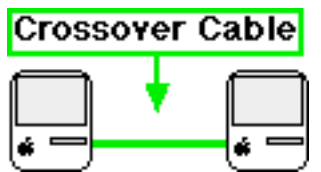
Introduction

Mac OS X significantly changes the way your Mac deals with networks. After years of juggling multiple control panels, seemingly random collections of extensions, and network terms that read like alphabet soup, OS X has only “Network,” a single panel in the System Preferences. Whether you use Ethernet, AirPort, or whatever, it all funnels through Network.

My own network consists of an AirPort-enabled Mac Cube and the occasional Windows laptop (courtesy of my corporate masters). Ninety-nine per cent of the time, I connect to the Internet world through AirPort, a blissful existence free of wire and worries. Sometimes, however, I need to copy an essential document (i.e., “tiny_dancer.mp3”) from the laptop, which lacks a wireless card. Since the AirPort Base Station is in a different part of the building, the only option is connecting the laptop and Mac directly. Fortunately, the Mac easily falls back to its built-in Ethernet port, but it takes a bit of reconfiguring.

Step One: Hardware Hookup

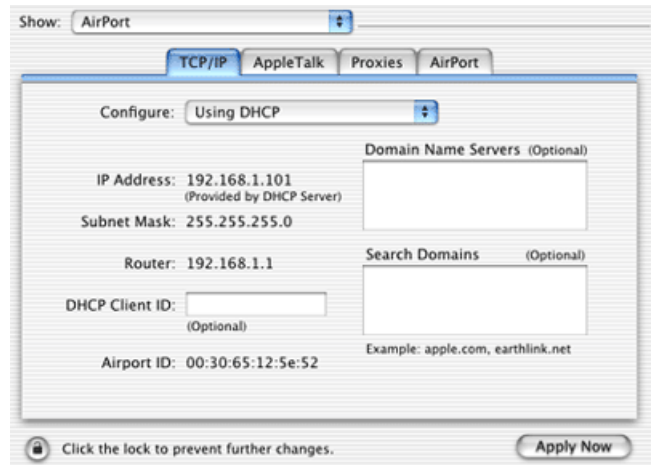
Hooking up the laptop to the Mac is no problem, just connect both Ethernet ports using a crossover cable. Find a crossover cable in the network section of your favorite (or even second favorite) computer store.



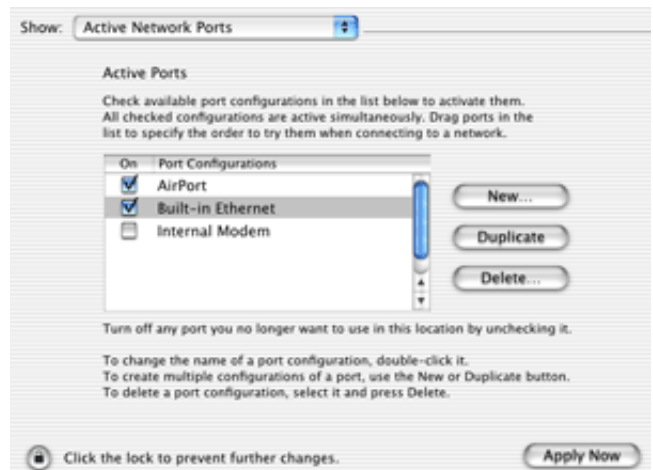
Two-Computer Crossover Connection

Step Two: Switch to Ethernet

Opening the Network panel on the Cube shows “AirPort” as the active connection. We need to change this to “Built-in Ethernet,” so choose “Active Network Ports” from the “Show” popup menu.

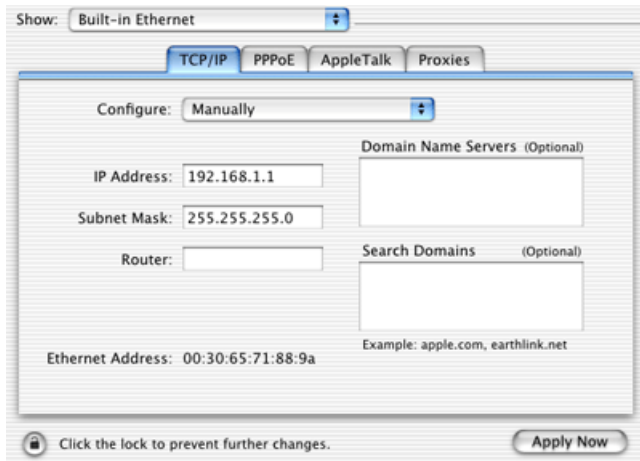


Check the Ethernet port and either disable the AirPort port or drag Ethernet above it on the priority list. Choose “Apply Now” and the Ethernet port becomes active.



Switch the “Show” popup menu to “Built-in Ethernet,” then choose “Manually” from the “Configure” popup. Enter an address like 192.168.1.1 (the 192.168 prefix is reserved for

private networks) and choose “Apply Now.” This gives the Mac an IP address, which you need to make the file transfer from the laptop.



Step Three: Configure the Laptop

Configuring the Windows laptop (mine runs Windows 2000) is similar to the Mac. To assign an IP address, open the Network control panel from Start Button>Settings>Control Panels. Highlight the TCP/IP protocol connected to your network interface and click on “Properties.” Select the “IP Address” tab and enter the IP address (192.168.1.2, for example—just make it different from the Mac) and subnet mask (255.255.255.0). Close the Network control panel.

Step Four: File Transfer

Transferring files between computers requires a way for them to communicate, as AppleTalk allows Macs to talk to each other. Since AppleTalk isn’t a convenient option for my laptop, I use an FTP (file transfer protocol) server instead. FTP is just like it sounds, good for file transfer, but without much glitz and glamor.

I run the FTP server on my laptop, then use an FTP client on the Mac to upload and download files. For help setting up the FTP server and client, see [Basic FTP File Sharing Between Macs and PCs](#)¹ from ATPM 7.11. For downloading files, most Web browsers will also work as FTP clients.

Downloading files is as easy as connecting to 192.168.1.2 from the Mac’s FTP client (or ftp://192.169.1.2/ from a browser). Once I’ve selected and transferred my (shockingly important) files from one to the other, I can disconnect the crossover cable and shut down the laptop, freeing my Mac to return to its natural, wireless state.

Step Five: Back to AirPort

Open the Network panel again (from System Preferences), then choose “Active Network Ports” from the “Show” popup menu. It’s time to re-enable AirPort and disable Ethernet, then choose “Apply Now.” Choose “AirPort” from the “Show” popup and “Using DHCP” from the “Configure” popup. Wait a few moments and you should receive a new IP address, indicating AirPort is up and flying again. Success! The switch is complete.

Technical note: I’ve noticed that AirPort won’t successfully reconnect until I unplug the Ethernet cable, even if I’ve disabled the Ethernet port. I’m not sure why, and your mileage may vary.

Conclusion

Mac OS X handles multiple networks with minimal fuss, even with the extra baggage of Windows. My own temporary switch is a good way to demonstrate moving from one to the other and you (yes, you) might find yourself in the same situation one day (unless, of course, you already have “Tiny Dancer”).

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

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



The User Strikes Back

by Ken Gruberman, kgruberman@atpm.com

Put Your E-Mail on a Diet

We hear it on the news every day: after 30 years of dieting and eating healthier foods, Americans are fatter than ever. Our pets are overweight as well. And now, it's time to face the awful truth... even our *e-mail* has gotten too big for its britches.

Most of us don't realize the volume of e-mail each of us deals with each day. Within a few months to a year, it's not uncommon to have sent and received thousands—or even tens of thousands—of messages. The problem is that most e-mail programs were never designed to hold such voluminous amounts of mail. Just as hard drives get fragmented and, as a result, slow down over time, so too does e-mail software.

For this article, I'm going to focus on Microsoft's popular e-mail clients, Outlook Express and Entourage, and how to get them back into fighting shape. (OE is Microsoft's free e-mail client for Mac OS 8 and 9, while Entourage is part of Microsoft Office 2001 and also Office for OS X.) Of course, there are many other e-mail programs out there, such as Eudora, Mailsmith and even Netscape mail, but most people I know use one or the other of the Microsoft products. If possible, I'll try to cover slim-down techniques for these other programs in a future article.

Let me say something about Entourage before I continue: if you're using Outlook Express and you like it, but either wish it could do more or are moving to OS X (where Outlook Express no longer exists), you should check out Entourage. It has schedules, a calendar, notes and to-do's that are all linked to your e-mail, a beefy address book that's printable, and Entourage can even HotSync with a Palm organizer. Unfortunately, Microsoft doesn't sell Entourage by itself (although that may change in the near future), but on occasion there are bundle deals that come along. Last year, you could purchase just Word and Entourage for \$149; that deal is over but there is another promotion currently underway that gets you Office X for only \$199 instead of \$499. The catch? You have to buy a new Mac at the same time! This promotion will last until January 7th, the date of Steve Jobs' next keynote at Macworld San Francisco.

Bob the Rebuilder

OE and Entourage, like many other e-mail programs, keep all your sent, received and filed messages in a single file, or related files. These are typically referred to as the "mail database." The files in question are called "Database," "Database Cache," and "Messages," and they can be found in the following places in Mac OS 9.x:

1. If you do *not* have a folder called "Documents" at the root level of your hard drive and use OE, you will find them in a folder called "Identities" inside your Outlook Express folder itself.

2. If you *do* have a Documents folder at the root level of your hard drive, or if you're using Entourage, you will find a folder in the Documents folder called "Microsoft User Data." (If you didn't have a Documents folder before, Entourage will create it during first run.) Inside the Microsoft User Data folder you'll find the aforementioned Identities folder for OE and an Office 2001 Identities folder for Entourage. Inside each of these folders you will find a sub-folder called "Main Identity" (unless you renamed the Main Identity to something else) and inside of *that* folder you'll find the mail database files.

In Mac OS X, OE is out of the picture; the Microsoft User Data folder will be found in the Documents folder that is found inside the Home folder (the one with the "Home" icon on it that is created for each user).

The other files in these "Identities" folders deal with other functions of the e-mail software such as rules, mailing lists, schedules, and the like and are not changed in any way during a typical rebuild: only the mail database files are involved.

OE and Entourage use mail database files because they were inherited from one of the best e-mail clients of all time: Claris EMailer. That's right—after its demise, the same people who created and refined Claris EMailer were hired by the Macintosh Business Unit of Microsoft several years ago to work the same magic for Outlook Express, then Entourage. This also explains why both products play so well with AppleScript: David Cortright, a guiding force behind all three products, is an AppleScript maven of the highest order.

Exercising Your Option (key)

Claris EMailer had a technique for compacting and rebuilding its mail database files, and OE and Entourage use the very same method. The funny thing is, few people seemed to know about this when EMailer was at its peak of popularity, and even fewer know about the feature today in OE and Entourage. So listen up, because here's something everyone should know and hardly anyone does: to rebuild the mail database in all three programs (for those of you who still are using EMailer), hold down the Option key while launching the program.

The easy way to do this is to launch the program first, then immediately hold down the option key until you see a dialog come up (see Figure 1) that asks if you want to do a “typical” rebuild or an “advanced” rebuild. I am happy to tell you that in all the years I’ve been using these products, I’ve never had to pick the Advanced option; the only reason to do so is if the Typical rebuild fails to solve whatever problems you’re having.



