

# ATPM



*About This Particular Macintosh™ 5.10: About the **personal** computing experience™*

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Info-Mac and all its Mirrors

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The CD-ROMs Accompanying:

*MacFan*, [MacFormat](#), [Macintosh Magazine & Internet](#), [Macworld UK](#), [Inside Mac Games](#)

**Any others? Let us know!**

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1. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/aboutthisparticu>

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# Welcome

Welcome to the October issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* Our autumn collection of **Audacious Tidbits** and **Puckish Musings** is designed to lift your spirits and satisfy your Mac-loving senses. The past month has been a delightful time for Mac users but a “rocky road” for Apple investors. You’ll read about it all inside this month’s issue.

## Mr. Bush Shouldn’t Have All The Fun

Relax. We’re not taking sides but we are taking numbers! No matter your political preference, we want your view on a bunch of different items (The stuff that really counts!). Each month the editors of ATPM will offer readers an opportunity to voice your opinion on a timely, Mac-specific question. No matter the outcome of next year’s presidential election, we want every Mac user to be the real winner. Your vote counts! Vote early and please come back often—about the first of every month. The survey questions will appear only on our [home page](#)<sup>1</sup> but the results will be published in our Internet magazine.

Here are the results of last month’s poll:

What is your favorite iBook color?

Blueberry: 51%

Tangerine: 42%

No Preference: 7%

## The Franco-iBook War

At press time Apple Computer was in a skirmish of sorts with the French military. It appears that the radio frequency used by the iBook for remote, wireless communication has been set-aside by America’s oldest ally for military purposes. The choice is either the French military scraps its communication equipment or Apple modifies its products for the French market. We wonder if the Belgian armed forces have surplus communication equipment they could lend to our friends in France? Musings aside, we expect slightly modified Apple products to arrive on French shores momentarily.

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



## Viva La Canada

Moving from France to French-speaking Quebec, Daniel Chvatik, ATPM's managing editor has new desktop pictures from his recent travels to Montreal. If the Internet really is the new way to see the world, Daniel's snapshots guarantee that all readers have a window seat with a view. Please see Daniel's stunning images with a decidedly French Canadian flavor in this month's electronic pages.

## OS 9 Should Be Mine

The forthcoming release of Mac OS 9 has the ATPM staff very excited. Staff members who have been seeded advance copies of the latest and greatest version of Apple's legendary OS tell us no one will be disappointed. The extraordinary improvements to Sherlock (Apple's fully integrated Internet search tool) are enough for us to recommend OS 9 to Mac owners. Please support your favorite Macintosh e-zine by pre-ordering your copy from [Small Dog Electronics](http://www.smalldog.com)<sup>2</sup> today.

## Hitting the Skids

Apple watchers witnessed with chagrin the recent sell-off of Apple stock. It appears that too much good news is bad news in the minds of people who trade stocks. Pre-orders for new G4 systems reached 150,000 units in just three weeks after they were announced. Motorola was unable to keep pace with Apple's chip orders so the delivery of chips was delayed. One would think the popularity of Apple's products would be a good thing. But the delays have caused the sale of the G4 machines to be booked in Apple's new fiscal year rather than the old one that closed at the end of September. So what if the sales are booked a couple of weeks later than originally planned? The unprecedented demand for an Apple product should be treated as good news.

To help end public misunderstanding about the unprecedented demand for Apple's G4 systems, we recommend that our friends in Cupertino take the following steps:

- When earnings for the quarter that ended in September are released later this month the company should publicly announce its own earnings estimate for the current quarter. This estimate should include the increase in sales and earnings from the G4 sales that didn't make it into the prior period (What a difference two weeks make!).

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

- Apple should publicly announce the total number of back-ordered G4s (demand has been well beyond Apple's and Motorola's expectations) with concrete ship dates for the back-ordered machines (Let the people on Wall Street and Main Street know what's happening).

These and similar issues will be covered in greater detail in the quarterly *Apples, Kids & Attitude* column scheduled for our November issue.

## CSS

Computer users are more than familiar with using initials for technologies and methods instead of names. There's one more set that should be at the top of every geekster's list. Cascading Style Sheets (or CSS for those in the know) are a real solution for Webmasters beset with mundane, look-alike pages. Please read Michael Tsai's *Personal Computing Paradigm* for more information.

## Put A New Face On It

Do you recall the aluminum siding craze of the 1960s? It looked really cool on a house until neighborhood kids dinged the stuff with baseballs. The good news about putting a new face on your Mac desktop is that it doesn't cost thousands of dollars and Danny DeVito won't be showing up at the door. In this month's *Shareware Roundup*, William Lovett evaluates Mac OS appearance enhancements. Whether you'd prefer a sandlot look or a major league improvement, we're sure there'll be a few "home runs" among his recommendations.

## Psst...It's Ist!

Ed Goss, ATPM's trivia titan and t-shirt tycoon is a quiet, soft-spoken kind of guy. We can imagine him as the voice-over man for a digital version of the old "Password" game show. But there's little about Ed's talents and generosity that should be mentioned in hushed tones. In addition to the cerebral calisthenics he provides our readers, Ed antes up a free ATPM t-shirt for the first two people who email him the all the correct answers to his questions. Visit Ed's trivia column for your chance to win.

## Tropical Storm Tom

As a government employee in rain-ravaged Tampa Bay, ATPM's Tom Iovino has been working overtime to ensure that emergency shelters and other regional disaster facilities are well stocked in the event of another major storm. No stranger to turbulence, Tom's column often

tackles the tough issues others are afraid to address. This month, Tom seeks to “spook” readers in a slightly different way. Please see Tom’s Halloween recollection in this issue’s *Apple Cider*.

## Let’s Do Lunch

ATPM’s “Hollywood Guy,” Mike Shields, is an interesting fellow. Behind the dark shades and Tinseltown grin lies the heart of a suffering screenwriter. Originally hailing from artsy “NOHO,” Mike keeps to a Hollywood-style work schedule. We hardly hear from him before deadline. He’s promised us a late-month column on digital video, but we’re never quite sure what topics he has in store. Check out Mike’s stuff for a few push-the-deadline surprises!

## Is There A Shrink In The House?

Well, almost. The editors of ATPM would like to introduce our latest staff member, Scott Feldstein. Scott’s a bright and energetic graduate student in educational psychology. A competent “Mac techie” in his own right, Scott prefers to explore the greatest reason for the Mac’s success—the creative genius and unique preferences of the people who choose to sit behind an Apple-branded box. A double installment of his new column entitled *User Preference* debuts in this month’s issue.

## InDesign Is Out The Door

InDesign, the new page layout program from Adobe Systems, has finally appeared on retail shelves. Oft dubbed the “Quark Killer” while in development, InDesign sports a modular architecture that supports third-party enhancements via plug-ins and includes translators for XPress documents.

Will InDesign live up to Adobe’s expectations that it will supplant XPress as the #1 page-layout application in the desktop pre-press market? Initial sales reports indicate that the product is a run-away success. Priced at \$299 (list price \$699) for owners of Quark Xpress and a few of Adobe’s own products, the company is aggressively pricing InDesign to gain market share. The staff of ATPM will be watching the battle for pre-press supremacy very closely. Check back each month for the latest developments.

## This Month’s Reviews Include

- CD Stomper Pro 3.2.6
- Extension Overload 4.5.1

- iCatch
- iMate
- MacHeadlines Pro 1.8
- ShrinkWrap 3.5

Please enjoy our latest issue!

The ATPM Staff



# Email

## Other Chess Options

I read your [article](#)<sup>1</sup> on the shareware chess options on the Mac, but you missed one important way of feeding a chess addiction.

IMHO, better than either ChessWorks or Yahoo! for network play are [FICS \(Free Internet Chess Server\)](#)<sup>2</sup> and [ICC \(Internet Chess Club\)](#)<sup>3</sup>. Both servers support various Macintosh interfaces (my preference is “Fixation”), and both servers have ample competition for players of almost every level (rank beginners will find FICS and ICC **very** frustrating). The interfaces can be downloaded from the servers' homepages: <http://www.freechess.org> and <http://www.chessclub.com> respectively.

**Tim Kokesh**

[tim@blueneptune.com](mailto:tim@blueneptune.com)

...

## We're Glad You Like It

It's almost a year I read your e-magazine and as it never caught up with me I appreciated it for the insightful articles and seriousness.

This issue was a blast, really interesting, funny and nearer to my tastes. I liked most of the articles (I always like them but this time appear more likely ;^) especially the *Apple Cider*, which remembered my situation and thought out a lot about computer speed and well written programs.

Anyway keep up the good work!

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1. <http://www.atpm.com/5.09/roundup.shtml>
  2. <telnet://freechess.org:5000>
  3. <telnet://chessclub.com:5000>

**Francesco Zavarese**

[ronin3@libero.it](mailto:ronin3@libero.it)

...

## iBook Color Poll

iBook color question: horrible. I wrestle nightly with that very problem: whether to make a splash at StarBuck's (tangerine, of course) or conduct a business meeting tastefully, but not so tasteful as a PowerBook (blueberry, I'm sure). The ideal would have been lime, but alas. Maybe next year. Please don't let this categorize me as a subscriber with (ugh) No Opinion.

[VOroak@aol.com](mailto:VOroak@aol.com)

...

## Chess

I've just read your article on the chess games available for the Mac. I've got another contender to add—surprisingly, it comes from New Zealand like I do (no, I have nothing to do with it). RChess (available at the HyperArchive) is perfect for people like me. It has 9 levels ranging from Politician through Lawyer, Hopelessly Drunk, Used To Play At School, Kasparov, up to Tortoise. It's easy to use, relatively easy to look at and has a good range of levels. It's also small—148K.

It gets my vote anyway.

**Scott Fannen**

[escottf@ihug.co.nz](mailto:escottf@ihug.co.nz)

...

## FreeMac Details

I thought you might be interested to know the terms of the iMac giveaway reported in your last issue. The details can be found by doing a search of the IDG Web site under “free iMac,” but the essentials are listed below:

1. Customers must apply for and receive a First USA credit card.
2. Customers must use said card to purchase 3 year contract with Earthlink (recently announced merger with Mindspring) ISP at \$19.95/mo.
3. 2 GB of hard drive will be reserved for built in advertising. 1/3 of total capacity ouch.
4. iMacs will be secured from Ingram Micro, for now.

So you buy standard Internet service through a respected ISP at the normal rate, but you still have to give up 2 GB of hard drive space when you only get 6! If you had to be subjected to the “floating ad banner” while on-line that would be one thing, but to be subjected to constant ads anytime you use the computer...that's very annoying. Never mind sacrificing screen space on a 15" screen. Plus you are obviously being monitored somehow, otherwise what's to prevent you from simply doing a clean reinstall to get rid of the pesky ads and reclaim precious disk space? But how are you being monitored? We aren't told and the FreeMac website has no links to privacy or any other type of policy.

You can't really compare this to the PC ‘deals’ that require you to purchase a three year ISP contract (example, eMachine and AOL/CompuServe). Those deals only result in a substantial discount, not a free computer. On the other hand they don't take over 1/3 of your hard drive either. More to the point none of those deals are offered in conjunction with a Mac as far as I know.

I like the iMac, I'd love a free one, but I think I'll pass this time.

**Shawn Blake**

[This information reflects the details of the FreeMac deal as of Aug. 4th. Those details have since changed. See the interview with FreeMac in this issue.](#)

• • •

## Networking Articles

I have a small question: Is there a way to get all 10 easy steps to becoming a network guru in one PDF sent to me, or do I have to wait 10 grueling months to become an expert. **Please don't tell me I have to wait 10 months!**

OK the panic attack is over. Thank you for your time

**Rik Acken**

[richard.acken@wwoffset.com](mailto:richard.acken@wwoffset.com)

Unfortunately, it will take seven more months for Matt to finish writing his ten steps; however, you can find lots of great networking information at his site: <http://www.threemac.com>.

• • •

We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise at [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com). Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's ok too.

*Send your e-mail to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com). All mail becomes the property of ATPM.*





# Aten-hut!

Ahhh, Halloween time is upon us again. Thinking back to my formative years, I used to live for this holiday. There were the non-stop oh-my-goodness-I-think-I'm-gonna-be-sick candy bingefests, the haunted hay rides, and, of course, as I got older, those Halloween parties with both boys and girls attending.

Oh, yeah, the kisses at those events weren't just chunks of chocolate provided by Hershey, if you catch my drift.

There was just one problem every year—what do I dress up as?

For those not familiar with the whole Halloween concept, it's a day when people are supposed to masquerade as someone—or something—they are not. As I was planning for the parties and trick-or-treating, I would think back to the previous year's festivities and think about which costumes worked, and which didn't.

There was always the traditional, and very easy, white sheet draped over your head with two eye holes cut out to look like a scary ghost. You could always count on at least ten girls at these parties to be dressed up as cats. And then there was the one guy who had been thinking about his costume since about mid-spring. He showed up as a perfectly crafted cardboard scale model of the space shuttle, including working cargo bay doors and rocket nozzles that spouted dry-ice fog.

I always hated that guy.

Well, after this usually fruitless thought process, I turned my thoughts to effective and easy. One year, I borrowed a hard hat and toolbelt and went as a construction worker. Another year,

I managed to spirit away a disposable asbestos suit from a construction site. That, together with the hard hat I had failed to return from the previous year, was a hit.

But, the best idea which seemed to work for a number of years was to dress up like I was in the Army. I had the black boots, the camouflage pants, and the heavy field jacket. I threw on a green knit cap and put my trusty cap gun into my shoulder holster, and I was **the man**.

I dredge up these old childhood memories because now it seems as if the United States Army is beginning to look like a bunch of Mac fanatics.

You see, the chief weapon on the battlefields of the new millennium is information. This information needs to be collected, processed, analyzed, and distributed to the appropriate parties in a timely manner. Needless to say, if, at any point, the information stream is compromised, the security of our country could be in jeopardy. I realize this sounds a little alarmist, but when you are dealing with a military establishment that mothers over one of the largest nuclear stockpiles in the world, you want those facilities clamped down tight.

So, you can understand the Army's concern when, this past June, a hacker from Green Bay, Wisconsin began poking around in an Army Web site, changing some of the content and altering files to prevent detection of his efforts. This guy, obviously bored because the NFL's Green Bay Packers weren't in season during the summer, occupied his time by co-founding a hacker group called Global Hell.

At the time of the attack, the Army was running Windows NT. The word on the street is that Windows NT is an easy system to administer, and, we've all heard this before, everyone is using Windows nowadays, aren't they? So, according to Microsoft and Windows boosters, why is there an Apple Computer anyway?

Well, the reason there is an Apple Computer is to offer an alternative. In the case of the Army, the IT folks there saw it as a more secure alternative. The Army is has switched to Mac OS servers running WebSTAR Web server software to host its Web site.

Why would the Army change to this set-up? After all, aren't all servers vulnerable?

Maybe not.

Back in 1997, a Swedish team offered an [interesting challenge](#)<sup>1</sup>. They simply unpacked a standard Macintosh from the box, installed WebSTAR, connected it to the net, and placed some Web pages on it. Nothing special was done to the server—it wasn't placed behind any firewall or any other security arrangements. The setup was done in less than 30 minutes.

