



# GET INFO

March 2005

## Upcoming Programs

April

### From Your TV to Your Mac

EyeTV presented by Duane Reaugh and Canopus ADVC-100 Analog-digital converter with iMovie/iDVD presented by Jeff Cole.

May

### Member Favorites

Short presentations from members on their favorite freeware or shareware application, game, script, tool, trick or tip. Members are invited to step forward to present; there is plenty of room on the schedule. *If you wish to be included on the schedule please contact Allen Emory at [aemory@earthlink.net](mailto:aemory@earthlink.net).*

June

### Member Swap Meet



## Prez Sez

### Welcome Back *Get Info*

At the last TMUG Executive Committee (XCOM) meeting, Melanie Crain introduced us to Lisa Colwell and the fact that she was going to revive the TMUG newsletter, *Get Info*. What a fortuitous turn of events for TMUG. How lucky we all are going to be to see the return of our User Group journal. I am excited to see what Lisa has in store for us.

But the fact that *Get Info* is returning isn't what really struck me. No, what really struck me was the fact that another TMUG member is stepping up and offering their service to our group. You see, it is this volunteerism from TMUG members that makes TMUG the quality organization that it is.

I have seen numerous notable efforts from our members over the past few months. Only a few weeks ago our listserv went down and Chips Chapman, Paul Lemeiux and Phi Sanders worked tirelessly to get it up and running again. TMUG member Chuck Watts helped our group get nationally known recording artist Branford Marsalis to speak at our January meeting. And in October, past TMUG president Smythe Richbourg made arrangements for every TMUG member that wanted it, to receive a copy VST's software, Vital Source KEY, a value worth more than your TMUG dues.

But, that is the past. You see, at the TMUG Executive Committee, we spend a great deal of time discussing all the possibilities for our group, and there are a lot of possibilities out there. The problem is TMUG needs more member participation. TMUG is your group and we need your participation.

I hope you will take the time to congratulate Lisa and to offer your support in her effort to bring back our newsletter. As you do so, please consider how you might become more involved in your Triangle Macintosh Users Group.

*Allen Emory, 1st VP – Programs Chair*

## TMUG Officers

### President

Frank Crigler, pres@tmug.org

### 1st Vice President

Allen Emory, vp1@tmug.org

### 2nd Vice President

Melanie Crain, vp2@tmug.org

### Secretary

Ruth Landa, secretary@tmug.org

### Treasurer

Jeff Cole, treasurer@tmug.org

### Web Master

Phi Sanders, webmaster@tmug.org

### Postmaster

Paul Lemieux, plemieux@tmug.org

### Listserv Administrator

Chips Chapman, velomac@mind-spring.com

### TMUG Committees and their Chairmen

Programs: Allen Emery

Membership: Alec Whittaker

Website: Melanie Crain, pro tem

**TMUG Web site: [www.tmug.org](http://www.tmug.org)**

*All members are invited to the following Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings:*

### Triangle Adherents of Palm

#### Information Technology (TAPIT)

(Palm Computing SIG)

Meets at 6:30 p.m. on the 3rd

Monday at the Prime Outlets Mall (in the Food Court). The Mall is on

Morrisville Rd, off I-40, opposite direction from the airport; Smythe Richbourg (palmnews@tmug.org)

<http://tapit.interpug.com>

## Don't Trust Your Eyes or URLs

by Glenn Fleishman  
[glenn@tidbits.com](mailto:glenn@tidbits.com)

