

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

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Welcome

Welcome to the February issue of ATPM. Issue 7.02 contains the following articles, reviews, and features. Before we introduce them, though, here's a short look at major Mac news items from January:

Mac News

Apple's [recent analyst meeting](#) shed some light on the company's financial situation and future strategy, including the intention to offer SuperDrives on iMacs in 2002. [Analyst responses](#) were mixed.

Mac OS X will be released on March 24, and Apple will likely honor purchases of the OS X Public Beta using [restricted coupons](#).

Poll

Last month's reader [poll](#) asked for your favorite MP3 player. 47% preferred SounJam MP, and 24% preferred Audion. QuickTime Player collected 8%, and the remainder of the votes were divided among MacAST, SoundApp, and other players.

Our internal staff poll showed a similar division: one third SoundJam, one third Audion, and one third other players. Note that the poll was started before [iTunes](#) was introduced, so it does not include that choice.

This month we want to know where you bought your current Mac. Go cast your [vote](#)!

Columns

[Apple Cider: A Matter of Trust](#)

Tom Iovino explains the reasons why people may be afraid to shop online and why their fears may be exaggerated.

“The lessons I learned that day in Maryland are the ones that cause quite a few people to shy away from shopping on the Internet. How do you know that someone won’t overcharge you when you make a purchase on the Internet? And just how secure is your information? Can someone charge on your credit card?”

Apples, Kids, & Attitude: Martians in the Manholes

In his final installment of *AKA*, Robert Paul Leitaio discerns fact from fiction in life, on TV, and in the PC industry.

“Since the introduction of the Apple II, rumors and prognostications of Apple’s imminent demise have filled the papers, the airwaves and now the Internet. Whether the figurative “Martians in the manholes” were IBM, Microsoft, concerns about MHz speeds, software availability, market share, or even product price, Apple Computer has survived and in most years the company has thrived. Bad fiction can never mirror reality.”

Beyond the Barline: A Tale of Two Trade Shows

David Ozab shares his opinions on iTunes, Yamaha’s mLAN, Apple’s music strategy, and the latest NAMM show.

“The promise to start a desktop music revolution comes sixteen years too late. Instead, Apple should do everything in its power to support the continued third-party development of hardware and software that centers around their computers in order to keep the support from musicians that they still enjoy. In part, this means continued support of PCI-based solutions through the G4 desktop. The addition of a fourth PCI slot was an important step, but it also needs the continued advocacy of FireWire and the encouragement of third party developers, Yamaha in particular, to transform products from vaporware to hardware.”

About This Particular Web Site

This month, Paul Fatula uncovered the following Web sites: Isys Information Architects Inc. (user interface praise and blunders), MobiusCo (abstract desktop pictures), Patrick Combs’ Good Thinking Site (amazing story about a \$95,093.35 junk mail check), Privacy.Org (updates on Internet privacy), Spammimic (encodes messages as spam ; -)).

[How To: iMovie Transition Tricks](#)

Jamie McCornack explains two transition tricks for iMovie and iMovie 2, in particular "Slow Motion" and "Beam Things Up."

"Let's say, for example, you want your cat to materialize from thin air. I don't know why, maybe you're doing a documentary on quantum physics, but let's say that's what you want to do. Aim your camcorder at a comfy chair and turn it to Record. Now take your unsuspecting kitty, and being sure to keep yourself out of the picture, toss it onto the chair."

[How To: Playing Compressed Sound on a Home Stereo](#)

Evan Trent explains the use of audio file formats for the use on CDs.

"In my opinion it makes more sense to just burn out the MP3s directly to an audio CD using Toast 4.x. This will result in a CD that is playable on a home stereo, and the sound quality will be no worse than the MP3 source file, although you will not be able to fit as many songs on the CD as if you converted and compressed the AIFF files beforehand."

[Reviews](#)

[Macintosh Chess Downloads \(Part I\)](#)

Richard A. Fowell reviews and compares two shareware/freeware chess programs, Sigma Chess 5.12 and Vanessa Chess.

"These days, chess strength should seldom be your primary decision factor in selecting a chess program. With the power of modern Macs, even Vanessa Chess is a much stronger player than most humans when set to full strength. For an opponent that is challenging, rather than unbeatable, one must usually set the computer to an "easy" level, or limit the number of moves the program looks ahead to one or two moves ("fixed depth 1" or "fixed depth 2" in computer chess argot). Price and convenience of acquisition are important factors, and commercial programs can't touch the price of freeware/shareware programs (Vanessa Chess is \$10 shareware, the other four are freeware) or the convenience of downloading."

Driver

Matthew Glidden reviews Driver, the newest car racing game from MacSoft.

“You assume the role of an ex-race driver turned policeman who goes deep undercover to infiltrate organized crime syndicates across the country. You turn in your gun and badge for the keys to a 70s muscle car and the chance to build a reputation for fast wheels and cool nerves among the law-breaking elite. The game features a wide variety of missions, most of which are courier- or chase-oriented, following location or time objectives in a race around realistically-modeled US cities while avoiding police pursuit.”

Final Jam Pro

In this mini-review, Christopher Turner introduces us to his favorite SoundJam MP Skin, whose interface is reminiscent of the Final Cut Pro look.

“The interface is simple and uncluttered. The uppermost left button closes not only the interface, but the application, which is standard across all SoundJam skins. Just beneath the title bar the skin shows the encoding rate and KHz rating for the file being played, and whether it is in stereo or mono. A timer plays in the far right just beneath the WindowShade button.”

iTunes 1.0

Daniel Chvatik looks at Apple’s newest “killer app,” a trendy MP3 player that wants to excel through ease of use and close system integration.

“While I think iTunes is a great program, some things about it bother me. For one, it’s slow, especially once you add a lot of songs. Just try clicking on your playlists back and forth. It takes over a second to load a short list. The redraw is so slow that you can actually see it. This is not a big problem if you just listen to music, but if you want to actively manage your playlists, it can be quite annoying.”

Jeopardy!

Gregory Tetrault introduces the computer version of the popular TV show. Now you can prove how much better your are than those people on TV.

“In spite of the minor problems listed above, I enjoy playing Jeopardy! I played so often while writing this review that I have encountered some questions three times. The game is still challenging for me when set to highest difficulty with adaptive AI (artificial intelligence).”

[Links LS 2000](#)

Eric Blair evaluates the newest version of the popular golf program.

“I’ll be honest—I don’t like playing golf. I’ve never seen the point of hitting a small white ball around a grassy area, finding said ball, and repeating the process till the ball ends up in the hole. Personally, if I’m trying to sink a ball into a hole, I’ll go out and play pool. That being said, I’ve always enjoyed computer golf games.”

[Que! Fire CD-RW Drive](#)

David Ozab reviews the FireWire CD-RW drive by QPS.

“First, I tested the drive as an audio burner. Using the inexpensive generic CD-R included, I burned a data file at 8x with no problems. Then, using another cheap disc (which I would never recommend), I burned an audio file at 8x. The drive and the interface had no problems with the extra demands of audio either.”

[Iomega ZipCD](#)

David Ross shares his experiences with the new Iomega ZipCD, a 4x4x6 USB CD-RW drive.

“Within minutes, I was burning my first CD with nothing more than a cursory glance at the manual. I’d heard horror stories about the time it takes to burn a CD so I started off with a 50 MB text folder to get the feel of things. Having dragged and dropped, I chose Simulation Mode from the Recorder menu—a handy little function which, as you would expect from the title, simulates a recording in real time. If all goes well, there should be no Toaster coasters when it comes to the real thing.”

Extras

[Desktop Pictures: Florida Panhandle Lighthouses & Mobius](#)

MobiusCo and ATPM Staff member Lee Bennett present their fantastic desktop pictures this month. Lee's pictures are from Florida Lighthouses, while Mobius' introduces us to the world of digital art.

[Trivia Challenge: Fun With Numbers](#)

The Answers!—Ed Goss reveals the answers to last month's *Trivia Challenge*.



E-Mail

Backyard Football

I liked your [review of Backyard Football](#) and think it's a real good game. I originally bought it for my little brother, but I ended up liking the game myself. But I was just wondering how you were able to copy pictures from the computer game onto your computer?

—*B.J.*

It's a simple matter to use Command-Shift-3 to capture a screenshot. If you want to get fancy, Command-Shift-4 will give you a cursor, and you can capture a portion of the screen. There are also utilities available, such as [Snapz Pro](#) and [Screen Catcher](#), which will give you more flexibility with a screen capture. I'm glad you enjoyed the game. Have fun. —*Mike Shields*

Ethernetworking Without a Hub or Switch

I am trying to network my new iMac DV with my old 7100, which is running system 7.5.3. I have all the cables in place, but I am not going through a switch. Is it possible to do this, and if so how? Any help would be much appreciated.

—*Anonymous*

If you are not going through a hub or a switch you must use what is known as a "crossover" Ethernet cable.

When connecting two Macintosh computers together directly via Ethernet, you use a different cable than when plugging a series of machines into a hub or switch. The reason is that the Ethernet jack on a Macintosh (or any other personal computer) is different from the port on a Hub or Switch. The difference lies in a pair of pins, which are reversed on the Hub/Switch. In fact, some hubs and switches have a port labelled "uplink." Often this port may be toggled between a numbered port and an uplink port (the hub would say on it "5/Uplink" for example and have a switch next to it). All that switch does is reverse the pins.

When connecting two Macs together, the pins need to be reversed in the cable since the ports on both machines are identical and neither port reverses the pins. A cable with reversed pins is known as a crossover cable. You can buy them most anywhere (mail order, etc.) or you can crimp your own from standard Category 5 cable. Just look online for a crimping diagram and it will tell you which pins to reverse.

Once you've got the proper cable, you can switch on Personal File Sharing and connect the machines using AppleTalk. If you need help with that part, just e-mail me and I'll be happy to walk you through it. —*Evan Trent*

MS Office 2001 for the Mac

Thanks for the [review](#). I was considering purchasing 2001. Now I will wait. I have 98 and it does what I need. I think I had read a review in *MacAddict* and they said it was great. At any rate with OS X coming it's better to wait.

—*Jim Presenkowski*

iBook Insomnia

I finally worked out how get my iBook to work as an alarm-clock; but it still won't do me a scheduled auto-shutdown or a scheduled sleep, neither when using battery nor when using main power.

I thought that it might be, e.g., that if you had the first tab, sleep set-up, set to Never, it would override the auto-shutdown, but it fails to shutdown even if that's set to a few minutes.

—*David Kettlewell*

I have some ideas but I can't be sure exactly what's causing your problem(s).

A few possibilities:

- You have AppleTalk turned on.
- You have File Sharing turned on.
- You have a program open that will not quit (this doesn't explain the sleep problem but perhaps the shutdown).
- You have Retrospect or Retrospect Remote scheduled to backup sometime soon.
- If it will sleep after inactivity but not on schedule, you should also check and see if your clock is set right. Perhaps AM/PM is wrong? Or maybe it's somehow otherwise misconfigured.

Whatever is preventing schedule sleep is also preventing schedule shutdown. One would not work if the other wouldn't. So when you find the cause both problems will be resolved. —*Evan Trent*

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Apple Cider: Random Squeezings From a Mac User

by Tom Iovino, tiovino@atpm.com

A Matter of Trust

I can vividly remember Thanksgiving 1988. Oh, it wasn't the turkey, stuffing, or mashed potatoes that made the holiday stand out. Nor was it seeing my family for the first time since having left for college in August.

No, I remember that Thanksgiving because of what happened at the Amtrak station at New Carrollton, Maryland. In college, I always waited until the last minute to purchase my train ticket, because (a) I labored under the mistaken notion that travel agents added a fee to the price of the tickets, and (b) I just liked to wait until the last minute to decide if I really wanted to go home.

That year, at the ticket counter, I handed the cashier my dad's "extension" credit card that he'd given me *only* for travel when I was visiting from school. It was imprinted with his name, and the policy at Amtrak was that only the cardholder could sign to authorize the purchase. One look at the card, which didn't match my name, and the cashier pushed it back across the counter. "We run into trouble with stolen cards, son," he said. Oh, great. So there I was, surrounded by my suitcases, 25 minutes until my train left, no ticket in my hand.

Desperate for help, I turned to my girlfriend, who had driven me to the station. I asked her to take my ATM card, withdraw the necessary funds, and return with the money while I waited with the bags. She darted out of the station and returned within ten minutes—cash in hand. I kissed her and thanked her profusely for helping me out of the jam. I plunked down the cash, got my ticket, and tucked the ATM receipt into my wallet.

Later in the vacation, I was out at a movie with friends, when I happened to glance at that receipt. I'd been surprised at the Amtrak counter, but you should have seen me when I discovered that my girlfriend had not only withdrawn enough cash for my ticket, but had taken out an extra \$40 for herself. I didn't want to believe this, but it was later confirmed when she tearfully confessed that she had ripped me off.

Okay, once you stop laughing about the deplorable state of my dating years, you may be asking, “What on earth does this have to do with computing?”

The lessons I learned that day in Maryland are the ones that cause quite a few people to shy away from shopping on the Internet. How do you know that someone won't overcharge you when you make a purchase on the Internet? And just how secure is your information? Can someone charge on your credit card?

