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About This Particular Macintosh

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

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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the May issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We're happy to report Macintosh sales gains have recently been so strong lately that competitors appear to be running in semi-circles over the news. According to one Wall Street analyst, Apple appears to have captured over 20% of US consumer PC sales. To commemorate the Mac's resurgence and the flummoxed state of competitors desperate to compete, we're calling this the Semi Edition of ATPM. While competitors struggle to catch the Mac, Apple is closing the loop with its new iMac offerings and leaving no room for sales inroads by challengers.

PA Semi

In April, Apple announced the purchase of PA Semiconductor for \$278 million in cash. The acquisition hardly dented Apple's cash position of \$19.4 billion as of the end of March, but the purchase may help Apple negotiate better terms with Intel for Macintosh chips during future periods while also providing the company with greater versatility in product designs and enhancing the company's ability to create products that can run on a variety of chip architectures. Notably, PA Semiconductor has used PowerPC designs in many processor products. Some consider Apple's acquisition of PA Semi a seminal statement on product development plans

Semi Recovery

At press time, Apple's share price has recovered most of the value it lost in the first calendar quarter market slide. AAPL ended April trading at \$173.95, less than 30 points or about 15% from its all-time high of \$202.96. How well the share price performs over the next few months will depend on news of the much-desired 3G iPhone and whether or not the Macintosh continues on its torrid sales pace.

Semi Record

For the three months ended in March, Macintosh sales came within 1% of setting an all-time quarterly sales record. Unit sales increased 51% over the prior year period with 2.289 million Macs shipped in the quarter. The unit sales record of 2.319 was set in the fourth calendar quarter of 2007. In other words, Macintosh sales were so strong in the traditionally weakest sales quarter for the company that unit shipments almost matched sales for the quarter encompassing Christmas, the historically strongest sales quarter for the Mac maker.

Semi Satisfied

For the three months ended in March, Apple recorded revenue of \$7.51 billion and net income of \$1.05 billion or \$1.16 per share. Still, despite the impressive revenue and profit gains, some analysts and investors were not satisfied with the dip in Apple's gross margins (product revenue less the costs of manufacture) to 32.9%. The slight decline in gross margins

was due in part to the price cut on the popular iPod shuffle and waning demand for shrink-wrapped copies of Leopard (Mac OS X 10.5) following unprecedeted demand at release. In other words, most people who planned to upgrade to Leopard have done so already. Still, the results represent the best first calendar quarter sales and earnings in the company's storied history.

Semi Pro

During the last week of April, Apple introduced an upgraded line of iMac personal computers. The top-of-the-line iMac offers a Penryn-class processor running at 3 GHz and a NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GS graphics card equipped with 512 MB of GDDR3 memory. This new iMac is a semi pro-level computer packed into the slim, all-in-one enclosure. For most home hobbyists and many creative pros, a Mac Pro is no longer needed. This iMac will amply handle the load.

Semi-Final

The scores on Vista's popularity are coming in, and the results don't look good for the team from Redmond. Even as Vista's first Service Pack was released, there's already talk of its replacement. Windows 7, purportedly based on what's called MinWin (a stripped down Windows core encapsulated in kernel-like structure) is rumored to be in development for an early 2010 release. Microsoft has extended the commercial availability of Windows XP to June 30, 2008. There's talk that the unpopularity of Windows Vista may compel Microsoft to extend the commercial availability of Windows XP beyond that date. In other words, Windows Vista may see an abbreviated commercial life as Microsoft accelerates plans for the release of its replacement. While this may not be the final word on Vista, the product is not winning many fans. Apple's 51% growth in Mac unit sales last quarter was fueled in large part by consumers who chose to abandon Windows and embrace Mac OS X.

Semi Summer

It's only the beginning of May and already temperatures have warmed in the west. By Memorial Day, summer weather will have arrived in much of the US and Europe. Our monthly magazine makes for a nice warm weather and travel companion. Please enjoy our special Semi Edition of ATPM as our natural surroundings come into full bloom.

Our May issue includes:

Bloggable: Alpacas Cynics Foremost

Wes Meltzer is out with the clone and "Back In Mac." This, and more, in *Bloggable*.

MacMuser: CD-ripping Rip-off

Mark Tennent states that Music Business Group complains of a cacophony of illegal usage.

MacMuser: Another Ripping Rip-off

Don't read the fine print—it won't help.

Next Actions: Master List

Ed Eubanks Jr. gives his first fly-over of applications for Getting Things Done.

Photoshop For the Curious: No Smoking Gun: Re-tooling Dodge and Burn

It's time to get out of Dodge. Fans of Photoshop's Dodge and Burn tools will appreciate this trick for performing these actions in a nondestructive manner.

Desktop Pictures: White Mountains

Reader David Siebecker provides this month's photos from a six-day hike through New Hampshire's White Mountains.

Cartoon: Cortland

All seems lost for Cortland and company as Lisa makes a last bid for victory, any way she can take it.

Review: Apple Keyboard

Can a thin, rubber membrane-equipped keyboard replace an ergonomic, mechanical switch-using keyboard in the life of Christopher Turner?

Review: Blue Crab 4.9.5

Blue Crab lets you download a little or a lot of the Web, as long as you know how to tweak it.

Review: Drive Genius 2

This genie may have minor imperfections, but Sylvester Roque discovers the magic in Drive Genius 2.

Review: Flipp Premium Leather Case For iPod classic

PDO shows the established iPod accessory makers how to make a proper leather iPod case, the best we've seen yet.

Review: SpacePig 1.0.2

There's no easy way to put this: you're a pig, on the moon, and you're destined to chase after riches until you die. But at least you're having fun.



Wikipedia: The Missing Manual

Thanks for the info, and thanks for ATPM. I am so glad the world has people like you!

—Ever Micheille

ScanSnap S500m

I've gone through your review just to know that the ScanSnap is really what I'm looking for. A question: I can't really understand if there are any hardware differences between the S500m and the S510m. It seems the only difference is the software (e.g. the drivers for Leopard, which I can download from Fujitsu). The price is very different. Can you help me with that? Thank you.

—Ignazio Pediconi from Italy

Ignazio, the main difference, as I understand it, is that the new one is supposed to be faster and have a larger sheet capacity (in other words, both hardware differences). The S510m is a new version that has come out since this review, and I haven't seen it firsthand.

Wouldn't it be great if they would release a firmware update that would bring the S500 up to the capacities of the S510? But I doubt it...

—Ed Eubanks, Jr.

Chips With Everything

I didn't know you guys could read my mind! I couldn't agree more with your observations re:

- QuarkXPress 7...check
- iTunes...check
- Microsoft Office...check
- FreeHand...check

Well said! Keep up the good work.

—Beth Pauley

• • •

Stop being so mean to Illustrator. I've used both as well and, honestly, comparisons aren't fair. They each have features the other could use. And, after all, FreeHand is dead, so long live the new Vector King.

—Jacques Daviault

I'm not being mean. Maybe it's a left-hand-right-hand thing, but Illustrator remains, for many people, the most awkward way of making vector illustrations.

Thankfully, XPress and InDesign both have advanced bezier abilities, plus layers, transparency, and export options that make Illustrator almost unnecessary. Add in better colour control, typography, tables, and multi-pages and you arrive back at FreeHand.

—Mark Tennent

I agree, and I'll hang on to my last copy of FreeHand for as long as it will continue to run on Mac OS X.

For the love of Pete, why am I able to work with bezier shapes more easily in InDesign than in Illustrator? Shouldn't it be the other way around?

—Lee Bennett

A Tutorial on Resolution

I've read this entire article and numerous others, and my art brain just isn't grasping this, so I'll just ask the question I need answered and hope for the best. I'm creating a digital painting for a book cover that will be printed at $9'' \times 12''$ (at a minimum of 300 DPI). However, I'd like to cover my printing options in anticipation of this artwork being printed at $18'' \times 24''$ inches for poster-sized prints.

I try setting up the image in Photoshop as an $18'' \times 24''$ document at 600 DPI (I figured higher DPI is better...?) but the document ends up being like $11,000 \times 14,000$ or something close to that. My machine really slows down with a document that size. It also makes the files size huge, like 450 MB. I know that there's one of these numbers I can change without sacrificing quality (or at least I think I know), but I don't want to learn the hard way by finding out after I've spent all this time painting the work and then having to redo it because the image is too pixelated. Please help me out here if you can. Sorry if I didn't understand your article. I really did read the whole thing. Thanks in advance for any help you can give.

—Christopher

The math isn't really all that hard, and there are two aspects of it to consider.

First: pixels divided by PPI (that should be Pixels Per Inch, not Dots Per Inch or DPI) equals inches. In other words, whatever number is defined as your PPI (or DPI as people improperly call it) is how many pixels are going to be represented as one inch of the image, either in height or width. Thus: 10,800 (total pixels in width) divided by 600 (pixels per inch) gives you the 18 inches.

Second: more resolution does not automatically mean better. You should make a decision on how much resolution you need for a particular job. In most offset printing scenarios, the amount of resolution you were talking about is completely overkill.

I realize it may get even more confusing when you learn that commercial imagesetters for outputting film and/or plates for commercial printing run in the neighborhood of 2400 PPI and higher. These resolutions are needed for things like simple-color line artwork. Take typefaces, for example. Usually one color and maximum contrast (e.g. black text on a white background). These types of images do need more resolution, but because they have fewer colors and tend to be smaller in printed size, they don't create a multi-hundred-megabyte file.

You say you are creating a digital painting with what I assume will be a full spectrum of colors. Thus, your image will essentially be like a photograph. The easiest rule of thumb to follow is to use a PPI value that is between 1.5 and 2 times what the halftone line screen frequency will be when the piece is commercially printed.

The halftone frequency refers to the tiny little dots used for printing. Take a magnifying glass and look at the pictures in a newspaper. Start with black-and-white photos first. Newspapers generally print with a lower screen frequency than magazines. You might even be able to see the dots with your naked eye. The distance of those dots (which are *not* individual pixels, by the way) is measured in terms of the halftone frequency. The measurement is Lines Per Inch, or LPI. Newspapers tend to print anywhere from around 85 to 133 LPI, though some are doing higher. Magazines, however, generally use much better (and more expensive) paper, which can handle a finer screen frequency. The higher frequencies on the paper used in newsprint usually make the ink bleed into a solid dark blob. But on the nicer papers used by magazines, you'll generally get 150 to 200 LPI.

Back to the image resolution. I've pretty much always set up my pictures at 300 PPI at the final size they were to be reproduced. Years ago, my less-experienced brain told me I should go with a PPI exactly double the halftone LPI frequency. Back then, we were doing 150 LPI jobs, so I made my photos 300 PPI.

Today, I know that 1.5 times the LPI is sufficient unless the photo has some extremely fine detail in it. However, today, I'm doing all my jobs at 200 LPI. Yet, I still use 300 PPI photos (which is 1.5 times the LPI frequency).

For those photos which have much finer detail, bumping back up to double the LPI is adequate. So, for a 200 LPI frequency, a 400 PPI image will suffice.

Remember those little halftone dots you looked at with the magnifying glass? Those are the reason that any more PPI resolution is wasted—those “larger” halftone dots completely chew up any additional resolution.