For the technically advanced among us, here are the server specs:

- The server was a standard Power Macintosh—AWS 9650/233 with 64 MB RAM and 4 GB HD, connected via standard built-in Ethernet to a 10BaseT LAN.
- The LAN was connected to the Internet via a router with no special filters. There were no firewall or other devices separating the server from the Internet.
- The server was on IP 195.198.39.111 and the FQDN is “hacke.infinit.se.”
- The server was running a clean Mac OS 8 with standard extensions. Open Transport 1.2 and AppleScript 1.1 were installed.
- File Sharing was running, program linking was not.
- WebSTAR 2.1 (fc) was installed with a minimum of plug-ins.
- No other servers were running on the machine.

Then, they announced a reward to the first person to crack the server and change the content on its pages. Initially, it was 10,000 Swedish kronor for the person who could breach the server. That reward was later raised to 100,000 kronor, or approximately \$13,500 US.

And, guess what? In two months, no one was able to step forward to claim the prize.

Think about that for a few minutes. This gang from Sweden actually invited hackers to their site. They offered cold, hard cash for the first person who could hack into the site and change the page. And no one could do it.

Also, according to WebSTAR Product Manager Eric Zelenka, WebStar offers more security features than the NT Server. With Windows NT, “system administrators can't know what is going on when there is a problem and have to keep up with all the security patches from Microsoft, which can create more problems.” With WebSTAR, “we could create a feature to watch for problems and alert a system administrator that action is needed, so people don't have to monitor the server all the time.”

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1. <http://hacke.infinit.se>

Of course, now that this Army site is up and running, you may see people try to hack it who have more motivation than money. Some scenarios for wars in the new millennium are based on attacks on information systems from foreign enemies. And we all know that the military has its domestic opponents as well, who would love nothing better than to bring the military to its knees—witness that person from Green Bay. So, you can count on the server being tested to its limits.

If the test run in Sweden is any gauge, you can guess that, at least for now, the Mac OS running WebSTAR is going to provide more security for our country. In fact, the word is that now other branches of the service, specifically the Navy, have begun a migration away from Windows NT towards UNIX or Mac OS to enhance their security.

So, as we approach the new millennium, isn't it interesting that Macintosh is now becoming the standard for high-security Web servers. Imagine the bind our country would be in if Apple had simply gone away, as many Windows boosters had wished when the company was on the ropes.

Believe me, the thought of what could have happened makes me turn as white as a ghost.

*“Apple Cider: Random Squeezings from a Mac user” is copyright © 1999 Tom Iovino, [tiovino@atpm.com](mailto:tiovino@atpm.com).*



## It's a Good Life

It's strange how things work. Long time readers will know that I spend a lot of time reading and posting to the newsgroup misc.writing.screenplays, (mws for short). Almost to the day after a flamewar about DV vs. film dies down, I receive the latest issue of *Wired* magazine. It's what has come to be the annual Hollywood issue, and one of the articles proclaims, "William Gibson has seen the Filmless Future," and the big headline is, "Life After Hollywood."

Now, I've been to [their site](#)<sup>1</sup>, and they promise that the entire content will be online October 12th, so I can't give you a direct URL to the article. However, the short form is that William Gibson held a film festival, where none of the entrants were on film. This brings us to what I was gonna talk about last month, [The Good Life](#)<sup>2</sup>. I waited for them to update their site. And waited. And waited some more. My deadline slipped by. My editors started sending threatening email.

They still haven't really updated their site since I first learned of them over six months ago., They've been promising clips from the film, however, today the page is down for repair I guess. And the travesty is that you need IE to view the clips—some sorta restriction due to Front Page 98, or so the webmaster says.

Anyway, the good parts—okay, the relevant parts—come on the technology page. They shot on a Canon XL-1, the camera that I recommend, and wrote briefly about recently. They edited on a G3, using Adobe Premiere. They did the video capture through an installed Pro-max card, so, I'm guessing they're using a first generation G3, although the site doesn't say so. Additional software they're using includes After Effects, and DigiEffects' Cinelook. Cinelook is interesting, as it'll give you a film look on your digital video. So, go to the site and explore.

1. <http://www.wired.com/wired/current.html>

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

Lemme know what you think. Or, I can let you know what I think. Three words: film is dead. I'm the guy that in the aforementioned flamewar, took the side that DV looks better than film. Now, I'll confess, I haven't seen the digital version of *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, however, I hear it looks really good. At the Good Life site, they have what amounts to a side-by-side comparison of before and after with Cinelook. Personally, I like the before.

**In September of 1999, Sarah Finifrock, Mike Anaya and Jeff Tobler ventured into Normal, IL to shoot a documentary on a local legend. They were never heard from again...**

Now [these guys](#)<sup>3</sup> have got it going. Frequent updates with new material. Went today and found out the above project is a finalist in a make your own Blair Witch Project contest that they entered. They've shot on a Sony Hi-8, and digitized down to a G3 running Avid Cinema. The clips look flawless. You can download [the trailer for The Blairwitch Project](#)<sup>4</sup> in either QuickTime or RealVideo format. I was laughing hysterically. The whole site is very well laid out, and the pages load quickly. They have another film entitled Always Walk that's available for download, and it's hearing about this that got me interested in these people. They even have a message board and an upcoming live chat section on their site. Check 'em out.

## Other Stuff

Some of you may have heard of a small film that came out this summer. The film crew, with a mere 31K and three handheld cameras, used a Media 100 system running on a 9600/300 to edit, as well as two G3s and an iMac. The publicity was performed on of all things, a Performa 6115. This is, of course, the film I alluded to previously. You can find out the full Mac story, and how it relates to The Blair Witch Project at [Apple's Web site](#)<sup>5</sup>.

Found an interesting message board at [this site](#)<sup>6</sup>. Not too much there, but what is there is good stuff. It includes an article on what is broadcast quality.

Received the following in my email recently. I don't know whether it qualifies as spam or not<sup>7</sup>:

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3. <http://www.stickbus.com>

4. <http://www.stickbus.com/blairwich/index2.html>

5. <http://www.apple.com/hotnews/features/blair/>

6. <http://www.postforum.com/>

7. Editor's Note: I can't give you a definition of spam, but I know it when I see it. :-)

Dear movie buff,  
ReelUniverse.com allows filmmakers to sell their feature films directly to the public.  
Come see what the buzz is all about.

Might be a good idea, might not. I haven't really decided as this, to me, qualifies as unsolicited email—the net-based definition of spam. Personally, I like mine with lettuce, tomato, Heinz 57 and french fried potato...

• • •

Not too much goin' on the home front. I drooled at the release of the G4. And Final Cut Pro 1.2. However, money doesn't come easily to the independent filmmaker, and now we're looking at a March shoot. The good news is that with the release of the G4 and the LCD display, I've cut approximately another 5K from the budget. That's right, my low-cost studio just got even cheaper. More to spend on what goes in front of the camera, as opposed to behind it. I'm sure some of you saw the recent article in *MacAddict* about how to put together your own studio. It's woefully outta date with the G4 release. Okay, not woefully, but you get the idea.

So, now it's your turn. There are 3,720 million stories out there on the net; one of them may be yours. If you're using a Mac to create video content, I wanna know about it. You can email at [MShields@atpm.com](mailto:MShields@atpm.com), and I'll get it. Well, let me rephrase. I'll receive it. Sometimes, especially when it comes to the Web, I don't get it.

72 and sunny in Redondo Beach.

E you next time.

*Disclaimer: Mike is about to shoot a movie, so, if you wanna jump on the bandwagon and show your financial support <g>, he can be reached at [mshields@atpm.com](mailto:mshields@atpm.com).*



# Cascading Style Sheets

In [recent columns](#)<sup>1</sup> I've talked a lot about the virtues of style sheets in word processors. Despite the fact that few people use them, word processor style sheets are old hat. The style sheet buzzword these days is CSS, which stands for Cascading Style Sheets. CSS is part of the latest HTML specification, and now that most people use browsers that support CSS, there's little reason not to design Web sites that use CSS to specify formatting.

This month's column is an introduction to Cascading Style Sheets. I assume a basic knowledge of HTML, the markup language used to create Web pages. If you aren't familiar with HTML, you should probably read one of the references at the bottom of this article first. Even if you use a WYSIWYG editor such as Adobe GoLive for creating your HTML, you will need a basic understanding of HTML's tags and structure to get the most out of CSS.

## Applying Formats With Styles

Think of HTML tags like `<H1>`, `<H2>`, `<P>`, `<EM>`, and `<LI>` as named styles in a word processor. To make a non-CSS HTML document you apply these tags and the user's browser determines how to display them. Typically, it makes headings large and bold, puts white space between paragraphs, and indents list items with a hanging bullet or numeral.

CSS is not a whole new language for writing Web pages. Instead, it lets you specify styles for the HTML elements with which you are already familiar. CSS lets you suggest formatting attributes for each HTML tag. Together, these format specifications constitute a style sheet. A CSS-savvy browser will use your style sheet as a sort of preferences file to determine how to render your document. Browsers that do not support CSS simply ignore the style information

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1. <http://www.atpm.com/5.07/paradigm.shtml>



and display headers, paragraphs, list items, and all the other HTML elements the same way they always did.

## Segments

By Scott D. Feldstein, sdf-ams@exer

# Magical Mystery I

About a month after its introductory  
Macintosh G3 computer (the blue a

## Segments

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# Magical Mystery

About a month after its introduction I pu  
computer (the blue and white one) for r  
must tell you that the machine is so awe

Part of the ATPM site without (left) and with (right) CSS

Specifying a format for an HTML tag is easy. You simply list the name of the tag followed by a set of formatting attributes, which are placed inside curly brackets and delimited with semi-colons. For example:

```
BODY {font-size:10pt; font-family:Geneva, serif}
```

This states that text inside a BODY tag should be set in 10-point text using the Geneva font (if available) or a standard serif font if Geneva is not available. (The alternative font list for font-family works the same as the font list in HTML's <FONT FACE> attribute.) **Font-size** and **font-family** are called properties and are separated from their values by colons. Property-value pairs are separated from each other by semi-colons.

That's it. The above technique will let you specify styles for any HTML element you want. List all the entries in your style sheet and you're done. For instance, your finished style sheet might look like this:

```
BODY {font-size:10pt;font-family:Geneva,serif}  
H1 {color:000099;font-size:36pt;font-family:Helvetica,sans-serif}  
H2 {color:000099;font-size:18pt;font-family:Helvetica,sans-serif}  
H3 {color:000000;font-size:18pt;font-family:Helvetica,sans-serif}
```

```
P {font-size:10pt;font-family:Geneva,serif}
EM {font-weight: bold; color:990000}
A:link {color:000099}
A:active {color:333333}
A:visited {color:333333}
```

There are some special elements like `A:visited` (which refers to links that the user has already seen), and there are many more properties than color, font-size, and font-family. For instance, there are properties for controlling spacing, positioning, font-weight, background color, and much more. You can read all about these properties in one of the references listed at the end of this article. For now, just remember that they are all used in the same way.

## Cascading Styles

So far we've discussed how CSS can specify styles for HTML elements, but we have not seen why they are called **cascading** style sheets. "Cascading" refers to HTML elements inheriting attributes from their superiors in the tag hierarchy. In general, tags inherit formatting from the tags that contain them. [Footnote: for a more precise definition of inheritance through containment, see Danny Goodman's book or the W3C site.] For example, if you've specified that paragraphs are in Geneva, then emphasized text in paragraphs will also be in Geneva because the `<EM>` tag is contained by the `<P>` tag. Most of the time this is exactly what you want. Say you've specified that emphasized text is bold and red:

```
EM {font-weight: bold; color:990000}
```

Then emphasized text in paragraphs will be formatted just like the other text in the paragraphs (same font, background color, spacing, etc.), except that it is bold and red. Likewise, emphasized text in a list item will be formatted just like the list item, except that it is bold and red. If your paragraphs are in Geneva and your lists are in Palatino, then the emphasized text will automatically pick up—inherit—the correct font from the tag that contains it.

Cascading works analogously for other HTML elements, and you can let as many properties as you want cascade for as many levels as you want. You can even use cascading to make your style sheets shorter and easier to read. For example, in the style sheet in the previous section we specified each property individually for each heading level. However, we could say the same thing using:

```
H {font-family:Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size:18pt; color:000000}  
H1 {color:000099;font-size:36pt}  
H2 {color:000099;}
```

This says that **all** headings should be in black Helvetica 18. Each level of heading will inherit these properties, although we can override them if we wish. In this example, level 1 headings override the color with blue and the size with 36pt. Level 2 headings appear in blue Helvetica 18, as before, but now we only have to specify that they're blue. The other formatting attributes are inherited from the properties we've specified for H.

Not only does the cascade-and-override approach decrease download times by leading to smaller style sheets, it also affords the Web designer greater flexibility for modifying page appearance. For instance, one could specify individual colors and sizes for each level of heading, but have all the headings inherit their font families (as above). Changing all the fonts for all headings on all pages of a site is as simple as changing the font-family property for H.

## Where Style Sheets Go

Once you've made your style sheet, there are two ways you can apply it to pages in your site. One way is to insert a line like the following into the <HEAD> section of your HTML documents:

```
<LINK REL="STYLESHEET" HREF="styles.css" TYPE="TEXT/CSS">
```

The value for the HREF attribute should be a link to the text file containing your style sheet. Thus, an HTML file including the above line would reference a style sheet named "styles.css" that resides in the same folder as the HTML document. Probably the easiest thing to do is to put a single style sheet file at the top level of your Web site and include an absolute link such as "/styles.css" in each of your HTML files.

The primary advantage to this method of referencing style sheets is that if all your pages reference the same style sheet file, you can easily change the look of your entire site just by editing that one file. Another plus is that browsers can cache the style sheet file so that if multiple pages on your site reference the same style sheet, users will only have to download it once.

The alternative to referencing an external style sheet file is embedding the style sheet directly in your HTML file. This is done by including the `<STYLE>` tag inside the `<HEAD>` section of your HTML file.

```
<STYLE TYPE="TEXT/CSS">
<!--
  (Style sheet goes here)
-->
</STYLE>
```

Note that the style sheet itself is placed in an HTML comment (delimited by `<!--` and `-->`) within the `<STYLE>` tag. This is to prevent older browsers that do not understand CSS from trying to interpret and/or display it. Because of this, you must be careful not to include comments in your style sheet (for instance to explain what each style is used for). HTML doesn't approve of nested comments, so you may not get the results you expect.

Embedding style sheets in each HTML file is useful when you want users to be able to save files to disk with all the style information included. Using the first method, style information would be lost upon downloading.

## CSS vs. `<FONT>`

By now you may be wondering what all the fuss is about. After all, you could apply fonts and styles using `<FONT FACE>`, `<FONT COLOR>`, `<B>`, `<I>`, `<U>`, and other HTML 3.2 tags. If we could do all this before and older browsers don't support CSS, then why use it? There are at least three good reasons:

1. CSS is easier to apply. You can declare in the style sheet that all paragraphs should be in Geneva 10, and they will be. With HTML 3.2, you have to include a font tag for each paragraph.
2. CSS makes it easier to change designs because you can modify the style sheet for an entire site without touching any of the content pages. This also means that the site content can be created before the design has been completed.
3. CSS lets you control far more properties than the traditional HTML tags do. Not only can you do things you couldn't do before, but it is no longer necessary to abuse structural tags

to create effects that you need. For instance, many people used HTML's <BLOCKQUOTE> tag to indent text. With CSS you can specify paragraph margins on all four sides in a variety of units, and save <BLOCKQUOTE> for the quotations it was intended for. Of course, you can use CSS to format BLOCKQUOTEs any way you want.