Figure 1: Holding down the Option key while launching Outlook Express or Entourage reveals an important, but mostly unknown, feature.

The truth is, I rebuild my mail database every few months to prevent problems from happening. The concept is a simple one: over time, you create and send messages, read and store messages, and deal with attachments. Some you save, while others you leave with the messages they came in on. The database files inflate a bit, just like a balloon, every time you get and send e-mail.

And of course, you’re going to (hopefully) delete a lot of messages after you read them, such as spam, stupid jokes you’ve already received a dozen times, and the like. But the database just keeps expanding from all the “hot air” from the daily torrent of e-mail. And after awhile, those files get awfully big. You can tell if this is happening to you by how long it take for your e-mail program to open and then display the main browser window. What once may have taken a few seconds could now be taking 30 seconds or more. When this happens it’s time for a rebuild, which not only compacts the message database, but also your contacts as well (see Figure 2).

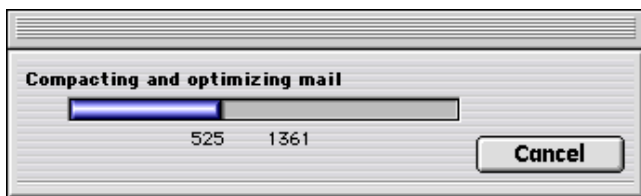


Figure 2: If you have a lot of e-mail to process, consider giving your e-mail program lots of RAM before starting the rebuild.

When the rebuild is finished, you’ll be told that it was successful and that it is okay to throw away the previous files which have now have the word “old” in front of them. (See Figure 3). Rebuilds can yield results that range from the

subtle to the dramatic. For this article I did a rebuild and, as you can see in Figure 4, the results are pretty impressive: an almost two-thirds drop in file size. But I’ve seen even better results, such as mail database files that were 400, 500 or even 800 MB in size dropping down to under 50 MB. In any case, after the rebuild is complete the main e-mail browser window will appear, and the next time you launch your e-mail program it should appear once again with the same pep and vigor it did when you first started using it.

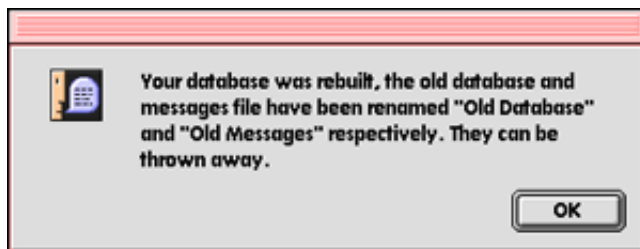


Figure 3: Success at last!

 Messages	15.3 MB
 Old Messages	53.9 MB

Figure 4: Here we see the mail database files drastically reduced in size after the rebuild. Your mileage may vary.

Trouble in E-Mail Land

If you’re getting error messages upon launch, or if your e-mail program is quitting suddenly and unexpectedly, this may also be a sign that either a typical or advanced rebuild is in order. In OS 9, you should also throw out all the Microsoft libraries so they can be replaced; in OS X, you don’t need such a complicated routine but rather can simply toss the Microsoft “plist” files. Here’s what I do when I am asked to deal with a recalcitrant Microsoft e-mail program in OS 9:

- Go to the System Folder’s “Extensions” folder and throw away any extension that starts with the word “Microsoft” or the letters “MS”
- Throw away the “MS Preference Panels” folder in the System Folder
- If a control panel is present called “Configuration Manager,” I’ll toss that one too.
- Remove either the Outlook Express preference from the System Folder’s “Preferences” folder, or the Entourage preferences found in the “Microsoft” folder inside the Preferences folder.
- Finally, I’ll restart, launch the program in question, and hold down the Option key until the rebuild dialog comes up, then do a typical rebuild.

I have found that this technique solves 95% of all OE and Entourage problems. If the problems remain, you should try the Advanced rebuild. And if that doesn't work, consider reinstalling the software itself and also restoring the mail database files from a backup. (You *do* backup, don't you?) Also, you could be having a font problem. Historically, Microsoft software programs, including Office components and Internet Explorer, are sensitive to either too many fonts, or things like duplicate fonts or font corruption. The good news is that you can fix all these things (and much more) by simply using Morrison SoftDesign's invaluable [FontDoctor](http://www.morrisonsoftdesign.com/docs/fd_mac.htm)¹ 5.1.2 for both OS 9 and X.

Oh yes, one more simple but not-so-obvious thing to try if you're having problems: in OS 9 give the program in question more RAM. Click once on the icon of the actual program itself and hit Command-I; try doubling or even tripling the Preferred amount of RAM. In OS X, of course, this is no longer necessary as the OS itself figures out how much RAM things need. This is one of the reasons I like OS X!

Tons of Text

Even with rebuilding, the time may come when you have too many messages for your e-mail program to handle in an effective way. If you've got hundreds of folders containing thousands of messages in each one (trust me, I've seen it), the time has come for you to consider archiving them and getting them out of your e-mail program for good.

While it's true that many e-mail programs use database files to keep track of everything, a real database program is far more efficient at handling this kind of thing. And the one people seem to use the most is FileMaker Pro. If you have a copy of FileMaker on your hard disk, that means you've also got a very cool way to archive your e-mail.

What bridges the gap between your e-mail program and FileMaker is a nifty shareware program called Entourage Email Archive by Softhing; it's available for both OS 9 and OS X. (They also make a version for Outlook Express that is virtually identical.) According to [Softhing's site](http://www.softhing.com)², here's what you can do with it:

Entourage e-mail Archive (EEA) is a simple and fast utility for archiving e-mails and attachments you have received or sent using Microsoft Entourage. Entourage e-mail Archive can archive your e-mail in three different ways:

- Archive e-mail and/or attachments in the Finder
 - 1—Archive e-mails + attachments
 - 2—Only e-mails
 - 3—Only attachments

- Export or append e-mail in a text file
 - 4—Export new text file
 - 5—Append to text file
- Export or append e-mail in tab-text format
 - 6—Export new tab-text file
 - 7—Append to tab-text file (for this function a freeware FileMaker Pro template is enclosed in OEA folder)

Settings 1,2,3 produce a Finder-structured-folders archive where e-mails and/or attachments are grouped by day. Settings 4 and 5 produce a long 'paper trail' file that can be viewed with a robust text editor like BBedit, Text-Edit Plus or Microsoft Word. Settings 6 and 7 produce a tab-text file that can be imported into computer database programs like FileMaker Pro.”

It's those last two options that are my favorites. If you don't own a database program such as FileMaker (remember there's a smaller version of it inside AppleWorks), archiving each message as a text file, or in one long text file, may be enough for you. If you choose this option, you can use Sherlock to either find messages by title, or, if you have indexing turned on, by keywords or phrases inside of messages. You can even use Sherlock to find messages you might want to restore to either OE or Entourage: to do so, just drag and drop them into the main browser window of either program. Neat!

EEA features a dizzying array of options for naming and saving archived text files and the folders they'll reside in. For more details on this, check out the concise and easy-to-understand HTML-based manual on Softhing's site, or download a copy for yourself.

Text files are nice, but the database option is a better idea, because then you can really put the power of FileMaker to work. Previous versions of utilities such as EEA required the installation and use of obscure AppleScript add-ons, but no longer. Archiving to FileMaker now involves the exporting of selected messages or folders to a tab-delimited text file, which is then properly imported by the EEA-supplied FileMaker Pro template, which requires FileMaker Pro 5 or higher.

Using EEA is easy and enjoyable. You first launch either OE or Entourage depending on which you're using; for best results, make sure either program has enough RAM assigned to it under OS 9. When first launching either EEA or OEA on top of your e-mail program, you'll be greeted with the

1. http://www.morrisonsoftdesign.com/docs/fd_mac.htm

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

opening screen (see Figure 5.) From here on out, we'll stick with EEA and Entourage, but rest assured the same also applies for OE and OEA.



Figure 5: Make sure to launch OE or Entourage first before running the EEA e-mail archiving application.

If this is the first time you're using EEA, you'll want to go to the File menu and click on Preferences. Decide first what kind of archiving you'd like to do, then click from tab to tab and make the appropriate selections (see Figure 6). Here, I've told EEA I want a new, tab-delimited export that will be imported into FileMaker. I could also say I want the new data appended to a pre-existing text file. EEA conveniently lets me pick the creator of the resulting text file; in this case, I've picked Text-Edit, my favorite shareware text editor. This is important because, in OS 9, SimpleText has a 32K file size limit. Bets are, I'm going to exceed that even with one folder full of imported messages.

After setting Preferences and hitting OK, you'll be returned to the main screen. For most archives, simply click on the Include Subfolders checkbox, then click on the icon on the left of the popup menu to have EEA gather all the folder information from Entourage. You'll then see all of your Entourage folder names displayed; select the one that has messages you want to export (see Figure 7). You may only

pick one folder at a time to export, but if you would rather export every message in every folder, click on the All Structure checkbox instead.



Figure 6: Before starting your first archive session in EEA, make sure to visit the Preferences menu and tell EEA exactly how you want your archive done.

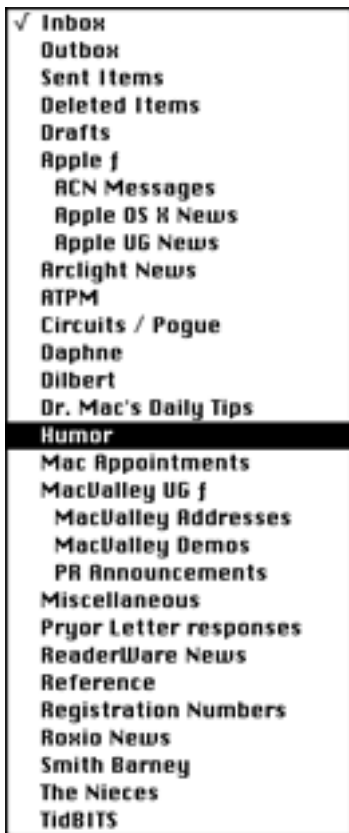


Figure 7: Like magic, here's our selection of Entourage folders now appearing inside of EEA.

Clicking on the "Destination" icon below the Entourage icon lets you pick where you want your text file saved, and how you want it named. If you've decided on a straight Finder-based individual message archive, this is where you'll decide where the files and folders should be saved. Finally, hit the "Process" button to get underway (see Figure 8).

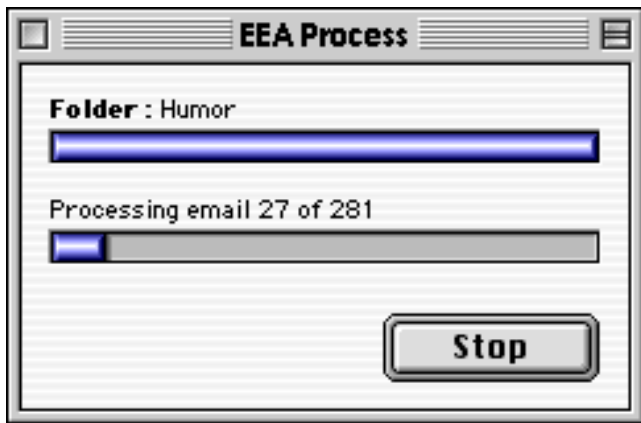


Figure 8: Once underway, EEA shows you its progress as it exports every message in a given folder to a master text file.