Think of it as a container of new tennis balls. They come in a canister of three balls. The balls are pixels and the canister is a halftone dot. Suppose you take out the tennis balls and put golf balls inside. You now have more pixels. But, if you close the canister, you wouldn't really know what was inside just by looking at it because the canister (the halftone dot) is still exactly the same size. So all that extra resolution inside is useless. (Unless, of course, you're a pro golfer!)

So, lastly, how do you find out what LPI you'll be using? Just ask whoever is doing the press work. In most cases, the press workers will generally reply with another question, “What LPI do you want?” That's because most of them will run the job at whatever frequency you specify—with reason. Talk to them about it, but aim for a 200 line screen.

If they start talking to you about something called a stochastic screen, well, that's an entirely different discussion which doesn't work in terms of halftone LPI. If the press only does stochastic (and more are starting to), then stick with the 300 PPI images or 400 PPI for very fine detail images. You should be pretty safe with those.

In summary, no, you don't need a 600 PPI image. It's fine if you want to print at 18×24 size just so you have a nice large image for your archive. But setting it up at 300 PPI should be quite adequate. Then, when you're done, make a copy of it (*always* keep original finished images), then scale that copy down to the 9×12 at 300 PPI for your book cover.

—Lee Bennett

Coping With Mac OS X's Font Rendering

Glad to find this discussion, because I thought I was losing my mind (and my eyesight).

I just got a MacBook Pro and mainly use a 24" Dell LCD panel—the same one I had previously been using with my Windows laptop. Now I'm running Mac OS X as much as possible, and running XP via Parallels for the Windows software I just can't escape. Same machine, same screen, same everything.

Since I switched back to Mac (after four long painful years with Windows only), I have noticed my eyes are a lot more tired at the end of the day, and I have been getting more headaches.

Once I got a hint of what was going on, I started comparing browsers, etc. and—who would've thunk it—old and slow IE 7 on XP is *way* easier on the eyes.

As I would rather gargle with shards of glass than have to use XP for browsing, I'm *very* interested in finding a solution to this.

—Lex

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Alpacas Cynics Foremost

They say everything old is new again, but I didn't think *my* childhood was going to be new anytime soon.

I was wrong.

From 1995 to 1997, Apple licensed Mac OS to third-party hardware manufacturers, in an attempt to be more like Microsoft. But at the time, name-brand Macs were pretty expensive, and the demand was fairly limited, so it only had the result of destroying Apple's ability to function as a company. Rather than turning into Redmond, they got turned into [Be, Inc.](#), with a legacy hardware program attached. One of prodigal CEO Steve Jobs' first actions was to eliminate the licensing program.

Jobs gets the lion's share of the credit for rescuing the company today, and I mean this in its original sense ("all," as per Aesop, not the colloquial "most"). And most of us thought that, in spite of the bizarre chatter from computer industry "analysts" who don't have any idea what they're talking about, the cloning program was done.

So it came as an, uh, [interesting](#) surprise to me to hear that there was a company with an Internet storefront offering Mac clones for sale with Mac OS X on them. I came at this a little later than everyone else, apparently, since I had the temerity to leave town on business and came back midway through the news cycle. And all I heard was "PSYSTAR!" *Ars Technica*'s Charles Jade [broke the story](#) (as best as I can tell), and he also had a lot of juicy details about the mysterious Mac clone they were offering for sale:

Psystar, a plucky little company from Miami, Florida is, for the moment, selling OpenMac, a Mac clone with Leopard pre-installed for \$554. You also get:

- 2.2 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo CPU
- 250 GB Hard Drive (7200 RPM)
- 2 GB DDR2 667 RAM
- Intel GMA 950 integrated graphics
- DVD+/-R Optical Drive
- 4 USB ports

For another \$110, you can get an NVIDIA GeForce 8600GT, and for another \$50, you can get FireWire too. Even without that, this price seems a little high compared to other OEM PCs sold by mom and pop.

The whole saga began with pluck, but that wasn't going to last. Jade foreshadowed what was going to come with 22 simple words in very plain English from Apple's End User License Agreement for OS X: "You agree not to install, use or run the Apple Software on any non-Apple-labeled computer, or to enable others to do so."

Set aside the question of whether it's realistic to sell a Mac clone. The amount of work required to run OS X on an Intel PC is apparently quite onerous, and a lot of hardware is bound not to work, because Apple drivers are customized to the exact models of hardware in their branded computers. So your hardware choices are limited, never mind the level of polish that Apple puts into their cases and peripherals and the like. But having said that, you *can* do it. The larger question isn't can you, but *may* you?

Their Web site may have been flooded with visitors, so much so that their site was down overnight on April 14. But by the next day, they were back and "[defiant](#)," to borrow *CNET*'s Tom Krazit's term. *InformationWeek*'s Paul McDougall got an employee named Robert to comment on the story, and all he said was, "What if Microsoft said you could only install Windows [on Dell computers](#)?" He went on to claim that Apple's EULA was what was in the wrong, and that Apple was a monopolist.

So Krazit does a little analysis: for the purposes of antitrust litigation in the US, Apple could only be a monopolist if the relevant market is "computers running OS X." He thinks that's a bit, ahem, constipated reading of the law. He wasn't the only one to pick up on this angle: *NewsFactor*'s Jennifer LeClair got an actual intellectual property lawyer to comment, Ilan Barzilay of Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks (in Boston). Barzilay [told](#) LeClair, "If the relevant market is personal computers, there's no way you can say Apple has a monopoly."

Now, there's an argument to be made here (and not just from Psystar; for instance, *PC World*'s Travis Hudson sounds like he's [edging toward it](#)) that the EULA is itself a sham. These agreements have so far been presumed to be valid *prima facie*, but Psystar is saying that they will litigate.

Then, the next day, Psystar's payment processing company ended their relationship with the company. PowerPay accused Psystar of [violating](#) the terms of their agreement. Psystar switched to PayPal, which may or may not still be processing payments for them. (I can't confirm it because I can't access Psystar's site at all.) And CNET's Krazit got a [direct explanation](#) from PowerPay's CEO:

The applicant processed almost 200 percent of his anticipated annual volume over just a few days. In doing so, the applicant never used AVS (address verification services), which is a vital part of validating cardholder consent... This, coupled with the fact that product was substantially different from what was described in the application, left PowerPay no choice but to suspend services. The discrepancy in addresses and other info only add to our discomfort with the account.

At about the same time, there was some good citizen journalism going on, trying to determine if this Psystar existed at all and who and what they were. With tips from readers, *The Guardian*'s Charles Arthur started trying to hunt down who this Psystar was (hint: neither the BBB nor the Chamber of Commerce had [ever heard of them](#)). It was he who hit on the changing address on the Psystar Web site throughout the day on April 15, something that certainly smells a little funny. A reader e-mailed Krazit to say that a Miami screen-printing company was located at [one of their listed addresses](#); then, they changed the address twice more. And they got some more information: the company appears to be owned by Rodolfo Pedraza.

Some of *Gizmodo*'s readers in South Florida actually drove to the locations and [took photos](#): one was a residential address, and some others warehouses in west Miami. Another reader found some incorporation filings from the State of Florida—apparently these yahoos (Rodolfo and an accomplice, Roberto Pedraza) are the state-registered officers of seven corporations of one bizarre stripe or another. My favorite is Dade Elevator Corp, filed in October 1979 and involuntarily dissolved on December 16, 1981. I can find no evidence of any elevators ever produced by the Pedrazas. And I'm not sure I'd want to ride in one. They've had other corporations dissolved by the state, for lack of paperwork filed (e.g., Foreceed Corporation, Expressi Networks, Deco Motors). Their only two active companies are Psystar and Floridatek, LLC, listed as based in Homestead, in far southwest Dade County, Fla.

Richard Koman, *ZDNet*'s government blogger, thinks that the whole thing smells rotten. In fact, he lists a variety of interesting reasons that they're just a [big phishing operation](#). I'm not sure, but good grief, people. If you're a real company, why wouldn't you register with the Chamber of Commerce, the Better Business Bureau, a directory—something?

After all of the uproar settled down, *Macworld*'s Rob Griffiths took a stab at building his own Mac clone. He figured, I guess, that it might be a good exercise. End results? "While it was fun to build the Frankenmac," he wrote, "the truth is that I'm [not generally willing to live](#) with the downsides of a build-your-own Mac over the real thing fresh from Apple's factory." Plus, I'd forgotten how awful the interiors of a home-built PC look in comparison to a Mac. Ouch.

Inheritances Mosh Town

- Apparently the next version of the Adobe Creative Suite, CS4, won't be 64-bit on the Mac but will be in Windows. *Ars Technica*'s maestro John Siracusa says you can blame [either Apple or Adobe](#), either because Adobe was unprepared or because Apple changed the rules of the game. John Gruber (can you believe this is the first time I've linked him?) asks if it'll [matter at all](#). In real-world use, a 64-bit Photoshop would be [8-12 percent faster](#), he quotes John Nack of Adobe. Hmm.
- Are you still using Eudora? Seriously? Even the Engsts, of *TidBITS*, are now using Apple Mail. It may be time to switch, guys. Have I mentioned that I lost patience

with Eudora and its ridiculous, unmodern ways a long time ago now? Anyway. Tonya Engst documented her experience [switching to Mail](#), and although it's clear that her setup isn't perfect, the time has come.

- Om Malik and John Gruber do some interesting math on how much money Apple makes from Google referrals. Apparently Malik thinks it's [at least \\$25 million](#) and wants to know more, and Gruber notes that we don't know exactly how much—but that Apple almost certainly has [better negotiators](#) than the Mozilla Foundation.
- Marco Arment takes an interesting, long-view look at the pricing and profitability of iPhone software sales. As he puts it, you could make [\\$18,648; or \\$186,480; or \\$1,864](#). What's the sweet spot? How does the number of iPhone users affect the dollars? What price will users pay for iPhone applications? I don't know, and neither does he, but it's good to see people asking the question. I hope, for the iPhone and for developers' sake (and for mine, once the exclusivity contract is up) that the answer isn't "free," because we'll see a much more robust software ecosystem at \$10-\$15, I think.
- Have you ever wondered about the magic of the graphical user interface, what makes it work and where there's room to improve? Bret Victor takes a very, very long, [Edward Tufte](#)-esque (and dissertation-length) look at the world of interactive graphical design, called "[Magic Ink](#)." You'll be glad you read it. (Someday. When you're finally done.)

Therefore Whiten Potent

On a final note, I finally got around to relaunching a sort-of blog for this column. There's always plenty that I think about writing, and flag for later work, but for a variety of reasons doesn't make it in at the end of the month. (Sometimes, it just doesn't fit; and sometimes, it doesn't look interesting anymore after a few weeks.)

If you want to follow along, and get the unfiltered Mac and blog news from just about every source I can bear to read, you can keep reading at [Son of Bloggable](#), my tumblelog. Send me photos of your Macs, links to anything that interests you, and whatever else you think deserves to be heard. We'll make it so.