Just think about it: you enter your credit card information on a computer screen, and it has to travel through the phone lines (wiretaps!?!) to a computer where some minimum-wage broom jockey is playing Tetris. (At least that's the claim of most of the folks I know who refuse to shop on the Internet.)

It's true that there is potential for mischief. Recently, the administrators of such notable sites as Travelocity.com, Egghead.com, Amazon.com, and IKEA admitted that for a time, a security breach in their system could have exposed thousands of names, addresses, e-mails, and other personal information to potential hackers. It's such stories that make people leery of Internet shopping.

But when you think about it, what type of shopping is totally safe?

Let's take cash for example. Do you want to take a big wad of cash with you to the mall? If someone lifts your wallet, you can't stop payment on currency. And why do you think that almost all catalog shopping and bill payment envelopes insist that you not send cash?

Checks? When I learned how to use a checkbook, the first thing my mother taught me was to draw a line after the amount so that no one can alter it. My local news recently broadcast a story about a procedure known as “check washing,” whereby someone with the proper solvent can remove most ballpoint pen inks from security paper and redraft a check for another purpose.

And how about those credit cards? When you pass your plate to the waiter, what prevents him or her from making an extra imprint or copying down your information and ordering, say, a new USB scanner? And I was certainly surprised the night I discovered my neighbor and I shared the same cordless phone frequency while she was placing an order with a catalog outfit.

There's always an element of risk when money changes hands. Fortunately, the vast majority of people we encounter in typical commercial environments are decent people with the best intentions. Regarding the minority, however, there are some pretty sophisticated safeguards in place to help thwart their efforts.

For starters, it always pays to get a recommendation before you shop somewhere. A service like [Bizrate](#) reviews hundreds of online shopping outlets and rates them for security, customer service, and delivery. This is valuable information that will help keep your Internet shopping experience a good one.

You should also look to buy from places that protect the transmission of your personal data through a secure server. The majority of you know what I'm talking about, and this is a no-brainer. If you don't, you'll know you're secure when you see a complete key icon in the lower left corner of your Netscape Navigator screen (or a lock icon in the lower right corner of your Internet Explorer screen) *and* the prefix https: instead of http: in your address window. A subtle thing to check, but one that should offer you some peace of mind.

You should also make a printout of your order reflecting what the retailer is charging you for your purchase. Believe me, this will come in handy should there be some discrepancy between the price you were quoted and the amount you were actually charged.

Also, pay attention to a merchant's return policy. Just because you're shopping online doesn't mean you might not get the wrong size, a broken item, or something completely different from what you had envisioned. Knowing that you can return an item with little or no difficulty will make you feel more confident about using the Internet.

You may want to look into getting a credit card that guarantees that you will not be responsible should someone charge your card illegally. While federal law in the United States caps the amount you have to pay due to fraudulent charges at \$50, that's still \$50 that you'll have to pay if someone decides to rip you off.

As far as security on the merchant's side is concerned, strides are being made to reduce the likelihood that your personal information can be leaked. Stronger encryption, guarantees by the merchant that they will cover all unauthorized charges, and more diligent attention to security will help ensure that customer information is kept

confidential. It is vital to the multi-billion-dollar Internet shopping industry that security lapses are minimized. If not, the confidence of consumers may fall off quickly, and one of the most useful aspects of the Internet could suffer.

And I'd hate to see the breakup of such a beautiful relationship.

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Martians in the Manholes

I remember visiting my grandfather years ago at what can only be described as his little urban plantation. He grew everything from watermelons to potatoes to hand-grafted fruit trees on a little plot of land just a stone's throw from a freeway. The chicken coop lay behind the garage that housed his farming tools and blue Ford Falcon. Whenever I'd visit overnight, I'd wake to the sound of my grandfather's rooster announcing the dawn of the new day and the aroma of fresh eggs on the stovetop.

To my grandfather, every morning in America was a new and splendid day. He emigrated from Lisbon as a teenager to escape the revolution in his country. He delighted in the freedom and opportunity available to residents of the United States. Fifty years after arriving in the US, he still marveled at the things so many of us take for granted.

Some of the things that amazed my grandfather were due as much to the era of his birth as to the comparative prosperity of the nation of his naturalized citizenship. Born around the turn of the century, he never lost interest in TV, nor tired of short trips to the local municipal airport to watch the small planes take off and land. His was a simple life of innocent pleasures and wholesome hard work.

One of the last times I was at my grandfather's house was during the summer of 1968. He let me stay up late so that we could both watch the Democratic convention. I knew little of the assassination of RFK, the Vietnam War, or the violent protests in Chicago that summer. He wanted me to see the balloons fill the convention floor, and I suppose he wanted to see democracy in action. We were both enthralled by what we witnessed.

Not all TV programming at that time (or now for that matter) had serious political or cultural importance. I remember sitting in his living room and watching *Superman*, too. I recall an episode in which Superman had an encounter with a pair of Martians who lived in some kind of subterranean world and entered our civilization through manhole covers.

In retrospect, short actors with really bad makeup and haircuts probably portrayed the Martians. But to a little boy, the concern was for world safety and what might come popping up from beneath the streets the next time I ventured more than a few feet from the safety of my grandfather's yard. I didn't think Superman lived in my grandfather's neighborhood, so if I was confronted by subterranean-dwelling Martians I figured I was pretty much on my own.

Only later did I realize that in the *Superman* episodes, whether the Man of Steel was flying during the day or at night, the same footage was used to depict the superhero moving swiftly through the air on his way to fight evil. This was one of my first discoveries of what is meant by fiction, and I realized that subterranean-dwelling Martians only appeared on TV. It was safe to walk the streets without fear of encountering creatures from another planet popping out of round disks in the road.

Discerning fact from fiction can often be difficult for people of any age, let alone a young child. What we see on TV or the Internet and what we hear from others isn't always an accurate reflection of reality. I don't suppose my grandfather gave Superman or Martians popping out of manholes much thought. But the fact that he was able to grow fruit trees and vegetables, raise chickens and have a somewhat agrarian orientation to life in the middle of an old New England mill town still astounds me.

My grandfather was from a farming family, but farming was not his trade. Although for a time he earned a living grafting trees for others, he spent most of his years working in the mills. His decision to leave Lisbon wasn't an easy one. Family members and family friends warned him about all the "Martians in the manholes" he might encounter on the journey and when arriving at his new, adopted home. Knowing in his heart he would never return, he surrendered the rights of his land inheritance to the relatives he left behind. He chose a more simple life of personal and religious freedom in America over an existence with a secure livelihood but political and religious oppression.

In my grandfather's day, there was no Superman on TV to safeguard the world from evil. But he had faith in God and a determination to live free. As a teenager he chose wisely to separate fact from fiction and move forward with his dream even at the risk of great personal cost.

Sixteen years almost to the day that I sat in my grandfather's living room watching the balloons fill the convention center, I better understood the reasons for his decision to leave the familiarity of Lisbon for the opportunity for freedom in America. It was the day his son and grandson stood side-by-side on the floor of the Republican convention in Dallas to witness a sitting president accept his party's nomination for a second term in office. The decisions my grandfather made were more for the benefit of the generations of family to come than for his own comfort.

Of all the speeches I heard in Dallas during the several days of that convention, the one delivered by Dr. E.V. Hill, a civil rights crusader, was the most memorable. Dr. Hill began his speech by recalling the last time he had been in Dallas—it was as a small boy attending a country fair. Born into poverty, he slept in a small pen with his pig. As Dr. Hill recounted, it was a long way from that fair to the podium of the Republican National Convention. And, it was a long way from my immigrant grandfather's living room in 1968 to the floor of the Republican convention in 1984.

Both my father and my grandfather are no longer on earth. But the decisions each of them made will impact the generations of family members to come. If my grandfather had chosen to busy himself by figuratively watching for Martians in the manholes, rather than pursuing his dream with steadfast determination and faith, he never would have left Lisbon. The lives of his children and grandchildren would be vastly different than what they are today.

I admire Dr. Hill and others who have stood against racial prejudice and intolerance. I admire the courage of early American settlers who worked hard to tame a newly discovered continent. And I admire the countless number of people like my grandfather who chose to emigrate to the US, often times sacrificing a familiar way of life in order to give their children and their children's children the opportunity for self-determination and personal freedom.

Collectively and individually Mac users have chosen a different way of doing things in order to meet our computer needs. As a community of users, should the naysayers and PC pundits who continuously see subterranean-dwelling Martians lurking behind every Mac distract us? Or should we remain steadfast in our resolve to separate fact from fiction and continue to support our platform of choice?

Since the introduction of the Apple II, rumors and prognostications of Apple's imminent demise have filled the papers, the airwaves and now the Internet. Whether the figurative "Martians in the manholes" were IBM, Microsoft, concerns about MHz speeds, software availability, market share, or even product price, Apple Computer has survived and in most years the company has thrived. Bad fiction can never mirror reality.

I hope that few of us are ever called to put ourselves in harm's way in order to end racial prejudice, suffer the humiliation of sharing sleeping space with a pig, or feel compelled to leave behind all we know and own in order to find political and religious freedom. But the decisions that we make today are as important to the well being of our children and grandchildren as the decisions made by the generations that preceded us. Individually and collectively we are shaping the face of the world for years to come.

I suppose maintaining a backyard farm was my grandfather's way of keeping his hands busy while he mentally worked through the day's challenges and sorted fact from fiction. He left no time in his day for second-guessing his decisions or worrying about subterranean-dwelling Martians in whatever figurative form they might appear. But his journey, like Dr. Hill's journey and the journey of millions of others who have toiled long and hard to shape the face of our nation, was not without tough times or difficult decisions. Had the pioneers, immigrants, and civil rights leaders who shaped our nation listened to their generation's naysayers, where would our country and our world be today?

It was sixteen years from my grandfather's living room to the floor of the Republican National Convention. It was also about sixteen years from the Dallas convention in 1984 to the morning of Christmas 2000. That's the day I had the pleasure of witnessing my own children opening the box to their new iMac. Had my grandfather listened to the naysayers, he never would have embarked on a marvelous, life-changing journey. Had I listened to the naysayers, Christmas morning would have been filled with puzzlement as to what to do with yet another bland, beige box.

Prior to January's Macworld Expo, the PC pundits and Apple naysayers were at it again. Newspapers and the Internet carried stories of Apple's imminent demise. It's funny. One Titanium PowerBook later and the subterranean-dwelling Martians appear to be safely below the manhole covers and bad fiction once again has failed to mirror reality.

Discerning fact from fiction can be a difficult task. But since the dawn of the PC era only one computer company has consistently proven to be a true product innovator and technology leader. Being a Mac user in a Windows-dominated world isn't always the easiest of challenges. But the rewards are more than worth the effort.

No great task is without its moments. I'm mindful that the rooster that would wake me to the aroma of fresh eggs on the stove is the same rooster that would chase me around the chicken house and peck at my ankles whenever I ventured inside the boundaries of the chicken wire fence. For that and a few other reasons I may never have a coop. Thankfully, my challenges are different than my grandfather's. To him the reward of seeing his children and grandchildren live free was more than worth the effort to leave his native home and journey to a new nation.

As members of the greater Mac community we share in monumental challenges. We are the émigrés from the status quo. We are the advocates for digital diversity. We must ensure that our children and our children's children continue to have a choice, and thus a voice in shaping the digital world of tomorrow. The rewards will be more than worth the effort.

This is ATPM's second issue of the new millennium and the last issue in which *Apples, Kids & Attitude* will appear. I've enjoyed the run. I'd like to leave our readers with just a few words of advice:

If you want farm fresh eggs, get them at a small local farm. But please do your ankles a favor: let the farmer enter the coop. If you see Martians lurking under manhole covers, please do the world a favor: put down the PC magazines and call Superman. If you want a supercomputer, do yourself and your children a favor: buy a Mac.

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A Tale of Two Trade Shows

When Steve Jobs introduced [iTunes](#) at last month's Macworld Expo in San Francisco, he billed it as the impetus behind a desktop music revolution comparable to the desktop video revolution supposedly started last year by [iMovie](#). The software he introduced has a great deal of potential for home entertainment, combining MP3 encoding, Internet radio, and CD burning (only with built in CD-RWs so far, though workarounds are springing up). In fact, it might be the perfect application for John Cusack's character in the film *High Fidelity*, whose ultimate goal in life (when he wasn't compiling "Top Five" lists) was to create the perfect pop music compilation. The comparison to iMovie, however, doesn't quite hold up.

The promise of iMovie is to allow any Mac user to easily turn their computer into a digital video studio through a combination of hardware (a digital camcorder) and software (iMovie, or, the parallel professional application, Final Cut Pro). The promise to turn a Mac into a digital audio studio began sixteen years ago, however, at another industry trade show held annually by the National Association of Music Manufacturers (NAMM). The 1985 NAMM show featured first appearances by Mark of the Unicorn, Passport Designs, and Digidesign. Among other attendees were David Oppenheim, who would later co-found Opcode; and David Zicarelli, who would develop the first DX7 software editor, port MAX to the Macintosh while at Opcode, and found his own company, Cycling '74.