After the export is complete, it's time to open the FileMaker Pro template provided by EEA and import the data you just exported from Entourage. The first time you import a tab-delimited text file into EEA, you'll be asked to match up the fields from the Export file with the fields inside the EEA template. They should already match up (see Figure 9), but if they don't you can simply drag the fields on the right side (the template side) so they match up with the fields on the left side (the text file side). This also gives you some latitude in what you decide to import: if you want header information, go ahead and click on "Headers" so that the arrow appears.

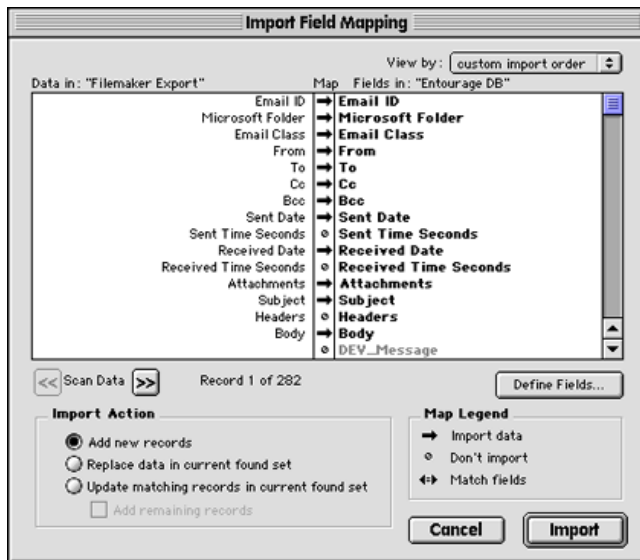


Figure 9: The last step in the Archiving process involves importing the tab-delimited text file you just created into FileMaker. Make sure the fields on the right match the fields on the left; you'll only need to do this once.

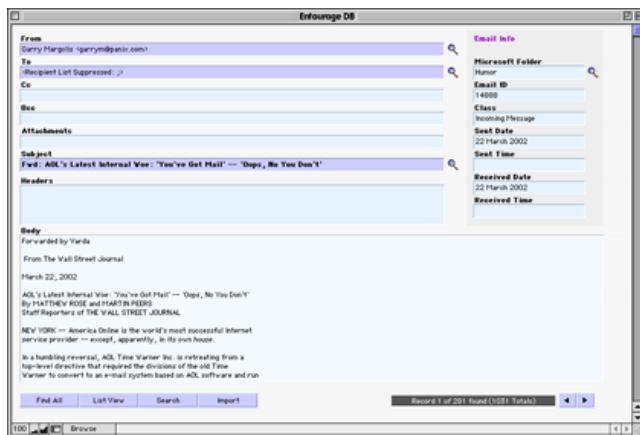


Figure 10: Here's what the EEA FileMaker template looks like. The information in every field is editable.

If you don't care about headers, leave them turned off. It's up to you exactly how much information on each message you want imported. When you're happy with the field names, click on "Import," and quick as a wink, your e-mails will now reside within FileMaker. Here, you can very quickly search

and sort to your heart's content; copy, paste, or export messages as you see fit; and otherwise play with the data (see Figure 10 for a sample page).

When you're satisfied that the e-mails in question have been imported properly, you may return to Entourage and delete the original e-mail messages from the folder in question and then go on to other folders, or quit both Entourage, EEA, and FileMaker. Keep in mind that e-mail attachments are *not* archived to FileMaker... only the reference to them is. If you delete a message out of Entourage that has an attachment, that attachment will also be deleted. Therefore, if you decide you need the attachment, you'd better save it to disk first; you could, if you wanted to, create a folder and call it "Archived Attachments." Then when you see a reference to one inside the EEA FileMaker template, you'll know where to find it. Of course, not every attachment is

worth keeping, so perhaps having the reference to it is enough for you. Also keep in mind that the EEA FileMaker database file is completely editable, so you can add or remove information from selected entries at will.

Now It's Your Turn

Compacting your e-mail databases will make your e-mail program snappy and responsive again, while archiving will give you greater power over your old e-mail, as well as peace of mind. That's important, because should the worst happen and your entire e-mail database is somehow destroyed or corrupted and there is no backup, at least you'll have whatever you've saved in a virtually indestructible FileMaker file.

Now it's time to hit the gym, and to put your e-mail program on a diet!

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



What's Under the Hood

by Robert C. Lewis, rlewis@atpm.com

The [article](#)¹ I did in the September issue of ATPM went over so well that after talking it over with the editors, we have decided to make it a regular column from now on.

I got a few comments from some of our readers about support after buying a shareware program. The first deals with bugs in the software. In most cases, if you find a bug in any shareware you buy, e-mail the developers about it. They will want to hear from you. How else can they improve what they make? When you do e-mail them, make sure you tell them what version of their program and the Mac OS you were using, what you were doing when you observed the bug, and why you think it's a bug. (Sometimes, what you think of as a bug may be an intentional design choice by the author of the program. If you simply say what the program did, the author may think, "That's what it's supposed to do." If you instead explain why you would prefer a different behavior, perhaps the author will change the software or help you learn to use it better.)

Another comment I got was about lack of communication when new versions are released. Although it would be great if all the shareware developers would notify their buyers of updates, in most cases this just does not happen. Most of these people do not do this as their primary job. It tends to be more of a hobby or a sideline for most. Just be glad that we have people like this who take the time to create such great stuff for the Mac. If you want to stay up to date on the latest software updates, then add [MacUpdate](#)² and [VersionTracker](#)³ to your favorite URLs and visit them once a day. This is the first thing I do when I go online for the first time each day. You can also have yourself added to MacUpdate's mailing list. At the end of each day, you will get e-mail from them listing all the URLs to the latest software for that day. VersionTracker offers a similar feature, but it carries advertisements.

OK! Now that we got all that out of the way, let's get dirty and take another look under the hood.

...

[Marine Aquarium](#)⁴ (OS X)—This has to be the finest piece of eye candy for your Mac. Marine Aquarium is a screen saver that simulates a real fish aquarium. I have seen many screen savers over the years, and this has to be the most beautifully generated piece of screen animation I have ever seen. It is so realistic that it even fooled one of my cats (see photo). SereneScreen offers a demo of the screensaver where you can have up to three fish in your tank. Registered versions allow

you have seven different fish, and if you have a widescreen monitor there is room for an eighth fish. Due to the nature of its graphics, sound, and animation, a G4/450 MHz or better Mac is recommended. From what I read on some bulletin boards, slower Macs just bog down and do not do justice to the program. Please, just remember not to tap on the glass.



[ASM](#)⁵ (updated for OS X 10.2.1)—ASM stands for Application Switcher Manager, and it does a good job at it. I wrote about it in the September issue and since then, it has been updated for OS X 10.2.1. The only reason I am mentioning it again is an improvement in the update. In the earlier version, all it did was keep a list of active applications in the upper right hand corner like in OS 9. Now when you select an open application from the menu, it will branch out and show any windows that are currently open from within the application. Sadly, this freeware item has now graduated to shareware. If you miss the application switcher you had in OS 9 then I think the cost is worthwhile.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.09/under-the-hood.shtml>
2. <http://www.macupdate.com>
3. <http://www.versiontracker.com>
4. <http://www.serenescreen.com>

5. <http://www.vercruesse.de>

[QuicKeys X](#)¹ (OS 9.2.2 and X)—QuicKeys is a system enhancement for the Mac. It allows you to create shortcuts for applications and any kind of project you can come up with. I set one shortcut that launches my AOL, signs me in, and opens my new mail just with the touch of a set of action keys. QuicKeys has been around on the Mac for over ten years. If you go to the QuicKeys Web site, you can download a free thirty-day trial of QuicKeys for OS 9 or X. For a more in depth review of QuicKeys by this writer, then check out the [November issue of MacReview](#)². Nuff Said.

[MOX Optimize](#)³ (OS X)—Take TinkerTool, Monolingual, System Optimize X, a RAM checker, a window buffer configurator, and you have MOX Optimize. This has to be the Swiss army knife of utilities for OS X. Infsoft claims that MOX Optimize can increase the efficiency of your Mac by anywhere from 10% to 40%. I have been using it for about a month and have noticed improvement in the over all performance of my Mac. To help you understand what each component of MOX Optimize does, help is completely integrated into every component of the utility. The trial version is more a case of crippleware because some of its functions are disabled and can only be unlocked by registering it. Even with that in mind, there are still more than enough features to work with in order to decide if you want to register it.

[DiskSpy](#)⁴ (OS X)—DiskSpy is a simple utility similar to Norton Disklight for OS 9. It adds a green and red activity light to your menu area. The green light means your Mac is reading your drive, while the red light indicates writing to the drive. Because DiskSpy is CPU hungry and runs continuously in the background, it can have a major effect on the overall speed of your Mac. At first I did not notice it on my Mac. Then I noticed that when Marine Aquarium was running in the background, I began to notice periodic pauses in the motion of the fish. After quitting DiskSpy, the pauses completely disappeared. Now if this little program can have this type of effect on my G4/733 MHz with a Radeon 8500, then I do not want to think of the effect it will have on slower Macs. Although DiskSpy is free and a nice idea, I must advise that this is one utility to stay clear of. End of Line.

[Snard](#)⁵ (OS X)—From the same people who brought you Dock-It (September ATPM) comes Snard. It brings back many of the functionalities that existed in the Apple menu under OS 9 and more. Snard can be used as a system menu, dock menu, or a hot-key activated popup menu—I myself prefer the menu version. Setting Snard up is as simple as opening an application or file. You can use Snard to open applications, folders and files from its menu. Snard can keep track of and give you quick access to recent items used. Snard

is honorware, meaning that if you like it then you can pay \$10 for it. That is quite a leap of faith for an independent software company to make for such a small fee.

[Autohide](#)⁶ (OS X)—If you are like me, you do not like a cluttered monitor. It would be nice if as you went from one application to another the other windows would hide automatically. That is exactly what this little utility does. It reduces the clutter of multiple windows by hiding them as you switch from one application to the next. If you do need to have more than one application visible at a time, just hold down the Shift key as you open the new program and all the previous windows will remain on your screen. Cryptonic Tech offers this item for free, so how can you go wrong by trying it?

[Quartz Extreme Check](#)⁷ (OS X)—Do you know for sure if your Mac is taking advantage of the graphic acceleration offered by the Quartz part of OS 10.2? One click of this little freeware item will tell you.

[Memory Usage Getter](#)⁸ (OS X)—Ever wondered where all your RAM went? Memory Usage Getter can give you an exact breakdown of how your RAM is being used. With this type of information, you can determine which applications are RAM hogs and shut them down, thus freeing up precious RAM space.

[Visage](#)⁹ (updated for OS X 10.2.1)—Like ASM, I covered Visage in the September issue. The reason I am referring to Visage again is due to a new feature that has been added to it. Now you can add your favorite screen saver module to act as your background screen. I tend to rotate among Marine Aquarium, Flux, and Flurry as my background screens. At this point, you have to rotate the screen saver modules manually. Since running these types of programs takes a lot of CPU power to run concurrently with your regular applications, I do not recommend it for slower Macs. Visage is freeware, so try it and have fun with it.