You see, this column has always been about you, Mac users on the Web. Except, "you" has always required that you have a blog or some other public forum, and that I be able to find you. Now, I have the opportunity to take down those barriers. All you need, now, is the ability to send me an e-mail or IM. Let's see if we can make this work.

And that's all for the news. Have a wonderful May!

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CD-ripping Rip-off

Not content with the hullabaloo created by their colonial cousins, the RIAA, the British-based Music Business Group (MBG) have their sight firmly set on iPod users. The MBG cartel, err, trade association which represents music publishers, songwriters, performers, and their numerous hangers-on, have decided they want a cut of the profits from the sales of iPods. Their reasoning is that most of the music on MP3 players is illegal because it has been copied from CDs. According to the Gowers report (see below) in 2005 over 20 million MP3 players were sold in the UK, and 90% of the music on them had been copied.

It is still technically illegal in the UK to transfer the music you legitimately bought and own from one media to another. Andrew Gowers, whose claims to fame are a biography of Yasser Arafat and a stint editing the *Financial Times*, was asked to conduct an independent review of the UK intellectual property system, and in 2006 [Gowers' report](#) recommended that the law be changed to allow strictly limited, private copying, format-shifting from one media to another.

Cassette Kickbacks

For years the music industry enjoyed a kick-back from the sales of blank compact cassettes because they convinced the powers-that-be that the tapes would be used to copy music from LPs. In some parts of the world, blank CDs also carried a surcharge which went directly to the music business to cover their “losses” from piracy. Gowers recommended extra safeguards and easier anti-piracy legislation for the music industry to ensure the correct balance between users and creators.

But this isn’t good enough for the MBG, who reject Gowers’ findings and want their snouts in the trough as well. As less use is made of “traditional” media such as CDs, tapes, and vinyl, and more music is stored and played on computers and MP3 players, the MBG is liable to lose control of their income stream. End users, their customers, will choose to purchase downloads rather than go to the bother of ripping music to disk and storing the source CDs. The MBG will be at the mercy of the download libraries. If they want to sell music, MBG members will have to accept the terms and conditions of the library owners.

Of course, they could always set up their own download sources and refuse to sell music to the likes of Apple, but then there is the danger that artists will strike their own agreements and bypass the music studios altogether. Which is exactly what a lot of them are doing already.

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Another Ripping Rip-off

Digital music is set to take another kick in the teeth. Have you got any tracks you downloaded from the MSN Music service? If so, think again, because on August 31 Microsoft is going to turn off the license servers. This means those tracks that you bought with your hard-earned cash will eventually become nothing more than digital detritus on your hard disk.

Microsoft's attempt to topple iTunes from its number one position started in 2004 and lasted two years before it realised it was yet another failure and stopped the service. Instead, the Zune Marketplace took over, presumably destined to go the same way at some point unless Microsoft can persuade iPod users that the Zune is a better device. That will be on the same day as the porcine air show no doubt.

Closing the MSN Music servers will not mean that tracks become unplayable immediately, because the currently authorised computer will remain unaffected. But the tracks will not be usable on another computer or operating system because Microsoft's digital rights management (DRM) stops the tracks being duplicated or transferred.

The only solution is to burn the tracks to audio CD, never 100% effective because they have already lost quality when the compressed versions were made, and more quality would be lost if you re-ripped them. Or you could find some nefarious means to crack the DRM.

Microsoft Inspires Piracy

It's almost as if Microsoft was encouraging piracy. Music, unlike computer programs, doesn't suddenly become obsolete, and "owners" of the tracks reasonably expect to be able to listen to their music for years to come. When they get a new computer they will also expect to transfer their digital music from one to the other. As many have pointed out, this is the weakness in protected music tracks where one relies on being able to transfer the tracks.

Of course, this is all pointed out in the friendly copyright notices that you scrolled to the bottom of, before you clicked on the Agree button. You don't actually own the digital tracks, just the right to play them until such time as the content provider decides otherwise.

You did read them, didn't you?

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Next Actions

by Ed Eubanks, Jr.

Master List

As promised, here is the new version of my ongoing list of Getting Things Done (GTD) applications. At least, here is the first installment.

This list covers only those applications that are locally installed and promoted as GTD-specific. Regular *Next Actions* readers will recognize this distinction. Over the course of the next several months, I'll add two other lists: one for locally installed *GTD-friendly* applications and another for Web-based applications. I believe these are helpful distinctions, although the lines blur considerably.

As always, I have striven to be comprehensive in this list; I'm sure, however, that there are others that I have missed. I welcome feedback on the list, but I would ask that you keep my distinctions (above) in mind. In other words, please don't give me a hard time for leaving an application off that isn't GTD-specific!

I hope you find this helpful.

Locally Installed Applications

Action Tracker



Developer: Mac Productive

Current Version: 1.3.1

Price: Free

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: FileMaker Pro (free Runtime version available)

Distinguishing Features: Also organizes notes, contacts, and other information related to projects.

News: None

Action Tastic



Developer: Jon Crosby

Current Version: 0.9.3

Price: Free, open-source

Development Status: Beta

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: Yes

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Processing engine; iPod sync; Mail and MailTags compatibility.

News: Developer recently discussed the path to 1.0 on his Web site.

Easy Task Manager



Developer: Orionbelt.com

Current Version: 1.9.2

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: Yes

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Windows version available; automatic advance of uncompleted due tasks to “today.”

News: Improved online presence for iPhone compatibility; improved printing capabilities now include notes; recently released EasyProject.

Frictionless



Developer: Twin Forces
Current Version: 2.0d15
Price: Free, open-source
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Quick-entry box; fuzzy repeated actions.
News: 2.0d15+ released with Leopard compatibility.

Ghost Action



Developer: Ghost Park Software
Current Version: 1.1
Price: \$20
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: .Mac syncing (without iCal running); PDA/iPod syncing.

News: A beta version is available for Leopard users; plans are in place for iPhone compatibility.

iGTD



Developer: Bartek

Current Version: 1.4.5.6

Price: Free

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Compatible with Address Book, Mail, iSync, and MailTags, as well as Web browser support, Path Finder, Yojimbo, MacJournal, and others; quick-entry feature; simple yet powerful interface.

News: Ongoing development of current version frequently brings additional features; v.2 is in development (public alpha release available for download), as is iGTD Pro.

iCog



Developer: HensPace

Current Version: 1.88

Price: Free

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: Python 2.4 or higher

Distinguishing Features: Compatible with any OS running Python (including Windows); very simple, text-only utility.

News: None

Kinkless GTD



Developer: Ethan Schoonover

Current Version: 0.83

Price: Free

Development Status: Beta

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: OmniOutliner Pro 3.6 or higher

Distinguishing Features: Nothing fancy, but a simple list management tool.

News: Schoonover has effectively abandoned development of kGTD since joining the staff of the Omni Group and working on the OmniFocus development team.

mGTD



Developer: Apokalypse Software Corp

Current Version: 1.2

Price: Free

Development Status: “Pre-final”

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: Mori 1.4

Distinguishing Features: Expands Mori (digital notebook) functions to include GTD principles.

News: None

Midnight Inbox



Developer: Midnight Beep Softworks

Current Version: 1.3.1

Price: \$35

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Action timer; quick-note and quick-action hot keys; Mail compatible; “automatic” data collection.

News: Latest version is Leopard-compatible; v.2 was recently discussed in great detail on the Web site.

OmniFocus



Developer: Omni Group

Current Version: 1.0.1

Price: \$80

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Mail- and Spotlight-compatible; simple interface with powerful view features.

News: None

[*pyGTD*](#)

Developer: Thiamin Trek

Current Version: n/a

Price: Free

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: Python

Distinguishing Features: Cross-platform compatibility; incorporates Covey-style prioritization with GTD; a simple text-based list.

News: None



Developer: Todd Vasquez

Current Version: 1.2j

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: A very different approach using a set of AppleScript routines to impose organization and communication across a computer's entire filesystem; multiple language support.

News: A feature allows exporting action lists to iPhone by e-mail.



Developer: Hog Bay Software

Current Version: 1.0.3 (26)

Price: \$19

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Simple, text-based system; no-frills, intentionally designed as an alternative to more full-featured systems.

News: Introductory pricing currently available.

Things



Developer: Cultured Code

Current Version: 0.9.1

Price: \$50 (pre-release price of \$40 with signup for newsletter)

Development Status: Alpha

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Features *will* include: iCal sync; repeating tasks; Mail compatibility; network and multi-computer operation; and import/export options.

News: Those who want to serve as alpha testers may request access. Final release version will cost between \$40 and \$50.

Thinking Rock



Developer: Avente Pty Ltd.

Current Version: 1.2.3 (2.0e also available)

Price: Free, open-source

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Cross-platform compatibility through Java; interactive collection and processing.

News: “Epsilon” version of v.2 includes a major overhaul, including plug-in modules, an improved interface, and fixes to problems in previous versions.

Vortex



Developer: AirBlade Software

Current Version: 1.0.13 (r22)

Price: £15 (approx. \$30)

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Two-panel view; single-click creation of new tasks and projects; contingent and dependent actions; time and energy requirement indices; Windows version available.

News: Current version is only compatible with Mac OS X 10.4.

What To Do



Developer: Objective Satisfaction

Current Version: 1.3.2

Price: \$29

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Drag-and-drop intensive for easy reorganization; .Mac syncing for multiple computers; XML export.

News: None

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Photoshop For the Curious

by Lee Bennett, lbennett@atpm.com

No Smoking Gun: Re-tooling Dodge and Burn

In my [article from October 2007](#), I described how Adjustment Layers could be used to perform visible changes on an image while leaving the original image untouched. Making apparent changes to an image in this manner, without actually changing the image, is known as nondestructive editing.

Photoshop's Dodge and Burn tools, however, have largely been known as destructive tools. Destructive editing may sound like a harsh term, but all it really means is that pixels which comprise the original image have been changed. Barring a few levels of the Undo command and/or saving a separate copy of the image, a destructive edit permanently changes the pixels.

In this month's tutorial, I'll show how using tools other than the original Dodge and Burn tools can perform nondestructive dodge and burn edits, and finish by showing how almost nothing—possibly absolutely nothing—in Photoshop is locked to just one task.

The History of Dodging and Burning

Those unfamiliar with the process of dodging and burning may be surprised to realize that these tools originate from an extremely low-tech trick used in the days of photo darkrooms and enlargers. Many moons ago, to make a photo, a film negative was placed into a device called an enlarger. The enlarger was akin to a slide projector with the image from the negative being projected onto a piece of photo-sensitive paper. The longer the light remained on, the darker the photo became.

In many situations, photographers would want a photo to be a little bit lighter in one spot or a little bit darker in another spot. To darken a particular spot, the darkroom technician would use either a large opaque sheet with a hole cut into it or, far more often, his own hands to block the light coming out of the enlarger. When using hands, he would cup them in a way to only allow a small spot of light through. By moving the respective devices around, the spot of light could be made to “burn” more light at any point of the photograph.

On the opposite end, various shapes, such as the hole cut from the above-mentioned burn tool, would be attached to very thin wire and held above portions of the photo. This process would “dodge” the light from exposing the photo paper during that time, making the area a bit lighter.