At this year's NAMM show, held about a week after Macworld a few hundred miles further south in Anaheim, Apple and Yamaha teamed up and demoed a system much closer to the iMovie model. I [foresaw this demo](#) in my last Macworld column, after the August 2000 New York Expo, when I said the following:

Yamaha is presently developing the mLan (or "music LAN"), a system that transmits both digital audio and MIDI over FireWire. In another year, we may see a fully functional digital studio rig built around a small and silent G4 Cube.

I only missed out on the timing. This very setup, G4 Cube and all, was displayed at a small booth just off the show floor. This was Apple's first appearance at NAMM in several years, which is encouraging despite their rather minor presence. I wish that Apple had made as big a splash with their mLAN collaboration as they did with iTunes.

Why FireWire?

As far as digital video is concerned, the main distinctions between the iMac and Cube systems and the G4 desktops are power and possible dual monitor support. Apart from those differences a FireWire based video setup is identical on all Macs, allowing a range of users on a range of budgets to set up digital video studios that differ only in power between professional and consumer levels. FireWire also levels the field for laptops.

A serious digital studio, however, is limited to the G4 desktop line due to legacy issues surrounding PCI sound cards (the standard interface for hardware/software Digital Audio Workstations, or DAWs) and SCSI controllers (the standard for digital audio data transfer). USB has successfully replaced the Mac serial port for the purpose of MIDI applications, but its limited bandwidth makes it an inadequate standard for digital audio. Even USB 2.0—a protocol which greatly increases data transfer speeds—lacks the sustained throughput level of FireWire, and it is sustained throughput (i.e. a constant rate of data as opposed to intermittent bursts) that makes FireWire the ideal protocol for time-dependent data like digital video and multi-track digital audio.

What Should Apple Do?

The promise to start a desktop music revolution comes sixteen years too late. Instead, Apple should do everything in its power to support the continued third-party development of hardware and software that centers around their computers in order to keep the support from musicians that they still enjoy. In part, this means continued support of PCI-based solutions through the G4 desktop (the addition of a fourth PCI slot was an important step), but it also means continued encouragement of third party FireWire developers (like Yamaha) to transform products from vaporware to hardware. mLAN is much further along than it was at last year's NAMM or Audio Engineering Society conventions, but it is still in development.

Musicians are a natural market for a silent computer like the G4 Cube, but they are held back by the lack of a viable FireWire DAW. A fully functioning mLAN system combined with an upgraded G4 Cube would be a very appealing professional audio system. Apple and Yamaha both know that, which is why they demoed a Cube/mLAN setup at NAMM. Will the Cube survive long enough however to see the commercial release of mLAN?

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



About This Particular Web Site

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

[Isys Information Architects Inc.](#)¹

Don't let the *i* in the URL fool you; this is decidedly not a Mac propaganda site, much as I wish it could be. It belongs to a company that specializes in "highly usable information systems," in other words, user interface design. In all likelihood, you're already familiar with their Interface Hall of Shame, which wrote a deservedly [scathing piece on QuickTime 4](#) when it first came out. If you haven't read it, it's a must. But the site is much more than that, with an Interface Hall of Fame delivering praise to the praiseworthy. The "New Entries" section features some great screenshots, generally from Windows, of true interface stupidities.

[MobiusCo](#)²

OK, so the Web is overflowing with pages offering [desktop pictures](#). The ones on Mobius do a great job being both interesting and non-distracting, an unusual combination, in my experience. The images are complex abstract renderings, generally on the dark side and not overly colorful, which means your desktop icons will still stick out over the background, as well they should. While the images don't tend to be available in a great variety of sizes, they do come in large, and from there, your Mac can scale them to fit your monitor size.

[Patrick Combs' Good Thinking Site](#)³

This is the site of a man who deposited a \$95,093.35 junk mail check and lived to tell the tale of the madness that followed. That story alone (yes, its true) is great reading, but there's a lot more where that came from. Combs also recounts times he delivered a baby on the sidewalk, got the president to sign his sweatshirt, guested on talk shows, and lots more. If you're sitting in front of your computer bored and looking for some entertaining reading, this site is for you.

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

2. <http://www.mobiusco.com/index2.html>

3. <http://www.dnai.com/%7Epcombs/>

[Privacy.Org](#)¹

This is a relatively new site, which I found out about in the latest EPIC (Electronic Privacy Information Center) E-mail Alert. Its purpose is to keep readers informed of the latest happenings in the area of (how'd you guess?) Internet privacy—and boy does it do a good job! Updated daily, the site is full of news and updates from around the world. It also provides links to off-site articles and “privacy resources” where you can learn more about protecting yourself from unscrupulous Web sites. As one would expect, the site doesn't use cookies: “We are an information resource, not an information sponge.”

[Spammimic](#)²

What does spam really mean? Can you ever know for sure? [Spammimic lets you turn meaning into spam, literally!](#) Type in some text, hit “encode,” and your very own spam message gets created. Send it off to someone and, assuming it doesn't get filtered directly into /dev/null (that's trash for everyone else), the recipient can go to spammimic and translate your spam back into a meaningful message.

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1. <http://www.privacy.org>
2. <http://www.spammimic.com>

Extras: Desktop Pictures

Florida Panhandle Lighthouses

Assistant Webmaster Lee Bennett offers [desktop pictures of lighthouses](#) from the Pensacola and Apalachicola regions of the Florida panhandle, taken over Christmas weekend, 2000.

The photos were taken with a Nikon Coolpix 990. Resampling and retouching were performed with Adobe Photoshop 4.01.

Mobius

About The Images

“[These images](#) were all created in Bryce, and some contain custom 3D models I created in Ray Dream Studio. I tend to find working in a 3D environment to be a bonus in the creative process: for example, you can grab the light source and move it while three quarters of the way through the image; and you can always rotate things around to get different views, instead of in the 2D world where you’d normally have to start back at the beginning.

“One of the other benefits of working in a 3D environment is that you can create one image, and a month later open the same file, rotate the image around while zooming in on one specific spot and end up with a completely new image. My art is often inspired by something material or physical, yet most of the time I don’t sit down with a set goal in mind; the images are created mostly through expression.

“For anyone getting started, the best piece of advice I can give is this: when you find that you don’t like an image you’ve been working on, do not delete it; instead save the file and come back to it a few days or weeks later. Who knows? You may later see something in the image that you hadn’t previously, or you might suddenly start brainstorming over how to finish the image.”

About MobiusCo

“Currently [MobiusCo](#) comprises one person, but the company’s long-term goal is to develop a team of four to five programmers and digital artists which will work on joint programming and graphic design projects, along with helping each other out with personal projects. For the time being however things are at the development stage. Most people relate MobiusCo to me, and that is how I like to keep it; this way the company name is the name that is remembered.

“Currently I am a student at Kent State University working on two degrees: one in Computer Science, and another in Graphic Design. I tend to create this kind of digital art as a way of relaxing. Just as some people play sports or drink or go for a walk, so I prefer taking a few hours to a few days out to work on these images. Eventually I plan to place poster size prints of my work up for sale so that people may be able to enjoy them on their walls or in their offices instead of just on the desktops.

“I know this does not give you much information about me as a person, but there is not much to give. To me the main interest is the work and not the person behind it. All the images are an expression of me as a person, and so I think the images can convey more about me than any words.”

Copyright Note

“These images are the sole property of MobiusCo, and are distributed for private use only. Anyone who downloads an image may use that image for their own personal use and not for any commercial or monetary gain. Images may be re-distributed with prior permission from and credit given to MobiusCo, along with a link to [this Web site](#). If you wish to use any image for commercial use, permission shall be given upon request, depending on the intended use.”

Previous Months’ Desktop Pictures

If you haven’t seen the rest of the series, it includes: [Yellowstone National Park](#), [Drops](#), [Toronto](#), [Niagara Falls](#), [Monaco](#), [Montréal](#), [Bahamas](#), [Clouds](#), [Aerial](#), [Made with Macs](#), [Landscapes](#), [Northwest](#), [Animals](#), [Spring Flora](#), [National Parks](#), [Insects](#), [Konstanz](#), [Mark Montgomery’s Desktop Pictures](#), [Konstanz Part II](#), [British Columbia](#), [New York](#), [France](#), [Northeast](#), [From ATPM Readers](#), [New York II](#), [Washington, D.C.](#), [Lighthouses](#), and [Mobius](#).

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 publish it in next month's issue. Have a regular print but no scanner? Don't worry. E-mail us, and we tell you where to send it so we can scan it for you. Note that we cannot return the original print, so send us a copy.

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS 8.5 and Newer

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

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

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

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1

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

Random Desktop Pictures

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

DeskPicture

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



How To

by Jamie McCornack, jmccornack@atpm.com

iMovie Transition Tricks

Yes kids, now you can do splendid special effects in iMovie and iMovie2 with Transition Magician! Amaze your friends! This offer will not be made in stores. Send no money...in fact, spend no money, because these tricks are strictly a matter of technique and no hardware or software is required.

Oh, all right. If you want to get picky, you need a DV camcorder, a Mac, and iMovie, but I figure you have those already or you'd be skimming your way to an article you can use. So since you're still reading, you'll be pleased to learn you can do a couple of neat things that even the best manuals tell you that you can't do—or at least, they don't tell you how to do them.

- Neat Thing #1: Slow Motion with iMovie
- Neat Thing #2: Beam Things Up with iMovie or iMovie2

Both these neat things use a little-known feature of the Cross Dissolve transition. The feature is that if you Cross Dissolve between identical or nearly identical clips, the identical parts don't change.

Slow Motion Made Easy (Or At Least Cheap)

Yep, there's a fairly easy way to slow mo with iMovie, if you can tolerate some glaring limitations:

- maximum finished segment length is 4:00 (four seconds)
- only works for powers of 2 (you can run 1/2 speed, 1/4 speed...)
- anything more than 1/2 speed is visibly jerky

In brief, you duplicate the segment you want to slow, then do a Slow Cross-Dissolve transition between them. Since the frames are identical in both clips, the "dissolved" frame pairs are duplicated without any distortion/blending/blurring of the individual images.

In detail, you...

Okay, imagine you finally landed a triple giloolie after twenty eight years of skateboarding, and you want to extend your airtime a bit by the miracle of slow motion videography. Here's what you do.

1. Make two duplicates of the clip that includes the segment you want to slow. The clip can be any length, though the segment you slow can't be more than 2 seconds long. Let's presume it's a clip you've named SkateTrick.
 - Select the clip you want to duplicate. Select Copy from the Edit menu.
 - Click the cursor in a free section of the Shelf.
 - Select Paste twice in the Edit menu, and two copies will appear in the Shelf, both named SkateTrick.
 - Rename the first of these copies SkateTrickFront, and the other SkateTrickBack.
2. Determine exactly which part of these clips you want in slow motion, and using the scrubber bar, note to the second and frame where that segment begins and ends.

For example (uh, I'm going to presume everybody's familiar with the basics of clip editing, so I'll drop the step-by-step routine), if the clip is 06:00 long, and the segment you want to slow begins at 01:15 and ends at 03:05, write that down.

3. Using Split Clip at Playhead from the Edit menu, split SkateTrickFront at the end of the segment you wish to slow (03:05 in this example) and split SkateTrickBack at the beginning of the segment (01:15). You now have four clips, SkateTrickFront and SkateTrickFront/1, and SkateTrickBack and SkateTrickBack/1.
4. Move SkateTrickFront and SkateTrickBack/1 to the Movie Track, and discard SkateTrickFront/1 and SkateTrickBack.
5. Open the Transitions palette, select Cross Dissolve Slow, and set the duration slider to *twice* the length of the segment you want to slow. In this case it's 03:05–01:15 = 01:20, and $01:20 \times 2 = 03:10$.

Sure hope that math wasn't too fuzzy for y'all. From 01:15 to 03:05 there are 50 frames. 100 frames is 03:10.

6. Drag the Cross Dissolve Slow icon between SkateTrickFront and SkateTrickBack/1, and wait patiently.

The result is that the frames at the end of SkateTrickFront will be fit with the frames at the beginning of SkateTrickBack/1, rather like a "perfect shuffle" in a pack of cards. Each 1/30th of a second image is printed twice, which slows the movie to 1/2 its previous speed.

It also drops the effective frame rate to 15 frames per second, which is unnoticeable for a short segment. But hey, that's how Final Cut Pro does it too, and unless you have a video camera that will record at 60 frames per second, this is as good as it's going to get.

To do quarter-speed slow motion, export your movie back to the camera, or save it to disk as streaming DV (QuickTime Pro required), then Import it back into iMovie and do steps 1) through 6) again.

I suppose you could connect any number of four second segments together to make a longer slow-motion segment, but four seconds is usually too long. Like many other snazzy effects, slow motion should be used sparingly.

Oooh, but you won't be able to resist overusing this next one.

Beam Things Into Your iMovies

I'm sure there's a proper technical term for this effect, but since the original *Star Trek* started using it about six times per episode in the 60s, it's been colloquially called a "beam."

The effect is (as if you didn't know), there's a scene on the screen, and an actor or monster or object fades into the scene. Cool, right? It was, until you saw it six thousand times. But I'm going to tell you how to do it anyway. No blue screen, no lab work, no special plug-in, no \$999 for Final Cut Pro. Just iMovie and Cross Dissolve.