## Next Time

Cascading Style Sheets are far too large a topic to cover in a single article. I hope that you now have a feel for what CSS is and how you can use it—either for new pages that you are designing or to spruce up old Web content. Next time, I'll discuss how you can take the cascading concept even further by using the CLASS attribute, how you can use multiple style sheets in the same document, and how you can use BBEdit's include mechanism in conjunction with CSS overrides to create some impressive effects.

## Online References

- [Style Master](#)<sup>2</sup>—free utility for creating and editing style sheets
- [A Beginner's Guide to HTML](#)<sup>3</sup>—excellent introduction to the basics
- [Introduction to HTML](#)<sup>4</sup>—basic tutorial for the HTML novice
- [Raggett's 10 Minute Guide to HTML](#)<sup>5</sup>—short tutorial with lots of examples
- [The Bare Bones Guide to HTML](#)<sup>6</sup>—a concise reference for HTML tags
- [WebReview's Cascading Style Sheets Guide](#)<sup>7</sup>—lists many properties and tells which browsers support which ones
- [Yale Style Manual](#)<sup>8</sup>—tips to keep in mind when designing your style sheets

## Books

- [Dynamic HTML: The Definitive Reference](#)<sup>9</sup>—by Danny Goodman of HyperCard fame

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2. [http://www.westciv.com/style\\_master/product\\_info/mac\\_info.html](http://www.westciv.com/style_master/product_info/mac_info.html)

3. <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html>

4. <http://www.cwru.edu/help/introHTML/toc.html>

5. <http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/>

6. <http://werbach.com/barebones/download.html>

7. <http://webreview.com/wr/pub/guides/style/style.html>

8. <http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/contents.html>

9. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1565924940/aboutthisparticu>

- [HTML: The Definitive Guide](#)<sup>10</sup>—from O'Reilly & Associates

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[mtsai@atpm.com](mailto:mtsai@atpm.com).*



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10.<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1565924924/aboutthisparticu>

## Guilty Pleasures

I got fragged<sup>1</sup> by “Benjamin Spanklin” the other day. I thought I was doing OK, having just splattered his buddies, “Millard Killmore” and “Napoleon Blownapart,” when he managed to nail me mid-air with a rocket launcher. Such is life.

I’m talking of course about “Quake 3 Test,” the public test version of the much-anticipated game from [Id Software](#)<sup>2</sup>, Quake III Arena.

For all six of you who don’t already know, the basic idea of q3test (and indeed all previous incarnations of Quake) is to get guns and kill stuff. Aside from awesome cutting-edge graphics via OpenGL, the thing that sets q3test apart from its predecessors is the fact that it’s built from the ground up as a multi-player game. That is, the focus of the developers has not been “dungeon crawling” from level to level, battling computer-controlled opponents, but rather getting online and fragging your friends and acquaintances. What could be a more rewarding pursuit?

In light of recent violence in the news, however, I must pause a moment to address the issue of video game violence and how it might be affecting our world.



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1. “Frag” is a term used by quake players which is synonymous with “kill.” While the precise origin of the term is unknown to me, it may have been coined by American combat soldiers as a synonym for “kill.” I suspect it may also be related to the word “fragment,” as soldiers are often wounded or killed due to fragments of exploding enemy ordinance.

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

There. Was that pause long enough? Seriously, I am much more concerned about hate groups and radio talk show hosts who spew intolerance and social poison than I am about games like Quake. Funny how it's often these very same people who are the first to blame the entertainment industry when some deeply troubled person tragically takes the lives of others. Go figure. With all the problems that beset our world, it's a shame that some folks can't see any better ways to help than to criticize video games.

Quake is, admittedly, a somewhat guilty pleasure. It's kind of like watching *Xena: Warrior Princess*. We may be a little embarrassed about the fact that we indulge, for to do so seems somewhat vulgar, but we relish it in secret delight nonetheless. Should we be alarmed? I don't think so. Where I live *Xena* is on every night but I have yet to see any real persons dressed in Lucy Lawless-style leather, brandishing sharp objects and screeching like banshees. As a service to ATPM readers, however, I'll be on a diligent lookout for any such persons in my area.

Still, everyone who's had "Psychology 101" knows that what we see on TV can affect our behavior in the future. Remember the bobo doll? All the kids who saw someone beating the thing up on a video monitor were more likely to do the same thing when they were in the room with it. Those that saw no such actions were less likely to do so. This classic experiment and others like it do mean something. I don't, however, think they mean we need to collectively campaign against the entertainment industry's tendency for violent themes. After all, entertainment is not prescriptive. It's descriptive.

What I mean is it's not at all the proper forum for social engineering. The very nature of entertainment is that it's what people **like**—not what we **think** they **should** like. It merely caters to that within us which must find a voice. People like romance stories because we have a built-in need for such things. People like horror films for the same reasons. They speak to things within us that we would do better to understand rather than to deny. It's probably impossible that we as human beings will ever rid ourselves of all violent and aggressive tendencies—and downright ludicrous to believe that cleaning up the entertainment industry will accomplish this goal for us.

Frankly, if we really wanted a less violent world, we would do things like work toward economic justice (at home and abroad), pass and enforce sensible firearm legislation, implement laws and programs to break cycles of domestic violence in families, and curb the illegal use and sale of addictive street drugs. I'd be willing to bet that if we doubled our efforts in even a few of these areas we would get a measurable result—even if every citizen were given free copies of every violent video game ever made.



Sadly, ultra-conservative voices who are the first to indict violent entertainment don't often show much interest in these issues. It's not hard to understand why. After all, it must be terribly comforting to think that the making of a more peaceful world is just a "Quake ban" away, as opposed to dealing with messy, real-life issues. It's a common human shortcoming, it seems, to seek simple answers to complicated questions.

I say, "Quake away" if the spirit moves you. And if you are concerned about reducing violence outside of your Mac, then do something meaningful about it. Meanwhile, if you see that "Benjamin Spanklin" guy, gib<sup>3</sup> him for me. Tell him "Steve Jobz" sent you.

*"User Preference" is copyright © 1999 Scott D. Feldstein, [sfeldstein@atpm.com](mailto:sfeldstein@atpm.com). Scott D. Feldstein is a full-time techie at Marquette University where he also a graduate student in educational psychology.*



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3. "Gib" is also a colorful term used by Quake players as a synonym for "kill." Again, it's exact origin is unknown to me but I suspect it is related to the term "giblet," as the appearance of a defeated player often resembles a big steaming pile of these.

# Scott's Law of User Insanity

The Macintosh is insanely great. Mac users, on the other hand, are merely insane. But Windows users are no better. Certainly their own pathology takes a different form, but we're all a little nuts if you ask me.

Consider that we Mac users are willing to pay more for our computers in spite of the fact that there are fewer software titles available for them. More to the point, we often insist that people who don't choose as we do are unsophisticated, vulgar sheep.

We sometimes even deny the facts. I myself have spoken personally to Mac loyalists who proclaim their ATI Rage 128 video cards (the ones that ship in recent Power Macintosh models) vastly superior to all others. As if the processing power of the nVidia TNT2 and 3dfx Voodoo 3 chips were roughly equal to that of a stale Dorito. No amount of benchmarking will convince them otherwise, it seems. These folks are not the sharpest knives in the drawer, if you ask me.

And what about those nutcases who call themselves PC users? They're perhaps even worse. Don't let them fool you—many of them do know what RISC and CISC mean. Yet in spite of this they defend the enormous, overclocked, too-hot-to-touch Pentium II and III as laughably superior to the G3 and G4. Furthermore, they'll go on and on about how their OS is superior because the Mac OS doesn't even include "regedit.exe." Are they one taco short of a combination plate?

What is it that makes otherwise intelligent people behave so? It's simple really. I call it **Scott's Law of User Insanity**. In it's simplest form, the Law looks like this:

(Some attribute of my computer) = not only am I devastatingly handsome, I'm really smart for having bought this machine.

Here's an example of Scott's Law in action. Let's say a guy just bought a computer. We'll call him, I don't know... "Bill." The new computer on Bill's desk is a spankin' new Dell Pentium III. After having bought it, Bill discovers that his Pentium III processor is an enormous, clunky thing with an operating temperature roughly equal to the surface of the sun. To make matters worse, he discovers that the only difference between his computer and the cheaper Pentium II he scorned is that the P3 includes a few instructions which boost performance of three applications in the entire universe by about .005%. Deep in Bill's subconscious, a thought begins to form and it goes like this:

My computer has a lame processor = I'm a chump.

Obviously Bill's subconscious mind will not allow such a thought to surface where it might cause feelings of, well, "chumpiness." Thus Bill performs a little slight of hand with the facts to save himself the agony of such realizations. By the time Scott's Law has worked its magic, the thought finally reaches Bill's conscious mind looking like this:

CISC is superior to RISC and Intel's "Katami" instructions are God's own gift to micro-processors = Not only am I devastatingly handsome, but I'm really smart for having bought this machine

You can see that the facts have been changed in the first half of the equation so that the end can come out more favorably. Bill's mind is at ease. For the most part, that is. Deep down he may suspect that something is amiss, and this may cause him to occasionally post to news groups like comp.sys.macintosh with tidbits like "Get a clue you Mac-in-trash idiots!" But for the most part, he's at peace with himself, having made the Scott's Law equation come out right.

To be fair, we Mac users do the very same thing. Consider a fellow who just bought himself a new G4. Let's call him—picking a name at random, you understand—"Steve." Steve, an avid gamer, marvels at the slick design and processing power of his G4. But one day he learns that all is not well in G4-dom. His PC-using friend, Bill, just emailed him and let slip that he gets approximately 39 billion frames-per-second when playing Quake 2 with his nVidia TNT2 video card. Steve himself only gets about 34 billion FPS with his ATI Rage 128. Furthermore,

he can't just go out and get a TNT card for his Power Mac—nVidia simply doesn't make such a thing. Slowly but surely, the wheels deep in Steve's mind arrive at the following thought:

I just paid a great deal of money for a system for which there are fewer add-in components like video cards = I'm a fool.

Obviously this distasteful idea simply cannot be allowed to reach Steve's conscious mind unaltered lest he suffer feelings of foolishness. Sadly, Steve performs some mental gymnastics similar to those which Bill engaged in, resulting in:

The Rage 128 provides the absolute best gaming experience money can buy = not only am I devastatingly handsome, but I'm really smart for having bought this machine.

Thus Steve goes on his merry way, keeping intact his feelings of intellectual superiority and personal attractiveness at the expense of a more honest appraisal of his platform choice. Like Bill, however, he may occasionally have to reinforce his new thought by snickering at PC users and referring to Bill Gates as the anti-Christ.

So in the end it seems there's no real harm done. Both our users feel good about themselves and their computers. I mean, both have decent new computers, so why should they feel badly about a few shortcomings? A little self-deception goes a long way towards making a lot of people feel better about a lot of things, after all.

No harm done? Let me count the ways. First off, when Bill spews his flame-bait into the Macintosh newsgroups, he's acting like a jerk and ticking a lot of people off. Similarly, when Steve belittles his PC-using friends, he alienates them. Neither approach does much in the way of a fruitful exchange of ideas or even peaceful co-existence. The fact that it makes them feel better personally does not justify these results.

Let's also consider what each of these guys is doing to harm his respective platform. By denying themselves an honest appraisal of their respective platforms, they cannot offer intelligent feedback to manufacturers of the systems. That is, if no PC users complain about the skanky x86 architecture, what incentive to companies like Intel have to change things? And let's not leave out Apple. Why would they go to all the trouble to encourage companies like 3dfx or nVidia to make compatible cards and drivers if we all go around saying that our ATI cards are the best—bar-none—for every purpose? Without this feedback, companies assume that we're

all supremely happy and have no suggestions on how they might better meet our needs as users.

Don't get me wrong, AT<sup>P</sup>M readers. I think Steve made a good choice when he bought his G4. There's plenty to feel good about there. He certainly has one of the finest personal computers a person can have—even for gaming. It's just that there's no need to exaggerate or ignore facts. (And someone should tell him that he could slap in a Voodoo3 card if he really wanted to.)

Alas, Scott's Law of User Insanity is alive and well in both camps. To be sure, not all of us engage in this type of self-deception and propaganda to the degree that these two fictional characters do. But even a cursory perusal of certain newsgroups will tell you that there are no shortages of "Bills" and "Steves" out there. Even the best of us have engaged in this type of thinking from time to time.

We owe it to ourselves to stop these shenanigans. Ultimately we hurt ourselves when we engage in them. I hereby issue a call to computer users everywhere to stop the madness!

And for those of you who were wondering, I really am devastatingly handsome and also really smart for having bought my Macintosh.

Oh, and it goes without saying that Bill Gates really is the anti-Christ.

*"User Preference" is copyright © 1999 Scott D. Feldstein, [sfeldstein@atpm.com](mailto:sfeldstein@atpm.com). Scott D. Feldstein is a full-time techie at Marquette University where he also a graduate student in educational psychology.*



BY DAVID OZAB, DOZAB@ATPM.COM

# Authorizing Opcode on USB Macs

I have used Opcode products for many years now. I find their software selection to be the most versatile on the market (Mac or PC), and their MIDI hardware is unequalled. Though it has taken them several months to complete the shift to USB-based iMacs, G3s, and G4s, they have done a commendable job—with one exception. A personal tale of frustration follows:

A few months ago, I came across an offer on the Internet I couldn't pass up. Opcode was selling MAX 3.5.9 to students, for one week only, for \$149! It normally lists for \$495, so I ran home, logged on, and bought it that day. All I needed to do was give them the name of the school I attend and my social security number. I paid two bucks extra for second day air—I couldn't wait. Well, imagine my shock when I open the package and there, along with the CD and manuals, is a **floppy disk**. Hmmm...floppy drive, floppy drive, where's the floppy drive...oh right, I own a G3. I don't have a floppy drive!

I'll spare you the details of my calls to tech support. Instead, let me start out by stating that the directions given on the [Opcode FAQ page](#)<sup>1</sup> do not work. Here is what you do if you find yourself in a similar dilemma, or, like me, have gone to the Web page, called tech support, and are stuck:

- If you have an Imation SuperDisk drive, do not download the drivers from the Opcode site. I tried this, and my computer couldn't see the drive at all. Instead, go to [Imation's software download page](#)<sup>2</sup> and download the Mac USB drivers there. You will need the latest SuperDisk driver (v 2.0) along with USB Floppy Enabler by PACE Anti-Piracy. After you download these, install and restart. The extensions will be enabled and your software will authorize on launch.

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1. <http://www.opcode.com/support/faqs>

2. [http://www.superdisk.com/sc/sc\\_dl.html](http://www.superdisk.com/sc/sc_dl.html)

- If you have a Newer Technology uDrive, the USB Floppy Enabler should work as advertised. Make sure you have the latest version of USB Floppy Enabler from [PACE Anti-Piracy](#)<sup>3</sup>.
- If you don't have a floppy drive, I recommend that you borrow one like I did. (Remember, only the two drives listed above will see the authorization disk correctly.) The alternatives are murkier. The tech support guy recommended downloading MAX from the Opcode Web site. Good luck finding this download (If you can, let me know, as I couldn't). The FAQ recommends using the [“Challenge Response” form](#)<sup>4</sup>, which now includes a MAX option. The only problem is that you need to be able to launch the program in order to get the Challenge number. I was able to do this with my downloaded version of Vision DSP, but all MAX gave me was an error message. Without the drive, I'd be stuck.

So if you're in the position I once was with a G3, G4, or iMac, but no music software, some titles are available online. The downloadable version of Vision DSP 4.5 is only \$59, and if you can live without a few extras (Bias Peak LE and MasterDisk) and tech support, it's a great deal. The “Challenge Response” form is a nuisance, in my opinion, but at least it works in this case. As for other Opcode software, StudioVision, the full version of Vision DSP, and Musicshop are downloadable as demos. I haven't tried this, but I hope that when you register the software at the end of the thirty days, you will get online authorization.