Last Words

Well, that wraps it up for this edition of *What's Under the Hood*. All the software that I discussed has been fully tested on my Mac. Nevertheless, I cannot guarantee how any of these utilities will affect your particular Mac. If you have data that you cannot afford to lose, then back it up before trying any of these utilities. If you have any questions, feel free to [write me](#)¹⁰ and I will try to respond in a reasonable amount

1. <http://www.quickeys.com>
2. <http://www.macreview.com/Productive/MacrosScripting/QuicKeys/QuicKeysXReview.html>
3. <http://users.skynet.be/cefs/alex/vente/mox2/mox2.htm>
4. <http://dreamless.home.attbi.com/diskspy.html>
5. <http://www.gideonsoftworks.com/snard.html>

6. <http://www.CryptonicTech.com/products.html>
7. <http://www.entropy.ch/software/macosex/#quartzextremecheck>
8. <http://homepage.mac.com/simx/>
9. <http://www.stanford.edu/%7Ekeaka/sanity/visage.htm>
10. <mailto:rlewis@atpm.com>

of time. If any of you software developers have something you want me to look at, feel free to contact me at the same e-mail address. Until next month, happy computing.

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1. http://www.haaugnet.org/frame_c.htm

How To

by Lee Bennett, lbennett@atpm.com

Adding A Graphical Favorite To the Internet Explorer Toolbar

It's time for an episode of "Little Tricks That Would Be Considered Stupid If They Weren't So Cool." Why is it cool? Some might say because it can be a pretty useful thing if used right, but probably the best reason I can think of is that it works on Mac OS X, but you can't do it in Windows! It does, however, work in IE 5.1.5 under Mac OS 9.2.1. I have not been able to test prior versions of IE or Mac OS. Feel free to [post a comment](#)¹ if you've determined lower versions that can do this.

You can drag any graphic from a Web page up to your Internet Explorer toolbar (where your back, forward, stop, refresh, etc. buttons are located) and it will stick there. If the graphic is more than about 22 pixels in height, it will scale down automatically. If it's under 22 pixels, it should appear normally.

Now for the real fun. If the graphic is just sitting on the page unlinked, then the one you dragged to the toolbar will simply load that graphic at full size in your browser window when you click it. But if the graphic had a hyperlink, then it works just like a link in your toolbar favorites line, only with the added benefit of having a picture.

In addition, the graphic that sticks in your toolbar is not saved on your computer beyond normal caching. Rather, it is linked to the Web site you pulled it from. This means if the webmaster updates the graphic, the picture in your toolbar will change, too. This is a handy, visual way webmasters can communicate with regular visitors so they know when the site is updated.



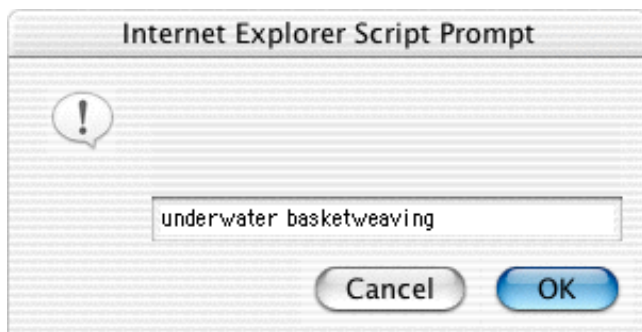
My two graphical toolbar buttons are the 'Joybutton' and a handy JavaScript window popup for Google. Notice that the Joybutton, which is 22 pixels in height, shows clearly. The Google button, which was created 30 pixels tall, downsamples a bit.

For example, this technique is now offered by the popular [Joy of Tech](#)² cartoon series. The webmaster selects and crops in on a tiny section of the current cartoon (such as a character's eyes), and saves it to an image file called joybutton.gif. Before long, the updated graphic shows up in your toolbar.



A button more than 22 pixels in height does not downsample when the toolbar is viewed by icon only. Notice the same 30-pixel-tall Google button is no longer downsampled.

Jon Gales of MacMerc.com wrote a [more detailed description](#)³ of this trick. In his article, you'll find several screenshot links showing how to set up a graphical favorite, as well as how to set up the Google button to be a popup search window. On the second page of his article, he's even provided several buttons for popular sites. In addition, I also found a site offering a [plethora of icons](#)⁴ to many well-known company Web sites.



The popup Google search window produced by the Google button. It's handy to be able to type search keywords in a fast appearing JavaScript window rather than to wait a few seconds for the main Google page to load.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.11/ie-toolbar.shtml#comments>

2. <http://www.geekculture.com/joyoftech/>

3. <http://www.macmerc.com/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=34>

4. <http://www.kartania.com/content.php?Show=ieicons>

An important footnote: be sure to define text in the ALT attribute of your graphic's hyperlink. This becomes the text that appears underneath the graphical button.

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Putting Curb Cuts and Wider Doors on the Internet: Toward Web Site Accessibility

Several years ago I was taking a few courses at the local university. At the same time several university courses were being offered online for the first time. One of the professors happened to ask whether the university's online course offerings and the Internet in general were accessible to students with disabilities. Now, I am somewhat ashamed to admit that despite the fact that I work with students who have disabilities and am myself disabled I had not given the matter a great deal of thought. In spite of my disability I can type about seventy words per minute and my vision is not too bad, so I had not had much first hand experience with some of the specialized hardware and software that's available. My first reaction was that with the wide variety of hardware and software available to make a computer more accessible it would have to be the user's responsibility to assure that the necessary hardware and software were installed and properly configured. After all, how could a content provider know what modifications an individual user with a disability might need?

Now, as any of my friends will gladly attest, I hate not knowing the answer to a question. There were, as I saw it, two options open to me: make up an answer or find the correct answer. Since making up answers, which often turn out to be wrong, can prove to be embarrassing, I decided to crawl into the mad scientist's laboratory and find some semblance of an answer. After several days of searching I knew two things: there were indeed several barriers that might prevent users with disabilities from effectively accessing the Internet, and there were many things that content providers could do to reduce or eliminate these barriers. Follow me into the laboratory we will take a very brief look at steps that can be taken to create accessible content.

Before we begin our quest in earnest, a quick caveat is in order. This article will provide only the briefest description of the hardware and software available to die-hard Mac enthusiasts who happen to be disabled. There may not be as many options as many in the Mac community would like, but there are some options available. If you are interested in that side of this issue [TidBITS](http://www.tidbits.com)¹ has published several articles addressing this topic. Readers interested in a platform-

independent discussion of accessibility will find many [useful references](#)² addressing this topic. Now, let's begin our journey.

Behind the Scenes

Obviously, there is no way to list each of the disabling conditions that might affect someone's ability to effectively use computers. There is no single accessibility solution that covers the needs of every user with a disability. Instead let's look at some general groups of disabling conditions and the types of resources that might make computer use a little less difficult.

Motor Disabilities

Generally speaking, motor disabilities affect the user's ability to execute the movements needed control their environment. Motor-based disabilities such as cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy, generally impact the speed, accuracy, or endurance of muscle movements. The next time you are in the mood for a little frustration, try typing using arms and hands that don't go where you want them to go when you want them to go there. And if that weren't enough, what's to be done about keyboard shortcuts triggered by simultaneous activation of multiple keys? How many times a day have you use Command-C rather than use the mouse to choose Copy from the Edit menu?

There are a number of options available to assist computer users who experience these difficulties. Keyboards with larger keys or alternative layouts often make typing easier. Users with severe motor difficulties may find it necessary to use specialized switches to control computers or other objects in their environment. The goal here is to find some body part that the user has reliable control over and use that movement in conjunction with the right switches and software to control the computer. Long-time Mac enthusiasts will remember the sticky keys section of the Easy Access control panel included in Mac OS 7 through 9. This panel attempted to make it easier for users of adaptive switches to press multiple keys simultaneously. The functionality of sticky keys is now included in the Universal Access preference pane under OS X 10.2. Simply choose the Keyboard portion of the System Preferences panel to access these features.

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

2. http://www.usablenet.com/accessibility_usability/readings.html

Visual Deficits

For most users, computer-based activities are very visual. Even before the advent of multimedia-intensive Web sites, the computer screen was the primary means of conveying information. This can be quite a source of frustration for users with visual deficits, and is also a problem for users coping with dyslexia or a specific learning disability. The challenge in this case is to understand the meaning of the text that can be seen. What could be done to address this problem?

Some users are able to address their vision needs by simply reducing the resolution of their screens. Text and graphics look larger at 640 by 480 than they do at 800 by 600. Other users have found a need for additional magnification or a screen reader. Under Jaguar, screen magnification is controlled by the “Seeing” portion of the Universal Access preference pane. In OS 7 through to 9, the CloseView control panel attempted to address this need.

Magnifying screen output is a good idea, but is not much help in coping with dyslexia, complete blindness, or a specific learning disability. For situations such as these, enter the screen reader. The general idea of this type of software is to have a synthesized voice read screen content aloud. You can get some idea of how this works without any additional software. Launch either TextEdit or SimpleText. Both programs have the ability to read back text. In SimpleText choose Speak All from the Sound menu. In TextEdit go to the Edit menu and choose Speech. A sub menu allows you to start or stop the program reading the document to you. Screen readers behave similarly but also have the ability to describe a graphic if the ALT tag is used appropriately.

In this brief look at accessibility I did not discuss some other features built into the Mac OS such as Speakable Items or Talking Alerts. Apple maintains some general information about [OS accessibility](http://www.apple.com/disability/easyaccess.html)¹ on its current Web site. There is also some information on the site about some of the [literacy and learning software](http://www.apple.com/disability/literacy/resources.html)² available.

Right about now you’re thinking, “I don’t have a disability. How does this affect me?” Well, I was just about to answer that question.

How Does This Affect Me?

From reading the previous section one can conclude that Apple devotees have a long history of addressing accessibility issues. There’s still a great deal to be done, but at least people are thinking about the issues. That’s as good a reason as any to address accessibility, but there are others. Let’s begin with the financial reasons to address Web site accessibility. There is nothing like a little enlightened self-interest for motivation.

The Web site Accessibility Initiative estimates that as much as [20 percent of some populations](#)³ are disabled. Of that number an estimated eight to ten percent might benefit from efforts to make Web sites more accessible. The remainder of the document describes a variety of potential benefits that may accrue from accessible Web design. As this document suggests, designing an accessible Web site often results in increased search engine visibility, reduction in necessary bandwidth, and better usability for those with low-bandwidth connections.

In addition to these benefits, Kynn Bartlett reports that consumers with disabilities control more than [175 billion dollars](#)⁴ of discretionary income. Even if, as the Web site Accessibility Initiative suggests, only eight to ten percent of the disabled population might benefit from access to accessible Web sites this is still a significant amount of money and a sizable customer base.

Bartlett’s observations concerning the amount of discretionary income available to consumers with disabilities is only one of several reasons that he gives for designing accessible Web sites. His list of reasons for accessible Web design includes avoiding lawsuits under Section 508 and the Americans With Disabilities Act. Passed by Congress in 1998, [Section 508](#)⁵ requires Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. William Matthews, writing in the October 2, 2000 issue of [Federal Computer Week](#)⁶, estimated that this ruling would affect 27 million federal government pages on the Internet.