Oh all right. One piece of hardware will make this a lot easier: a tripod. Otherwise, set your camcorder on a stack of library books or something, but don't bother trying this with a handheld camera unless you're trying to be terribly *avant-garde*.

The only limitation of this technique is that the person/monster/object you're beaming in has to be the only thing moving during that beam-in moment.

Hey, don't complain. When this was done on *Star Trek* (the Kirk and Spock version), the people being beamed couldn't move either. This is way better—the beamee can be in motion, which adds needed realism to an unreal effect. All it took was three decades to get it in the hands of ordinary folks.

Let's say, for example, you want your cat to materialize from thin air. I don't know why, maybe you're doing a documentary on quantum physics, but let's say that's what you want to do.

Aim your camcorder at a comfy chair and turn it to Record. Now take your unsuspecting kitty, and being sure to keep yourself out of the picture, toss it onto the chair.

Yes, I love cats— Siamese cats excluded (too much dark meat)— and most cats don't mind this sort of treatment. They tolerate unusual behavior from humans because cats don't have opposable thumbs and thus can't operate the can opener. But toss it gently, don't spike it like you just scored a touchdown in the Kittycat Superbowl. You could simply set the cat in the chair and then scamper out of the frame if you want to be a real stickler for this kindness-to-animals stuff.

Sorry, I drifted a bit. Back to our lesson.

Let the camcorder run a few more seconds and shut it off. FireWire it to your Mac and save the clip in iMovie. You have an empty chair, then a cat flying in from stage left (honest, my cat liked this part), landing on the chair, and looking at the camera with a feline *what-was-that-all-about* expression on its face.

Using Split Clip at Playhead, make a clip of the chair and no cat. Then make a clip of the cat, starting at the moment its paws first touch the chair seat. Discard the segment in the middle (the part with the cat in flight).

Drag both clips down to the Movie Track, and connect them with a Cross Dissolve from the Transitions palette. Set the duration to a second or so—any faster than half a second is too quick to appreciate, any longer than two seconds is boring, but YMMV (your mileage may vary).

After the transition has rendered, play the movie. You'll see an empty chair, a cat fading in gradually from specter to ghost to solid, and then (depending on your cat's acting ability) looking startled by the success of the matter transmission procedure.

And like all special effects, try not to overuse it. The SPCA may be watching.

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How To

by Evan Trent, etrent@atpm.com

Playing Compressed Sound on a Home Stereo

Question

I know that you can convert MP3s into WAVs and AIFFs, but they are both very large formats. I am wondering whether there are any other formats that you can convert MP3s into, which are more compressed but are still playable in most home stereos.

Answer

The AIFF file format supports several compression algorithms. They are all lossy. Your choices are MACE, μ Law, and IMA. AIFF files compressed with these compressors will play back fine on any computer or home stereo. The size of the files will be significantly reduced, but their sound quality will be adversely affected. You will have to play around to see if you are willing to accept the compromise. You can compress an AIFF file using one of these algorithms with a program like SoundEdit 16 from Macromedia, or using QuickTime Player under QuickTime Pro (you will need to upgrade if you are using the free version of QuickTime).

In my opinion it makes more sense to just burn out the MP3s directly to an audio CD using Toast 4.x. This will result in a CD that is playable on a home stereo, and the sound quality will be no worse than the MP3 source file, although you will not be able to fit as many songs on the CD as if you converted and compressed the AIFF files beforehand. Toast 4.x converts MP3 to AIFF on the fly but it does not offer the option to compress the AIFF files because that is too processor intensive to do on the fly and would interrupt the CD burning process.

Compressing AIFF files beforehand is time consuming. You can use a program like Cleaner from Terran Interactive to batch convert/compress files, but otherwise you have to baby-sit the computer and do it file by file. I'm lazy and would rather have more CDs with higher quality sound that required less of my time and energy to generate, than fewer with poorer quality sound.

A home stereo cannot play AIFF files that have been compressed using a proprietary or third party compression algorithm (or codec); it can only play AIFFs compressed using the algorithms that are part of the AIFF definition (MACE, μ Law, IMA, etc.). Files compressed using these algorithms do not need special software to be played because they do not fundamentally alter the file format; they simply tweak the dynamic range and save space in clever ways.

Proprietary algorithms (such as QDesign Music 2, which comes with QuickTime Pro, and is a remarkable compression technology) work their magic by way of far more sophisticated and successful methods, but in order to play the files you need a program that can read the new, modified, data. So using QDesign as an example, you would need to play the compressed files on a computer with QuickTime Pro (or the QDesign codec) installed, and naturally your CD player could not play a CD full of QDesign compressed AIFF files. In this sense they are no different than MP3s.

No matter what compression algorithm you use on the AIFF files in question, you are compressing the data for the second time (first time was with MP3), and that is always going to wreck the sound quality of your recording.

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Review: Macintosh Chess Downloads (Part I)

by Richard A. Fowell, Rafowell@aol.com

ATPM reviewed [five chess software programs](#) in the September 1999 issue. Since that review, Sigma Chess was upgraded, and Vanessa Chess was released. Since Macintosh chess software is my hobby (I own dozens of Macintosh chess programs, and maintain the [Macintosh Chess Software Index](#)), I volunteered to write about them.

Sigma Chess 5.12 is the strongest Macintosh freeware/shareware chess program reviewed in ATPM. I've played 100-game matches between each of five programs using the excellent freeware chess umpire/database program, [ExaChess Lite 2.1](#). Sigma Chess beat all the others—their score against Sigma Chess was: [Crafty 14.11B](#) (47%), [MacChess 4.0e](#) (39%), [Screamer 1.0](#) (25%), and [Vanessa Chess 2.01](#) (10%).

These days, chess strength should seldom be your primary decision factor in selecting a chess program. With the power of modern Macs, even Vanessa Chess is a much stronger player than most humans when set to full strength. For an opponent that is challenging, rather than unbeatable, one must usually set the computer to an “easy” level, or limit the number of moves the program looks ahead to one or two moves (“fixed depth 1” or “fixed depth 2” in computer chess argot).

Price and convenience of acquisition are important factors, and commercial programs can't touch the price of freeware/shareware programs (Vanessa Chess is \$10 shareware, the other four are freeware) or the convenience of downloading.

For those of you who find chess program strength of supreme importance, [HIARCS 7.0](#), available online at [Your Move Chess and Games](#) and [GambitSoft](#), is by far the strongest Mac chess program.

Two other important factors are ease of use and features, which is why I'm not reviewing Crafty: Most of Crafty's features can only be accessed through a command line interface.

Sigma Chess

Developer: Ole K. Christensen ([product page](#))

Price: free

Requirements: PowerPC-based Mac with System 7.5.

Recommended: 800x600 display with thousands of colors, 10 MB of application RAM.



Sigma Chess is the strongest, prettiest, and most full-featured freeware/shareware GUI Mac chess program.

It has many nice things no other Mac freeware/shareware chess program includes, such as a double-clickable chess tutorial (“Rules of Chess”), an illustrated online manual, and a collection of instructive games, endgames, combinations, and chess problems. The last ATPM review rated Sigma Chess 4.02 higher than all the rest, and Sigma Chess 5.1.2 is much better than 4.0.2, with many major improvements and a host of minor improvements.

Starting with Sigma Chess 5, Sigma Chess was optimized for Power Macintosh, making it much stronger.

If the “Novice Levels” in Sigma Chess are too easy for you, Sigma Chess 5.0 now has a “Playing Strength” feature, where you can set Sigma Chess’s approximate strength numerically (higher numbers are stronger), as an alternative to setting the time Sigma uses or the number of moves it looks ahead.

Sigma is the only free Macintosh program with the option of displaying the board in a 3D view using “true perspective” pieces like those in the commercial chess programs [Chessmaster 6000](#) and [Virtual Chess](#).

The 3D display has been polished since the earlier version. The menu bar is now visible in 3D mode, the optional digital clocks are less obtrusive, and the side to move is now indicated by glowing yellow LEDs embedded in the right edge of the wood board. These changes are representative of the many improvements made throughout the program.



The Sigma Chess 2D Display

I personally prefer the 2D display, which I think is the nicest looking Macintosh chess interface available at any price. The pieces are gorgeous, and the on-screen control buttons save a lot of time otherwise spent in travelling to the menu bar. The menu selections each have color menu icons. I like these icons, but those who don't can turn them off in "Preferences." I also love the digitized sound of the felted pieces landing on the wooden board, and the "clack" of wood on wood when pieces are captured, though I usually have this turned off in "Preferences" so as not to annoy others.

For those who like chess puzzles of the “White to move and mate in 2” variety, Sigma Chess is the only Mac program whose “Mate Finder” mode is not only guaranteed to find such a mate if it exists, but which will find all such mates, if you tell it to.

Sigma Chess has scores of other features, including rating your play, annotating your games, and printing them in double-column format with diagrams and comments. If there is something you want Sigma Chess to do, you can probably find out how in the online manual.

Vanessa Chess

Developer: Schubert-it ([product page](#))

Price: \$10 (shareware)

Requirements: 200 MHz PowerPC-based Mac, Mac OS 8.6, 12 MB application RAM.

Recommended: G4-based Mac with Mac OS 9.

Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)



Vanessa Chess has a nice-looking interface and a reasonably complete set of features (albeit far fewer than Sigma Chess).

Three things about Vanessa chess might make it a better choice than Sigma Chess for some tasks: it can read games out loud, it is much weaker than Sigma Chess, and it can print formatted game scores with color chess diagrams.

The ability to have games read out loud is one I wished for when studying games from chess books. When playing such games on a physical board, I found my attention distracted by the need to look back and forth between the book and the board to follow the game. Almost all modern computer programs are an improvement in the sense that games stored in the computer can be viewed on-screen without needing to look away. However, some feel that the best way to study for over-the-board play is to play games out on a real board. With a program that reads chess game moves out loud, this can be done while keeping one’s attention on the board. The only other downloadable program that does this is the \$10 shareware program [PGNTalk](#), which doesn’t play chess or print games.

The tournament results indicate that Vanessa Chess is about a tenth as strong as Sigma Chess. Paradoxically, this can be a good thing. If you find other chess programs too overwhelming, it may be easier to configure Vanessa Chess to a comfortable level. Besides the usual ability to limit the computer's thinking by setting a time limit or the number of moves it looks ahead, Vanessa Chess offers a unique "Adaptive strength" feature that is supposed to match its strength to yours, but I have not used it enough to know how well it works.



The Vanessa Chess Interface

One use of computer chess programs is printing games with diagrams and notes. Vanessa Chess and Sigma Chess Lite are the only Mac freeware/shareware chess playing programs that let you do this. Vanessa Chess is the more capable program in this regard. While Vanessa Chess does not permit printing in figurine notation (mini-icons rather than letters for pieces) like Sigma Chess, it is the only program that allows your printed game to include color chess diagrams, multiple diagram formats, and multiple annotation fonts

and styles. If you want to print nice-looking chess output, Vanessa Chess might be worth considering for this alone.

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Review: Driver

by Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com

Developer: Macsoft/Infogrames ([product page](#))

Price: \$29.99 ([list](#))

Requirements: G3-based Mac with Mac OS 8.6, 128 MB of RAM (including virtual memory), Rage Pro or better.

Trial: Feature-limited (only one mission), [31.7 MB](#)



Overview

You assume the role of an ex-race driver turned policeman who goes deep undercover to infiltrate organized crime syndicates across the country. You turn in your gun and badge for the keys to a 70s muscle car and the chance to build a reputation for fast wheels and cool nerves among the law-breaking elite. The game features a wide variety of missions, most of which are courier- or chase-oriented, following location or time objectives in a race around realistically-modeled US cities while avoiding police pursuit.

Installation

The installation process was relatively painless, with all game files deposited into a single folder. There are two game applications, one for Glide 3D cards and one for all others. You also need InputSprocket and QuickTime to play. You don't need the game CD to play, so pop in your favorite CD of driving tunes for maximum gaming enjoyment.

Look and Feel

Originally released on the PlayStation a while back, the graphics suffer somewhat from the passage of time, lacking the polish of the newest generation of games. Atmospheric changes and effects (day, night, thunderstorms, etc.) are good, but I would like to see more attention paid to the car, since it's the focus of the game.

There are several cities in the game, all modeled after real-life street layouts (but squared-off for the sake of geometry). You begin with Miami and San Francisco and unlock other cities as you progress through the game. Although you start with just one car, you'll

receive calls from garages as you advance through the undercover missions. At the garage, pick your current car from a growing assortment. Make sure to switch to newer cars as they become available, to improve speed and handling.



Avoid police cars; they hurt!

Gameplay

There are several gameplay options, including open city driving and trial runs of each basic mission type, but the game's focus is the undercover missions. You start in Miami behind the wheel of a bulky Nova look-a-like, doing courier and getaway work for the local dirtbags. The early missions are simple: drive to a location within a time limit, then to another location while eluding cops and without wrecking your car (these goals go hand-

in-hand, as cops are very good at wrecking your car). The missions add story elements, but you don't have decision-making power outside the available missions, so it's all about the driving.



Real gamers don't use turn signals.