In both cases, the technician would typically keep the respective dodge and burn devices in constant slight motion so the area dodged or burned would not create a hard edge around

the perimeter. Also, in both cases, the process was a very inexact science. The results could never be seen until after the photo had been developed and could be taken into viewing light. I can speak from personal experience in darkrooms that I would often attempt to dodge or burn portions of an image up to a dozen times before getting it exactly the way I wanted.

Today—at least in my world—darkrooms are an ancient memory, and I now perform dodging and burning with tools in Photoshop specifically created to approximate the effect of doing so.

Each new major version of Photoshop has improved the ability to perform image adjustments in a nondestructive manner. Though the Dodge and Burn tools aren't currently nondestructive by default, they can be—with a minimal amount of advance preparation.

Preparing a Faux Adjustment Layer

1. Open an image in Photoshop. Any image that could benefit from a bit of dodge and burn love will suffice for this tutorial.
2. Create a new layer above the image. While technically not an Adjustment Layer, this is where the dodge and burn adjustments will be performed, instead of on the original image.
3. Under the Edit menu, select Fill....
4. Select 50% Gray in the Contents section of the Fill dialog box. Ensure the Blending Mode is set to Normal, Opacity is 100%, and Preserve Transparency is off.

These steps will result in a neutral gray color that covers the original image. This 50% gray color appears on its own layer above the image in the Layers palette.

5. With the gray layer highlighted in the Layers palette, change its Blending Mode to Soft Light.



A 50% gray fill occupies an entire layer above the original image. Its Blending Mode has been set to Soft Light which, at this stage, has made it invisible.

Right now, the example photograph, above, appears unchanged because the Soft Light Blending Mode hides the 50% gray layer. This is why 50% gray is considered neutral. Therefore, dodging and burning can now be performed on this gray layer without directly affecting the original image.

Abandoning the Traditional Dodge and Burn Tools

The nature of this faux Adjustment Layer makes the traditional Dodge and Burn tools useless. I'd be a liar if I said I completely understood how the Soft Light Blending Mode changes the behavior of the Dodge and Burn tools. But, I do know, for one, that every test I performed while writing this tutorial resulted only in varying degrees of dodging. I could never perform any burning.

Secondly, since I am working on a single, 50% gray color, regardless whether it's visible, there are no highlights or shadows. Consequently, the Dodge and Burn tools' selector for adjusting Highlights, Midtones, or Shadows is a bust.

Use the Brush Tool Instead

Thankfully, the solution is a very simple one. I've established that the 50% gray fill on top of the image is completely invisible when the gray color's Blending Mode is Soft Light. Quite predictably, if the gray becomes lighter, toward white, the result is that the image on the layer beneath is also lightened. Conversely, when the gray becomes darker, toward black, the image beneath is darkened.

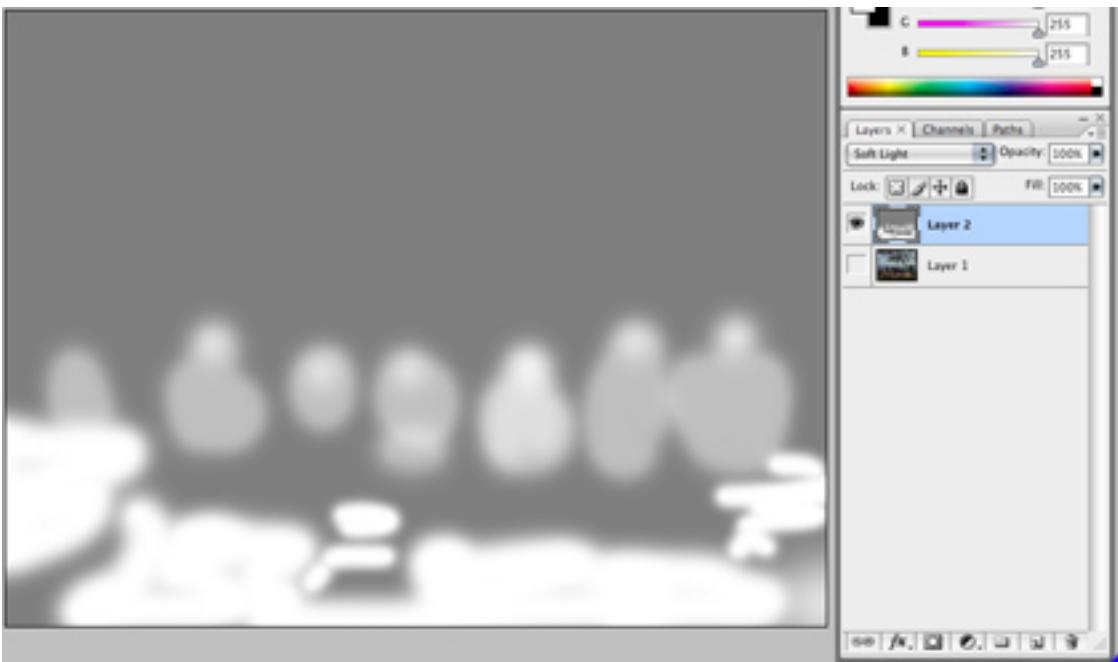
So, instead of using the Dodge and Burn tools, the Brush tool makes the perfect stunt double. Here's the procedure.

1. Ensure the 50% gray layer is selected in the Layers palette. This is the layer to be edited—not the original image.
2. Set the foreground color in the Tools palette to black for burning or white for dodging.
3. With the Brush tool active, choose a brush size and hardness in the same manner as if the original Dodge and Burn tools were being used.
4. Choose an opacity percentage. Higher numbers equal increased lightening or darkening.
5. Use the Brush tool over the image in the same manner that the Dodge and Burn tools would be used.

Instead of toggling between the traditional Dodge and Burn tools to lighten and darken, respectively, painting white (to dodge) or black (to burn) with the Brush tool on the 50% gray layer offers near identical functionality while preserving the original image's pixels.



The shadows and the people sitting by the water were lightened using a dodging method, but performed on the 50% gray layer instead of on the original image.



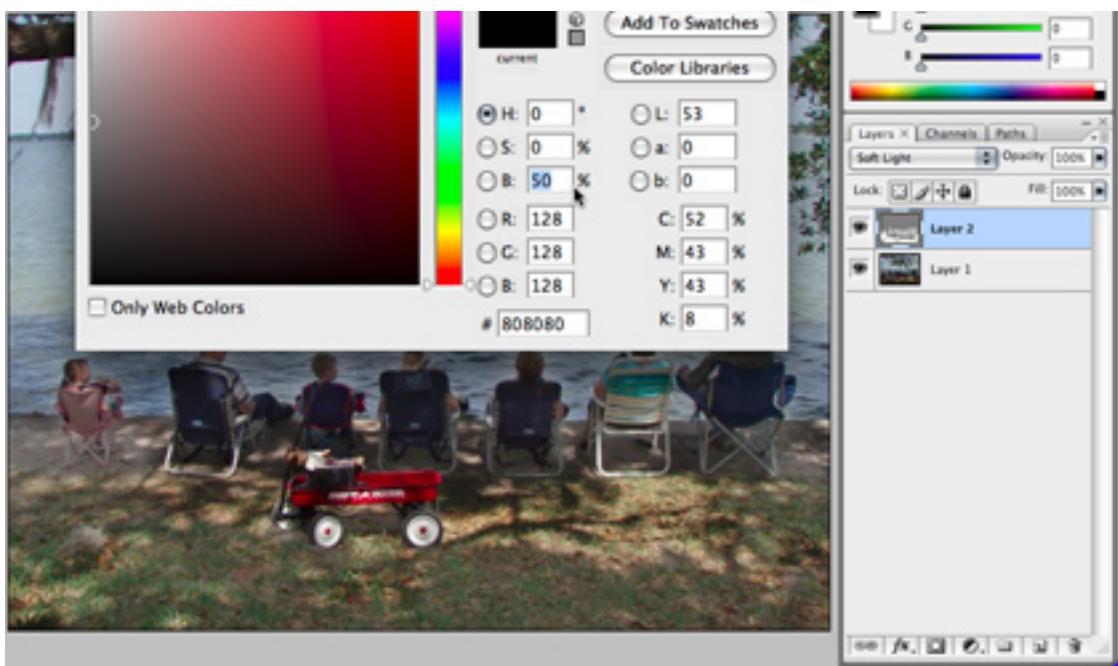
By hiding the layer containing the original image, the 50% gray layer becomes temporarily visible, revealing the exact areas where I painted white to lighten certain portions. 100% opacity was used on the bottom to lighten the ground shadows considerably. Only 50% painting opacity was used on the people in chairs, which is why my painted shapes only appear to be a lighter shade of gray instead of white.

The image above showing my 50% gray layer after some dodging exposes one small caveat resulting from the Soft Light Blending Mode: dodging and burning can only be done to a certain amount and no further. Even if 100% white or 100% black is painted with the Brush tool, the area painted will never become solid white or black because the Soft Light Blending Mode will always allow some of the original image to show through.

Yet, one must remember that the typical goal of dodging and burning is only to gently lighten or darken bits of an image by small amounts. When I require more significant lightening or darkening to areas of an image, I'll generally reach for other Photoshop tools instead of Dodge and Burn.

Don't Forget—It's Nondestructive

Returning portions of an image to how it looked before any dodging or burning was done is accomplished simply by using the Brush tool to paint 50% gray back over the areas to be restored.



Instead of painting black or white, set the foreground color to 50% gray by clicking the foreground color well in the Tool palette, then set a value of 50 in the Brightness field, labeled B, with the H and S fields at 0, as shown above. Also remember to set the Brush tool opacity to 100%.

Now having used the Brush tool for dodging and burning instead of the actual Dodge and Burn tools, it becomes clear that one should never assume that a particular tool or command in Photoshop is only meant to accomplish one thing. With that in mind, here is this month's...

Homework Assignment

I'll be stepping outside the realm of nondestructive dodging and burning for this assignment. In the spirit of recognizing that probably nothing in Photoshop is a uni-tasker, this assignment is to use the same steps described above to perform a very different result—a hand-tinting effect.

You may have already surmised that there's absolutely nothing wrong with using colors other than black, white, or 50% gray on the faux Adjustment Layer. The result can approximate a hand-tint effect on any part of the image.



By using some green and blue shades, I deepened the color of the grass and the water by painting a small bit of the respective colors on the 50% gray layer. Of course, tints like this don't have to be restricted to improving realism. It would be just as easy to paint a purplish sky.

This effect can be even more pronounced when the original image is desaturated to grayscale. If the original image is grayscale to begin with, be sure to first change to RGB Mode from the Image menu. Now, try just a few accent colors.



Take note that this is not the same as holding the original colors from parts of an image and desaturating the rest. This, instead, is tinting new colors onto specific areas of the photo.

I vividly recall using photographic tinting inks, cotton balls, cotton swabs, and toothpicks to hand-tint black-and-white prints I'd made in the darkroom. Today, using this faux Adjustment Layer technique, I can now continue to enjoy the fun of tinting grayscale photographs without the worry of permanent mistakes or costly tinting inks.