I will contact Opcode (by email; my phone bill is high enough) and inform them of what I've found. I will also suggest that they supply full downloads of all their software, with “Challenge Response” authorization until they think of something better. In the meantime, I keep considering just giving in and buying a floppy drive. But should I really have to spend \$100 (or \$170 for the SuperDisk) just to authorize software I already own?

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3. <http://www.paceap.com>

4. <http://www.opcode.com/support/challenge.html>

# MIDI and the Mac—Part One.

## What is MIDI?

MIDI stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface. It is a standard protocol that allows synthesizers, samplers, sequencers, and other electronic music devices to communicate with each other. In the dark days before The MIDI Era (BME), musicians needed special translators custom built for any pair of devices. A box that connected a Roland Synth with an Oberheim wouldn't connect that Roland synth to a Moog or a Prophet. Since 1983, though, all one needs is a simple cable to connect any two instruments.

## Misconception # 1: MIDI is NOT Audio

MIDI transmits information about performance—such as notes, dynamics, pedal changes— independent of the resulting sound. Because of this distinction, any controller (what you play) can be matched with any module (what you hear). A keyboardist can play a string ensemble, a guitarist can play a saxophone, a sax player can play a drum kit, or a drummer can play a piano.

## Types of MIDI Devices

Take a quick flip through any electronic music magazine. The pages are packed with synthesizers, samplers, effects boxes, mixers, guitar controllers, wind controllers, electronic drum pads, and many other fun toys—all MIDI compatible. In general, though, they all fall into one of three basic categories:

1. Controllers are the instruments you play—like keyboards or drum pads. They transmit MIDI, telling any devices on the other end of the connection what notes to play, how long to play them, and how loud to play them.



2. Tone Modules are the devices that produce sound—like synthesizers and samplers. These might have their own keyboards, but many are rack mount modules.
3. Sequencers are the “tape deck” of MIDI. They receive MIDI from controllers and send MIDI to modules. The earliest sequencers were hardware devices, but by the late '80s software programs began replacing them. Now professional quality sequencing software installed on a computer forms a powerful command center for both home and pro studios.

## MIDI Cables and Connections

MIDI is transmitted through five-pin DIN cables (known to most today as MIDI cables—they are inexpensive audio cables adopted in the original MIDI specification). The rate of transmission is 31,250 bits per second, close to the speed of a 33.6 Kbps modem. The three types of MIDI connections are IN, OUT, and THRU. IN accepts information from another device, and OUT sends information to other devices. THRU is a special case—the instrument takes the signal from the In port, duplicates it, and sends it through to the next device in the chain. This “daisy chain” loses information at each stop, though, and MIDI hubs of various types are common.

## The Structure of MIDI Messages—Here Comes the Binary

Ok, it's not that bad. The average length of a MIDI message is only three bytes long. My Mac could process that in a nanosecond, but MIDI is in many ways an antiquated technology. This raises the issue of MIDI's future, but that's another article. For now, considering the way MIDI is structured will help explain the types of MIDI messages and their inherent limitations. Again, the average MIDI message is three bytes long. It consists of a Status byte, which tells the receiving device what kind of message it is looking at, and a data byte, which tells the receiving device “how much” of that type of message there is. The most common “word” (that is, collection of bytes) in a MIDI stream is the Note On message. Within this word is a Status Byte identifying the message type (Note On) and specifying the MIDI channel, a Data Byte identifying the note (note number) and another Data Byte identifying how loud the note is (velocity—loudness is measured, either literally or conceptually, by how fast a key on a piano-

like keyboard is depressed). The MIDI Note On message contains all this information. The way it's organized is quite clever:

<b>Status</b>	<b>Data 1</b>	<b>Data 2</b>
10010001	00111100	01100100

The first thing that jumps out is the difference between a Status Byte, which always begins with one, and a Data Byte, which always begins with zero. This is how the receiving device can tell which is which, and organize the bytes into understandable groups. Once it recognizes a Status Byte, it needs to tell what kind it is. The next three digits, 001 (I made this example easy), identify a Note On message. The last four digits, 0001, place this message on MIDI channel one. Now that the device knows it's seeing a Note On set to MIDI channel one, it also knows that the Data Bytes are a note number and a velocity value respectively. So the seven remaining express the value of each. In this case, note number 60 (middle C) and velocity 100 (a solid forte). All MIDI messages are organized this way.

<b>Status</b>	<b>Data 1</b>	<b>Data 2</b>
Note Off	Note Number	Release Velocity
Note On	Note Number	Velocity
Poly Pressure	Note Number	Amount of Pressure
Control Change	Controller Number	Controller Value
Program Change	Program Number	
Aftertouch	Aftertouch Value	
Pitch Bend	Least Significant Byte	Most Significant Byte

Note Off is rarely used. Most MIDI Note On messages end when the module playing the note receives a matching Note On with velocity zero. (Note that duration is never directly transmitted, it depends on the time elapsed between events.) Control Change covers the wheels (except Pitch Bend), pedals, buttons, sliders—all the accessories. The controller num-

ber identifies each one (i.e. Mod Wheel = 1, Volume Pedal = 7, Sustain Pedal = 64, etc.). Program Change is simply a command that changes the sound loaded in the module. Pitch Bend is like a controller (it is a wheel, after all), but uses two bytes to express an exponentially larger range of values (16,384 instead of only 128). Aftertouch and Poly Pressure are similar. Both record pressure applied to a key after it's depressed. Aftertouch applies the result to all the notes in a chord no matter which key is pushed, while Poly Pressure only affects the note in question.

## MIDI Modes

Once the message is sent, the receiving module needs to know what to do with it. This is where MIDI modes come in. The modes as specified in the MIDI specification version 1.0 are as follows.

- **Mode One: Omni On/Poly (or Omni Mode)**  
Play all the notes no matter what channel they're on.
- **Mode Two: Omni On/Mono (never used)**  
Play one note at a time, ignoring the MIDI channel.
- **Mode Three: Omni Off/Poly (or Poly Mode)**  
Play all the notes, but only on the set MIDI channel.
- **Mode Four: Omni Off/Mono (or Mono Mode)**  
Play one note at a time, on the set MIDI channel.

Omni Mode is the no-brainer setting. Plug it in and get sound. Poly Mode is the most important setting for polyphonic synths and samplers. Play chords up to the polyphony limit (number of notes possible at once), but only one patch (timbre—tone quality) at a time. The advent of multi-timbral synthesizers—inconceivable before MIDI sequencing—led the IMA (International MIDI Association) to replace Mono Mode with Multi Mode. In Multi Mode, the module can receive multiple MIDI channels, and divides its available polyphony between them. So chords are possible on every channel as long as notes are still available.

## Who is this General MIDI?

General MIDI is a standard that associates particular channels and program numbers with specific types of patches. For example, Program Number 13 is always a marimba, and MIDI channel ten is always used for drums. The advantage of General MIDI is the portability of MIDI files. If I sequence a song with a particular instrumentation, I know that you will hear roughly the same thing that I do. The guitar solo won't inexplicably become a pan flute. The disadvantage is that General MIDI is generic by definition. I know the guitar solo will always sound like a guitar, but it could be a really cheesy guitar.

Next Month: MIDI and the Mac—Part Two: A look at available hardware and software for the Mac.

*Copyright © 1999 David Ozab. 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.*



## Step 3: Network Software: Sharing Files (and feelings) With Others

### Errata From Last Month's Article

A portion of the **Performa** model listing from last month's article was in error. The Performa models 6205, 6210, 6214, 6216, 6218, 6220, 6230, 6260, 6290, and 6300 should be listed as having Comm Slot and LC PDS slots, rather than Comm Slot II and PCI slots. Sorry about the confusion. For an updated list, check out [this page](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### This Time

We check out the most common use for computer networks, sharing access to one or more files among multiple computers. We also profile the different pieces of software that you use to configure and control Macintosh File Sharing.

### Before We Begin

Since computer networking involves some of the “under the hood” features of your Mac, it helps to know something about controlling its basic functions (the **system software**). System software, including the networking software, resides primarily in the **System Folder** of your hard drive. Just because your Mac turns on, however, doesn't necessarily mean that you're ready to use a network. The networking functions are a specialized part of the system software that you may need to **install** or **enable** before you're ready to go. **Installing** software involves inserting the **System** disks or **Mac OS** CD-ROM that came with your Mac and running one or more of the Installer programs found there. Enabling networking software involves opening

1. [http://threemac.com/network/explained/network\\_ready.html](http://threemac.com/network/explained/network_ready.html)

the **Extensions Manager** control panel and making sure the network-related control panels and extensions are turned on. If you haven't used the Extensions Manager or a system software installer before, familiarize yourself with them in case you need to them to add software referred to later in this article. After enabling or installing software, make sure to restart your Mac. Another way of installing network-related software, the **Network Software Installer** application, is in the Software Updates section of the Apple.com site. Search for it by name and download the most recent version. This is especially useful for owners of older Macs who don't have the original system disks anymore.

## What is File Sharing?

File Sharing is the process of making Mac files available to a network for opening, editing, or any other purpose. While it's technically called File Sharing, it might be more accurately called folder sharing, since you actually make a folder (or hard disk) available to the network, rather than individual files. Sharing files on a network serves a number of purposes. It allows everyone to work with the same file, so you don't end up with out-of-date copies. It's also easy to make backups. A single file only resides on one computer, saving space on the others.

For whatever reason you want to share files with your networkers-in-arms, the process is fairly straightforward: decide which files you want to share, put them in a folder (new or extant), and choose the **Sharing...** command. In Mac OS 8.5 and later versions, **Sharing...** is in the submenu of Get Info. In 8.1 or earlier versions, it's in the **File** menu. You can share documents or applications, although sharing an application on the network puts quite a strain on your own Mac when someone uses the application remotely, so is typically something to avoid. Although the general process of sharing files is simple, there is a supporting cast of software to handle the picky details. The rest of this article profiles this software, including where you'll find it and how to use it. (All control panels, for example, are found in the **Control Panels** folder in the Apple menu.) If a given piece of software isn't where you expect it to be, you may need to enable it or reinstall your networking software.

## AppleTalk (or Network) Control Panel

This control panel selects the port your Mac will use for its network connection. All currently available choices (such as Ethernet, printer port, etc.) will appear here. While all Macs using at least Mac OS 7.6 will have the AppleTalk control panel, some Macs with 7.5.5 and below will use the Network control panel. Both control panels serve the same purpose.

**Technical Note:** If your connection list is missing a networking option that it should have (such as Ethernet), it probably means that the proper Ethernet software isn't installed or enabled. If you're using Ethernet on your Mac through an added adapter (such as a PCI or Nubus card), you may need additional software specific to your Ethernet adapter to make it work. Check with the card's manufacturer (usually their Web site) to obtain this software (also known as a driver).

## The Chooser

Installed in your Apple menu by default, you use the Chooser to select the active printer and (more significantly for our purposes) browse any servers on the network. Until the release of Mac OS 8.5 (with the **Network Browser**), the Chooser was the primary method of network access. The Mac OS file sharing software includes the **AppleShare** extension, which places an AppleShare icon in the Chooser. When you select this icon, your Mac searches the network for file servers and lists them in the right hand window. To access one of them, just double-click on its name and enter your name and password (if required). You can also enable and disable **AppleTalk** from the Chooser, using the provided buttons.

## File Sharing Control Panel

You access the primary file sharing functions (on/off and name/password) from this control panel. For inquiring minds who want to know, the **Program Linking** feature is for programs with special built-in network features, such as a spreadsheet that retrieves data from elsewhere on the network. It doesn't refer to the ability to directly open programs on other Macs, which is part of File Sharing. In Mac OS 8.0 and up, this control panel can also monitor connection activity, should your computer have shared files. Earlier OS versions allow monitoring from the **File Sharing Monitor** control panel instead.

## Network Browser

Over time, using the Chooser to access shared files became somewhat cumbersome as the Mac OS interface changed. Included in Mac OS 8.5 and higher, the Network Browser allows you to look at the available shared computers and files in a more "Finder-like" way. You can create lists of servers for later use or drag individual items to the desktop to create an icon for direct access.

## Users & Groups Control Panel

If you plan to share files from your Mac, you'll need to create an account for people who will be accessing it, or at least enable the **Guest** account (which is anonymous and will allow anyone on your network to access your shared files). Creating an account entails giving the account a name and password, which someone will need to enter when they access your shared files. You can also create a **Group** of accounts to manage many accounts under a single name (for example, to give the Marketing department access to a specific group of files).

### Tying it all together

At this point you may ask yourself, "Self, how do I combine all this information into a coherent whole that gets me started sharing files?" I'm glad I asked.

1. Install and enable your networking software.
2. Open the Chooser and enable AppleTalk.
3. Open the AppleTalk/Network control panel and select the network port.
4. Open the File Sharing control panel, and enter your name. Your name becomes the "owner" of the Mac. Newer versions of the Mac OS ask for this information as part of the installation process, so there may already be a name here.
5. Choose a password. If you access a networked Mac using the owner's name and password, it gives you complete access to that Mac's files (unless otherwise specified in step #9).
6. Choose a network name for your Mac. When your Mac appears in a list of file servers, it will use the name you choose. Close the File Sharing control panel.
7. Open the Users & Groups control panel, open the Guest icon, and check the box that lets Guests access your Mac.
8. Select (or create) a folder to share and select the **Sharing...** command to share it. In Mac OS 8.5 and later versions, Sharing... is in the submenu of **Get Info**. In 8.1 or earlier versions, it's in the **File** menu.



9. Give everyone **Read** access to the folder, then close the access window.

Now, when another Mac looks at the network through the Chooser or Network Browser, your Mac will appear. When someone opens it (with an account name and password or Guest access), they'll see the contents of the shared folder. As many as ten different network users can access your computer at a time and a single user can access as many as ten different Macs at a time. To remove (or "unmount") a networked Mac, just go to the Finder and drag the icon to the trash.

## Frequently Asked Questions about File Sharing

**Q** Is there any way around the ten-user limits on viewing or sharing files?

**A** Not that I'm aware of, although you can work around this somewhat by moving some of the shared files to another Mac, thus increasing the number of servers.

**Q** Can I share files between different system versions? Like 7.1 and 8.5?

**A** Yes, you can share files between Macs with any system version past 6.0.

**Q** How do I share files between Macs and PCs?

**A** The short story is Macs and PCs can't "talk" directly to each other, so you need to get software to translate for them. The most used are [Miramar Systems' PC MacLAN](#)<sup>2</sup> and [Thursby's TSSTalk or DAVE](#)<sup>3</sup>. The long story will be addressed in a later article.

*Copyright © 1999 Matthew Glidden. Matthew Glidden is the webmaster of [Three Macs & a Printer](#)<sup>4</sup>, a guide to constructing and maintaining home and small-office Macintosh networks. He can also tango and juggle, not necessarily at the same time.*



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

3. <http://www.thursby.com/>

4. <http://www.threemacs.com>

Welcome to the fourth edition of *About This Particular Web Site*. This will mark the last issue for me as the writer of *ATPW*. From the next issue on, ATPM newcomer David Spencer will take over the lead. This would be an excellent opportunity to fire off any comments and suggestions to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com)! Please also note that the Web sites mentioned here are not endorsed by ATPM, they are simply suggestions for your own browsing endeavors. On and on we go...