Even if you are not one of the Web designers responsible for 27 million pages of federal government information, Internet accessibility requirements may still apply to your organization. At least as early as 1996, the United States Justice Department issued a policy ruling regarding Internet accessibility for persons with disabilities. This interpretation applies accessibility standards to businesses as well as government agencies. Statements from the U. S. Department of Education have placed similar requirements on educational institutions. A [summary of these rulings](#)⁷ has been written by Cynthia D. Waddell, JD.

It is unfortunate, however, that the same does not necessarily apply to private businesses. [A recent decision by a United States court](#)⁸ ruled that Southwest Airlines was not required to include access for the blind. US District Judge Patricia Seitz said that the Americans with Disabilities Act did not apply to the Web. The plaintiff, a blind man, argued that the Southwest Web site was too difficult to navigate using his screen reading software.

3. <http://www.w3.org/WAI/bcase/benefits#legal>

4. http://www.icdri.org/Kynn/selfish_reasons_for_accessible_w.htm

5. <http://159.142.162.122/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=3>

6. <http://www.fcw.com/fcw/articles/2000/1002/tec-508-10-02-00.asp>

7. <http://www.rit.edu/%7Eeasi/law/Weblaw1.htm>

8. <http://news.com.com/2100-1023-962761.html>

1. <http://www.apple.com/disability/easyaccess.html>

2. <http://www.apple.com/disability/literacy/resources.html>

If you are not in the United States, you should double-check your country's legal requirements regarding accessible Web design. For example, [Australian law requires](#)¹ that any Australian Web site—not just a business—must provide equal access.

Fixing the Problem

Now that we know what the problem is and to whom it applies, let's get to work fixing it. It doesn't take a mad scientist to design an accessible Web site, but it does take some planning. Since I don't spend a lot of time building web sites I decided to ask for a little assistance from my wife at this point.

One of the first decisions to be made is whether to develop one accessible site, or build two separate sites—one of which is accessible, while the other is not. My belief is that for a new site, it is easiest to plan and maintain one Web site. Over the years I have seen several sites where the inaccessible version of the site contained current content but the accessible version contained information that was possibly outdated. *If you choose to maintain two Web sites, place a link to the accessible version of the site near the top of the main page.* With this arrangement, users with disabilities do not have to navigate an entire page of inaccessible content to get to the link that leads to your accessible site.

Now that you are ready to build the actual site, look for a design that can be easily navigated. Site organization should group together elements that are related. Buttons and menus should be easy to find, easy to use, and in consistent locations. This is, in essence, good site design for any site regardless of whether the user is disabled.

Another issue that contributes to the overall usability of a Web site is a lack of sufficient contrast between the background of the page and text that you want the user to read. A dark blue background with medium or light blue text is not likely to be legible to most users even if there is no disability present.

Until this point, we have examined some general site design issues that should apply to any site. Now let's look at some specific types of content and how to make them accessible. Along the way you might find this [developer's checklist](#)² helpful.

Audio files can of course prove difficult for users with hearing impairments. One of the easiest ways to fix this problem is to include a link to a text file that provides a description of the audio file's content. This is also a nice touch for anyone who does not want to wait for a sound file to load.

Video files can prove problematic for users with visual or hearing impairments. The simplest fix is to link to a text file describing the video content. The text file is almost always a faster download than the video and can be read by a screen reader.

Graphics have become an increasingly important element of most Web pages. Graphics that are part of the Web page should be marked with the ALT attribute of the IMG tag. Screen readers will recognize this tag and read the description indicated by the ALT text. Make sure that the text you use for this tag is descriptive. Tags which say 'image1,' 'image2,' etc. do not let visually impaired users know what information the graphic contains.

Tables should not, as a general rule, be used for formatting. Screen readers have difficulty reading this layout properly. Essentially the problem is that the screen reader reads from left to right without regard for the cell's content. If you are going to use tables to present data, provide an alternate link to a summary of that data.

Frames are used by many sites for navigation. Under this arrangement, it is common to see the menu appearing in one frame and the content requested by the user appearing in another frame. Screen readers can have some difficulty with content in frames.

Here is one way to make use of frames that does not violate accessibility standards. The menu appears in one frame on the page, and content appears in another frame. This menu and content are, in reality, pages that are designed to be accessible. Users who can use the "regular" site see things in frames, while users who need accessible content can click on a link that goes directly to the menu page without using any frames. That menu page then links to the content pages. In essence both users get the same pages but users with disabilities do not have to cope with frames. You can use the NOFRAMES tag in HTML to help achieve this.

Scripting and applets can be difficult for many of the assistive technology devices to manage. Even without assistive devices installed, problems with scripting can bring a browser to its knees. Although I have heard that scripting can be made compatible with assistive devices, I have not explored this issue much up to this point. When in doubt, find an alternative to the scripting.

Portable Document Format (PDF) files have become a mainstay of the Internet. When I first examined this issue PDF documents were virtually inaccessible to screen readers. Newer versions of Acrobat Reader are somewhat more screen reader-aware when dealing with documents that were designed to be accessible, but they have less success with older PDF documents. Adobe has also maintained a [Web site that will convert PDF documents](#)³ into HTML or plain text.

1. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html#s2

2. <http://www.usd.edu/%7Esmockler/Webmanagement/access.htm>

3. <http://access.adobe.com>

Testing is of course an important part of any project. One way to [test your site's accessibility](#)¹ is to use Bobby. This site will present you with a report on the extent to which your site meets accessibility standards. Bobby is a little picky, though.

...

Well, that should be enough to whet your appetite. As you design your site, keep in mind that there is a great deal of information out there to assist you. The [Alliance for Technology Accessibility guidelines](#)² are a good place to start. I have also found that the [Web Accessibility Initiative](#)³ has extensive online resources regarding Web accessibility.

1. <http://www.cast.org/bobby>

2. <http://www.ataccess.org/rresources/Webaccess.html>
3. <http://www.w3.org/WAI>

Copyright © 2002 Sylvester Roque and Kimberly Nyles-Roque, nyles@cp-tel.net. Sylvester Roque is a long-time Mac user who currently works as a speech-language therapist in the public school system. His hobbies include finding new uses for old Macs and listening to great blues. Kimberly Nyles-Roque is a less-frequent Mac user currently working on a PhD at Iowa State University.



Troubleshooting 101

Everybody has problems with their computer from time to time. Using my experience as a former help desk operator, the following article shows how I make sure that I experience few problems, and gives you a list of steps to take when problems occur.

The goal in troubleshooting a problem is to isolate the cause and correct it. This can easily be done by following a precise set of steps to determine the cause of the problem. In this article I will cover troubleshooting problems that can occur after installing new software or hardware. I would like to begin by providing some tips on how to minimize problems before they occur.

Problem Minimization

1. Backup your system.

Before making any changes to your system, back it up—regardless of whether you are adding hardware or software. Having a working backup is a must. With a working backup you can always restore your system to its previous state, in case you are unable to correct any problems you have after subsequent changes.

Most of the newer Macs come with a built-in CD burner, so backing up is as simple as dragging your System Folder (Mac OS 9, Disc Burner) to a new CD and ejecting the new disc afterwards. OS X users will find this a little more difficult, but last month's article on [cloning a Mac](#)¹ contains useful instructions on successfully backing up in OS X.

To be completely safe, back up your entire hard drive; another alternative is to back up just the System Folder and your data files. You can always restore programs if you have to erase your hard drive and start over. I can't stress enough how important a backup is.

2. Make one change to your system at a time.

I know this takes longer, but it makes troubleshooting a lot easier.

3. Make sure your system is compatible.

Make sure your system meets the minimum requirements for whatever you are installing. Also make sure the hardware has compatible drivers. Always read the Read Me files.

Resources

There are a number of Web sites that can also be helpful. MacFixIt.com is a great place to check to see if there have been any problems with what you are installing. (Only the

1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.10/cloning.shtml>

most recent information is available subscription-free.) A couple of other places that are helpful reference sources are xlr8yourmac.com and macosxhints.com.

Community-based Web sites are also useful. One example is macfora.com², a place where Macintosh users ask questions and share Mac-related discussions. There are plenty of communities out there, but I am partial to macfora.com as I moderate one of the forums there.

Usenet news groups are a great source of information. If you are not familiar with Usenet news groups, you can find the most relevant news group on [Google Groups](http://www.google.com/groups)³, although your ISP probably provides access to Usenet news groups besides. In news groups, you post a message to the specific news group best equipped to handle your question. comp.sys.mac.databases, for instance, would be the news group for database questions.

Finally, mailing lists can be quite helpful. Subscribe to a mailing list with your e-mail address, and you become part of a larger community holding a group discussion. Generally, when someone sends a message to a mailing list everyone on the list receives the message. You have to be a subscriber to the list to post a message. With most mailing lists you are given the option of subscribing to a daily digest, containing all the messages posted to the list that day. This means only having to wade through one long e-mail instead of lots of short ones. [macosx-support](http://www.macosx-support.com)⁴ is an OS X support mailing list on Yahoo! Groups.

As you can see, there are multiple support options available if you run into trouble. I recommend using more than one service, as different people tend to frequent different venues. Find the ones that suit you best.

I now want to describe the steps necessary to troubleshoot new installations of software or hardware.

Basic Troubleshooting Steps

1. Install new product.

2. Reboot and test. If something goes wrong, go to step 3. If not, end.

3. Reset to base system configuration plus new product only. Test. If problem disappears, go to step 4. If not, go to step 5.

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

3. <http://groups.google.com/groups?hl=en&lr=&ie=UTF-8&group=comp.sys.mac>

4. http://dir.groups.yahoo.com/dir/Computers__Internet/Software/Operating_Systems/Macintosh_OS/OS_X?show_groups=1

4. Add an additional piece of software/hardware and then test. Repeat until testing reveals a problem.

5. Find out if there is a newer version of the conflicting software or if there is a known incompatibility with your configuration. If hardware, make sure it is compatible with your system.

System Folder Troubleshooting

1. Upon restarting, if something stops working check to see what files the new software installed.

All good installers generate a log file; check this for specific information as to what was installed where. If stuck without a log file, [Installer Observer](http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/4588)¹ takes snapshots of your System Folder if run before and after the installation process, and will tell you what has changed. Another piece of useful software is [Conflict Catcher](http://www.conflictcatcher.com)². Most software problems are caused by conflicts with other System Folder items; Conflict Catcher tries to root out potential conflicts, but it also lets to manage your System Folder items such as extensions and control panels.

2. Load only the basic system.

In OS 9, disable anything in Extensions Manager that isn't a part of the basic system. Enable all of the newly installed software's System Folder items. Reboot and see if the new application works. If it does, start enabling disabled System Folder items one at a time, rebooting each time and testing the application until it doesn't work, in which case the last System Folder item you enabled will be the conflicting item.

3. Now that you have determined the problem, find out if there is a newer version or a workaround for your particular situation.

Check [macfixit.com](http://www.macfixit.com) and any other of your support sources to find any known incompatibilities.

Hardware Troubleshooting

1. Install or connect the hardware and load any software that comes with the hardware. Reboot. If your hardware does not work as advertised, go to step 2.