During the mission itself, you drive around the city and follow on-screen directions, checking the miniature and full-city maps to locate your destination and plan your driving route. If you fail a mission, you have unlimited retries, which you'll frequently need in the higher levels. You return to your hotel after some missions (where you can save your progress), but sometimes set out immediately for follow-up missions. This can be trying on the nerves, since you may need to pass three or four challenging missions in a row before you can save your game again.

Though most missions are of the “drive from A to B to C” variety, there are also several chases, car thievery, and some taxi “intimidation,” where you drive like a crazy person to freak out the passenger (in other words, it’s just like a real taxi ride). Each car handles differently, but they generally improve speed, acceleration, and handling as the game goes on.



Slip through oncoming traffic to shed police pursuit.

The game display is simple, defaulting to a behind-the-car view that works well (and warns you of police in close pursuit). There’s also an in-car view, in case you like close-ups of your crunched hood. The Damage and Felony meters in the upper left are crucial to

game play, since your car is wrecked if you hit too many things and police cars become more plentiful and aggressive as your felonies increase (so if you speed or hit things, don't do it where the cops can see you!).



Slip between the cop cars to evade roadblocks.

The mini-map in the lower right corner shows a two-block radius around you; press Escape and you can access the complete city map, which will prove essential for the long-range destinations of later missions.



Follow the mini-map's grey arrow to your destination.

Driver includes a “filmed” action replay of your mission for those who like to add that “Streets of San Francisco” feel to their driving. There are tons of replay features to fiddle with, including alternating viewpoints, stationary cameras, and so on. You can also store your replays to savor in your golden years.



Check the back window to see who’s tailing you.

Play Control

Driver's play control is simple enough to play with a keyboard, but you could certainly use a game pad or driving wheel instead. Basically, you have forward, reverse, stop, peel out, and turn (no gear shifting or part upgrades). The Escape key pauses the game and brings up the in-game option screen.



Catch air off the steep San Fran hills.

Annoyances

There are two problems I have with Driver, the first of which is Training. Undercover mode starts with a training session, which drills you on driving skills and maneuvers in a one-minute timed session. You must pass the training session before you can start to play, which gets frustrating quickly. It is useful to learn the different driving moves, but requiring that first-time players pass this first is, in my opinion, unreasonable. At least the

PlayStation version showed you which buttons to press during the training demo—the Mac version is not that kind. For help on the training, see the Infogrames [Driver FAQ](#). If you're a first-time player, plan to spend at least an hour on training.



That annoying training mode.

My second problem is the cars' handling, which is very loose, especially considering the successful physics models of driving games like Carmageddon. I can't say I've driven any 70s muscle cars personally, but I'd give Chevy a piece of my mind if my real car slid this much. The responsiveness of the later cars improves, so I guess that's the game's way of rewarding progress. Unfortunately, the equivalent in an action game would be progressing several stages through a game before your character learned to duck. It's just a bad gameplay concept.

Conclusion

Driver is a quality action racing game, although it's lost some of the showroom shine and new car smell since its original release. While it dabbles in each, this isn't the game for the diehard racer or plot enthusiast. If Racing Days R and Carmageddon had a child, this would be it: the thrill of cruising the city and dodging traffic mixed with a modicum of

real-world game design. Driver has decent replay value, as you can try out the missions you missed the first time around, and should perform well on any G3-powered, 3D-enhanced Mac model.



Finish the game to unlock the Jaguar and a special city.

Copyright © 2001 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.



Review: Final Jam Pro (SoundJam MP Skin)

by Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com

Developer: [Rich D.](#)

Price: free

Requirements: SoundJam MP



I have been a [SoundJam](#) user since Casady & Greene released the product, and my favorite skin has to be [Final Jam Pro](#) by the quasi-enigmatic Rich D. Based on the user interface of Apple's professional video editing software, [Final Cut Pro](#), Final Jam Pro exhibits a purplish-gray and brushed metal interface.



The interface is simple and uncluttered. The uppermost left button closes not only the interface, but the application, which is standard across all SoundJam skins. Just beneath the title bar the skin shows the encoding rate and KHz rating for the file being played, and whether it is in stereo or mono. A timer plays in the far right just beneath the WindowShade button.

Beneath this is a visual feedback window that offers your choice of three different visual representations of the file in play, or none at all. Just clicking once inside this window shifts you from one representation to the next. Again, this is a standard function in all SoundJam skins.

Just under the visual feedback window is a slider bar for the track length of the file in play. The user can click and hold on the yellow triangle and move forward or backward in a song, or simply watch as the slider moves from left to right during song play.

The next row features the main controls: volume and balance controls are on sliders on opposite ends, with the control buttons in between the two. The play button dominates the center, with stop and back buttons to its left, and the pause and forward buttons on the right.



The bottom of the skin features any track information in the middle, including title, artist, album name, and essentially whatever else is available in the MP3's ID3 tag information. There are four more buttons here, two on either side of the track information. To the left lie the shuffle and repeat functions, in that order from left to right, and on the right-hand side are the equalizer and playlist buttons.

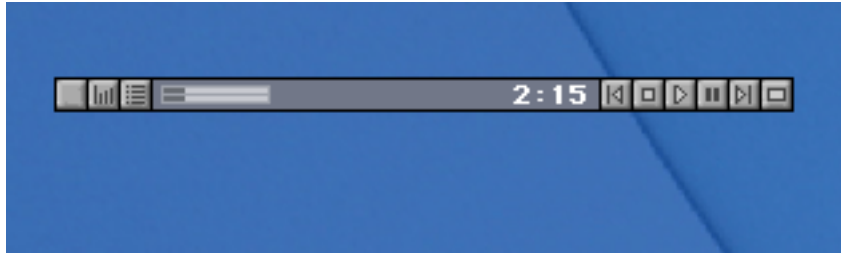
Like all good SoundJam skins, the Equalizer is skinned to match the main console, and Rich D. doesn't disappoint.

I have found Final Jam Pro to be relatively unobtrusive, and just the right size on screen, whether it be the 1152 x 870 resolution of my 20" monitors, or the 800 x 600 resolution of my iBook.

My favorite part about Final Jam Pro is that when you click on the WindowShade button, it minimizes the skinned player down to a tiny bar, with all of the main controls on the bar. So you can minimize your player, pull it into a corner or anywhere you want, and still have full access to all the controls.



Clicking here...takes you to this:



Personally, I feel that Final Jam Pro is one of the best skins available for SoundJam. It is not flashy or obtrusive, but stylish—and it can be minimized to save on screen real estate while retaining full functionality. I encourage any and all SoundJam users to download Final Jam Pro for daily use.

Oh, and while you're looking at and downloading Final Jam Pro, be sure to enjoy Rich's unique brand of [humor](#).

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Review: Jeopardy!

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

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

Price: \$29.99 ([list](#))

Requirements: PowerPC-based Mac at 132 MHz, Mac OS 8.1, QuickTime 4.1.2, 56 MB application RAM, 800x600 display, 45 MB disk space.

Recommended: 560 MB disk space (for full installation) or 270 MB disk space (for everything except movies).

Trial: None



Overview

Jeopardy! faithfully reproduces the television game show experience on your Macintosh. One to three persons can play by sharing the keyboard. The game supplies computer opponents, if necessary. Network play is not supported.

Installation

A CD contains the Jeopardy! installer. Standard installation places the application and some data files on the hard drive you designate. Custom installation lets you install all components except the movies. Full installation installs all components. The full installation is not necessary unless you have a slow CD-ROM drive.

Look and Feel and Sound

Jeopardy! looks and feels like the television game show. It uses the voice of announcer Johnny Gilbert and has video and audio clips of the TV host, Alex Trebek. Jeopardy! also uses the same video and sound effects as the TV show. The sound quality is excellent. Video quality is fair. Keyboard keys (spacebar, control, and shift) act as your "buzzer buttons." You use the mouse to select answers from the board. Live players must type questions; your computer opponents speak them.

Game Play

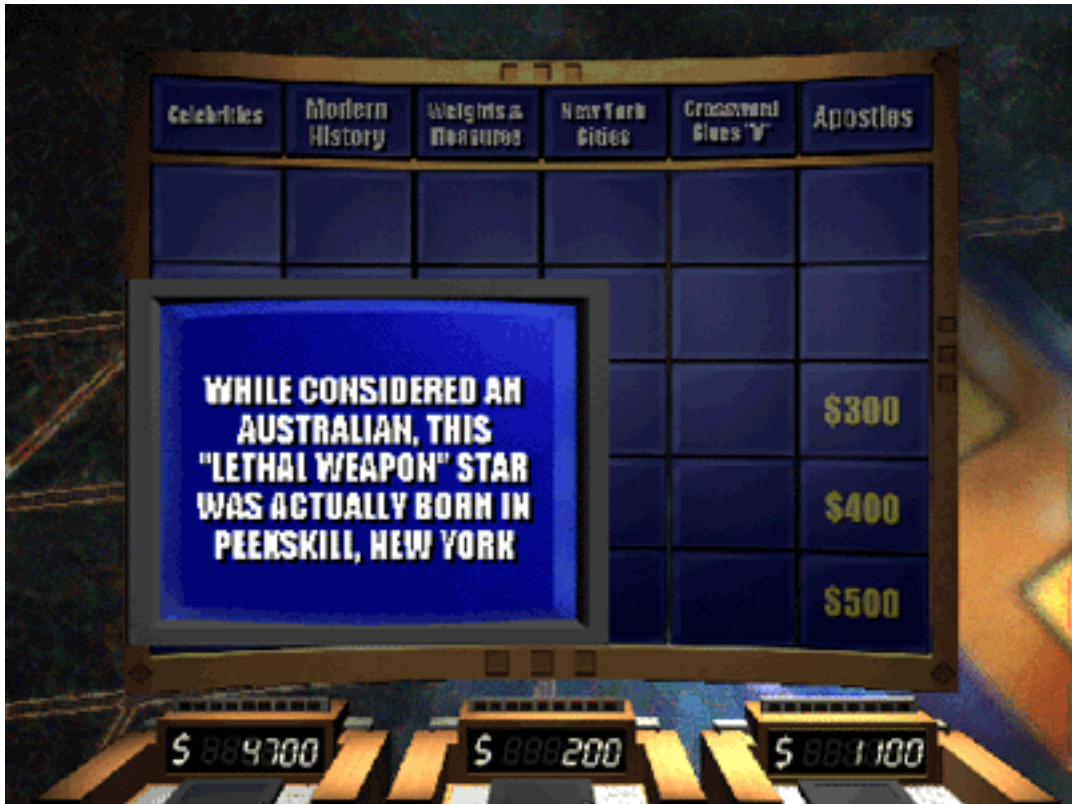
The game starts with a menu screen and a voice talking you through the options. You can set the time allowed to buzz-in after the answer is read (2 to 8 seconds), the time allowed to type a response (5, 10, or 20 seconds), spelling tolerance (a slider from “loose” to “strict”), skill level of computer opponents (“easy” to “hard”), and whether the computer opponents exhibit adaptive behavior and get tougher if a human opponent takes the lead.



Main Menu Options

Once you choose your options, you are treated to the TV-style introduction. The voice of Johnny Gilbert announces the game and the categories for Jeopardy. Play is similar to the TV show, except that you must type your responses. The game automatically starts your typed responses with the initial question (e.g., What is...). You only type the rest of the question, and you omit articles and the final question mark. You cannot press your

“buzzer” until the answer is read and the lights turn on at the top and bottom of the game board. Unlike the TV show, there is no time limit for each round. When you respond correctly, you can take as much time as you wish to choose the next answer.



Game Play

Game play options include normal, tournament, and speed match. For a tournament, you play two games against the same opponents. The player with the highest two game dollar total goes on to the “Tournament of Champions” against two advanced level computer opponents. You have no opponents in the misnamed Speed Match game. You play a single Double Jeopardy board and try to answer all the questions. There is no time limit. You may pass on any question without losing points. The object is to get the highest dollar score for a Solo Game.

You can interrupt game play by pressing the Escape key. This brings up a menu of options. You can save the current game, go back to the main menu to begin a new game, quit Jeopardy!, and set the screen detail level and whether videos will be shown.

Instructions and Help

Jeopardy! comes with a 24-page manual in the CD jewel case. It adequately describes installation and game play. There is no online help other than the announcer.

Bugs, Omissions, and Annoyances

Jeopardy! always leaves my computer in a slightly unstable state. Changing monitor resolutions after quitting Jeopardy! caused problems with my desktop layout. I have a high frequency of soft crashes after playing Jeopardy!

Jeopardy! went into an infinite loop when I was asked to be more specific in a response. I could not delete or backspace over my original response, and pressing return repeatedly resulted in Alex Trebek asking me to be more specific.

Jeopardy! sometimes does not accept correct responses. For example, two different answers required the question "Who is Jules Verne?" However, "Jules Verne" was scored as an incorrect response both times. The name is probably misspelled in Jeopardy!'s database. Similar problems affected other responses where minor differences were incorrectly scored.

The most annoying omission is the inability to override an incorrect decision. Another omission is the inability to add more categories and questions. The game has over 3,500 questions, but each game uses 61. That means you can have fewer than 60 games with completely unique questions. Hasbro Interactive released Jeopardy! Second Edition for Windows and PlayStation, but this is a full game purchase. I do not know if this edition will be released for Macintosh. I would like to see a Jeopardy! game version that supports expansion modules.