- Feel like you are paying too much for insurance? Try [InsWeb](http://www.insweb.com/)<sup>1</sup>. InsWeb gives you (after filling out a 15–20 min survey) comparative quotes for various kinds of insurance, such as auto, term life, health, homeowners, renters and condo insurance.
- Are you or your kids going to college? Then check out [CollegeBeans](http://www.collegebeans.com/)<sup>2</sup>. CollegeBeans gives you access to the “college life” of several universities with parties and other events, as well as relevant links. The “bookworm” allows you to compare text book prices among several online merchants, some are up to 40% cheaper! For parents, this might be an opportunity to actually know what’s going on at your kid’s school!

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

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

- This is a really fascinating site: [The Hunger Site](http://www.thehungersite.com/)<sup>3</sup>. We all know the world is not the perfect place we wish it were. But we often find excuses not to make it better. What can we do as individuals? If I make a donation, how can I be sure it really helps the needy? Now there is no more excuse. The Hunger Site lets you make a donation by clicking a single button. The actual money will be provided by a corporate sponsor. All **you** need to do is press that button and see a neutral page showing the logos of the sponsors. No spam, no surveys, just a few sponsors. You can track the donations to date online. On September 29 alone 152,580 donations were made, for a total of 33,377 pounds of food. You don't have to go there every day (though you can), but at least do it once in your life.



- While you are in the mood for doing a good deed, here is another (though not as noble) one: [IP World Map Project](http://www.ezmail.com/%7Es98273734/geolocate/default.htm)<sup>4</sup>. The idea is basically to create a map of the Internet's citizens. All you have to do is enter the name of the city that you live in—no email address, no survey, so don't worry about spam. The data for all users will be put together to yield a map of where the world's Internet users are located. This map can be used to plan new Internet infrastructures and help localize advertisement of future Web sites. Other than that it's just plain interesting.



- Email has become a mainstream method of communication for many people. But changing ISPs means changing your address, something that can be very troublesome and unpleasant. You have to change all your mailing lists, notify friends etc. Why not have a permanent email address that follows you around the world and that you can check from any computer with Internet access without any email software? So far so good, but which

3. <http://www.thehungersite.com/>

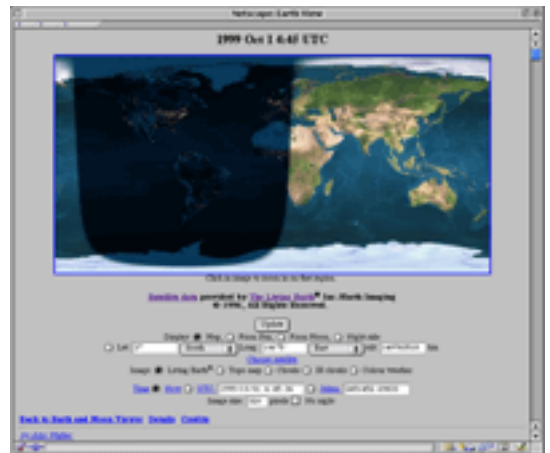
4. <http://www.ezmail.com/%7Es98273734/geolocate/default.htm>

one? There are dozens of free email companies out there. [Lamiya's Freebies](#)<sup>5</sup> lists them all (well, almost). So how about joey@beer.com or ashley@ChickMail.com? Some of them, like [MauiMail](#)<sup>6</sup> are run entirely on Macintosh servers. Good luck finding the right one!

- Trying to get somewhere but don't know how? [Yahoo! Maps](#)<sup>7</sup> has the answer. Either enter one address and see it on the map (which you can move around and zoom in and out of) or find driving directions by entering a starting and ending address. A map of the route and detailed directions will automatically be generated. It hasn't always put me on the fastest route, but at least I have always arrived.



- Do you want to see your home from space? With actual daylight/night representation? [Earth View](#)<sup>8</sup> can show it to you. Using actual satellite pictures, it shows you what any place on Earth looks like at the current time of the day.



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[dchvatik@atpm.com](mailto:dchvatik@atpm.com). When he's not spending all of his waking hours surfing the Web while claiming to be doing research, Daniel finds time to volunteer as ATPM's Managing Editor.



5. <http://www.onecom.net/lamiya/email.html>

6. <http://www.mauimail.com/>

7. <http://maps.yahoo.com>

8. <http://www.fourmilab.ch/earthview/>

## About These Shirts

Made of 100% cotton, these Hanes Beefy-Ts are top-quality shirts designed to last through many issues of ATPM. Available in sizes Medium through XXL, you'll be the talk of the Internet Cafe wearing an ATPM T-shirt. ATPM is not for profit; all proceeds go to support our Website and to buy prizes for reader contests.



The ATPM Logo on the Front, and the ATPM Logo, Slogan, and URL on the Back

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**To Order:** Send a cheque or money order (in US funds) to:

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PO Box 11

North Windham, CT 06256-0011, USA



## Desktop Pictures VI: Montréal

As the summer comes to an end, ATPM has the pleasure to bring you some [wonderful pictures](#)<sup>1</sup> from Montréal, Canada. We are taking you on a tour from the Olympic Park through the underground shopping centers to the stock exchange. Enjoy! If you haven't seen the older parts of the series, they can be found here:

1. [Yellowstone National Park](#)<sup>2</sup>
2. [Drops](#)<sup>3</sup>
3. [Toronto](#)<sup>4</sup>
4. [Niagara Falls](#)<sup>5</sup>
5. [Monaco](#)<sup>6</sup>
6. [Montréal](#)<sup>7</sup> (new)

- 
1. <http://www.atpm.com/5.10/montreal/>
  2. <http://www.atpm.com/5.03/yellowstone.shtml>
  3. <http://www.atpm.com/5.05/drops/>
  4. <http://www.atpm.com/5.07/toronto/>
  5. <http://www.atpm.com/5.08/niagara/>
  6. <http://www.atpm.com/5.09/monaco/>
  7. <http://www.atpm.com/5.10/montreal/>

# 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” sub-folder 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.

If 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, available [here](http://www.peircsw.com/DeskPicture.html)<sup>8</sup>. You can also find a review of DeskPicture on [this page](http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml)<sup>9</sup>.



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

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



About This Particular  
**Cartoon**

By DAVID ZAPASNIK

dazapasnik@snet.net

**So Mr. Gates,...you're one of the most wealthy men on the planet...**

**Hyehyeh,...I sure am...**



**With all your riches and your understanding of technology, you must have the greatest PC imaginable...**

**Hehyeh,...I sure do...**



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♡♡G4♡♡



David Zapasnik © 1999 Out Of My Mind! Studios





## FreeMac

America is the land of opportunities, even if the only opportunity is to get a computer for less. On the PC side, there has been a recent movement to the “free PC.” The idea is to get a cheap PC to the consumer at little or no cost and then to regain that investment by generating a future income stream based on fixed Internet access fees, personalized advertisement and future e-commerce commissions. Most computers offered under this plan have been last year’s technology though. Now a new company called “FreeMac” is trying to bring this concept to the Macintosh and to break the rules by offering an unprecedented value for “free.” Is it too good to be true? That remains to be seen. ATPM talked with Chuck Fox, Business Development Officer with [FreeMac.com](http://FreeMac.com) on Monday, August 30, 1999. Chuck has been working primarily with the financial efforts of FreeMac.

• • •

**ATPM:** How do things currently work with the FreeMac?

**CF:** The night before the FreeMac site goes live everyone who has signed up at our current site will be sent a notice that the site will be going live within the next 24 hours. Once the site goes live anyone will be able to sign up to receive a free iMac.

**ATPM:** How many iMacs will you give away?

**CF:** We’ll be giving away 10,000 between now and the end of the year, and scaling up to a total of one million iMacs over two years.

**ATPM:** How do people get a free iMac?

**CF:** The iMacs will be given away on a first-come, first-serve basis to people who meet certain demographic requirements.

**ATPM:** And what are those requirements?

**CF:** The requirements are that they must qualify for an iMac branded credit card which will be issued by First USA VISA, and they will sign a 3 year contract with Earthlink for Internet service.

**ATPM:** We understand that FreeMac has just announced that 1960's pop artist Peter Max will be your spokesperson. What can you tell us about that?

**CF:** Yes, Peter Max has been signed on as our Chief Creativity Officer. Peter will function as a spokesperson for FreeMac.com. He will also lend his creativity and his presence to the company's business activities through painting a limited series of ten Apple iMac computers. As part of the FreeMac.com launch, these one-of-a-kind Collector's Editions will be auctioned through a major online auction venue such as eBay or Amazon.com, with all proceeds going to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Peter will also design a series of 12 posters, and will participate in FreeMac.com video news releases as well as trade show and press events.

**ATPM:** How can you get one of those posters?

**CF:** The posters will be available exclusively through FreeMac.com. Every person who submits a completed demographic profile at the FreeMac.com Web site will receive a free poster. A different poster will be offered each month.

**ATPM:** Besides Peter Max and the other companies we've mentioned, who else is FreeMac working with?

**CF:** Besides Earthlink and First USA, we have entered into an agreement with Cybercash to provide each member of the FreeMac community with a co-branded FreeMac/First USA InstaBuy e-wallet. This e-wallet will instantly enable one-click shopping at FreeMacStore.com as well as at thousands of e-commerce sites within the InstaBuy network of merchants, including Borders, Virtual Vineyards, and others. We have also just entered into an agreement, of which details will soon be announced, with one of the world's largest Internet portals to provide FreeMac.com with branded content and search capabilities.

**ATPM:** Is Apple involved with this, did FreeMac contact them?

**CF:** Apple is not directly involved, although they have taken a very strong interest in FreeMac.

**ATPM:** What is FreeMac trying to achieve with the giving away of a free iMac?

**CF:** Well, our goal I guess you would say is threefold.

**ATPM:** What do you mean?

**CF:** Our goal is to provide a free Apple iMac computer to qualified online users in order to:

1. Build a network of over one million consumer households for a variety of marketing partners including credit card companies, banks, and Internet service providers;
2. Deliver a highly qualified, highly participatory online community to our advertisers and e-commerce partners by means of permission marketing, and;
3. Build a branded online community that delivers the very best Internet experience to its members and participants.

**ATPM:** What do you mean by “community”?

**CF:** That community will include many interesting aspects. All of our members will have a FreeMac Personalized Start Page which can be customized by the end-user to reflect their particular content interests. We will also have the FreeMacStore. This is an e-commerce site where members of the FreeMac community will be able to purchase all of the software and peripheral devices for their iMac along with portable computers and other Apple products. The community’s virtual town center will be ClubFreeMac.com. ClubFreeMac is envisioned to become the preferred congregation place for online members by providing a wide variety of content and commerce tied to the interests of its community.

Basically, we see the FreeMac community as central to our business model and want to deliver the highest quality content, products, and services we can to satisfy the real needs of our community. By doing this, FreeMac.com will become the starting point and destination point of its members.

**ATPM:** What will keep customers from getting a “cheap” iMac for \$718.28 (the cumulative cost of the deal FreeMac is offering) in three years without actually using the Internet access and the credit card? Even if customers use it, what will guarantee that they will become part of the “community”?

**CF:** Once again we need to reiterate our commitment to building an online community which delivers the highest quality Internet experience possible. This will be achieved through branded content, commerce and tools designed to turn community members into community participants.

**ATPM:** Where will FreeMac get the computers from?

**CF:** We are currently in talks with two of the largest distributors of the Apple iMac, and are negotiating the best price and terms possible.

**ATPM:** How will FreeMac be profitable if their income is so much below the price for which they will presumably get the iMacs?

**CF:** FreeMac has developed a very diverse revenue model, and as stated earlier, we are negotiating very beneficial price and lease terms for the iMacs.

**ATPM:** What is FreeMac's prior experience with the Mac, online communities, and free computers?

**CF:** Jonathan Strum, our CEO has extensive knowledge in the development of "communities," along with a background of over 20 years experience in the tech and retailing sectors.

**ATPM:** How well is FreeMac backed by investors presently?

**CF:** We have completed our seed financing and are currently finalizing our first round financing, with negotiation beginning with second round financiers.

**ATPM:** Would you say that response so far has been good?

**CF:** Yes, as of last week, we had about 500,000 responses. That was for about a 10 day period.

**ATPM:** Can people still sign up to be contacted by FreeMac?

**CF:** Yes. People can sign up for notification about when the FreeMac site will go live at our current site: <http://www.freemac.com>.

**ATPM:** Finally, when will the FreeMac site go live for the actual sign ups?

**CF:** Our site should be live for the actual sign-ups sometime between late this week and the early part of next week.

ATPM: Thanks Chuck for all the information. We hope it's a great success.

*Send your e-mail to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com). All mail becomes the property of ATPM.*



## Enhance Your Interface

Call me an interface junkie if you want, but when it comes to the look and feel of the Mac OS I demand variety. The Finder is an elegant piece of software, granted, and one that is constantly evolving. But who says my Trash icon has to look like the home of Oscar the Grouch, or that when I double-click my hard drive the resulting window is merely a gray rectangle? No one, that's who. With this festive "My Mac, My Rules" spirit, the Shareware Roundup presents five programs you should experiment with if you're ready to venture outside the cozy confines of your computer's default appearance. Don't reach for your Appearance control panel—we're taking the interface to a whole other level.

### Menuette 3.0.1

**Published by:** Tiger Technologies

**Web:** <http://www.tigertech.com>

**Price:** \$19.95

**File Size:** 747K

**Requirements:** Compatible with both System 7 and Mac OS 8, including 8.6.



We begin our customization quest at the menubar, home of the File menu, the Edit menu and many others. Unlike the rest of the Mac OS, this is one place you usually won't find icons. With the exception of things like the Apple Menu icon, the place is crawling with words. But is it necessary? Not if you install Menuette, a control panel that substitutes tiny animated icons for menu names. The Edit menu, for instance, becomes a tiny picture of a clipboard. Tons of icons come preinstalled, and most are intuitive substitutes that can be set to appear globally or only in the menus of certain applications.

Menuette has other features as well, including global WYSIWYG font menus and menu font display options.



Look familiar? This is the plain old AppleWorks menubar.



Here's Menuette's version of that same menubar.

The space savings is good news for small monitors and Powerbooks.

The animation feature, new to version 3.0, is a nice touch. So is the built-in icon editor, where you can make and animate your own creations pixel by painstaking pixel. The only downside with using Menuette is the potential for icon overload. Using one on every menu can be just plain confusing if you aren't absolutely sure what each one represents. Unlike words, which provide immediate feedback, icons demand a split-second of interpretation. Sometimes the connection is obvious, but not always.

You may find that Menuette is nothing more than a gimmick whose novelty will wear off after the first week. That's usually a symptom of inflexible software, one that Menuette avoids by letting you decide how far you want to go with this kind of enhancement. Is one or two icons per application sufficient, or do you need total and global saturation? It's your call.