2. Disconnect everything except the basic system (keyboard, mouse, monitor, and computer) then add your new hardware and test. If it still doesn't work, try installing the new hardware plus its software on another computer. If it *still* doesn't work you may have a faulty piece of hardware. If it does work, start adding the rest of your hardware one piece at a time until the new hardware doesn't work any more.

3. Now the hard part begins. There could be all kinds of reasons for a hardware conflict. Be sure to try different configurations. Put the new device first in the hardware chain or last in the chain. Make sure that the device is configured

correctly for your situation. Visit the manufacturer's Web site and other troubleshooting sites to determine if there are any fixes that you can try.

Software Troubleshooting

Software troubleshooting is more involved. At each step below, stop when the problem disappears. Also, any software that loads during startup may be affected by the order in which it loads. Change the load order for the problematic piece of software. This usually can be done through a startup manager such as Conflict Catcher, or by renaming the extension or control panel.

1. Remove the preference file associated with the software that you are having trouble with.

This can easily be accomplished by moving the file out of the System Folder's Preferences folder (in OS 9) or the Library folder's Preferences folder in your home directory (in OS X). Sometimes removing the file from your system completely is the only way to disassociate it with software. Backing up the associated preference file to another computer is a good way to preserve your settings. Reboot and test.

2. Rebuild the desktop file (OS 9 only).

This can be done by restarting your computer and holding down the Command and Option keys during startup. At the end of the boot process you will be asked if you want to rebuild the desktop. Click OK and allow the computer to rebuild the desktop. (Micromat offers a free utility called [TechTool Lite](http://www.techtool.com)³ which will do steps 2 and 3 for you.) Reboot and test.

3. "Zap" the Parameter RAM. To zap the PRAM, restart your computer and hold down the keys Command, Option, P, and R. Make sure you hear the startup chimes twice before letting go. Test.

4. Remove the problematic software along with all files related to it, except documents created using the software. Reboot and reinstall the software.

5. Run disk drive utilities such as Disk First Aid and Norton Disk Doctor (part of Norton Utilities and Norton SystemWorks). Fix any problems. Reboot and test.

If these steps don't fix problems being experienced with the software you will need to start to research your problem. [Macfixit.com](http://www.macfixit.com) is a great place to start, and there are plenty of other places to look. Be sure to check the software publisher's Web site to make sure you have the latest version; there may be a version of the software which fixes the problem that you are encountering.

1. <http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/4588>

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

3. <http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/5995>

Conclusion

In conclusion, remember you are not alone. Someone else has probably had the same problem you have and will be able to help, so don't be afraid to ask. Community sites are great places to ask for help. Also remember that all experts at one time had the same level of experience you have.

Be specific when you are asking questions. Questions such as "my computer doesn't work, what's wrong with it?" are not at all helpful in diagnosing a problem, but saying "I get a type

2 error when launching Microsoft Word" is much more specific. Always write down error messages exactly as they appear, as this helps to a great extent whoever is trying to provide support. Remember, once you isolate problems you are on the road to solving them.

If you have any questions or comments about this article, please feel free to [contact me](#)¹.

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1. <mailto:pmconaway@yahoo.com>

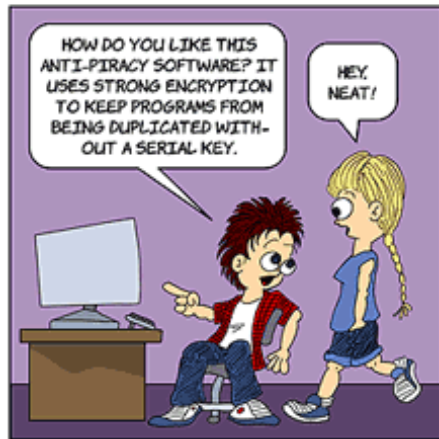
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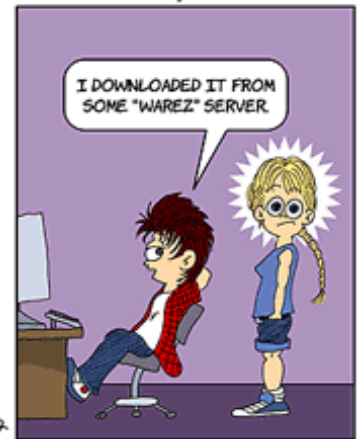
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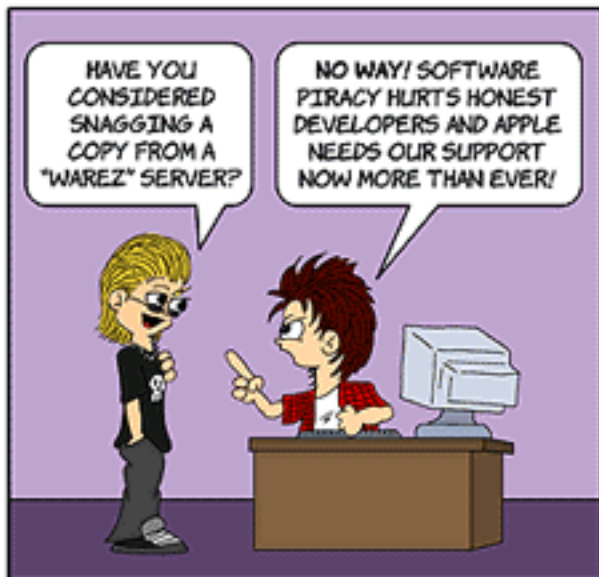
by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

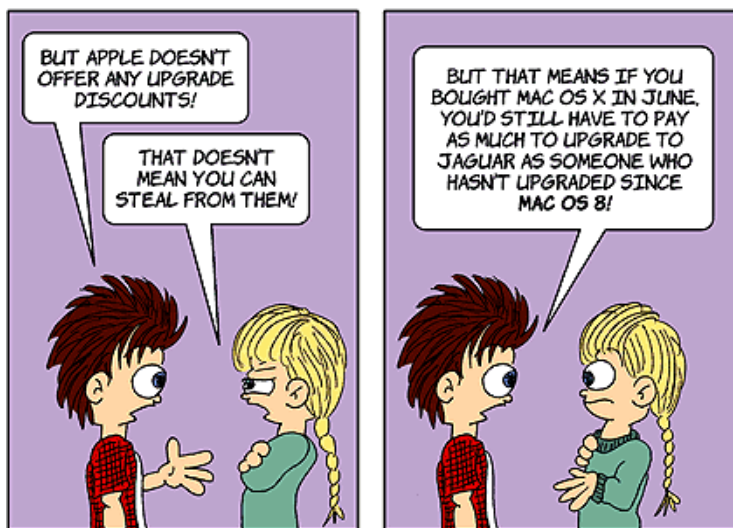
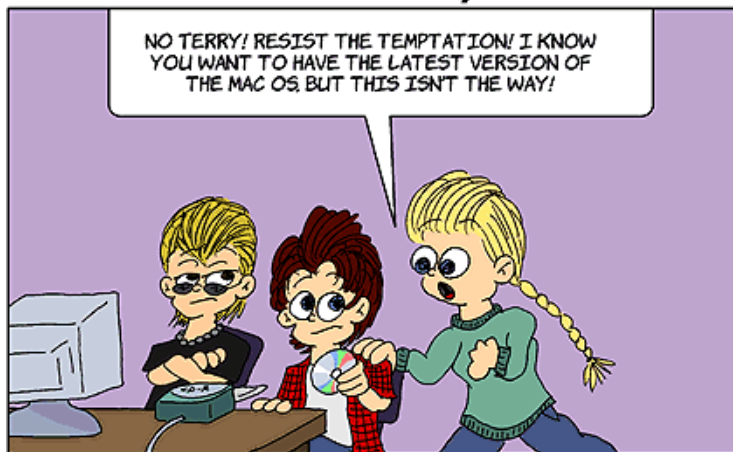
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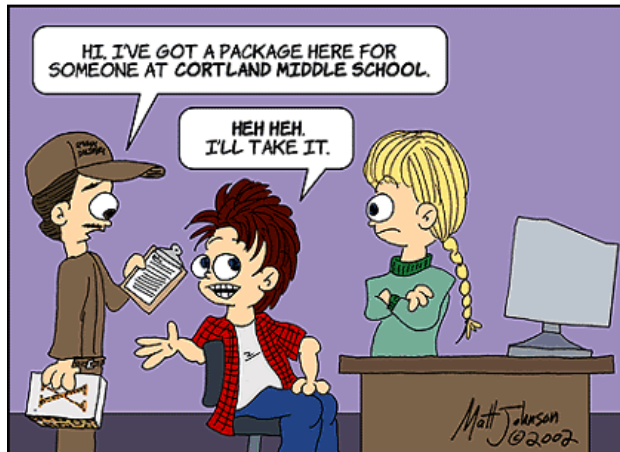
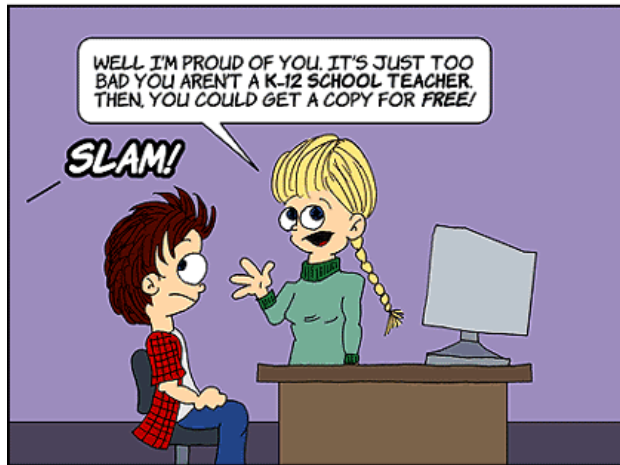
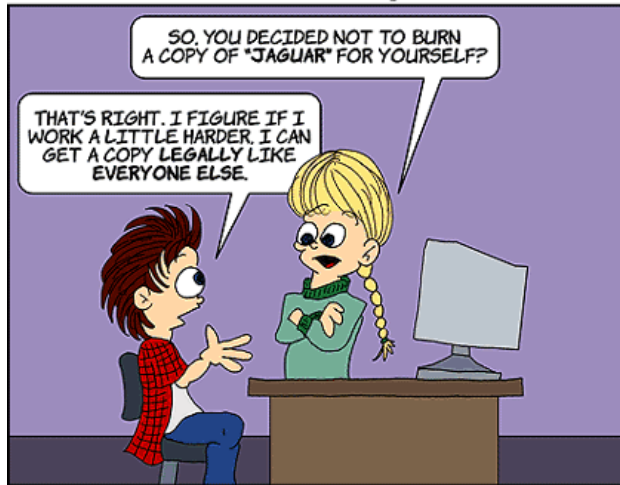


by Matt Johnson









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Cartoon: Hambone

by Mike Flanagan, sensible@sensible.screaming.net



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Extras: Desktop Pictures

Bimini¹

This month's desktop pictures were taken by AT[®]M reader Al Camentz in Bimini, the Bahamas. He used an Olympus D-400 Zoom 1.3 megapixel camera and shot the pictures from aboard a 55-foot liveboard dive boat, the [MV Ocean Explorer](#)².