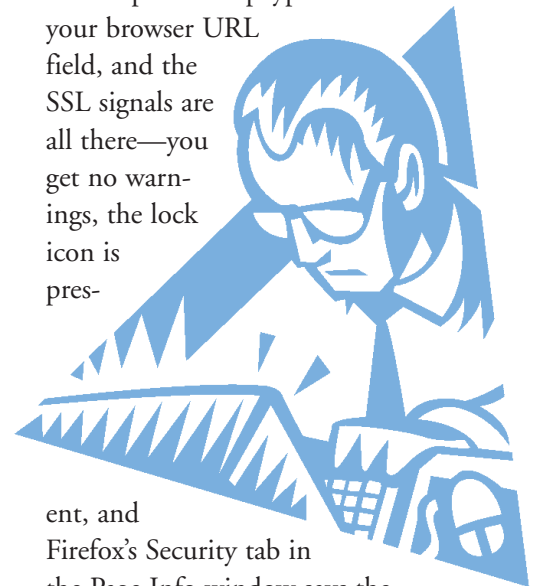
The clever folks at the Shmoo Group, a bunch of interesting security folks who punch holes in assumptions about what's secure on the internet, have discovered a simple way to fool most browsers into believing that they've connected to a secure Web site when they've been spoofed into connecting to a rogue location with a different name. It's ironic, but Internet Explorer is entirely exempt from this spoof. Opera, Safari and KHTML-based browsers, and all Mozilla and Firefox browsers suffer from this weakness on all platforms.

In brief, the Shmoos found that a poorly implemented method of allowing international language encoding within domain names, called International Domain Name (IDN) support, allows a malicious party to display what appears to be one domain name in the Location field of a browser while connecting you to another. Phishing scams have just become more difficult to identify. This exploit is made possible by a system called "punycode," which has been widely adopted according to the Shmoo Group. Domain names that use characters outside of unaccented Western alphabet letters via Unicode/UTF-8 are converted into a string of Roman letters (see Matt Neuburg's "Two Bytes of the Cherry: Unicode and Mac OS X" for more information on Unicode). This conversion isn't a problem, per se. It means that domain names outside of the English character set can be used freely without confusing browsers and can be registered using simple English characters for backwards compatibility within the domain naming infrastructure.

The flaw is twofold: first, affected browsers display whatever the encoded version of the character is, which might look identical to another language's character. For instance, the Shmoos use the

Russian lower-case letter "а," which is encoded as "&#1072;" in UTF-8 using decimal (base 10) notation, and displays in browsers that support IDN as a lower-case "a" indistinguishable from a Roman lowercase "a."

The second problem leads from the first. It's possible to have a legitimate SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) digital certificate for the punycode-based domain name. Thus, in an example that the Schmoos posted for a while (now replaced), you see "https://www.paypal.com/" in your browser URL field, and the SSL signals are all there—you get no warnings, the lock icon is pres-



ent, and Firefox's Security tab in the Page Info window says the Web site's identity is verified. Click View in that same tab in Firefox, and you'll see the full punycode name of the Web site, however, which is "www.xn—pypal-4ve.com." Copy the URL from the Location field and paste it into Terminal, and you'll see the encoded version in standard UTF-8 format, too, which looks like "www.p&#1072;yypal.com." I don't know that there's an easy solution to this problem. It's the result of choice by the developers of the various browsers to display precisely what a Unicode character looks like, which is reasonable enough. But at the same time they use a kludgy, opaque hack in the background to map that Unicode character to an English character to provide full backwards compatibility with what was once a U.S.-centric domain naming system,

# Freshly Squeezed Review

by Frank Petrie

When did you do your last back up? Yeah, you remember when Reagan was president, too?

And forget about archiving. How often do you save a file or important document that you're currently working on? Photoshop might crash while you're in the middle of an important editing job for a client, for example, or the power might go out while you're working on a letter in TextEdit. Enter **SaveMe**, the program that saves all your files automatically, regardless of the program.

I don't back up often enough, if at all. Could a simple program "Save Me" from myself?

**The Good.** Installation is the usual routine—unstuff and drag to the Applications folder. Upon first launch, SaveMe leads you through a special configuration of your Universal Access preferences. But as it leads you by the hand, no problemo. Simultaneously, it adds an icon to your Menu Bar.

Once this is done, you are asked whether or not you would like to go to the Help file. I chose "Yes" so I could set up SaveMe for this article in TextEdit. In fact, you can set different saving preferences for every application that you have.