# Kaleidoscope 2.2

**Published by:** Greg Landweber and Arlo Rose

**Web:** <http://www.kaleidoscope.net>

**Price:** \$25

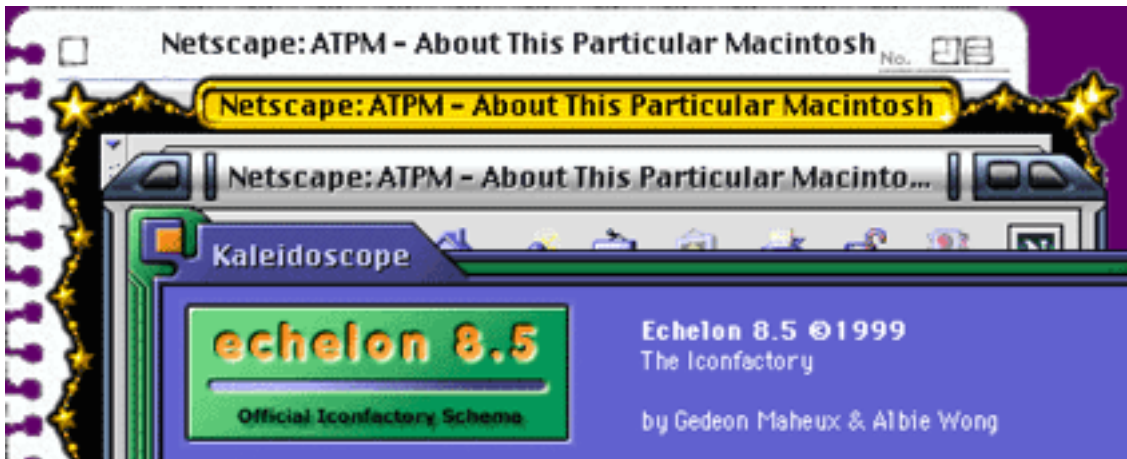
**File Size:** 2.5 MB

**Requirements:** Compatible with Mac OS 8.5, as well as all versions of System 7 and Mac OS 8.



This roundup would be remiss if it didn't make mention of Kaleidoscope, the wildly popular control panel that is the foundation of genuine interface enhancement. It's easy to sing the praises of this program, but for all its super-cool features, it isn't for everyone.

Kaleidoscope is a patch program of epic proportions. Most software patches fix problems and sweep out the bugs in a program, but Kaleidoscope simply persuades the Finder to do things a bit differently than normal. Specifically, it substitutes the default appearance for windows, icons and every other aspect of the Mac interface, with something new and exciting. The directions for all these replacements are contained in Kaleidoscope scheme files, hundreds of which are available for download from the Kaleidoscope Web site.



The four Kaleidoscope schemes that make up this montage are all available from the [Kaleidoscope.net Scheme Spotlight](http://www.kaleidoscope.net/schemes/schemespotlight.shtml)<sup>1</sup>

1. <http://kaleidoscope.net/schemes/schemespotlight.shtml>



Think of Kaleidoscope as the bottle of air freshener you spray in your car to give it that brand new, fresh from the factory smell. Just like the smell of the air freshener, the novelty of Kaleidoscope schemes will eventually evaporate, forcing you to download a new one. No scheme can disguise the fact that an old and slow computer is, in fact, an old and slow computer. In fact, Kaleidoscope might even make it slower.

All Kaleidoscope schemes are not created equal. Some make minimal changes, while others change everything to the point of wild excess. The Finder is used to doing things a certain way, but some schemes may push it beyond reasonable expectation. As a result, screen redraws may slow down considerably and your Mac's responsiveness may start to feel sluggish. This is less an issue for G3s and iMacs as it is for older Power Macs.

Kaleidoscope can do a lot for your Mac. It's the epitome of interface enhancement, as long as you're willing to sacrifice some speed. When used properly, the results can be stunning.

## IconDropper 3.2.1

**Published by:** The Iconfactory

**Web:** <http://www.iconfactory.com>

**Price:** \$20

**File Size:** 2.3 MB

**Requirements:** System 7.5 or later, including OS 8.5.



Just because Kaleidoscope schemes usually come with their own icon sets doesn't mean you have to use them. Since the earliest days of the Mac, any icon of any file, folder, or server has been easily changed by paying a visit to the Get Info window and doing a little cut and paste magic. Before IconDropper, maintaining a respect-

able icon library was a tedious task involving tons of empty folders whose sole reason for existence was to display a particular icon. Not any more.



IconDropper serves as a database for all your icons. Instead of an archive of empty folders, you download Icon Pack files from the Iconfactory Web site. Instead of working from the Get Info window, just drag the item in question onto IconDropper and you'll have all the contents of all your Icon Packs a mere two clicks away.

Included with your IconDropper download is IconDragger and IconPacker, two utilities for creating those handy icon packs. Most of the features (at least the useful ones) of these two programs are disabled until you register, but when you do, say hello to icon micromanagement. Your desktop will thank you.

# Virtual Desktop 1.9.3

**Published by:** AWOL Software

**Web:** <http://www.magma.ca/%7Eawolsp/>

**Price:** free

**File Size:** 216K

**Requirements:** System 7 or later, including OS 8.5.



Ever since it came out of the box, your monitor has set the boundary of your desktop. The bigger your monitor, the more workspace you have. Yet even with a 17-inch monitor, there never seems to be enough space for all the windows that pop up when you start working at your Mac. At least, that was my situation before I installed Virtual Desktop.

This program is just plain amazing, because it frees you from the size limitations of your monitor. We all know that window sizes are adjustable, so why not apply that behavior to the Desktop. The idea comes from the world of Unix. Most graphical interfaces on Unix machines have a built-in feature that lets you create any number of desktops and switch among them much like Mac users switch between applications. It's the equivalent of having, for example, four monitors hooked up to your machine in a two-by-two grid. You can only see one workspace at a time, but the others are there in a virtual capacity. Each one can contain different windows.

Virtual Desktop brings this feature to the Mac. Instead of separate, interlinked desktop workspaces, it puts scrollbars on your desktop and lets you move around as much as you want. You can then reserve specific zones for individual applications. There are several ways to switch from one zone to another, including keyboard shortcuts, omnipresent icons, a control strip module, or a pull-down menu on the menubar. Virtual Desktop can also be set up to launch an application or open a file whenever you make such a switch.

Naturally, there's a downside. I'll use my own setup as an example. I have four areas set up in Virtual Desktop—Home, which has the hard drive and trash icons on it; Eudora; Netscape; and Explorer. When I switch to the Eudora area, Eudora launches automatically and checks for new mail. If one of my fellow ATPM editors sends me a link to check out, the window that pops up when I click on it won't transfer me to either the areas I've reserved for Netscape and Explorer. I can scroll my way there, or jump directly, but absolute segregation of application

windows just isn't practical. Still, there's no better way to banish the evil little demon that is desktop window clutter.

# TitlePop 3.0.4

**Published by:** Jouko Pakkanen

**Web:** <http://www.datavasara.fi/titlepop/>

**Price:** \$15

**File Size:** 175K

**Requirements:** Mac OS 7.0 or later, including OS 8.5; 68K compatible.



Next up we have TitlePop, an extension that takes application switching to the next level by giving you access to each and every open window on your desktop. That pesky window you need to get to that's buried under several others can now be reached from a popup menu in the titlebar of the frontmost window.

Application-switcher programs are extremely common. An entire Roundup could be devoted to them, although it would be fairly boring because they all do essentially the same thing. With that similarity in function comes a repeated limitation, the inability to get at an application's windows. What if you have three Web browser windows open, and then decide to check your email? To get back to the bottom-most browser window, you first have to switch applications, then visit the Window menu, and select the one you want. TitlePop offers a direct route with no stopovers



But wait, there's more. Sometimes you need to transfer the contents of one window into another, rather than just switching between the two. Most Mac applications allow for drag and drop, but that only works if the window you're copying to is visible to receive the drag. TitlePop to the rescue once more. Point your drag in the direction of the titlebar, and TitlePop will be gracious enough to deposit it in whatever window you select from its menu.

This sounds like a great feature, but it produces mixed results. TitlePop offers two ways to drag and drop. The simpler one, called Quick Drop, inserts whatever file, or graphic or text blurb you pull onto the titlebar into the middle of the receiving window. That may not be where you want it to go. Navigate Drop, meanwhile, is supposed to let you specify where the item should be dropped. It only works in certain situations, due to limitations of the Mac OS.

When it comes to drag and drop operations, you may be better off sticking to the time-tested copy-and-paste routine. TitlePop's core strength is as a window switcher. The main weakness in that department is a lack of keyboard support, but user preferences will vary. Overall, TitlePop gets high marks for adding a very helpful feature to your Mac's interface in spite of being a little rough around the edges.

## Desk Picture

**Published by:** Clay Maeckel, Pierce Software Inc.

**Web:** <http://www.peircesw.com>

**Price:** \$19.95

**File Size:** 760K

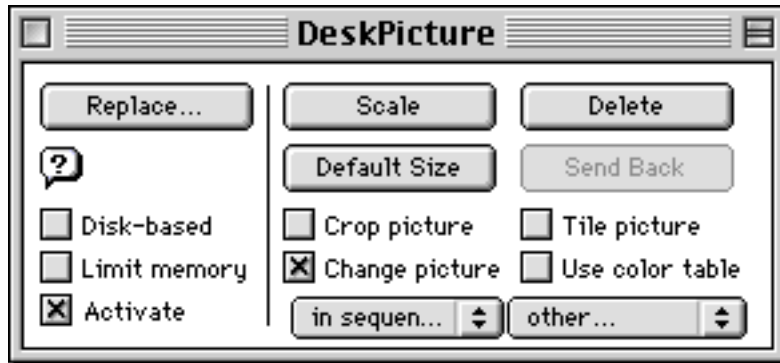
**Requirements:** System 7 or later.



After all this talk of enhancement, we haven't even mentioned the one part of the Mac interface you probably spend the most time looking at—the desktop background.

The Desktop Pictures control panel first appeared in OS 8.0. Before that, it took a third-party piece of shareware like DeskPicture for System 7 users to look at anything more exciting than tiled backgrounds. If you're still on System 7, DeskPicture deserves a test drive for all the options it offers. Aside from just displaying image files (PICT, GIF, JPEG, and other formats too), it lets you scale and crop the image much like you would in an image editor like Photoshop or Graphic Converter. Another nice feature is the ability to rotate among different

images in the same folder. DeskPicture lets you pick how often the image changes, to the point of specifying hours, minutes, and seconds. With the right ingredients, this could be the basis of a crude desktop movie.



Users of 8.x may scoff at DeskPicture, but its features surpass the ones you'll find in the Desktop Pictures control panel. With Apple's offering, you can drag in a folder of images for random selection, but that's about it. If there's a moral to this story, it's that old-school software is sometimes a better choice than the latest whiz-bang newcomer.

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## Web Confidential 1.3

In issue 5.01, ATPM [reviewed Web Confidential 1.1](#)<sup>1</sup>. Since then, the program has been updated to version 1.3. Several new features have been added. First, there is now an option to turn off the glasses next to the hidden fields so that unencrypted password can not be displayed. A Contextual Menu Manager (CMM) plug-in has been added to facilitate the entering of information into Web Confidential from other applications. With Mac OS 9 coming out shortly, Web Confidential has been updated to support the Keychain that will be present in the next release of the operation system. Web Confidential's encryption algorithm has been strengthened using SHA-1 algorithm. According to Bruce Schneier, "There are no known cryptographic attacks against SHA" (*Applied Cryptography*, p. 445). Along with these changes, Web Confidential now supports both balloon help and the new iCab Web browser. Also, the price has been dropped from \$25 to \$20. —**Eric Blair**



There are far too many Mac products these days for us to review each one, or even keep up with all the ones we have reviewed. Indeed, many shareware authors are revving their products more than once a month! The Update section, new in this issue, is where we acknowledge significant new versions of products that we have previously reviewed. If new features, bug fixes,

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1. <http://www.atpm.com/5.01/page11.shtml>

or other revisions are substantial enough to change our assessment of a piece of software, we will generally publish a full review of the new version.

*Send update information to [update@atpm.com](mailto:update@atpm.com). Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at [reviews@atpm.com](mailto:reviews@atpm.com)*







BY EDWARD GOSS, [EGOSS@ATPM.COM](mailto:EGOSS@ATPM.COM)

# CD Stomper Pro 3.2.6

## CD Labeling System

**Manufactured by:** Stomp, Inc. Costa Mesa, CA

**Web:** <http://www.cdstomper.com>

**Requirements:** 68040 processor, CD-ROM drive, Mac OS 7.6.1, 16 MB RAM, color printer for best output.

**Street Price:** \$35

With the continually decreasing prices of CD-R and CD-RW internal and external drives, more people are taking the plunge into recording their own CDs. Whether it is for creating custom audio CDs, archiving valuable data, or backing up on a regular basis, CD recorders are becoming a necessary part of many Mac users' daily lives. After purchasing a CD recorder—or “burner,” as they are often called—users are finding it easy to amass a collection of the shiny silver discs. Since all of the blank or recorded discs look the same, the problem then is to be able to identify your CDs to facilitate cataloging.

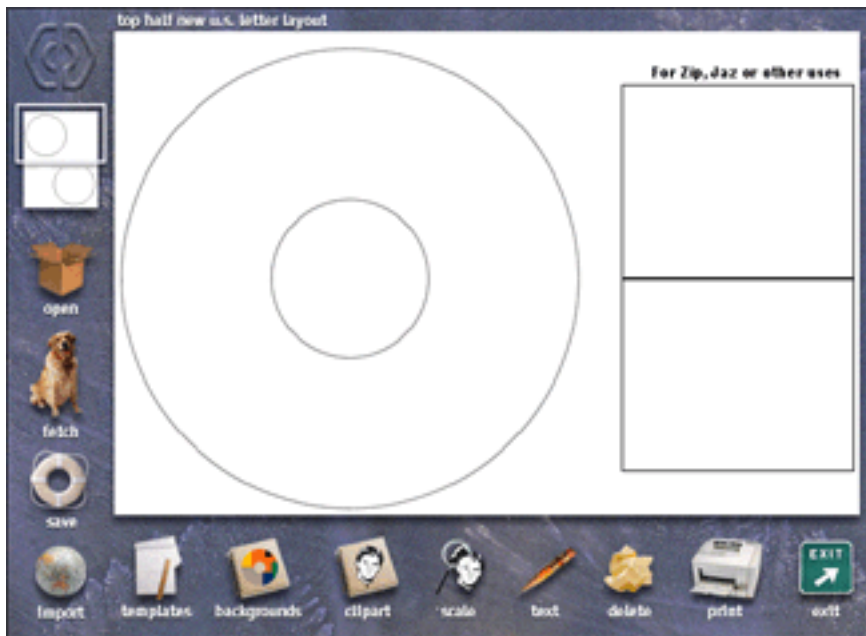
The CD Stomper Pro is a complete CD labeling hardware and software system. It consists of a Stomper label applicator, CD Stomper software for Mac and PCs, and an assortment of blank, printable self-adhesive labels for CDs, jewel case inserts, and labels for Zip, floppy, or Jaz discs. The software includes an application that is installed on your hard drive to access the graphics available on the Stomper CD, which is required to be in the CD-ROM drive during use. Since the CD Stomper Pro consists of two parts—hardware and software—I will divide this review into two sections.

## Hardware

First, the hardware. The CD Stomper label applicator is a device to apply the round CD labels that you create to the non-data side of a CD. Simply by placing the label (adhesive side up) onto the Stomper rubber pad and lowering the CD (label side down) the CD is “stomped” and the label applied. It is harder to describe than it is to do; I found success with my first try, and every one thereafter. My hardware rating for the Stomper applicator is excellent; it could not be easier or more fun.

## Software

The CD Stomper 3.2.6 software is where I encountered my problems. Obviously created for PCs, and then ported to Mac, the software package is about as non-Mac as you are likely to encounter. Launching the program changes your screen resolution to 256 colors if you have it set higher; and, aggravatingly, does not change it back to its former setting when you quit the program. Each time you launch CD Stomper Pro, it asks you to choose a language preference—English, German, French, Spanish, and Italian. Unfortunately, since the program has no Preferences setting in the File menu, you must make this choice every time you launch the program. After you select your language you are presented with the Stomper workspace. The workspace controls are fairly intuitive and complete. A quick experimental tour should teach you what each of the buttons does, and their purpose is displayed in a Help Box below the workspace window as you drag the cursor over them. Now you are ready to create a CD label.