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the [desktop pictures archives](#)³.

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 AT[®]M 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](#)⁴ in issue 5.10 and available for [download](#)⁵.



1. <http://www.atpm.com/8.11/bimini/>

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

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

4. <http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml>

5. <http://www.peircsw.com/DeskPicture.html>

Review: FireWire DriveDock

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

Developer: [WiebeTech](#)¹

Price: \$139.95 (DriveDock with AC adapter); \$109.95 (DriveDock without AC adapter); \$69.95 (DriveDock ATA-6 upgrade)

Requirements: Mac OS 9.1 or (or X), FireWire port, 3.5" IDE hard drive or IDE CD/DVD drive



In the past, if you wanted to add an external drive to your Macintosh, you went out and purchased a SCSI drive. In recent years, though, things have changed. Now, FireWire and USB are the preferred ways of connecting external drives.

One of the advantages of using a FireWire interface is that you can purchase adapters that convert standard IDE drives (IDE is the interface used in many internal hard drives) for use with the FireWire interface. Most of these converters enclose your IDE drive in a case, making it look like any other external hard drive. WiebeTech's DriveDock takes another approach; it leaves the drive uncovered and simply plugs into the IDE and power ports on your drive.



WiebeTech's FireWire DriveDock

Making the Connection

You can have DriveDock connected and running in under a minute. Line up the IDE port on the DriveDock with the IDE port on the drive, connect the power cord to the drive, connect the power to the DriveDock, and connect DriveDock to your computer with a FireWire cable (not included). Once you flip the power switch on the DriveDock, your newly-connected hard drive should appear on your desktop (or under OS X, not, depending on your Finder settings).

Connection will take a few minutes longer if you decide to attach the included bottom plate to the bottom of your hard drive. The bottom plate both protects the underside of your drive and gives you room to attach the four small rubber feet, which do a decent job of holding the drive stationary.

These bottom plates are only compatible with 3.5" inch drives. If you are using a CD or DVD drive with the drive dock, you're on your own when it comes to providing some sort of base. The internal CD drives I've looked at all have solid enclosures, so I'm not so worried about protection. However, I would recommend adding your own rubber feet (or something along those lines) to keep the drive from sliding off your work surface.

Given how simple it is to connect up DriveDock, you might be surprised to learn it took me about three days to get my hard drive working. So, how did I accomplish this "feat?" I made the mistake of pulling a hard drive out of my G3, connecting it to the DriveDock, plugging DriveDock into my PowerBook and just expecting it to work.

It turns out that any connected drive must be set as a master device (as opposed to a slave configuration). There was no mention of this in the 3" x 5" instruction card, the FAQ, or my unanswered e-mails to tech support (although I did e-mail tech support after I solved the mystery to let them know I had the DriveDock working).

Appearance

When I use DriveDock at work, I've had several people come into my cubicle and say, "What's that blue thing connected to your hard drive?"

"That blue thing" is DriveDock. As well as being blue, DriveDock is also very small. It's just slightly taller than a 3.5" hard drive (the extra height lines up with the bottom of the drive plate) and is under 2" long. The case is made of metal and feels very sturdy. The back edges are rounded, so they won't catch on clothing or cut you when you need to carry it.

There are two lights on the top of DriveDock. One light indicates that the power is on and the other indicates drive activity. The back of DriveDock has a FireWire port, a power

1. <http://www.wiebetech.com/products.html#firewired>

port, and a power switch. There is also a four-pin power connector attached to the side of DriveDock that powers the hard drive.

Since DriveDock doesn't provide power to the drives from the FireWire port, an external power supply is necessary. This adds a lot of bulk to DriveDock: it's about as tall as the DriveDock itself, and almost 3 times as long.

For some reason, WiebeTech puts DriveDock's label on the bottom of the device. While this is very minor, it did contribute to my co-workers not knowing what it was.

Performance

Although several companies make IDE to FireWire converters, there are few that make the circuitry that does the conversion. DriveDock uses the Oxford 911 FireWire bridge, which in testing has shown to be the fastest of all available bridges. Although I don't have any benchmarking software, *Accelerate Your Mac!* [tested](#)¹ several of the available bridges. In these tests, the Oxford 911 FireWire bridge came out on top almost every time. Although Mike Breeden used the OWC Elite FireWire case as opposed to DriveDock, the performance of the Oxford 911 FireWire bridge tends not to vary much from product to product.

Compatibility

I threw various tasks at DriveDock, both at home and at work, and I never ran into any problems. My first task was installing OS X 10.1.5 from a graphite G4. Unlike my nightmarish attempts at installing on an external SCSI drive, this went without a hitch.

I followed up the installation of X by copying OS 9.2 from the G4 to DriveDock. There were no problems and I can now boot my PowerBook from DriveDock.

As you would expect, I had no problems working with files on drives connected via DriveDock, since the Mac OS sees it as a normal hard drive.

Since I was satisfied with how it worked with the hard drive, I decided to try connecting a second CD-ROM drive to my PowerBook via DriveDock. After switching the CD-ROM drive from slave to master, everything seemed to work as advertised. I was able to mount disks, play audio CDs in iTunes, and record a disc image in Toast.

After I received my demo unit, WiebeTech updated the DriveDock to take advantage of drives up to 200 GB in size. According to the specifications on the WiebeTech Web site, the model I tested supports drives up to 160 GB. Since I don't own any drives this large, I wasn't able to test these limits. If you have one of the older DriveDocks, you can update to the newer model for \$69.95.

Conclusions

The FireWire DriveDock certainly works as advertised. Whether or not you should buy it, though, depends on your needs. If you just want to convert a single IDE hard drive to a FireWire drive, you might be better off buying a FireWire case. I briefly looked around [Other World Computing's](#)² Web site and they had two full enclosures for sale that were less expensive than DriveDock.

Also, if you want a portable IDE to FireWire solution, there are several disadvantages to DriveDock. The power supply is fairly bulky, you need to keep track of three pieces, and DriveDock offers very little protection for your bare hard drive.

People who will find DriveDock most useful are those who have multiple IDE hard drives they need to connect via FireWire. For instance, there are some who have a different hard drive for each of their projects. Instead of buying multiple FireWire cases or disassembling their only FireWire case whenever they need to switch projects, they need only swap the drive attached to DriveDock.

This is just one example, however. If you have more than one IDE drive you want to connect via FireWire (one at a time, of course) then DriveDock could be exactly what you are looking for.

1. http://www.xlr8yourmac.com/firewire/OWC_oxford911/OWC_oxford_911_casekit.html

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



Review: Lapvantage Deluxe Dome

by Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com

Developer: [The Plasticsmith, Inc.](http://www.lapvantage.com)¹

Price: \$79.95 (deluxe model); \$49.95 (base model)

Requirements: a notebook computer, preferably a PowerBook or iBook



More and more computer users are ditching their desktops and going with full-time portables. Apple's continued success in moving PowerBooks and iBooks is a testament to this. It appears as though half the folks featured in the Switch ad campaign made a PowerBook or iBook their first Macintosh.

One side effect of using a notebook computer as your main computing system is that one tends to cramp up: the keyboard is oftentimes, if not smaller, then at the very least more compact, than a full-size keyboard, and you spend a lot of time looking down, rather than at eye level, at the screen. The solution for most has, to this point, been to attach a full-size monitor and keyboard, with mouse, to a PowerBook when working at a desk.

As screen sizes have increased, however, many portable users are finding that their notebooks' screens are big enough to work on, and they really only need a full-size keyboard and mouse. The only problem the user is left with is elevating the PowerBook's screen to a more ergonomic level. This has resulted in many inventive solutions, from the stacked textbook/telephone book approach, to steel-welded imports from Japan.



More and more portable computer stands are appearing on the market, and one such stand caters directly to the Macintosh crowd: the Lapvantage Dome. The base is constructed from sturdy, recycled ABS plastic, with an anodized aluminum support arm, and—in the case of the Deluxe model—a clear acrylic platform upon which to rest

your PowerBook. Lapvantage has two models: the Dome and the Deluxe Dome. The Deluxe differs from the base model in the following areas:

- The Deluxe's platform is clear acrylic instead of the same ABS plastic as the base.
- The Deluxe features a height-adjustable arm, able to move between 4.75 to 6.5 inches in height. The base model Dome is fixed at a height of 5.5 inches.
- The Deluxe rotates a full 360 degrees. The base Dome has no rotation.
- The Deluxe will set you back \$79.95; the base \$49.95.



1. <http://www.lapvantage.com/dome>

At work, I have the luxury of several company-provided Macs. I have three G4s of various speeds, each set up for a specific function, all tied to a NEC 15" LCD and Apple Pro keyboard and mouse via the USB version of the Dr. Bott [MoniSwitch 4](http://atpm.com/5.03/moniswitch.shtml)¹. My main system, however, is a PowerBook G4/500, to which I have hooked up a Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro and a Kensington Mouse-in-a-Box Optical. My Palm m505 and iPod both plug into my PowerBook. I had been using an old shelf part from an HP docking station that was no longer in use to elevate the PowerBook to a more ergonomic level. It was big and ugly, and took up a lot of desk space, but the shelf did the job.

Nevertheless, a more elegant and desk space-saving solution was desired, and then along came the Lapvantage Dome. I have been using the Deluxe Dome for more than a month, and I can say that I am quite pleased with it. As you can see from the photos in this article, the base looks like the base of the flat-panel iMac, and several coworkers have remarked as such. On the support platform, there are two 3M gumdrop-style feet that keep the rear of the PowerBook slightly raised to allow for better ventilation to keep your 'Book cool.

something that the HP docking shelf was incapable of, and a feature that has come in handy on occasion when working with other members of my department.



The Lapvantage Dome feels solid, and well built. Granted, I wouldn't go dropping it out of high-floor windows, but it should more than survive the day-to-day rigors it might be subjected to. My only suggestion to maker The Plasticsmith would be to incorporate some sort of storage into the Dome's base, like in one of Lapvantage's other products, the immobile Storage line.



The Lapvantage Dome takes up a lot less space than the old HP docking shelf, and looks a heck of a lot better on my desk to boot. It offers a cooling option I did not have before, and it works: I haven't heard the PowerBook's fan come on since I ditched the HP docking shelf for the Lapvantage Dome. The Deluxe Dome also offers 360-degree rotation flexibility,



If you use your PowerBook or iBook as your desktop system, with a full-size keyboard and mouse, I heartily recommend obtaining a product like the Lapvantage Dome

1. <http://atpm.com/5.03/moniswitch.shtml>

to elevate it to a comfortable eye level, and to free up valuable desk space. The PlasticSmith has manufactured a quality product that looks good as it does its job.

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Review: Watch & Smile 2.0.7

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

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

Price: \$80 plus s/h directly from binuscan

Requirements: 18 MB of application RAM.

Recommended: 30 MB of application RAM.

Trial: Feature-limited (cannot save files)



Overview

Watch & Smile is used to create slide shows of your images. You can add text and sound, extensively edit and modify imported images, and control the timing of each image within the slide show. Completed slide shows can be viewed with the freely distributable Watch & Smile Player, or they can be converted into QuickTime movie format.

Installation

The downloaded installation file is 12 MB. The standard VISE installer requires you to quit all applications before installation. You can choose the location for the installation folder (18 MB). No restart is required after installation.