Above all else, don't stop experimenting—on copies of your original images, of course! Try setting up multiple faux Adjustment Layers and overlapping your edits. Try Blending Modes other than Soft Light. And, most importantly, if a result is not what was expected, don't be so quick to hit the Undo command. Take a second to examine the result and what was done to create it—knowing what was done might prove useful in the future.

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Desktop Pictures

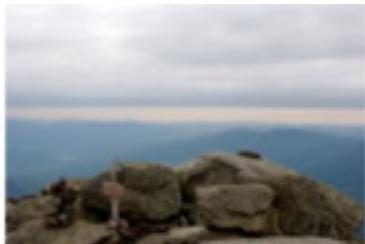
by David Siebecker, <http://www.sidekickr.com>

White Mountains

We need new desktop pictures each month. [Write](#) to us!

This Month's Desktop Pictures

This month's photos were taken by [David Siebecker](#) on a six-day hike through New Hampshire's White Mountains.



[View Pictures](#)

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

Downloading All the Pictures at Once

Some browsers can download an entire set of desktop pictures at once.

iCab Use the Download command to download “Get all files in same path.”

OmniWeb Choose “Save Linked ▷ Images...” from the File menu.

Safari Use [this Automator workflow](#).

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

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

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.3.x through 10.5.x

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu, click the “Desktop & Screen Saver” button, then choose the Desktop tab. In the left-side menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Select the Screen Saver tab which is also in the “Desktop & Screen Saver” System Preferences pane. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, click on the Pictures Folder in the list of screen savers. Otherwise, click Choose Folder to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu and click the Desktop button. With the pop-up menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu. Click the Screen Saver (10.1.x) or Screen Effects (10.2.x) button. Then click on Custom Slide Show in the list of screen savers. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, you’re all set. Otherwise, click Configure to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

Mac OS X 10.0.x

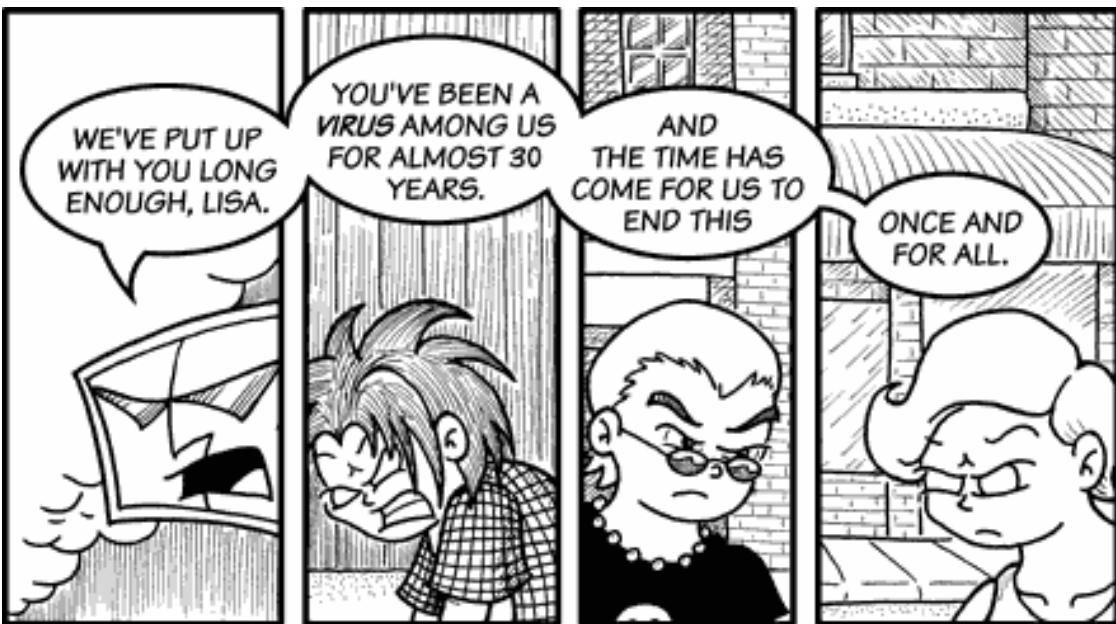
Switch to the Finder. Choose “Preferences...” from the “Finder” menu. Click on the “Select Picture...” button on the right. In the Open Panel, select the desktop picture you want to use. The panel defaults to your `~/Library/Desktop Pictures` folder. Close the “Finder Preferences” window when you are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



Cortland

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com









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Hardware Review

by Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com

Apple Keyboard

Developer: [Apple](#)

Price: \$49

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.10, Keyboard Software Update.

Trial: None



Could it be that a flat, standard keyboard using rubber membranes could displace the mechanical key switch-using Datadesk Smartboard I had come to [know and love](#)? That was the question I set out to answer when I purchased the Apple Keyboard (wired version) a month and a half after its debut in August of last year. I've been using Apple's latest keyboard since mid-September, and I haven't looked back.

Though it has been termed Apple's "Aluminum Keyboard" for the purpose of identification, the only aluminum part of it is the slender top surface. The even slimmer bottom surface is made of white plastic, like the keys atop. In a nod to the color of the aluminum, the print on the keys isn't black, as one might expect, but a grey.



The keys themselves are, of course, inspired by the keyboards of the MacBook line. My only experiences with such a keyboard prior to the purchase of this one, were the few times I'd tapped out lines inTextEdit while on a MacBook in an Apple Store. Not long enough to make a truly informed decision, but at least long enough to know I didn't totally hate it. As it turned out, not only do I not hate the keys on the Aluminum Keyboard, I *love* them. So much so, that I'm hoping Apple brings this keyboard style to the next MacBook Pro refresh.

Speaking of the keys, the function keys on the Aluminum Keyboard sport a lot more functions than did those of its predecessors. With the Keyboard Software Update installed,

not only do they control the brightness and volume levels of your system, but they can also launch Dashboard and Exposé, and control iTunes. For me, enabling these features meant finding a new capture key for EagleFiler, which by default is F1. Apple has left F5 and F6 “blank,” so F5 was the winner.



A look at some of the special-feature F keys.

Moving from a keyboard like the SmartBoard, which uses mechanical key switches—think of the loud clackety-clack of keyboards of yore; those used mechanical key switches—to one using the now more-common rubber membranes to control key function can take some getting used to, and it was an odd couple of days at first. Now, I can’t imagine going back. You don’t have to press very hard on these keys, meaning less finger travel, which saves wear and strain on your digits’ muscles. Likewise, the low profile and slight angle of the Aluminum Keyboard take the strain off of my wrists just as much as the SmartBoard did with its design. Unlike with the MacBook keyboard, there is no flex to the Aluminum Keyboard when you get into a heavy typing session.



The keyboard is very thin, but very sturdy.

I imagine the wireless version of the Aluminum Keyboard is very similar in operation, though I have no personal experience with it. I have noticed that the arrow keys are smaller on the wireless version, and users should note that keyboard also lacks the numeric keypad and function keys F13–19 found on the wired edition.

If I had my druthers with the Aluminum Keyboard, I would move the two USB ports further out to the edges of the board. The current placement by Apple is more for aesthetics than practicality, and I nearly always have to lift up the keyboard to line up the plug of the device I'm plugging in with the port.

As with many things, using a keyboard is very subjective. I like the reclaimed desktop space due to its smaller size, and the fact that my fingers don't have to work as hard as before. I really like Apple's latest keyboard, but there are plenty of folks who do not, and that's okay. If you're in the market for a new keyboard for your Mac, though, you could do a lot worse than Apple's Aluminum Keyboard.

Copyright © 2008 Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com. Yes, Managing Editor Christopher Turner was quite serious when he said he hoped the next version of the MacBook Pro has a keyboard like that of the MacBooks. Really. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Software Review

by Linus Ly, illy@atpm.com

Blue Crab 4.9.5

Developer: [Limit Point Software](#)

Price: \$25

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4. [Universal](#).

Trial: Fully-featured (10 days)



I love writing and found Blogger.com to be the right outlet for my passion.

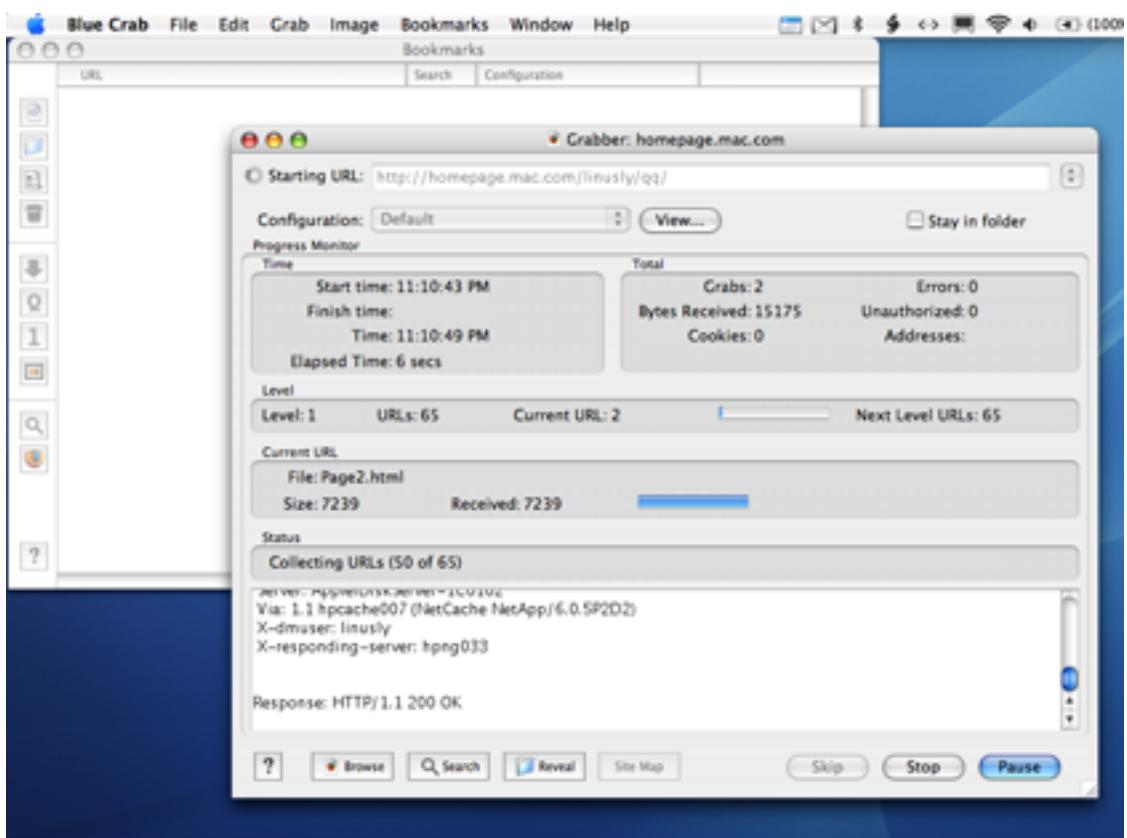
When I work on qaptainqwerty.blogspot.com, I do not need to worry about HTML syntax or other technicalities. I just need to concentrate on whatever topics that I want to rant about. The one downside is that the whole blog exists only on the Web. I have been looking for a way to archive my blog for posterity. I need a Web crawler, and Limit Point Software's Blue Crab looks promising.