Other minor omissions include the inability to bypass or speed-up the TV-style introduction and the inability to choose different opponents. (You can change the overall abilities of the computer opponents, but the two opponents remain the same.)



Side Offset View

The Macintosh version does not include the "Pre-Show" audition that evaluates players and adjusts the initial level of play. I do not consider this a significant omission.

A minor annoyance is the continual switching between three different game board views (see “Game Play” and “Side Offset View” above and “Full Screen View” below). After each question, the view switches. It is too easy to inadvertently click on the wrong game board selection when the view changes.

The American Revolution	Women's Landmarks	Gourmet Cuisine	Crossword Clues "A"	1990's Movies	The Animal Kingdom
\$100	\$100	\$100		\$100	\$100
\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400
\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500

Full Screen View

Opinion

In spite of the minor problems listed above, I enjoy playing Jeopardy!. I played so often while writing this review that I have encountered some questions three times. The game is still challenging for me when set to highest difficulty with adaptive AI (artificial intelligence).

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Review: iTunes 1.0

by Daniel Chvatik, dchvatik@atpm.com

Developer: Apple Computer ([product page](#))

Price: free

Requirements: "All Apple systems released in August 1998 or later" (iMac and later), Mac OS 9.0.4.

Recommended: Mac OS 9.1, internal Apple CD-RW drive required to create custom CDs.



The MP3 "craze" has not died down like some have predicted. On the contrary, MP3s are starting to infiltrate the mass market, with (for example) CD players that can play MP3 files directly from CD-Rs. Both the MP3 hardware and software markets are healthy on the Mac, with about six players to choose from on the hardware side and more than fifty MP3-related programs available for download.

Apple admitted at Macworld San Francisco that they missed the boat on this trend, and they've decided to catch up with a vengeance. At the Expo, Steve Jobs introduced both [new machines](#) that feature CD-RW instead of DVD-ROM drives (and the combination "SuperDrive" in the high-end G4 tower) and a new Apple MP3 player named, in the tradition of iMovie, "iTunes." AppleInsider had already partly spoiled the surprise by rumoring the advent of "iMusic." Well, not quite, guys! Some of the rumors were right though—more about that later. David Ozab further examines the [musical implications](#) for Apple.

The Interface

There are many things worth noticing about iTunes, but two immediately take center stage. The first is the price. iTunes is free; all you have to do is download it from Apple's [iTunes Web site](#). The second is its sleek interface, wrapped into a brushed metal look we first encountered with Sherlock 2 and the QuickTime 4 player. This time though, the brushed metal look seems to be much more appreciated, probably for three reasons. First, we've gotten used to non-standard interfaces (called "faces" or "skins") from other MP3 players. Second, we've had more time to get used to the Sherlock 2/QT look, so it's not quite as shocking anymore. The third and most important reason is that Apple succeeded

this time by combining beauty with functionality in the interface. The iTunes interface wastes less space and puts all the important components within the reach of a mouse click.



Browse the Library

Unlike most other players, iTunes provides all its functionality in a single window without cluttering it too much. How? By operating in different “modes” and changing between them transparently. The image above shows iTunes in its most “complex” mode for browsing, which you can reach by clicking on the eye above “Browse” in the top right of the window. Clicking the eye again exits the mode. The browse mode puts your entire MP3 collection at your fingertips. The operation of this three-pane view is quite intuitive. By applying constraints on the top, you can alter the list of songs displayed on the bottom. You can look for songs by any combination of genre (this can be turned off to simplify the view), artist name, and album title. Alternatively, you can simply enter any text snippet from the song’s information into the text box above “Search.” So, for example, you can find all songs from a specific Britney Spears album, or find all songs whose information contain the text “baby.” Unfortunately, you cannot combine the two methods of finding

songs. Once you have the desired list of songs on the bottom, you can create a new playlist from them. There are different ways to do that, such as dragging and dropping them onto a new playlist or selecting the songs you want by shift- or command-clicking and then choosing “New Playlist from Selection” from the File menu.

The library is special in that it contains all songs that iTunes knows about. When you add a song to another playlist from the Finder, it is also automatically added to the library. Upon installation, iTunes also offers to search your hard disk for existing MP3s and put them at your disposal in the library (note, this process may take a while). Also, you can only enter the browse mode when the library is selected on the left under “Source.” It may be noteworthy that the iTunes library can only hold 32,000 songs, though that should be plenty of room for most uses.

Playlists are an important part of using iTunes. While you can get along without them, they allow you to save your favorite combinations of songs. You create a new playlist as described above, by selecting “New Playlist” from the menu, or by clicking on the new playlist icon at the bottom left of the window. Once created, the name of the playlist is selected so that you can give it a descriptive name. I decided to create a playlist for each of the artists whose CDs I have in my library. While I can select them in the Browse mode, the playlist is just a bit faster.

If you select any of the playlists, you will notice that you automatically exit the browse mode. The eye on the top right is replaced by a funky new button above “Burn CD.” This new mode allows you to burn CDs (that is, if you have one of the new Macs with built-in CD-RW drives). Apple has “promised” to add functionality for older drives in the future, but so far no others are officially supported. We don’t have any of the new Macs (yet), so I couldn’t test the burning. In theory, though, it’s quite simple: Create your playlist, arrange songs in the order you want to have them on the CD, and press the Burn CD button. That’s it. The iTunes preferences let you specify some extra settings like the time gap between songs (two seconds by default). Unfortunately, you cannot set the gaps individually; rather, the setting applies to all songs on the CD equally.

There’s a lot more, but at this point I’ll just give you a short tour of the remaining interface elements: the top left contains the previous, play/pause and next buttons, as well as a volume slider. Those are pretty self-explanatory. In the top middle, you find the information panel.

By clicking on the left triangle, you can switch it between different display modes. The first display gives general information such as elapsed time (or remaining or total time, when you click on it) and a progress bar that shows you where you are in the song and allows you to drag it to another location within the song. It also shows the artist, song title, and album name in a rotating fashion. The second display gives you a graphical frequency analysis, which isn't really useful, but is nevertheless neat. When you're encoding a CD (more on that later), a third display is available that shows the encoding progress and speed. I assume there is also a display for burning, but again, I couldn't test that.

The top right contains the search box, which allows you to show only a subset of the songs in the playlist or library by filtering out songs that do not contain the string in the text box. And last is the mode button that we already explained.

The bottom left contains a group of three icons for creating a new playlist, toggling shuffle (random play) on and off, and setting the repeat mode (off, repeat one, repeat all). The bottom middle contains a summary of the current playlist or library with the number of songs, total play time, and hard disk space used by those songs. The bottom right contains the visuals button (more later) and the CD eject button.

Most of the action takes place in the middle. On the left, in the "sources" list, are the library, playlists, and CDs you may have in the computer (you can play those back as well, of course), and the Radio Tuner. You *cannot* rearrange the playlists; they remain sorted alphabetically. Instead, if you drag one playlist onto another, you copy over the songs from the first to the second list.

Finally there is the list of all songs in the playlist, containing all the usual information. The little check box next to each song lets you temporarily "turn off" the song to skip it during playback. As you would expect, you can resize the columns, rearrange them and change the sorting order by clicking the small triangle in the column once it is selected. You can change which columns are displayed by selecting "View Options" from the Edit menu. It is important to notice that all these settings are specific to each playlist. There is, as far as I know, no way to set them for all playlists. So if you have twenty playlists and want to remove the Comments field on them all, you'll have to do it by hand for each of them. By the way, new playlists seem to take on the settings of the library list when they are created.

Overall, the interface is quite intuitive and easy to use for both newcomers and pros. Most of the interface functionality is mirrored in the menus and has keyboard shortcuts.

If you don't want the whole list to take up your entire screen, you can minimize the window by clicking the minimize button. The window can be resized to your liking even when minimized.



Small Window With Graphic Display



The Smallest iTunes Window

Functionality

So far, so good. It looks pretty and is easy to use. What can it do? In this regard, iTunes is also at the head of the pack. It can play CDs and MP3s (and also some other formats like AIFF and WAV, although it isn't quite clear at this point which formats besides MP3 it supports—it seems that there is some basic integration with QuickTime and that it does or will support every format QuickTime can play back. It can burn CDs. That is a first for the Mac, although [SoundJam MP Plus](#) has tight integration with Toast for CD burning.

Of course, you have to get MP3s from somewhere. iTunes does not support Napster, likely in order to stay away from legal trouble. It does have a “radio tuner” that lets you listen to MP3 radio stations over the Net, but it does not let you record the music—again likely for legal reasons. What it does instead is let you encode MP3s.

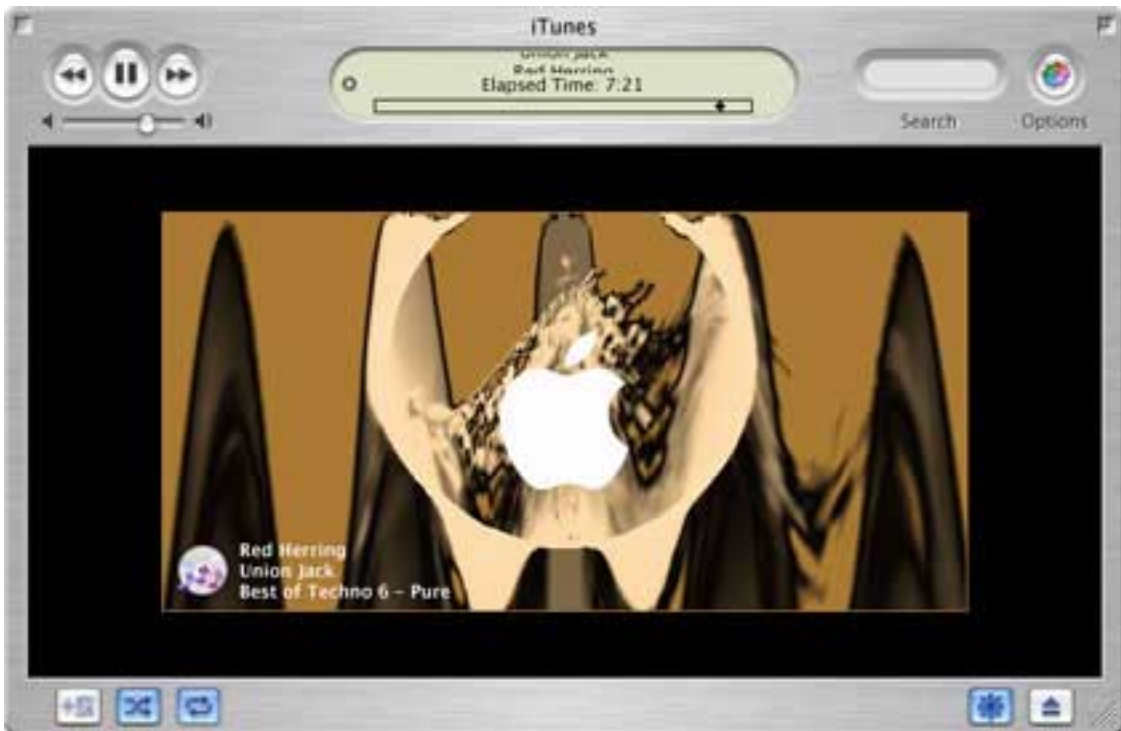


Encoding Songs

Encoding is simple. You insert a CD, and it appears in the source list. You select the CD, and the mode button changes again, this time to “Import.” Clicking the button imports the CD to your library in the iTunes folder of your Documents folder, though you can change the library location in the preferences. Preferences also let you change the encoding quality and even let you use an AIFF or WAV encoder instead if you really want that. You can also set iTunes to import every music CD that is inserted and to eject it automatically once the encoding is finished. Encoding is fast, taking advantage of the Velocity Engine on G4s. On my 450 MHz G4, I got top speeds of 7.3x.

The encoder is very similar to SoundJam's, and there's a reason: according to rumors, Apple bought SoundJam and its top programmer from Casady & Greene. Neither Apple nor C&G officially said anything about this, but the similarities are striking, down to similar dialog boxes and internal structure between the programs. Still, C&G continues to sell SoundJam, and it appears that this will not change any time soon. My personal theory is that Apple licensed parts of SoundJam technology to speed the development of their own program. According to a recent [MDJ](#) report, iTunes was written by Dave Heller and Jef Robbin (of SoundJam fame) and Apple licensed the code from them.

The SoundJam heritage also shows in the radio tuner, which uses the inferior (in my opinion) Kerbango servers from 3COM. They are frequently down, have limited choice, and often your favorite server just disappears after some time. You also need to reload the list of servers every time you exit the program.



Visuals Turn Me On

Many hard-core MP3 fans will be disappointed by the lack of skins in iTunes, but at least they can be assured to have “visual plug-ins.” These popular little programs create amazing graphics that change in time with the music. iTunes only contains one (built-in) plug-in at this point, which appears to be the famous G-Force plug-in from SoundJam. iTunes appears to be extendable with more plug-ins, but it seems that reusing SoundJam plug-ins does not work directly.