Once again, lacking a Preferences file, you must select your “template” pattern—to properly align your created label with the label paper chosen—every time you start a project. Once you have selected a template you can begin creating a label. This is the fun part. With over 1200 different backgrounds and clip art to choose from, you will be able to create just about any type of label background that you wish. After selecting a background you can add text blocks anywhere within the printable area to identify your masterpiece. In case you can’t find exactly what you want in the provided graphics, there is a provision to import custom PICT files to use instead. These imported PICT files (no other image formats are supported at this time) can be scaled, rotated or cropped. Unfortunately, in my case this feature did not work properly. When I tried to import a PICT from my hard drive the program would inexplicably switch templates to “Original U.S. Letter Label” when the provided paper sheets were in the “New U.S. Letter Label” format. This presented me with a catch-22 situation. If I imported a PICT, it changed templates on me. If I then switched templates, my PICT was deleted, since it thought I was starting over. So I am limited to using the provided Backgrounds and Clip Art, which are actually more than adequate for my purpose. I have recorded some custom audio CDs and simply need to label them with titles and artists. The provided artwork and

text capabilities fulfill my needs. Someone requiring more versatile labeling options might find the CD Stomper Pro too annoying to put up with.



A Sample CD Label

It might seem that I find the CD Stomper program unbearable, but actually I enjoy using it. Once you get past its obvious deficiencies, and learn its limitations, it is fun to use. The labels print very well and I don't have any difficulty removing them from their backing or applying them to my CDs. I just wish that Stomp, Inc. would get its Mac act together and provide a true Macintosh program to be used with its excellent label applicator. During the on-line registration process comments are solicited, and I voiced my three main concerns when I registered. I was surprised to receive a prompt answer from Stomp, which, although sounding quite formulaic, said:

Valued Customer: We are looking into the issues you have reported, but it all may become a moot point when the next CD Stomper new/upgrade software becomes available (March 2000), no charge to current users. Best regards, CD Stomper Technical Support.

So I will wait and see. But because of the poor software, I have to give a rating of only “Good” to the complete package. It would have been much better had they only let a few Mac users try it out before shipping it. Since the software is up to Version 3.2.6, I can’t imagine what Versions 1 or 2 were like. I’m just glad I didn’t have to find out. But if you are looking for a solution to your CD labeling problems, you might want to try CD Stomper Pro, complete with caveats, and wait for the upgraded software package. If they address my three main concerns I’ll be a very happy user.

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BY DANIEL CHVATIK, [DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM](mailto:DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM)

## Extension Overload 4.5.1

**Written by:** Teng Chou Ming

**Email:** [eo@kagi.com](mailto:eo@kagi.com)

**Web:** <http://www.mir.com.my/%7Ecmteng>

**Requirements:** 68020 or higher, 2 MB of free RAM, System 7 or higher

**Price:** \$20.00 shareware fee

The Mac OS is a very user-friendly operating system, but there is one place that is not friendly at all: the Extensions folder. Last time I checked, mine was filled with 189 items with names ranging from a clear “Control Strip Extension” to the dubious “pfpick” or the empowering “XTND Power Enabler.” Most beginners and even many “experts” have no clue what those files are and whether they are really needed. Usually, it’s a good idea to remove unneeded extensions from your system, as they can cause crashes or simply waste system resources. But which ones are unneeded? Will removing this extension cause your computer to stop working? Naively, you might be tempted to use the “Get Info” command. Try it on “XTND Power Enabler” and you will be enlightened that it is a “library” and © by Apple Computer. It will even tell you that it is part of the “Mac On RISC Beta SDK.” Wow.

Enter Extension Overload. It is basically a database of information about extensions and control panels with some organizing tools and various other information. Looking up our “XTND Power Enabler” there will tell us that it is:

“Part of the XTND file translation system used by ClarisWorks, MacWrite, FileMaker Pro, and some other applications.” While that might not answer all your questions, it at least takes you a step closer to knowing what you are dealing with. Extensions and control panels from System 7, 7.5, 7.6, Mac OS 8, 8.1, 8.5, 8.6, as well as iMacs and G3s are covered—a total of over 2000 such files from Apple and other companies.

In addition to providing this precious information, Extension Overload acts as an extension manager, allowing you to enable or disable extensions and control panels. Or you can search EO's database for files by either name or description. It also enables you to save reports on the status of your extensions and control panels. Two reports are available. The "user report" creates an excellent and detailed HTML summary of the extensions and control panels in your system. The "feedback report" allows you to collect information about items not in EO's database and email that text file to EO's creators so they can add those items in future versions.



The program is very well organized. The Tidbits menu contains some interesting tidbits for curious users, such as explanations of what an extension or a shared library is, descriptions of system errors, Easter eggs, and various other tips.

The Extension Overload Web site (see above) provides a lot of the extension/control panel information in an online format. The Web site also offers additional information, such as "Ways To Make Your Mac Go Faster."

Extension Overload includes a "Simple Internet Version Control" engine (SIVC) that will notify you of a new version and let you download it over the Internet at the touch of a button. The software is well written, easy to use, and comes with a comprehensive manual explaining all functions in detail. The extension/control panel manager is closely modeled after Apple's Extensions Manager—with the addition of displaying more information. However, there are a

few things it leaves to desire: it would be very nice if it were possible to make the window wider, not just taller. It does display most information at the current size, but it feels very cramped. The ability to save and recall multiple sets is an absolute necessity for future versions! The columns in the manager can be selected to change the ordering, but resizing would also be a nice touch here.



Extension Overload contains a wealth of useful information and deserves a place among the tools of every serious Mac user. What keeps me from giving it an excellent rating is the lack of sets in the manager and the fact that it often fails to include the very latest of extensions and several exotic but not uncommon ones. However, it will cover most of the extensions/control panels that a regular Mac user will encounter. It would be great if its database could be contin-



ually updated as new information is added, not just in discrete upgrade steps. Be sure to report the missing information, as it will benefit you and all others in the future!

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BY DANIEL CHVATIK, [DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM](mailto:DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM)

# iCatch

**Company:** Macsense

**Web:** <http://www.macsensetech.com/Product/iCatch.html>

**Distributor:** <http://www.drbot.com/prod/iCatch.html>

**Requirements:** the round mouse that comes with the iMac and blue & white G3.

**Price:** \$9.99

The iMac and the blue & white G3 are very nice machines, but one complaint keeps resurfacing: the mouse. I have yet to meet a single person (other than Steve Jobs) who really likes it. Feelings toward it range from indifference to utter hate. I have witnessed many beginners—and even some advanced users—struggling with its round shape, twisting and turning it back and forth to keep it straight. Many complain about its size, which seems to be designed for use by children rather than adults. The shape might be stylish, but is less than ergonomic and might even get you closer on your road to RSI.

Yet before you trot to the bank and dip into your savings to get a new mouse, there are two alternatives. Either you get an iMate, which enables you to connect an older ADB mouse if you have one, or you get an iCatch. The iCatch is a nicely formed piece of plastic which you snap over the iMac mouse. It elongates the form of the mouse to fit your hand more naturally, helping to give direction to the mouse and comfort to your hand. The iCatch comes in several fla-



vors—the five fruity colors, bondi, and transparent—allowing you to mix & match the colors of your input device.



Installation is easy, just snap the plastic piece over the old mouse. This is not explained anywhere in the package but is pretty straightforward (you need to apply a little bit of force). And, there is no software you need to install. A little disadvantage of the snap-on design is that the button is slightly recessed, but it is not much of a worry.

The iCatch is a very nice accessory for your iMac or G3, and makes a terrific gift for any mouse-challenged friend of yours. Getting a new USB mouse will cost you between \$9.95 and \$50, depending on the kind of mouse you want to get. There are generic gray PC USB mice for \$9.95 that will work with your Mac, but you will lose the nice, colorful touch. A more iMac-like mouse will cost \$19.95 and up.

I will still stick with my three-button wireless mouse. :-)

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BY DANIEL CHVATIK, [DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM](mailto:DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM)

# iMate

## ADB-USB converter

**Company:** Griffin Technology

**Web:** <http://www.griffintechology.com/imac/imate.html>

**Driver:** [http://www.griffintechology.com/imac/imate\\_driver.html](http://www.griffintechology.com/imac/imate_driver.html)  
(required with dongles and devices that need special drivers)

**Distributor:** <http://www.drbott.com/prod/iMate.html>

**Requirements:** A USB-capable computer (iMac, G3, G4, bronze PB or older Mac with USB card—though those probably have ADB anyway)

**Price:** \$39

USB (Universal Serial Bus, the standard on all new Macs) might be a great technology, but it doesn't do you any good if you are stuck with lots of legacy devices that you cannot connect to your new computer. ADB, or Apple Desktop Bus, the interface standard Apple employed before USB came along, was used to connect mice, trackballs, trackpads, keyboards, graphics tablets, joysticks, game pads, Apple-Vision displays, and dongles to older Macs. If you needed to use any of those older devices on a new Mac without ADB, you were left high and dry—until Griffin Technologies released the iMate.



The iMate is an ADB-USB converter, meaning it allows your older ADB devices to talk to the new USB interface. Sometimes it might just be convenient to use your nice old 3-button mouse, but in some cases it is even essential because you use a piece of software that is copy

protected by a dongle. A dongle is a little piece of hardware that usually connects through the ADB port and allows you to run software when it is connected that otherwise would refuse to run. This method was used to deter illegal copying of very rare and expensive software. Unfortunately, this means you cannot run that software on a newer Mac, unless you use the iMate.

The iMate itself is a small piece of hardware in stylish translucent bondi-blue that connects to your USB port and features a single ADB port for your legacy equipment. The iMate comes with no software, and you won't need any additional drivers to connect a simple mouse or keyboard. The Mac can handle those with no problem. If you want to connect a device that needs its own driver or a dongle, you need to get the iMate USB driver from Griffin's Web site.

The iMate sports an activity LED that lets you see what's going on. Griffin also offers the iMate Fiddler (at same location mentioned above), a program that lets you play with the iMate driver settings, like ADB polling speeds. Those settings shouldn't be messed with unless you are experiencing problems and know what you're doing.

While the iMate is not very exciting in itself, it provides an invaluable service to those that need to connect older ADB devices for various reasons. One iMate supports multiple ADB devices (if you chain them together). It also supports keyboard soft power on and off (i.e. using the power key on the ADB keyboards). In contrast to many converters, the iMate is small and not intrusive. It is a must for everyone who needs to protect an extensive investment in ADB technology.

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BY ERIC BLAIR, [EBLAIR@ATPM.COM](mailto:EBLAIR@ATPM.COM)

# MacHeadlines Pro 1.8

**Published by:** Trexar Technologies, Inc.

**Email:** [info@trexar.com](mailto:info@trexar.com)

**Web:** <http://www.macalive.com>

**Requirements:** 68020 processor, System 7.5.1 or higher, 8 MB RAM, Internet Connection.

**Shareware Fee:** \$19.95 (Pro)

Between school and work, I spend a lot of time tied to a computer. Often I have a television or radio on while I am working. This is for background noise, more than anything else. More often than not, I am blissfully unaware of what the current radio or television personality is talking about. As a side effect, I am also usually unaware of current events. That is why MacHeadlines Pro immediately appealed to me. Anyone who has watched the financial networks on cable or almost any sporting event has seen the tickers that run across the bottom of the screen. Sometimes they display stock information, sometimes news, sometimes sports scores. Now as long as you are connected to the Internet, you can have your own custom ticker on your monitor.

jan 1,000 UN Troops Arrive In E.Timor <sup>Excite™</sup> Pure Net is no sure bet <sup>Excite™</sup> Stop the Web hype <sup>Excite™</sup> Infos

On the surface, MacHeadlines Pro sounds a bit like the “push” technology of a few years ago. One of the problems with push technology, was that the users did not have an excessive amount of control over what was displayed. You entered some preferences and the program would “push” the content to you. MacHeadlines Pro is more of a “pull” program—you can tell MacHeadlines exactly which Web pages you want to see and how it should look for content in those pages. MacHeadlines Pro then goes to those pages and “pulls” the content.

## No News Is Good News!?!?

The person who said this was probably the same person who had the blank look on his face when everybody else was discussing current events. The truth is everybody should make some effort to stay current with respect to the news. For instance, it would be easy to assume that there will not be a ticker tape parade for the Boston Red Sox this October, but if you missed the fact that the Red Sox won the World Series, you could be stuck in traffic for a while.... Sorry about that, I guess I drifted off into my fantasy world again. Like I was saying, not hearing any of the story is a bad thing. Likewise, only getting the headlines is not a safe practice. For instance, a recent headline that tracked across my screen was “Visor puts heat on Palm.” Judging by the title, you might think it was an article about new hand warmers for skiers. Reading the article would tell you it was actually about a new PDA. MacHeadlines Pro makes it possible to get the whole story. Double-clicking on any headline brings up the related story in your Web browser. If there is a site with several stories that pique your interest, you can double-click on the site name and that site will be displayed in your browser.

MacHeadlines Pro comes with several Web sites entered into database by default. These sites include: MacWEEK, MacCentral, MacinStein, MacSurfer, Wired, Excite, CNET’s News.com, CNN, CNN/SI, Excite, Yahoo stocks, and MacAlive’s own Web site. If these are not to your liking, you can turn them off and on or enter you own site using the MacHeadlines Site Format (MHSE). With MHSE, you tell MacHeadlines Pro what sequence of either text or HTML tags, called tokens, to look for when determining a headline. All of the sites included with MacHeadlines Pro are sites where the headlines are presented as an HTML link—clicking on the headline displays the Web site for the associated headline. By creating your own tracked site using MHSE, it is possible to track sites that display all their information on a single page, like MacNN or DealMac. The only problem with this is that MacHeadlines stops parsing the headline when it gets to another tag, so if there is a link in the news section, it jumps to the next token. In this case, an option to indicate where a headline ends would be nice. The only problem I had creating a tracked site came when I entered the MHSE data in all capital letters and the site I was adding had some of the tags in uppercase and some of the tags in lower case. Since capitalization is inconsistent from site to site, it would be nice if MacHeadlines Pro could ignore capitalization when tracking sites.

There are two ways of displaying data with MacHeadlines Pro. The first method is to let MacHeadlines Pro load all the sites at once and scroll all the headlines across the bottom of your screen. The second method is to load each site one at a time and display the information from only the loaded site. This method is called “delayed circulation.” I had some difficulty with

delayed circulation, though. With delayed circulation active, you can choose which site is currently displayed on the ticker. Unfortunately, MacHeadlines Pro seemed to continually switch to the site that was at the top at the list of sites to track. Also, when loading sites with delayed circulation and MacHeadlines Pro in the background, some of my keystrokes did not register. I can only assume this means MacHeadlines Pro was using a disproportionate amount of system resources while in the background.

Despite some problems with delayed circulation, MacHeadlines Pro is a great program for those tied to their computers but desperately trying to keep up on current events. Also, if you are not interested in adding tracked sites to MacHeadlines Pro, you might want to look at MacHeadlines Lite. It has most of the features of the Pro version, except you cannot add or delete tracked sites, and any changes made to the appearance on the ticker are not saved. But you can edit the tracked sites, which means, for instance, you could change the stocks that MacHeadlines Lite is tracking. If you use MacHeadlines Lite; however, I think you will realize that MacHeadlines Pro is worth \$19.95. At first I was convinced I would not need to add sites to the tracked list, but now I have added pages from the online version of my local newspaper. If you spend much time on the Web, you too will find sites that you would like to track.