Standard Installation

Blue Crab's installation is straightforward—download disk image, mount it, and drag the package to the hard drive. You do need to obtain a password from Limit Point Software, however, in order to use the software either for the ten-day trial or the full version.

Overview

Web crawling is a serious job, and Blue Crab tries to make it easier. The most straightforward way is to select "Crawl URL" from the Grab menu. Enter a Web address and click Start, then off you go with the Default configurations. As Blue Crab crawls the URL, the log window tells you exactly what is happening. However, all that reporting slows down the process very much. By selecting "Grab Quickly," you use a faster download technology, and there's less reporting. For an even faster result, you can go with the "Download One Page" option but, of course, you will get just that one page. In all cases, you have the option of grabbing the URL from the Web browser it's currently open in and not having to worry about mistyping. Once the Web site is downloaded, you can browse it or search through it with Blue Crab's built-in search function.

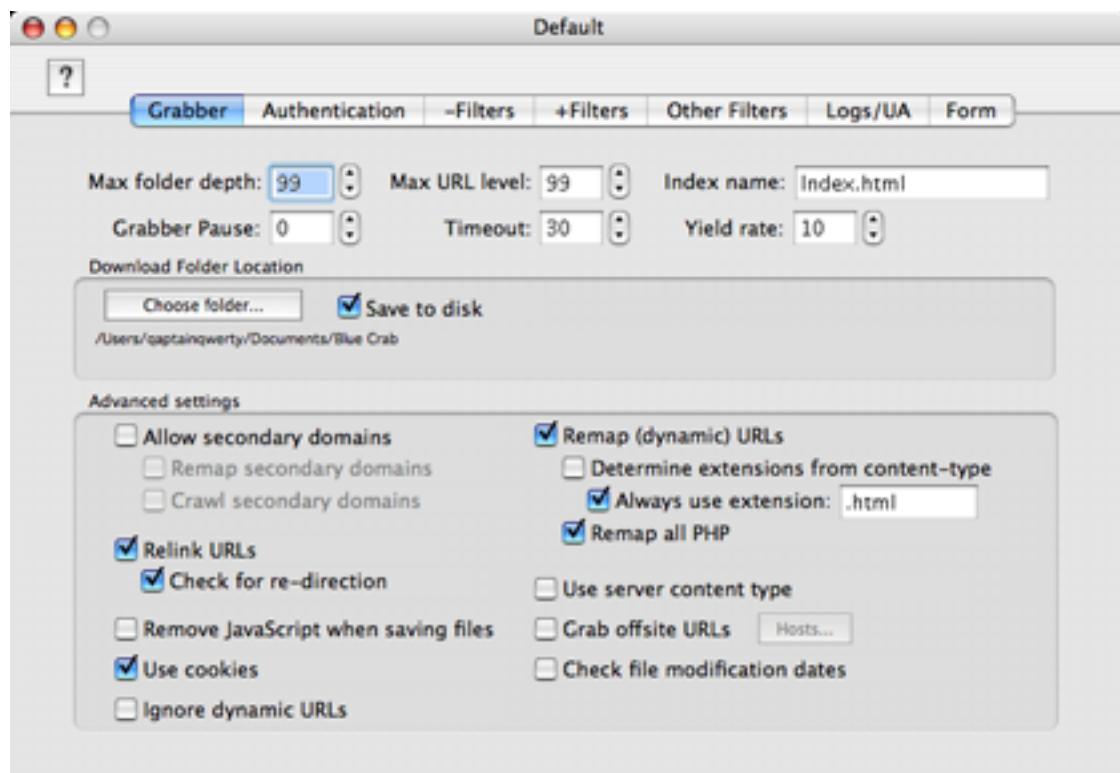


The classic Crawl URL shows what's happening with the download.

Prior to having the Blogger site, I had another site for exposing [my still cartoons](#). I would draw the cartoons at work to entertain my colleagues, usually covering topics such as office politics or current tech news. I would next capture the drawings with a digital camera, then import them into iPhoto. A simple HTML export generated the Web gallery. Simple Web sites like this work well as either a one-page grab or a complete grab.

Options Galore

Chances are the Web site the typical user wants to grab is a complex one, with links to other Web sites, banner ads, and Flash animations. Blue Crab has many ways of helping with the grab, although the learning curve gets steeper from here. Probably the most obvious way is to limit the number of levels to dig into the site. Using my simple .Mac site as an example, <http://homepage.mac.com/linusly/qq> would be Level 0, then <http://homepage.mac.com/linusly/qq/index-Pages> would be Level 1, and so on. You can also limit the folder depth the crawling occurs at. Whereas the level is associated with HTML links, the folder depth is about the number of folders in any given URL. A folder depth setting of 3 would cause links such as <http://www.blah.com/folder1/folder2/folder3/folder4> to be skipped.



Oodles of options to download the whole Web or not.

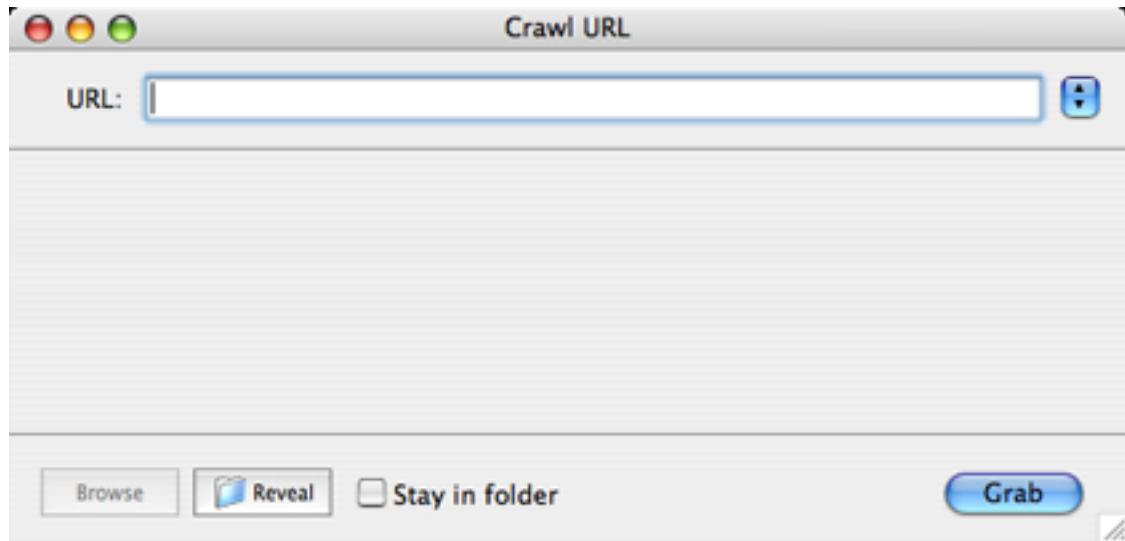
Level and folder restrictions are easy to implement, but other settings may not be so straightforward. For instance, to limit the crawl to files matching a certain criteria, the text to be searched has to be URL-encoded. Space characters must be replaced by %20 and the @ sign must be entered as %40, for example. The number following the percent sign is the hex value of the original character. Hex equivalents of everyday characters may be more meaningful to you if you have some programming experience. Supposedly there is a listing of all these so-called “unsafe characters” out there on the Web, but I have not stumbled across it yet other than some references to [RFC 1738](#). It would be helpful if Blue Crab’s documentation included a full table of unsafe characters and their hex equivalents, or if it simply let you type the characters without URL encoding.

Without a doubt, Blue Crab is full of features to control how much you want to download from the Web. Most of the time, I can guess the uses for the various features. For other features, looking them up in Help Viewer clarifies the issue. Unfortunately, Blue Crab’s documentation does not keep up with its development. There are some features that are simply not mentioned in the documentation. I suspect the “Ignore dynamic URLs” option can be useful for skipping ads, but neither the documentation on the hard drive nor the online tour mentions it. Only the version history file, accessible as Release Notes in Blue Crab, refers to the feature. The online tour does include a section called Improving Speed, in which many Blue Crab options are discussed with regard to optimum content and fastest speed.

Another function that is covered only in the version history is imaging. At first, I thought it was related to grabbing images. It turned out to be a way to capture a Web site as a picture file, although I am not too sure how to use it. On the surface, it seems the end result is a JPEG file that mostly resembles what the browser showed at the moment. But then Blue Crab also opens a sort of Web browser window within which you can navigate the Web. I do not know what the purpose of Blue Crab's browser window is. Bug or feature, I will have to wait for the documentation to catch up.

Blue Crab makes use of configurations to store combinations of the many settings. You start with a default configuration that is not changeable. Instead, you can copy the default configuration or create new ones. While it may be interesting to poke around with Blue Crab's oodles of options, I think it would be more helpful if the software came with pre-set configurations. In addition to the default, perhaps there should be one for ignoring pictures and movies for faster download, another for optimal speed with all the settings as suggested by the online tour, and one for optimal content.

If having too many options turns you off, you can try Blue Crab Lite, which is just a straightforward crawler that allows you to manually control the downloading process. All you can do is pause and resume the crawling process, or stop it altogether. Limit Point offers Blue Crab Lite as one of its many utilities. Interestingly, with just one donation amount of \$10, \$15, \$20, or \$25 you can unlock all the utilities and receive their updates free, too.



Blue Crab Lite is the bare-bones version of Blue Crab, in which you have no control over the crawling process other than pausing or stopping it.

Verdict

Power and ease of use usually don't go hand in hand. While anyone equipped with Blue Crab can easily start grabbing Web pages, making the most of the software requires an extra

level of technical expertise. Not everyone can readily associate %20 with the space character or know the extensions for image files displayable on the Web. It does not help that the documentation is a few versions behind. Having reference materials in the documentation, perhaps as simple as a URL, would help the less technical users. Still, Blue Crab is a good tool to have for any Web-archiving endeavors.

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Software Review

by Sylvester Roque, sroque@atpm.com

Drive Genius 2

Developer: Prosoft Engineering

Price: \$99

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.9, 1 GHz processor. [Universal](#).

Recommended: Quartz Extreme for animated user interface.

Trial: Fully-limited ([many disk write features disabled](#)).



If there were an award for sexiest category of Mac software, disk drive maintenance utilities probably aren't even in the competition. I'm probably in the group of Mac users that doesn't think about these programs until I need them. Recently, I was forced to think about this a bit: I had older versions of several utilities that either weren't Leopard-compatible or wouldn't boot my Mac Pro.

Overview

Over the years, one thing has occurred to me about disk utility programs. It seems that your options are to buy several programs, each optimized for a few tasks, or one program designed to perform several tasks. Drive Genius 2 fits squarely into the second school of thought: one utility to perform several related tasks.

Using one program to protect data integrity and optimize drive performance is only half the equation. A powerful program has to be designed in such a way that its use is comprehensible. At best, badly designed programs don't get used. At worst, they increase the likelihood that users inadvertently make mistakes. Inadvertent mistakes with hard drive utilities can lead to lost or corrupted data. Drive Genius attempts to create just the right mix of a powerful yet easy-to-use program.