Launching Watch & Smile

After you launch Watch & Smile and click on its annoying splash screen, it takes over your computer. The menu bar is inaccessible, Control Strip gets turned off, and volume is reduced to level 3 (out of 7). Watch & Smile's "friendly TV remote control interface" appears, and then you guess at the best way to proceed. You might decide to read the manual, except the Watch & Smile demo doesn't have one.



Watch & Smile Work Space at Startup

You might decide to launch a help file, but clicking the Help button results in a failed attempt to load a help file into Netscape Navigator. Hmm, not a great start. You then try to proceed logically. Your main goal is to create a slide show of images, so clicking on the Photo button seems appropriate. A small window with three buttons appears. The TWAIN button allows you to retrieve an image directly from a TWAIN-complaint scanner or digital camera. The image is saved as a TIFF file.



Photo Importing Choices

The FILE button allows you to import a single image file. The following formats are supported: TIFF, JPEG, BMP, PICT, PCD, PSD, PCX, PNG, TGA, DCX, and GIF. The PHOTO CD button allows you to import a picture directly from a Photo CD. Note that you cannot simultaneously import multiple image files.



Window for Importing an Image

1. <http://www.binuscan.com/us/ws/index.html>



Photo CD Preview Window

Using Watch & Smile to Create “Scenes”

The TEXT button pops up a text creation and editing window. You can select size, style, alignment, and color for the text block. The text block becomes a layer in your image. It can be moved, resized, and reordered in relationship to other layers. Watch & Smile does not have a captioning feature, so using text in your scene is the only way to display a title for each image.



Text Editing Window

You can perform many image editing functions with Watch & Smile. Adjustments accessible from the second section of the “remote control” tool panel on the left include brightness, contrast, saturation, and sharpness. You use the plus and minus “rocker” buttons next to each of the four icons to increase or decrease the function. You also can adjust RGB color channel intensity by clicking on the red, green, or blue button and then using the dual color button (that replaces the brightness button). All these adjustments are crude because

only 20 settings are possible per control. The AUTO button applies Watch & Smile’s photo adjustment algorithms to the selected image. The Revert button (two arrows pointing to a vertical bar) removes ALL image adjustments. There is no way to undo adjustments singly.



Window Used With Advanced Image Retouching Tools

The third section of the “remote control” contains the following tools: zoom, rotate, layers, opacity, contour shading (edge dissolve), flip (horizontal or vertical), and cutting out. The zoom button has an adjacent light. It changes from green to orange to red if you enlarge a picture so much that interpolation is necessary. You can zoom in or out by pressing the + or - buttons or by using the slider to the right of the zoom button. The rotate button works like a dial. The selected image rotates in parallel with the dial’s rotation. There are no restraint keys for 45 or 90 degree increments, but clicking on the appropriate quadrant of the rotate button generates a 0, 90, 180, or 270 degree rotation. The layers button lets you change the order of items within a scene. A scene consists of all the elements within a single slide or frame. Scenes can contain multiple images, text blocks, and QuickTime movies. Each of these items gets a layer number. You change the stacking order by selecting an item and then pressing the + or - buttons next to the layer button. The

opacity slider (left bar on the vertical slider) changes the opacity of the selected image. The contour shading slider (right bar on the vertical slider) increases or decreases the width and intensity of the edge dissolve region. The flip horizontal and flip vertical buttons work as expected. The cutting out button pops up a small window with three shapes: rectangle, oval, and multigon. You select one of those shapes and then choose which part of the image you will cut out. (The residual image outside the cut area is discarded. If you need the intact image, make a copy and use the cutting out tool on the duplicate.) The rectangle and oval selection marquees can be resized and moved before the final cutting. The multigon tool lets you select irregularly shaped areas by clicking to create vertices. Double-clicking closes the multigon.

The bottom section of the “remote control” contains 8 buttons. The @ button launches your Web browser and directs it to the binuscan Web site. (In the PC version, this button launches the IE channel, which allows you to view Web pages within the Watch & Smile window and to select images of Web pages for use in your slide show.) The paintbrush button brings up six advanced image editing tools: warp, perspective, paint, clone, changing colors, and plug-ins. The warp (envelope) tool lets you distort your picture by moving edges inward, outward, or to a new position. The perspective tool lets you deform an image from an edge or a corner. It does not provide a true visual perspective. The paint, clone, and changing colors tools all use a new tool window to the right of the image.



Using the Painting Tool

The paint tool (it looks like a bazooka but is supposed to be an air brush) modifies images with a round paint brush. You first select a paint color by dragging your image within the small target window. Center the target over the color of choice. (What, you want to paint with a color that isn't in your image? Find the color that's closest to what you need and try

to modify it using RGB color intensity adjustments). You use sliders to adjust the brightness, saturation, contrast, sharpness, and RGB color intensities of the paint. The sliders to the left and right of the white circle control the diameter of the paint brush and the opacity of the paint. After all adjustments are made, you can begin painting the selected image. If you make a mistake, the undo button on the left removes ALL your painting changes (not just your most recent change).

The change colors tool (the blue to orange button) is for modifying colors within a selected range (painting only on a portion of colors). You select the color to be changed in the upper window. You use the color change slider in the middle of the tool window to select a new color. You can make fine adjustments by clicking in the color window above the slider. When you have selected the new color, you lock it in by clicking the OK button. The horizontal sliders below the color change slider control the hue and darkness ranges of the selection (for overpainting). Moving the sliders further to the right means that a greater variety of colors and darknesses will be overpainted. The vertical sliders at the bottom control the diameter and opacity of the round paint brush. These adjustments are indicated by the white circle. Once all items are set, you can paint on the image. Paint will only be applied to the parts of the image that match the original target color (within the zone specified by the hue and darkness sliders). In my example, most of the reds on the car body were overpainted with bright green. Note that some of the darker reds did not accept the green paint. This tool works best when an image has large areas of uniform color.



Using the Color Change Tool

The clone tool lets you copy a circular region of an image and apply a modified clone to another part of the image. You can modify the cloned image's brightness, contrast, saturation, sharpness, and color channel intensities.

Creating a Multimedia Slide Show

You set up your slide show by using the film strip frame at the top. You can rearrange scenes by dragging them to other frames. A slide show can contain 255 frames. You use the slender arrow buttons on the upper left and right to select which 9 scenes are visible for editing. You can insert a blank frame in from of a scene by clicking on the Insert button in the upper left corner of the selected scene. You can attach sound or music to a scene by clicking the Sound (notes) button.



Editing Your Slide Show

A menu appears with three choices: None, New, and Import. New lets you record a sound from a microphone or from an audio CD. Import lets you import an AIFF file for the scene. The scene display time is adjusted by clicking the arrows to the left and right of the time (displayed in seconds). The default setting is 5 seconds. You cannot type a display time value. You cannot select multiple scenes and set a global display time. Transition effects are selected by clicking on the small number at the bottom of the scene. Each number represents a different transition effect. The 17 choices include various wipes and dissolves, slow fade in, and no transition effect.



Sound Recording Window

You can have background audio for the entire slide show (in addition to audio attached to scenes). You do this by clicking on the Music button on the left side of the “film strip” area. As with scene audio, you can record audio from a microphone or an audio CD (one track only), or you can import an AIFF file. Unfortunately, you cannot link multiple files for background audio.

The tool palette at the bottom of the window lets you play your slide show. You can adjust audio volume, move to a numbered frame, pause or play the show, and toggle between window and full screen views.



Slide Show and Export Controls

Other buttons include Help (which doesn't work), Quit, and Export. Clicking Export allows you to save or print a scene or save an entire slide show. Scenes are saved as JPEG files or as JPEG files within a Web page. A slider adjusts JPEG quality (0 to 100%). Slide shows can be exported as a QuickTime movie or as a Watch & Smile movie file. Slide shows in native format can be viewed with the free Watch & Smile Player application. However, this application has serious limitations. It took 54 seconds to load a 15 slide 1.3 MB demo file. The Player has a control panel that can be moved but cannot be hidden! It always covers part of the picture, even when you are viewing in a small window instead of full screen.



Export Window



Player with Annoying Control Panel

Bugs, and Problems

Clicking the Help button resulted in a failed attempt to launch the help HTML page in Netscape Navigator. I could launch the Help file manually by navigating through the following folder hierarchy: Watch & Smile 2 Demo:Help:local:Current:main.html.

The left and right arrow buttons in the Photo CD window sometimes jump ahead many photos after a single mouse click. A similar problem occurred when trying to record audio CDs. The track advance buttons jumped ahead. On a CD with 12 tracks, I could only select tracks 1, 4, or 8.

The cutting tool mini-palette cannot be moved or hidden while editing, and it blocks part of your image. You need to move or resize your image if you need to see the blocked area.

According to binuscan's Web site, Watch & Smile lets you place navigation buttons within individual scenes, but I could find no way to do this. The Text Window has a "Button" button, but it did not do anything. The Text Window is also supposed to allow creation of text that will show in every frame of the "film," but that feature did not work.

Omissions

The list of missing features is quite long. The most important missing feature is the inability to import all images in a folder. A Watch & Smile slide show can contain 255 frames, and you must import each frame individually, which is a tremendous time waster. Similarly, the fact that Watch & Smile takes over your computer screen prevents features like drag and drop and cut and paste between applications from working. The lack of serial undos is another big omission. If you make a

mistake when editing an image, all your previous changes are lost, unless you revert to a previously saved slide show. The inability to change default parameters or to select multiple scenes simultaneously means that you must go through the tiresome process of adjusting viewing times and transition effects for every scene.

Watch & Smile's paint tool doesn't let you choose any color, you must use one derived from the image you are editing. You should have access to the entire spectrum of colors. Similarly, text colors are constrained to those in Watch & Smile's 256-color palette.

Watch & Smile lets you import only AIFF audio files. It cannot import MP3 audio files (a serious limitation), although its Web site refers to MP3 audio. You are limited to one background audio file per slide show, and Watch & Smile cannot merge audio files.

Documentation

No documentation is included. The help file consists of an HTML page displaying the control regions of Watch & Smile. You click on an item to display information about its function. There is no index or table of contents, and there is no overview on how to use Watch & Smile. Also, this file contains helpful instructions such as "holding the ALT key on Mac."

Technical Support

Technical support is only offered through a Web page form. The binuscan Web site has no troubleshooting information, no frequently asked questions, no hints or tips, no examples or templates, etc.

Summary

Watch & Smile is the most frustrating graphics application I have encountered. Non-standard interfaces can work well; KPT Bryce exemplifies that. Using a TV-style remote control for viewing a presentation makes sense, but using that same interface to create a multimedia slide show is non-intuitive and inefficient. The negative effects of the interface are worsened by programming errors, lack of keyboard shortcuts, inability to switch between applications, poor help files, and lack of documentation. Obviously, Watch & Smile is a mediocre port of a mediocre Windows application. I felt as if I were being teased: Watch & Smile has features that I long for, but its inefficiencies and bugs make it almost painful to use. Binuscan devotes too few resources to this Macintosh port: it hasn't been upgraded since March 2, 2000.

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FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

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- All blue-underlined links are clickable. Links to external Web sites are reproduced in footnotes at the bottoms of pages, in case you are reading from a printed copy.
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What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

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



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