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BY MICHAEL TSAI, [MTSAI@ATPM.COM](mailto:MTSAI@ATPM.COM)

## ShrinkWrap 3.5

**Company:** Aladdin Systems, Inc.

**Web:** <http://www.aladdinsys.com>

**Email:** [info@aladdinsys.com](mailto:info@aladdinsys.com)

**Requirements:** Mac with 68030 or higher, System 7.1.1 or later.

**List Price:** \$30

In “[Disk Copy—Not Just For Floppies](#)<sup>1</sup>,” I wrote about the virtues of disk images—single files that your Mac can treat as virtual volumes. Like StuffIt archives, disk images can compress, combine, and segment files and folders for exchange or archiving. Read-write disk images behave like “soft” partitions—sometimes with RAM disk speed—while read-only disk images maintain an exact copy of a disk or folder and may be compressed to a fraction of their original size. Unlike StuffIt archives, you can view and use the contents of a disk image without first expanding it to disk, and with virtually no speed penalty. In short, I like disk images better than StuffIt archives for most purposes.

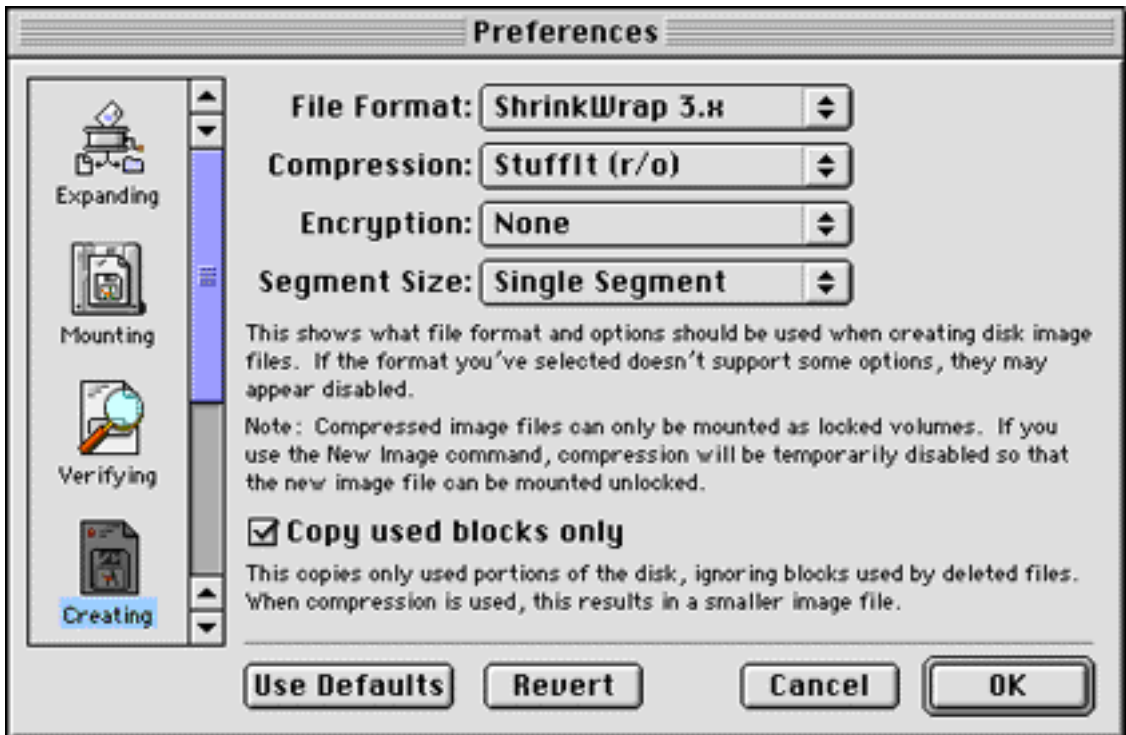
Although many applications can create disk images, two stand out. Apple’s Disk Copy is widely used—and has the virtue of being free. ShrinkWrap, formerly a shareware product of Chad Magendanz and now a commercial product from Aladdin Systems (the makers of StuffIt), is a better way to create Disk Copy-compatible images. It also provides several image formats of its own, which are incompatible with Disk Copy, but are superior choices when the person reading the images has ShrinkWrap or a recent version of StuffIt Expander to mount them.

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1. <http://www.atpm.com/4.09/page8.shtml>

## Why ShrinkWrap Is Better

ShrinkWrap's interface is nicer than Disk Copy's and lets you do what you want quickly, with minimum interruptions. As with Disk Copy, all the commands are available from menus, however you can also do nearly anything in ShrinkWrap by dragging and dropping onto the application while depressing specific modifier keys. Dropping without modifiers mounts images and creates them from folders or disks. Holding Control causes ShrinkWrap to verify the dropped image(s) and display a log window. (Disk Copy can also verify images, but will stop on the first error.) Control-Shift dragging converts images to your preferred format, as specified in the ShrinkWrap preferences. Holding Option lets you specify options for the current operation. The interface for doing so is the same as the well-designed Preferences dialog, however the changes you make are temporary. Other drag modifiers are documented in the about box and manual.



ShrinkWrap just has more features than Disk Copy. Disk Copy can make segmented and self-mounting images, but only via an AppleScript. ShrinkWrap provides a smooth interface for both those tasks, as well as extensive scripting support of its own. ShrinkWrap supports the same image formats as Disk Copy, with the addition of a new ShrinkWrap format. Such images may use the HFS+ disk format, and may be encoded with 40-bit encryption and/or

compressed using Aladdin's StuffIt compression. Images with StuffIt compression are smaller than those compressed with Disk Copy, and they take less time to create. Remarkably, I've also found them to be smaller than StuffIt 5 archives in many cases.

If you like the savings of StuffIt compression but prefer the compatibility of the Disk Copy format, ShrinkWrap can automatically stuff image files after creating them. Likewise, if you drop a stuffed image file onto ShrinkWrap, it will expand the archive and mount the image. If you use images for your compression needs, all you need on your desktop is the ShrinkWrap application. Not only can it create and stuff image files, but it will also expand any StuffIt archives you drop onto it.

## Conclusion

In my opinion, one hallmark of a well-designed application is that it lets you do what you want without getting in the way. ShrinkWrap does more than Disk Copy, but it's also much nicer to use. Some of its benefits would show up on a marketing checklist, but others, such as the fact that it yields more time to other applications while in the background, are equally welcome. The one problem I have experienced with ShrinkWrap is that it sometimes runs out of space when copying lots of small files to an auto-sized image. You can work around this by creating a slightly larger, manually sized image—which is annoying, but it gets the job done. In all other respects, I'm very happy with ShrinkWrap and recommend it to anyone who creates lots of disk images.

*Copyright ©1999 Michael Tsai, [mtsai@atpm.com](mailto:mtsai@atpm.com). ShrinkWrap has replaced StuffIt Deluxe for all of Michael's compression needs, except preparing ATPM files for distribution. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at [reviews@atpm.com](mailto:reviews@atpm.com).*



## What is ATPM?

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

## Are You Looking For New Staff Members?

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## Which Format Is Best For Me?



The Online Webzine edition is for people who want to view AT<sup>PM</sup> in their Web browser, while connected to the Internet. It provides sharp text, lots of navigation options, and live links to AT<sup>PM</sup> back issues and other Web pages. You can use Sherlock to [search](#)<sup>1</sup> all of the online issues at once.



The Acrobat PDF edition is optimized for printing, but it can also be viewed on-screen, and we've increased the font sizes to make this easier. It may be viewed online in a browser, or downloaded and viewed in Adobe's free [Acrobat Reader](#)<sup>2</sup> on Macintosh or Windows. PDFs may be magnified to any size and searched with ease.



The Offline Webzine is a HTML version of AT<sup>PM</sup> that is formatted for viewing offline and made available in a StuffIt archive to reduce file size. The graphics, content, and navigation elements are the same as with the Online Webzine, but you can view it without being connected to the Internet. It requires a Web browser.



The eDOC edition of AT<sup>PM</sup> is a self-reading document that, like our old DOC-Maker format, may be read on just about every Mac ever made, without any additional software. It features a table of contents, clickable URLs, high-quality printing, and easy magnification and searching. Oh, and it's **very** fast.

## What Are Some Tips For Viewing PDFs?

- You can [download Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)<sup>3</sup> for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 4 has better quality and performance. AT<sup>PM</sup> is also compatible with Acrobat Reader 3, for those with 680x0 Macs.
- You can zoom the PDF to full window width and scroll through articles simply by single-clicking anywhere in the article text (except underlined links).
- You can quickly navigate between articles using the bookmarks pane at the left of the main viewing window.

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

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

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

- For best results on small screens, be sure to hide the bookmarks pane; that way you'll be able to see the entire page width at 100%.
- Try turning Font Smoothing on and off in Acrobat Reader's preferences to see which setting you prefer.
- All blue-underlined links are clickable. Links to external Websites are reproduced in footnotes at the bottoms of pages, in case you are reading from a printed copy.
- You can hold down option while hovering over a link to see where it will lead.

## Why Are Some Links Double-Underlined?

In the PDF edition of ATPM, links that are double-underlined lead to other pages in the same PDF. Links that are single-underlined will open in your Web browser.

## Is The eDOC Edition Missing Graphics?

Yes. Because eDOC doesn't compress as well as PDF, we need to remove some of the less-important graphics to keep the file size down. Otherwise, the eDOC edition would be too large.

## What If I Get Errors Decoding ATPM?

ATPM and MacFixIt readers have reported problems decoding MacBinary files using StuffIt Expander 5.x. If you encounter problems decoding ATPM, we recommend Mind Vision's MindExpander or StuffIt Expander 4.x. <http://www.mindvision.com>

## How Can I Submit Cover Art?

We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for ATPM, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com) for more information.

## How Can I Send A Letter To The Editor?

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

## Do You Answer Technical Support Questions?

Of course. E-mail our Help Department at [help@atpm.com](mailto:help@atpm.com).

## How Can I Contribute To ATPM?

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

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

**Wishful Thinking:** Is the space for Mac enthusiasts who know exactly (if you do say so yourself) what Apple should do with its advertising campaigns and product introductions. Have

you come up with a great advertising tag line? What about that Mac campaign that has been stewing in the back of your mind? Send your big ideas (or your art) to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com).

## Which Products Have You Reviewed?

Check our reviews index at <http://www.atpm.com/reviews> for the complete list.

## 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 [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com) for shipping information.

## Can I Sponsor ATPM?

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## Where Can I Find Back Issues of ATPM?

Back issues of ATPM, dating since April 1995, are available in DOCMaker stand-alone format from <ftp://ftp.atpm.com> and <http://www.atpm.com/Back>. In addition, all issues since ATPM 2.05 (May 1996) are available in HTML form at <http://www.atpm.com/Back>. You can search all of our back issues from <http://www.atpm.com/search>.

## 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](mailto:editor@atpm.com).





## Trivia Challenge 5.10

This is the latest in ATPM's series of Trivia Challenges. Answers to this month's Trivia Challenge will be found in the next issue of ATPM. If you have any suggestions for future Trivia Challenges, or wish to comment about almost anything, please e-mail me at [egoss@atpm.com](mailto:egoss@atpm.com).

I would like to congratulate Texan (Home Of The Stanley Cup!) Doug Head and D. Lee Grooms from Washington State as winners in last month's ATPM Trivia Challenge. Your ATPM t-shirts are on the way!

This month's prize is a world-famous ATPM T-shirt! The ultra-cool, 100% cotton t-shirt emblazoned with the ATPM logo on the front and our logo and motto on the back goes to the first two correct entries I receive. Send your answers to: [egoss@atpm.com](mailto:egoss@atpm.com). All readers are eligible to win once every 12 months.

This month's Trivia Challenge is a list of hobbies and occupations that end in the suffix "ist." See if you can match them up with the definition on the right that most closely describes the hobby/occupation as you take part in:

### Trivia Challenge 5.10—The "ist" List

- |                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Numismatist  | A. Studies Birds     |
| 2. Philatelist  | B. Studies Languages |
| 3. Botanist     | C. Coin Collector    |
| 4. Pugilist     | D. Studies Fish      |
| 5. Entomologist | E. Stamp Collector   |

## Trivia Challenge 5.10—The “ist” List

6. Ornithologist	E. Studies The Environment
7. Herbalist	G. Plant Scientist
8. Ichthyologist	H. Earth Historian
9. Centrist	I. Studies Insects
10. Linguist	J. Medicinal Healer
11. Geologist	K. Social Moderate
12. Ecologist	L. A Boxer

## Last Month’s Answers 5.09—Movie Mutterings II

1. “Assimilate this!”	E. <i>Star Trek: First Contact</i>
2. “Number five is alive!”	G. <i>Short Circuit</i>
3. “Vote for ‘None of the above!’”	I. <i>Brewster’s Millions</i>
4. “Shoot a nuke down a bug hole, you got alotta dead bugs.”	N. <i>Starship Troopers</i>
5. “So much for little green men.”	O. <i>The X-Files Movie</i>
6. “Look on the bright side. We’ll all get high schools named after us.”	J. <i>Deep Impact</i>
7. “Good morning! And in case I don’t see you: good afternoon, good evening and good night!”	M. <i>The Truman Show</i>
8. “You can’t fight in here! This is the War Room!”	K. <i>Dr. Strangelove</i>
9. “Sell crazy somewhere else. We’re all stocked up here.”	D. <i>As Good As It Gets</i>
10. “Is it... safe?”	A. <i>Marathon Man</i>

## Last Month's Answers 5.09—Movie Mutterings II

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 11. “As you can see, Genghis Khan greatly enjoys Twinkies because of the excellent sugar rush!”                              | L. <i>Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure</i> |
| 12. “It's as if I've taken love heroin, and now I can't ever have it again.”   | H. <i>Notting Hill</i>                       |
| 13. “I wonder where a guy, an everyday Joe like myself, could find a little action.”   | F. <i>Beetlejuice</i>                        |
| 14. “You see Hopper, Nature has a certain order. The ants pick the food, the ants eat the food, and the grasshoppers leave!” | B. <i>A Bug's Life</i>                       |
| 15. “I call that bold talk for a one-eyed fat man.”  | C. <i>True Grit</i>                          |

### The Rules

Each question has only one correct answer. The answers are stored in a hermetically sealed envelope guarded by a fierce Bengal cat named “Kira” who lives in our house.

### This Month's CD Recommendation

“[Lucinda Williams](#)<sup>1</sup>” by Lucinda Williams—A very well done re-issue of her first album; includes six bonus tracks. Simply one of the best female songwriters in the business. Emmylou Harris said it best: “Just when you thought there were no more truths to be unearthed in the human heart, along comes Lucinda Williams who plows up a whole new field.”

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1. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B000007NYS/aboutthisparticu>

## Parting Pointer

Beginning this month ATPM is introducing a “Tips and Tricks” section. If you have a pointer that you would like to share with other readers to make their Mac experience easier or more enjoyable, please send it to me at [egoss@atpm.com](mailto:egoss@atpm.com). Here’s this month’s “Parting Pointer”:

To keep special paper, card stock and break-apart business cards from getting damp and unusable in humid weather, try storing them in your refrigerator until needed. They will stay nice and crisp, just like your lettuce!

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