To be most useful to you, Drive Genius must either boot from the DVD or from a second drive. Many of the operations it supports cannot be run from the current boot drive because the drive must be unmounted to complete the operation.

Initial Impressions

My first impression of a new program often begins with the installation process. I should read the manual first, but rarely do, unless the program in question has a reputation for being particularly picky in this regard. Drive Genius doesn't disappoint here. Dragging the Drive Genius folder from the DVD to your Mac's Applications folder copies it to your hard drive. Upon the program's first launch you will be prompted for a name and serial number. If your Mac doesn't support Quartz Extreme, Drive Genius 2 disables the animated user

interface—which can also be disabled from the program’s preferences. All of the tasks performed will still function but without the pictures of spinning hard drives and flying data. Automatically disabling the animated icons was one of the first things to provide a positive first impression.

One of the other polished touches which contributes to a good first impression of Drive Genius is the automatic check for updated versions of the program, which happens each time the program is run. Normally I would consider this an annoying intrusion, but it is important. Using outdated disk utilities can seriously damage your data. The check is almost unnoticeable with a broadband connection. If you don’t have an always-on Internet connection, or you’re willing to risk having an outdated program, this feature can be easily disabled by choosing “Check for Updates” from the Drive Genius menu. The resulting dialog provides an option for disabling auto update checking.

The Main Program Interface

Once launched, Drive Genius’s Main Menu resembles a cross between a system preference pane and the cover flow view in iTunes. The main portion of the screen looks like a preference pane. Icons representing each of Drive Genius’s major drive operations are placed in the center of the screen. Six operations are represented in the first screen. Clicking the green arrow provides access to icons representing the five remaining test areas. Each test has a descriptive icon not unlike the album art viewed in cover flow mode in iTunes. The primary difference is that the icons are side-by-side rather than stacked on top of each other à la iTunes. This eliminates the need to scroll through tests to get to the area that you need.



Main Menu

I thought I would find the process of accessing the second tier of tests annoying—it really isn't. Although I might prefer having icons for all the tests on the same screen, transitioning between the two main menu screens occurs quickly on my Mac Pro. If you find this process annoying, or perhaps a bit slow on older machines, use the pop-up menu in the upper right side of the program window. From here you can access any of the test suites. The name of the currently running test appears here, and you can also use it to return to the main menu.

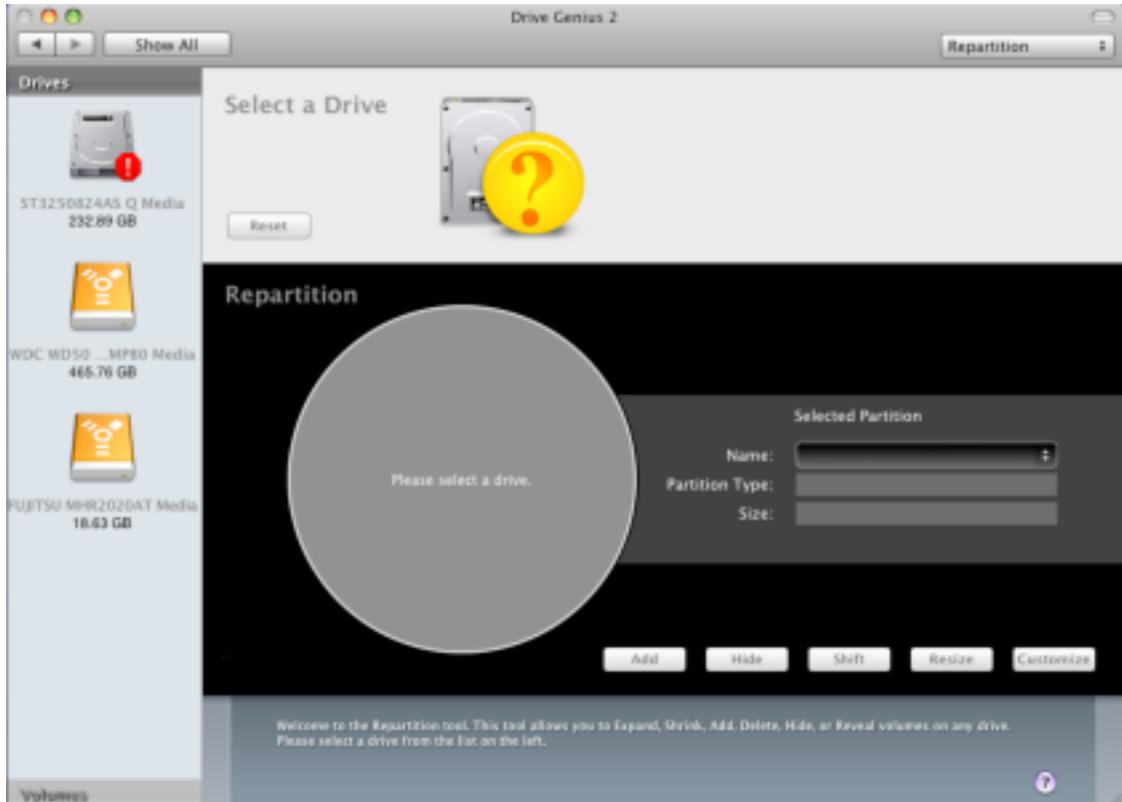
Once you've chosen an operation to perform, step one of Prosoft's view of drive management is complete. Steps two and three involve selecting a target volume and setting the necessary parameters to complete the operation. The program window changes a bit to make this part of the process easier.

Setting And Applying Test parameters

Once an operation is selected, the main window changes slightly. Icons representing the major operations are replaced by a four-paned window. The leftmost pane runs vertically along almost the entirety of the program window. In all the operations this pane has the same function—select the drive or volume on which to work. This completes step two of the process.

The remainder of the window is divided into three horizontal panes. These panes carry out step three of the process—setting and applying parameters for the chosen operation. The top pane either asks you to select a volume or presents information about that volume depending upon the operation being performed.

The second horizontal pane allows you to set specific parameters for each operation. Choosing Initialize, for example, shifts this pane so that the user can choose either Apple Partition Map or GUID Partition Table. Choose a Repartition operation, and the previously simple window changes to present options for the name, type, and size of each partition. Although the content of this pane changes according to the operation, the layout is always well thought-out, and changes are accomplished with a few mouse clicks or keystrokes. Even the Repartition screen, which has perhaps the most options, is easy to understand with this arrangement.



Repartition Screen

The third horizontal pane is the smallest of the panes. Throughout each operation this pane has two functions: inform the user about what needs to be done to successfully complete the operation, and start the operation. The text in this window varies from operation to operation but one thing remains constant—the “?” Bubble at the bottom of the screen. A quick click here takes you to Drive Genius’s searchable PDF-based manual. Curiously, the main menu is the only screen without this help bubble.

What Can Be Done

There are eleven major operations that can be performed with Drive Genius 2. Detailed descriptions of each would likely take more time to read than you have. Instead I'll list the operations, which have self-explanatory names, and comment about one or two items that caught my attention right away and were largely responsible for my interest in the program.

Users can perform the following operations with relative ease: Information, Initialize, Defrag, Repartition, Benchtest, Duplicate, Repair, Shred, Integrity Check (make sure the data is readable and writable), Sector Edit, and Scan (find and deallocate bad blocks).

While preparing for this review I ran each of the tests except for "Sector Edit." I've never been confident enough with my knowledge of that area to risk data or feel competent discussing it. Having said that, all the tests perform as advertised and do so in times that are comparable to other utilities. I didn't time most of the tests because too many variables come into play to give reliable information. My thought is that for most of these tasks you want reliability rather than speed.

Each of the tests describes the operation's purpose and includes a well-thought-out interface. If an operation could destroy data, users are warned about the possibility before continuing. Throughout the program and manual there are reminders about the importance of having a backup in case something unforeseen happens.

There are a few things that struck my attention about the "Duplicate" operation. If a volume/partition is selected, users are limited to copying HFS+ volumes. Selecting the entire device allows copying of filesystems from other operating systems, including Mac OS 9, Windows, and Linux. Using this portion of the program on OS 9 volumes may cause you to lose the ability to boot from the OS 9 volume. At the moment, I cannot test its ability to copy Windows volumes, but I should be able to soon.

I was able to "clone" my boot drive containing Leopard once I booted from the DVD. The process went flawlessly and took almost eight minutes less with Drive Genius than with Carbon Copy Cloner. In fairness to Carbon Copy Cloner, having to boot from the Drive Genius DVD eats about 4:30 of the time savings if I can't boot from another drive. Even under those conditions, rebooting from another drive consumes over two minutes of the time savings. As far as I can tell, running this operation from a hard drive would require three drives, since both the source and target drives must be unmounted during the process.

The big draw for me in Drive Genius was the ability to *repartition* a drive without having to reformat the drive and losing data. I seem to have a knack for using drive partitions as a means of organization. Unfortunately, several times in the past I have created partitions that quickly became too small for their intended purpose. Drive Genius solves this problem nicely with the ability to repartition a drive. The caveat is that you must have some unallocated space on the drive before being able to expand the partition. If the space is there, it's possible to move things around as needed. If you want to hide a partition, this is the place to go.

What Can't Be Done

Drive Genius is not a backup program, nor is it a data recovery program. That's why reminders to backup your data are included throughout the program and the documentation. If you are interested, Prosoft has other software to satisfy. It's also not designed to benchmark or otherwise test the health of your entire system. As the name implies, Drive Genius focuses on your drives.

There are some drives that Drive Genius cannot work with. If you need to work with MS-DOS or RAID drives, you'll need other utilities.

Things I Would Like to See in the Program

My gripes with this program are minor. It does the things I need this type of utility to perform. Some of you may consider it too picky. For what it's worth, here are the things I noticed:

If you click on the “?” icon within the program it brings you to the manual. As far as I can tell, no matter what you are doing it defaults to the first page of the manual. It would be nice if clicking the link took users to the section of the manual relevant to the task being performed.

In the “Duplicate” segment, I'd like the ability to “clone” the boot drive while booted from that drive, à la Carbon Copy Cloner or [SuperDuper](#). I realize that this process has the limitation of not producing a block-by-block accurate clone of the system, but it would meet most users' basic cloning needs as well as allowing users to work in other programs while the clone is being completed.

Final Thoughts

For a while I debated the rating for this program. Were the concerns I had enough to deny it ATPM's highest rating? After all, this is a rock-solid program that works as advertised. Ultimately I settled on a rating of Excellent because in the scope of things my concerns were minor. Drive Genius is definitely worth a place in your utility closet.

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Accessory Review

by Chris Lawson, <http://chrislawson.net>

Flipp Premium Leather Case For iPod classic

Developer: [PDO](#)

Price: \$30

Requirements: iPod video or iPod classic (two different models, depending on thickness)

Trial: None



Compared to many manufacturers, PDO is a relative newcomer to the iPod accessories market, but that doesn't seem to have hurt their ability to produce a quality, functional, and attractive iPod case.

The Flipp is a classic black leather flip-style iPod case in the same vein as the [PodFolio](#) and [LeatherPod](#). The case is available in two sizes: one for the thin iPod video and iPod classic models (30 GB and 80 GB, respectively), and one for the thicker models (60 GB or 80 GB iPod video, or 160 GB iPod classic).