Visuals can be turned on from the main window or the Visuals menu and come in four sizes: small, medium, large, and full-screen. The last is not really a new size, but rather changes your screen resolution and removes the rest of the interface so you can enjoy the visuals at full size. The Apple logo and song information fade away after a few seconds.

When I said that iTunes gets by with only one window, that was only partially true. The View Options and Preferences have their own dialogs, and you can open playlists in new windows. While you can edit song information (ID3 tags) directly in the playlist and library, some items are only available in the information dialog. Like SoundJam, the dialog lets you edit multiple files at once, for example, if you want to change the genre of multiple files simultaneously.

And of course, iTunes supports CDDB lookup and submissions (by the way, the company is now called “Gracenote” and no longer CDDB). The Advanced menu has a feature for MP3 conversion of older files. It seems like that function can even be used to downsample existing MP3s, for example for use in portable MP3 players. File menu has a command to reveal the sound file for the selected song in the Finder, although you should rarely need that. Like SoundJam, the song information lets you make individual songs louder or quieter, and lets you cut away part of the beginning and end, if desired.

Support for hardware MP3 players cannot be missing in Apple's new "digital hub" strategy, and therefore iTunes supports the following MP3 players: Nakamichi SoundSpace 2, Nomad II & II MG, Nomad Jukebox, Nike ps[play 60 & 120, and Rio 500, 600 & 800. They appear just like a CD or playlist would. Copying files over is just like moving songs to a new playlist. It pretty much works like SoundJam yet again in that regard.



Uploading to Rio 500

Despite all this functionality, some items are missing. Skins for one—although in this case, they wouldn't really fit. Little specials like Karaoke and alarm clock are also gone. But what I miss most dearly is a graphical equalizer that allows you to change settings from Pop to Classical or use a custom setting to change the bass or treble. Gone also are the ability to have hierarchical folder structures in the playlists. That's a regression, in my mind, although it allows the interface to be cleaner. Also, unlike SoundJam, there is no broadcasting ability over the Net.

The Nitty Gritty

While I think iTunes is a great program, some things about it bother me. For one, it's slow, especially once you add a lot of songs. Just try clicking on your playlists back and forth. It takes over a second to load a short list. The redraw is so slow that you can actually see it. This is not a big problem if you just listen to music, but if you want to actively manage your playlists, it can be quite annoying.

Also, iTunes is really bad for those with files that have improper ID3 tags (e.g., if you get music from Napster). The whole organizational system of iTunes relies on proper tags, and will break down if your files don't have the proper information. This is not a problem for those who get their music from encoding CDs while they have an Internet connection to look up the information.

Something that may be confusing to some people is the distinction between playlist and library. When you remove a file from the playlist, it is still in the library (and on your disk). If you remove it from the library, though, it disappears from the other lists as well and possibly from the hard disk (it will ask you whether you want to delete the file from the disk).

iTunes did a pretty good job following files on my hard disk, until this morning. I moved some files around to see if it would still find them. Previously it would find them, even if I moved them to another disk. However, today it didn't. Instead, it asked whether I could locate them for the program. Ok, no problem. I found the file and selected it. Again, iTunes still could not find that file even though I just showed it exactly where the file was. This kind of a bug shouldn't occur. I had to remove the file from the library and add it again from the Finder. In the weeks that I tested the program, I found several smaller bugs like that.

There are also inconsistencies in the user interface. While the playlists support "typeahead," the ability to type the first few letters of an item's name to select it from the list, this stops working inside the three filter panes in the Browser mode. The shuffle (random) mode is quite badly done. While it remembers the list of random songs in the past, and so allows you to step back through it in the reverse order, it often randomizes songs in the same order, so if you start over playing the list, you will get the songs in the same "random" order over and over again. Worse, it doesn't randomize the order linearly,

so you may end up hearing a song three or more times before it finally gets to a song it hasn't played at all before. Also, iTunes does *not* support AppleScript or Balloon help. Amazing how Apple ignores its own technologies.

So far, iTunes is only available in US English. According to Apple, "[v]ersions of iTunes for International English, Japanese, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Dutch will be available February 2001 followed shortly by Brazilian Portuguese, French Canadian, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Chinese, Swedish and Korean versions." Apple also promised CD-R plug-ins for CD burning, and hopefully visual plug-ins will follow. A [hack](#) was posted that allowed burning on external "Yamaha 4260" drives, but was pulled as far as I know. iTunes requires OS 9.0.4, although [another hack](#) was posted that allows it to run on OS 8.6. We haven't tried it, so proceed at your own risk!

Also, Apple claims you need an iMac or later to run iTunes, but we have tested it successfully on platinum G3s down to older Power Macs. So if in doubt, just download it and see if it runs.

[One more hack](#) allows the options in iTunes to work with a single click, even when in the background. Apple has also posted a [firmware update](#) for iMacs with DVD-ROM and the Cube, improving the "audio extraction performance."

Also, according to Apple, iTunes does not currently work on OS X, but future versions will.

Conclusion

With [275,000 downloads](#) in the first week alone, iTunes is poised for success. It will soon come with every new Mac that leaves Apple's factory walls. I would have thought that this would be a death blow for the other MP3 programs. Yet the weeks after iTunes' release witnessed the release of [Unsanity Echo](#), yet another spiffy new MP3 player for the Mac with an amazing feature set for \$19.79 (although the program operates in unlimited trial forever). And Subband released their AMP Radio as [MacAMP 2.0](#), with many new functions, and a powerful broadcasting feature. Its price tag is \$15. We'll have to see how these programs do.

iTunes is a great program; I now use it almost exclusively. It works with my CDs, my MP3s, and my MP3 players, and soon, when I get my new Mac, I'll also be able to burn music CDs with little effort. Sure, it has no skins, no broadcasting, no Karaoke, and no alarm clock. But these are features I never really used anyway. For me, it's close to perfect.

But it's not for everyone. For many, the limited feature set compared to SoundJam is a regression. It is slow, maybe too slow for some. Not everyone will like the interface. There are no visuals and no support for other CD-R drives yet. It requires (unless you hack it) Mac OS 9. I decided to give it "just" a Very Nice because I think these problems could have been addressed, and they make it less than perfect for many users. Also, the bar has been raised by Audion 2, SoundJam MP Pro, and many of the newer programs. It isn't enough to put a subset of the functionality into a smarter interface. There will be a market (albeit smaller) for all the other programs. But iTunes 1.0 will win the hearts of many people new to digital music, and has laid a wonderful foundation for the next version.

Related Reviews

- [iTunes on MP3.com](#)
- [iTunes on Business Week](#)

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Review: Links LS 2000

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

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

Price: \$49.99 ([list](#))

Requirements: 120 MHz Mac with, Mac OS 8.5, 128 MB RAM.

Trial: None.



I'll be honest—I don't like playing golf. I've never seen the point of hitting a small white ball around a grassy area, finding said ball, and repeating the process till the ball ends up in the hole. Personally, if I'm trying to sink a ball into a hole, I'll go out and play pool.

That being said, I've always enjoyed computer golf games. I don't know why, I just do. Growing up, I played a whole bunch of the Electronic Arts games on my Sega Genesis and had an older copy of Links on my old LC III. I'm not sure, but I may have had an old golf game on my Apple IIe. When I heard that Links 2000 was available for the Mac, I knew it was something I wanted to try.

Gameplay

Coming from somebody who has played these games for a while, it seems like we may have exhausted all the ways to actually play computer golf—aim the cursor, click to start the swing, click to end the backswing (and set the swing power), and click to hit the ball (and set the shot accuracy). Links LS adds to this a little, but its additions are not entirely successful.

The easy mode eliminates the final click, allowing new users to concern themselves only with shot power. Also, this mode adjusts the power of the swing based on where you have aimed the shot instead of making the user decide on the power of the swing. All in all, it is a good way for beginners to learn the game.

The PowerStroke option, Links LS' new advanced swing, is less successful than the other swing options. You must click to start your swing, move the mouse to the right for your backswing, to the left for the downswing, and click to strike the ball. Also, the angle and speed of your mouse movement affect the way that the ball travels. Anybody who tries

this motion will discover the inherent limitations of using a mouse to play golf. If you tend to sweep the mouse in an arc-like motion, as I do, this will screw up your shot. If I concentrate, I can overcome this to move the mouse in a consistently straight line. This comes at the expense of speed, which means my shots aren't as powerful and do not travel as far. Finally, my mouse occasionally sticks when moved quickly in different directions. My mouse is somewhat old and probably ready for a replacement, but I have heard that there may be similar problems with optical mice when moved rapidly.



Teeing it up on one of Hawaii's beautiful courses. Life is good.

As you would expect, Links LS 2000 lets you modify your shot to simulate most of the options golfers have when they are on the course: chip, draw, putt, adjusting the stance, etc.

I have one other complaint about the game play, though: the game seems to register some mouse clicks late while swinging the club.

Options

With all the game play options offered by Links LS 2000, you could play for a long time without reusing the same options twice.

For starters, you will probably want to create your own player. Yeah, it's nice to pretend to be a real professional golfer, like Links LS 2000's Arnold Palmer or Fuzzy Zoeller, but it's somehow more satisfying to see your name sharing a score card with the same gentlemen. For creating players, you choose your skill level, clubs, shot type, and the look of your golfer. This look consists of your shirt color and one of 12 animations—Arnie, Fuzzy, five generic men, and five generic women.

Then you have the option of six famous courses—three at St. Andrews, the Covered Bridge course in Indiana, and the Mauna Kea and Hapuna courses in Hawaii. As with golf in the real world, you have the option of playing a full eighteen holes, the front nine, or the back nine, although some games require you to play the full eighteen. I can say that the courses are well done and that the art work will not disappoint.

Of course, almost no game would be complete without having different types of game play. Out of the box, Links LS 2000 contains 35 different game styles, or Modes of Play (MOP). These MOPs fit into one of four categories: stroke based, skins based, match/Nassau based, and wolf based. Stroke based is the standard game, where score is relative to par. Skins based is a more high-stake game with dollar value assigned to each hole. The winner of the hole gets the money for the hole. Match/Nassau based games are decided by the number of holes each golfer wins. Wolf based is similar to skins based game, except that there is a wolf assigned for each hole and the wolf gets a bonus for winning the hole. You can also create your own MOPs should you feel a desire to create your own game of golf.

Finally, you can choose how you are going to play—a single game by yourself, a tournament in a tour, or a multiplayer game. The tournaments in a tour are called Virtual Tournaments—you play a four-day, 72-hole game against computer opponents of similar skill level. For multiplayer games, you have three options—you can sit down at the computer with some friends and pass the mouse when it's time to shoot, you can play

online through the GameRanger service, or you can record your round and send it to a friend who can play the same course and conditions to compare the final scores. From my point of view, it seems like Links LS 2000 covers all contingencies if you are trying to set up a game with friends.



Arnold Palmer sets up for his shot.

Extras

Links LS 2000 comes on three CDs. The first two CDs contain the files necessary for basic game play. The third CD is a multimedia CD—it contains ten movies covering the golf courses, Fuzzy Zoeller, the Wolf Challenge, and some other related subjects. While not

necessary for game play, these movies could prove interesting for somebody who wants to know more about the golf world. I am somewhat disappointed that there isn't an Arnold Palmer feature, though. Personally, I would rather hear about Arnie than Fuzzy.



Lining up for the birdie put.

Conclusion

Excluding Tiger Woods, Links LS 2000 packs just about everything you could want in a golf game onto its three CDs. Although I think it would be difficult for a gamer to pick Links and be entertained for hours on end, it could be just what you're looking for if you're trying to squeeze in a round but just can't get out to the course. There are some elements of the game that can't survive the transition to the computer, but Links LS 2000 does a decent job of capturing the feel of the game.

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Review: Que! Fire CD-RW Drive

by David Ozab, dozab@atpm.com

Developer: QPS, Inc. ([product page](#))

Price: \$269

Requirements: Mac with FireWire, Mac OS 8.6.

Trial: None



Background

The release of the Blue and White Power Mac G3 in January 1999 marked the first time that Apple shipped a professional desktop computer without a standard SCSI port. Instead, it had two USB ports (introduced five months earlier on the original iMac) and two brand new FireWire ports. Apple promised that FireWire would become the industry standard for high speed data transfer, and, in particular, streaming audio and video.

When I purchased my G3 (in April 1999) I knew that I would eventually buy a CD burner as well. I could have ordered the computer with a SCSI drive and SCSI port, but decided instead to wait out my options. Recently, I made my decision, and purchased a Que! Fire CD-RW drive.



Say Que!

QPS Inc. had been a pioneer in USB CD-RW drives with their original Que! drive. Though rated at 4x2x24, this drive, and all other USB drives, were unable to burn audio at faster than 2x. Since higher burn speeds result in higher quality audio, USB (at least Apple's implementation) turned out to be inadequate for audio CD burning, which, as a musician, was my principal reason for buying a CD burner. FireWire, though, has a much higher bandwidth than USB and seemed a perfect solution for both CD duplication and external

storage (I'll discuss my choice of an external hard drive next month). I priced various models, and found a great deal through Outpost.com (one of our sponsors) on the Que! Fire 8x4x32 CD-RW drive.

Packaging

Usually, I don't think much about packaging, but QPS does a superior job with their merchandise. Upon opening the box, I found a stylish soft black case with "Que! Drive" emblazoned in gold. Inside the case, the drive, cables and included media were neatly packaged. I'm not sure that I'll ever need a carrying case for my Que! drive, but it's a nice touch.

Hardware Installation

This is where the advantage of FireWire (and its slower companion, USB) over SCSI becomes obvious. Installation is so simple. One cable (with power supply adaptor) plugs in your power strip and the other connects to the FireWire port. Power it up, and it's time to install software.

Software Installation

This part is almost as easy. The Que! drive ships with a software CD featuring Adaptec Toast. As long as the correct Apple FireWire drivers are in the extension folder (at least version 2.2), installing Toast also configures the drive and installs the correct extensions. I did say "almost as easy" and here's the catch. After rebooting, go to Extensions Manager, disable Toast USB Support, and reboot again. My drive had some problems at first, which I solved by disabling the unnecessary USB extension.

Ready to Burn

First, I tested the drive as an audio burner. Using the inexpensive generic CD-R included, I burned a data file at 8x with no problems. Then, using another cheap disc (which I would never recommend), I burned an audio file at 8x. The drive and the interface had no problems with the extra demands of audio either. Note that I only did this as a test. For real-world use, I recommend good quality blanks (blue is good, gold is a bit better) and a 4x burn. Though quality does increase with burn speed, some older CD players (and most car stereo systems) can't read discs burned at faster than 4x.

Then, I tested the drive with rewritable media. Here's where high quality discs seem to make a big difference. Using the included disc (Mr. Platinum 650MB), I was unable to burn successfully above 2x. I was able to run 4x in simulation mode, however, which suggest the problem was with the disc, and not the burner. Subsequently, I ran the same test with an Imation CD-RW, and was able to burn data successfully at 4x. I'm not sure whether it's the interface or the burner itself that's picky, but save yourself some time and trouble and buy good media (this is sound advice in general).

Final Thought

The Que! Fire drive is easy to set up, and easy to use, and when I had problems (the extension conflict I mentioned above) technical support was very helpful. One strange side note, though. My internal drive was unable to play DVDs for a few weeks. This problem appeared mysteriously after I installed the Que! drive, and disappeared just as mysteriously when I updated to Mac OS 9.1. I'm not sure if it was a conflict or just a coincidence.

Addendum

On some systems (including mine) Toast will either malfunction or break completely under Mac OS 9.1. A definite cause is yet to be determined.

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



Review: Iomega Zip CD-RW 4x4x6

by David Ross, david@digitalpeninsula.com

Developer: Iomega ([product page](#))

Price: \$279–299

Requirements: G3-based Mac with USB, Mac OS 8.6.

Recommended: 680 MB hard disk space (for CD duplication).



The Iomega ZipCD 650 USB looks good, is easy to use, produces excellent results, and its technical support is speedy and efficient. Yet I wish I'd never bought it.

Installation

Buying, installing, and using it is easy. This 4x4x6 CD-RW cost £180 UK pounds inclusive of local taxes (although inexpensive, you should note that the pre-tax UK price of £155 equates to around \$30 less than the price quoted here). I was able to order online over a weekend with delivery on Tuesday.

The drive itself is a one-color-fits-all purple which may not integrate 100% with my blueberry iMac but hey, I'm after functionality, not fashion. And at the price paid, I was also willing to overlook the rather flimsy CD tray.

Setup and installation were easy. With a funky jazz track in the background, an Australian woman talks you through a simple process designed for new users that enables you to learn about the software, view the hardware installation guide, and view the user manual, as well as install the software. Unless you particularly like the music or have a thing for antipodean accents, the seasoned Mac hack should just double-click and install.

At this point, it has to be said that I started casting an envious eye over the extras that come for use on a PC. Still, no point in fretting. I've used Macs long enough to get used to the limited range of software available on peripherals.

Burning CDs

The ZipCD contains Toast 4.0, and although I'd never used a CD-RW before, I found it easy to set up and understand. If I faced any problems, there was always a comforting PDF manual on hand to refer to.

The Toast interface appears mid-screen with what at first I took to be firefighter's helmet but which, on further inspection, turned out to be a couple of slices popping out of a toaster on a platter. Instructions couldn't be clearer. The intuitive interface and the application of drag-and-drop means that most Mac users should have no difficulty in making sure this particular piece of Toast lands butter side up. There is a drop down menu for the Toast functions—files and folders, audio CD, and disc copy. Below that is a recorder status box that lets you know if Toast can detect the drive's presence or not. So far so good. Time to try it out as I gingerly selected the (default) files and folders function for text data.



Within minutes, I was burning my first CD with nothing more than a cursory glance at the manual. I'd heard horror stories about the time it takes to burn a CD so I started off with a 50 MB text folder to get the feel of things. Having dragged and dropped, I chose Simulation Mode from the Recorder menu—a handy little function which, as you would expect from the title, simulates a recording in real time. If all goes well, there should be no Toaster coasters when it comes to the real thing.

Moving on to creating an actual CD, there is one item that needs to be foremost in your mind. After choosing Write CD you will be given the options of Write Session or Write Disk. Session allows you to use the unused segment of a CD-R at a later date. With a CD-RW, the same option allows you to update or add new material without having to erase the original. This, of course, assumes you have enough space left on the disk. You can check this by going to Disc Info under the Recorder menu.

Choosing Write Disk on a CD-R means that, once the disk is written, it can't be used again. With a CD-RW, you can use the disk again if you've chosen this option, but you will have to erase the existing contents first. If you are absolutely certain that you won't need to use a particular disk again, choose Write Disk; otherwise play safe and go with Write Session.

I was pleasantly surprised that in under five minutes, my CD was ready. Having also read tales about CDs that would only work on the machine that created them, I forsook my G3 iMac 350 (Mac OS 9.0.4) and tested the CD on my old Power Mac 5500/225 (Mac OS 8.1).

Everything was perfect, even down to the custom folder icon on the desktop. Until now, my backup process involved e-mailing between my two machines. No more. By copying to the desktop and replacing the old folder on the Power Mac when prompted, I had acquired an instant update. Just what I wanted a CD-RW for.

Having tested the water and found my feet getting enjoyably wet, it was now time for total immersion—some serious backup. Time to store every piece of data I needed for work, every little thing that I needed which wasn't on an installation disk, and, importantly, every download on my computer that had taken more than 15 minutes. You may laugh, but this is an important issue to those of us on this side of the big pond. ISPs think nothing of cutting off Net access after a maximum of two hours, and often much less than that. An effective backup means an end to howls of anger when a download approaches 95% just as a Finder message tells me I've been disconnected.

At 4x, a full 650MB disk should be ready in just under 20 minutes—and it was. One thing to watch out for here—after writing the disk, Toast will ask if you want to verify it. If you don't eject within a few seconds, verification takes place automatically, adding more time to the process. And of course, the more you've written, the longer the verification process—up to 12 minutes on a full disk.

Time is relative. As a newcomer to CD writing, I was happy to let the verification process ride, though I'm not sure what options would be left if it failed to verify. (Presumably, the ability to wipe the disk so that it is reusable. Either Toast is unclear about this or I have missed something.)

Now some people might think 20 minutes is a long time, but I was happy to get a break from my desk, stretch my legs, make a coffee, and read the newspaper while the CD burned (fairly) quietly in the background.

Then the Trouble Began

I was just thinking about what to do next—test the audio CD function, perhaps try to copy an audio CD, or maybe try out the optional audio play facility—when I got the first inklings that something was up. While busy in AppleWorks, I started receiving error messages, number -110, an odd address or out of range error. I was a bit perplexed by this but, as nothing shut down, I foolishly carried on as normal.

Next came the online freezes, first in IE 5, then with Netscape 4.74, and finally with Netscape 6. Reasoning it couldn't be all three browsers that were awry, and not wanting to believe my lovely new drive could be causing problems, I started going through my folders, discarding old items, demos past their trial date, preferences for long-dead software, that kind of thing. I even gave my mouse a long-awaited and much-needed clean.

But things just got worse.

Memory error messages started creeping in for no good reason. Then came the crashes, the inability to reboot, and spookiest of all, a Mac which had been put to sleep overnight was now awake before me in the morning. Given that the year is 2001 and I'm called Dave, I was tempted to start calling it HAL!

The next step was to start reading up on Forums. I visited all the usual suspects, learning as much as I could about possible problems with CD-RWs. This prompted me to update to Toast 4.1.2 and start again.

I've got to stress here that at no time did the drive itself give me any grief. It burned away happily, and my backup has never been so secure. Both CD-R and CD-RW functions worked fine. I've had no problems with using my disks on PCs. And how anyone can complain about speed when a 650 MB disk can be filled in under 20 minutes is beyond me. Though with the associated problems, I still haven't used the audio CD facility.

Still the freezes and crashes persisted. So now it was off to Iomega's Web site for some tech help. Their assistance was first class. Online help is available Monday through Friday, and unlike some other online services, it's accessed quickly. There are even a couple of icons to let you know their operative is reading/researching or typing, a boon to anyone who's ever been left hanging in the ether wondering where their online support has got to.

And, also unusual, they know their Macs. The response I normally get from online support is "a Macintosh? Uh, hold on...yeah, I think we've got somebody knows about them...um, err, doesn't appear to be around at the moment," or words to that effect.

At Iomega, by typing in your OS as well as the product *before* you speak to a helpline assistant, you are guaranteed to get someone familiar with Mac OS broadly, if not with particular systems or machines. Iomega also leaves you with a screen page transcript of your session, and will e-mail you a copy for future reference.

The advice I got was sound. Basically, some idiot (me) was using his CD-RW with a USB hub rather than plugging directly into the iMac. Problem solved? Not really.

Online support is one thing, but as I'm in the UK, I'm running eight hours ahead of PST, so it was the following morning before I tried to fix things. Still the same. Sudden quits, including several while writing this article, Disk First Aid forever claiming to repairing the hard drive during restarts, freezes on start-up. TechTool Pro telling me my system's fine. And by now it was a weekend so it was back to Iomega, this time by e-mail.

Again a prompt response, from their European HQ, suggesting, for the first time, that there may be an extensions conflict, in which case the offending item is the software rather than the drive. A phone call to their London office was less productive, more or less claiming that this kind of thing was to be expected and that it was other manufacturers faults that their products weren't compliant with Iomega's drive!

Perhaps I'm being incredibly naive, but I don't expect to have to change a scanner and printer that have served me well (and in any case are under a year old) when I buy a new piece of hardware. Especially when the hardware claims to be fully compliant with my machine, OS, and other peripherals.

The upshot of this advice was: only plug in the drive when you want to use it, do the same with other peripherals, or disable extensions for other peripherals until the source of the conflict is identified. Since the great claim for USB is its ability to be hot pluggable, the idea of constantly plugging, unplugging, and restarting forever and a day until a possible extensions conflict can be found is a distinctly unappetizing one.

And, since the drive itself works perfectly well, it can't be sent back. Even if it could, there is no guarantee that the same thing wouldn't happen again. And if it is a software problem? Well, what then? Toast seems to be pretty standard for the Mac, and I've got the latest update installed. I've already tried reinstalling the original software and the results are the same.

Much as I prefer to have a life as well, it looks as if I'll have to go through the monotonous procedure of checking extensions or creating a duplicate set of extensions for work with the ZipCD drive only. Either way, it's not an ideal solution.

Conclusion

Steve Jobs' confession that Apple missed out with CD-RW drives is welcome, and their inclusion on new Macs is welcome if long overdue. But it doesn't solve the problem for those of us who either don't want to or can't afford to buy new. My iMac is less than a year old, and I'd hoped to be running it for some time yet.

So, in the final analysis, my experience of the Iomega USB ZipCD drive is: great little machine, looks good, functions well, not a single coaster to its name, and the price represents value for money. But the price of wreaking havoc with a machine which had worked perfectly beforehand and the time spent in seeking support and making alterations to my system is far too high for this particular consumer.

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

Hardware and Software Reviews

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

Shareware Reviews

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

Which Products Have You Reviewed?

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

What is Your Rating Scale?

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

Will You Review My Product?

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

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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.



Trivia Challenge

by Edward Goss, egoss@atpm.com

Answers to “Fun With Numbers”

The winner of last month’s *Trivia Challenge*, “Fun With Numbers,” was Steve Klein. The answers are:

1. The number of FireWire ports on a Bronze PowerBook.	D. 0 (zero)
2. The number of grooves on both sides of a 45 RPM record.	F. 2
3. The number of primary colors.	J. 3
4. The number of RAM slots in a Power Mac 8500.	E. 8
5. The number of Provinces in Canada.	O. 10
6. The number of moons orbiting Jupiter.	H. 12
7. The speed—in MHz—of a Mac Classic II.	A. 16
8. The number of teeth in a human mouth.	K. 32
9. The number of ways to leave your lover.	N. 50
10. The number of US Dollars in a “C-note.”	B. 100
11. The number of laps to complete the Indianapolis 500 auto race.	M. 200
12. The number of bones in the human body.	G. 206
13. The maximum resolution (in DPI) of an Apple Personal LaserWriter LS.	C. 300
14. The Area Code of Cupertino, CA.	L. 408
15. The Area Code of Redmond, WA.	I. 425

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