Closed

It's obvious that PDO took some notes from the competition's hits and misses. Like many modern iPod cases, the Flipp is lined with a soft synthetic material to prevent scratches due to the case and, like many flip-style cases, the Flipp holds its outer shell closed with a pair of tiny—but strong—magnets at the base of the flap.



Open

Unlike the PodFolio, but like the LeatherPod, the Flipp has a clear plastic window over the iPod's screen for extra protection. PDO went the extra mile and sandwiched the clear plastic between two layers of material, holding it off the screen and avoiding the scratch problem that the LeatherPod had. Another area where it's obvious PDO learned from others' mistakes is the hinge of the flip—the Flipp has a 7/8ths-width hinge that leaves ample room for large third-party headphone jacks but provides almost as much protection as a full-width hinge.



Corner

The Flipp has a sturdy-feeling belt clip on the back that easily slips on and off your waist no matter what your apparel is made of, but miraculously manages to remain secure even if you're running. The dock connector cutout on the bottom is neat and tidy, more so than on many non-rigid iPod cases I've seen, and allows for easy charging of the iPod via the factory USB cable. The stitching is also very neat and tidy throughout the case; the overall quality of the materials and workmanship on the Flipp seem to be far superior to most of the cases I've seen in this price range.

Another nice touch that adds to the classic look of black leather is the complete absence of any logos on the flap. The PDO logo is on the back of the case, just below the belt clip, safely out of the way and assuring you that gaudy logos won't ruin the lines of the case with your Armani suit or Wrangler jeans.



Back

I was unable to test the case with any dock connector-based accessories, but the leather across the bottom of the case is fairly thick, so don't expect many accessories wider than the connector itself to work well, if at all. Of course, this is a fairly widespread problem with iPod cases and is by no means unique to the Flipp.

There are a lot of \$30 cases out there, and there are even a number of leather cases out there in this price range, but of all the ones I've seen so far, PDO's Flipp is the highest quality and best looking. Longtime readers will know I do not hand out Excellent ratings lightly, but this product truly deserves it.

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Software Review

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

SpacePig 1.0.2

Developer: [baKno](#)

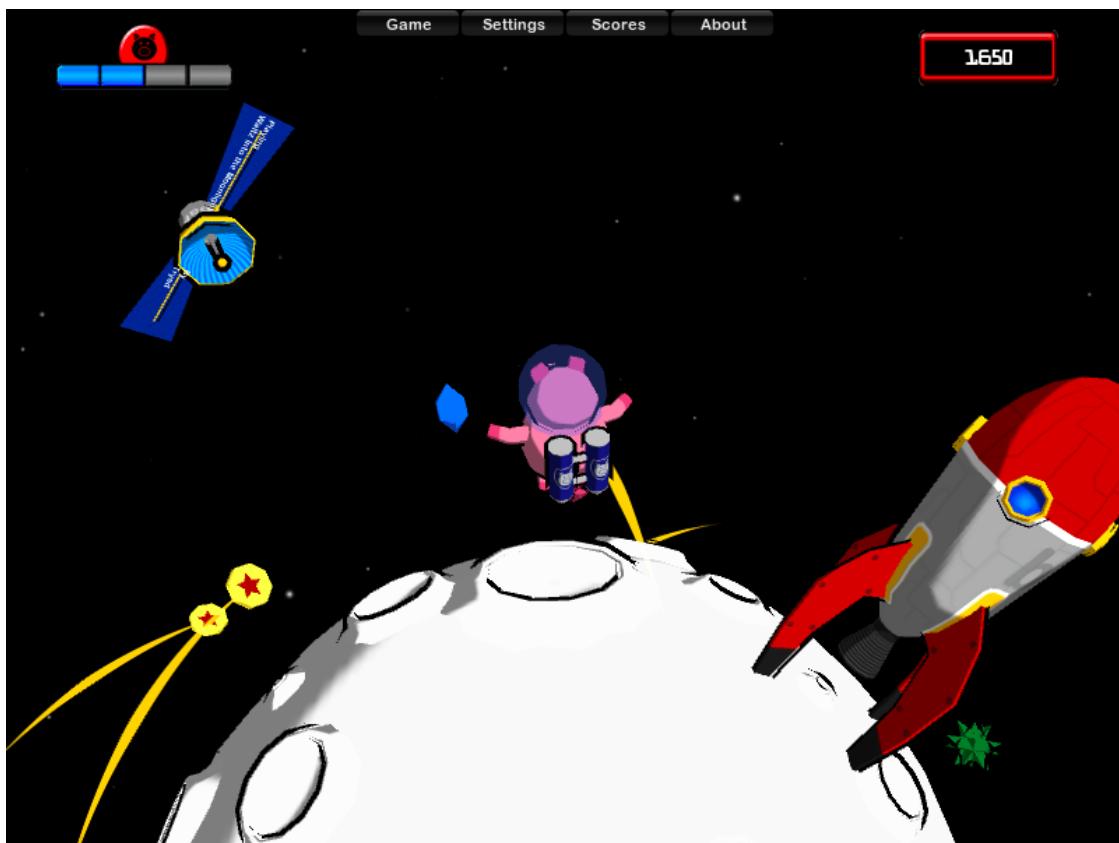
Price: \$10

Requirements: Mac OS X, Internet connection. [Universal](#).

Trial: Feature-limited (you only get one life)



SpacePig got my attention because of its silly premise. You're a pig, on the moon, collecting coins and diamonds. You're the only pig on the moon, I might add; there aren't any others. If this were an Atari 2600 game, I'd reach straight for the manual to learn the pig's name and why he has left his home to risk his life pursuing lunar riches. But since it's a Macintosh game, all I could do is reach for my keyboard and start playing.

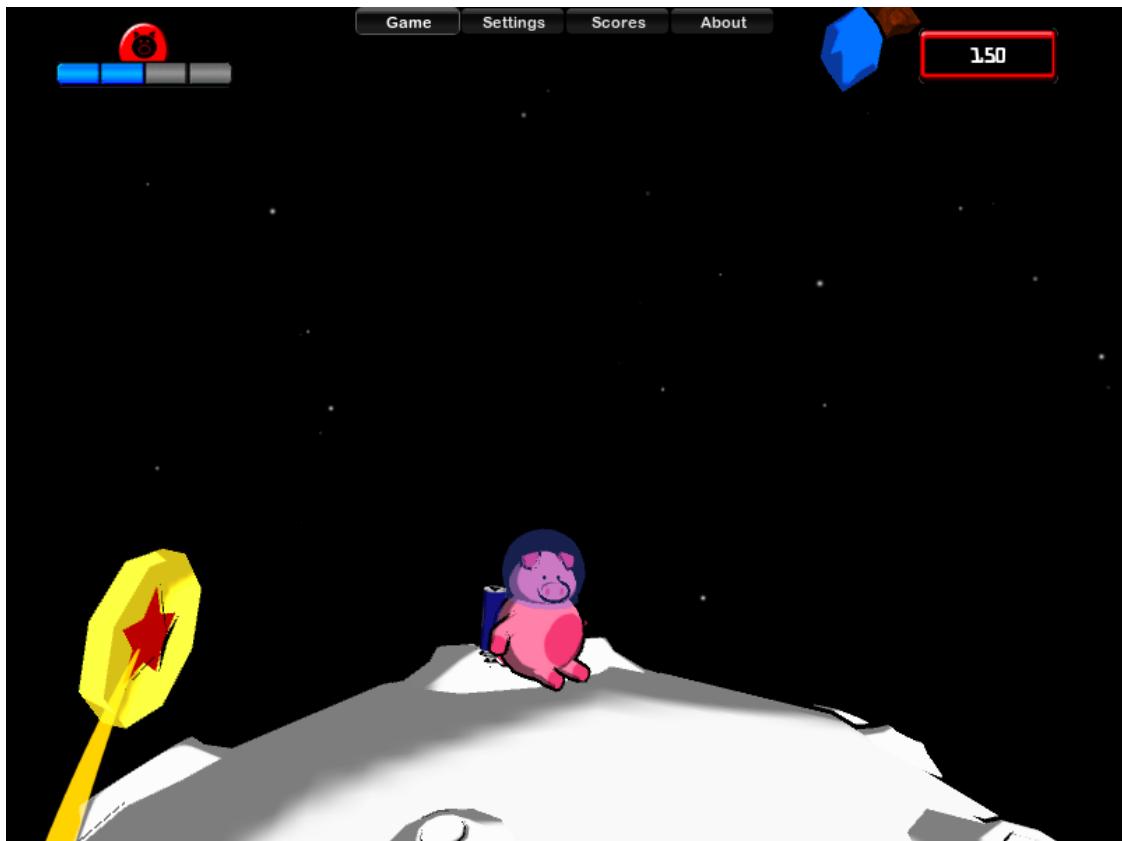


As it turns out, the moon is pretty small. You'll run around it many, many times, in all different directions, gathering wealth and avoiding—because they can kill you—meteoroids

and green spiky things that remind me a bit of conkers. Often the wealth is over your head, but you can jump—very high and very far, thanks to your rocket-pack and the moon's low gravity—to reach them.

I suppose all of this sounds easy, but it's not. It can be difficult to tell when something is directly overhead. Even when leaping for diamonds, which are stationary, I often miss and need a second or third try. As for coins, which fly through the sky...catching one is more luck than skill. It doesn't help that while you're in the air you can't change direction, only look around.

But honestly, I find SpacePig amusing. Lots of motion on the computer screen tends to make me woozy, it's just the way I am: but I'll play as long as I can. The graphics are simple, old-fashioned maybe, kind of charming or nostalgic. And the music, streamed from baKno, is great, somehow fitting perfectly with floating slowly around the moon. Stop playing and listen. The pig sits down, and the moon spins and spins until I am so dizzy I have to stand up and keep playing.



Like all pigs, it's inevitable that you will die, cold and alone on the moon. Four times you will die, and then it's really over. The reward for your efforts is fame: high scores are [posted online](#). As of this writing, I'm number six.

My two biggest complaints about SpacePig have nothing to do with gameplay. The first problem, in fact, is common to many games I've played: if you play in full-screen mode, the icons on your desktop are out of place when you quit. To me, that needlessly sours the gaming experience. SpacePig, at least, opens in a window by default: but beware of the mess if you decide to play full-screen.

My second complaint only affects those who pay to register the game. You can't paste your serial number into the window to register; you must type out the long string of hyphenated gibberish. You also must be connected to the Internet in order to enter your serial number. It's annoying, since there's no reason why a program shouldn't be able to validate a serial number without phoning home. But it gets worse: if, having successfully entered your serial number, you want to play again later without an Internet connection (say, on the plane), the game thinks you're not registered. This takes anti-piracy measures to such an extreme that they interfere with the use of the game by people who actually paid for it.

SpacePig isn't modern or complicated, and it doesn't require much thought. Sometimes, however, that can be a good thing. If you're looking for a somewhat silly arcade-style game that's relaxing rather than frantic, and you have a persistent Internet connection (Big baKno is watching you!), give SpacePig a try.

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