The graphical user interface (GUI) is very simple and straightforward. While you're in your application, click on the Menu Bar icon *Show Inspector*. Up will come a window with the icon of your frontmost app. You'll then choose from "Do Nothing," "Save," "Save As" and "Save All." Then choose from a selection of intervals from 30 seconds to 12 hours.



**The Bad.** Nada.

**The Ugly.** Nada.

**The Pulp.** SaveMe is again, my favorite kind of shareware, a one trick pony that does its trick extremely well. And here's the killer. This guy started his company as a young teenager! I was never a young teenager!

The \$25 purchase price seems to be pushing it a little bit, but in the end, it's not a deal breaker. Particularly if you've had to rewrite something two or three times and especially when you have to meet a deadline.

**Rating:** 9 out of 10

**Product:** SaveMe v1.0

**Company:** GoldfishSoft

[www.goldfishsoft.com/saveme.html](http://www.goldfishsoft.com/saveme.html)

**Requirements:** Mac OS 10.3 or higher; 5 MB hard drive space

**Price:** \$25 USD

**Test Rig:** PowerMac G4/DP

1.42Ghz/1.5 GB RAM;

PowerBook G4 1.33MHz 12"

**Review Date:** February, 15 2005

one that retains substantial vestiges of that history. If you're a Firefox user, I recommend obtaining and installing a utility called SpoofStick, which alerts you to what is being called "homograph" spoofing; that is, the character or glyph looks like another, unrelated glyph. If you visit the Shmoo site with SpoofStick installed, you get a big lovely warning.

<<http://www.corestreet.com/spoofstick/>>

Trust has gone out the window when you follow links in email or on Web sites. There's no longer a way to be sure that the domain name you're visiting is the one you think you are unless you check the URL out in Terminal or have SpoofStick installed. Realistically, the upshot of this situation is that you must be even more careful about following links you receive in email to sites that ask for sensitive information. A message that purports to be from PayPal customer service, for instance, may look right and even use URLs that appear to connect to PayPal's site, but could in fact be taking you to another site designed to capture your username and password. The likelihood of falling victim to a spoofed URL on the Web itself is less likely, assuming you start from a site that's a relatively trusted source. When in doubt, fall back on common sense and check the URL by pasting suspect URLs into Terminal to see if they're concealing any unusual Unicode characters. Hopefully we'll see browser fixes soon. Simply displaying the full punycode-based domain name alongside its actual representation would at least highlight what's happening behind the scenes without interfering with navigation or Web pages.

# Book Review

## AppleScript: The Missing Manual

By Frank Petrie

**Author:** Adam Goldstein

**Publisher:** Pogue Press/O'Reilly

**Price:** \$24.95 USD

**Level:** Beginner to Power-User

**Rating:** Five out of Five stars

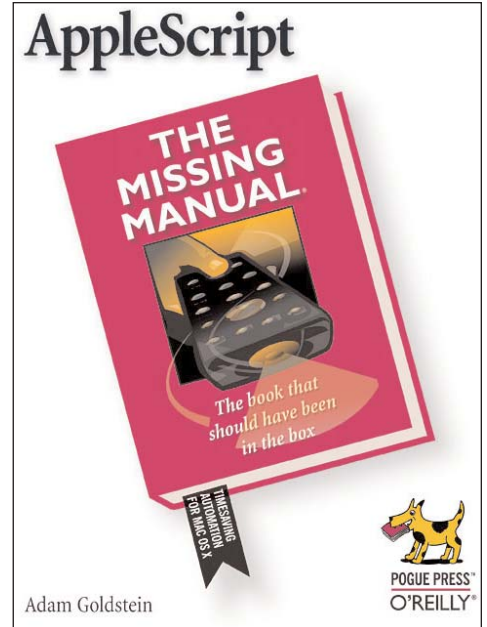
Do you work for your computer or does your computer work for you? I should hope it's the latter. If not, you might want to pick up a copy of *AppleScript: The Missing Manual* and show your Mac who's the boss.

Another entry in the ever popular 'Missing Manual' series ([www.missing-manuals.com](http://www.missing-manuals.com)), Mr. Goldstein, the teenage founder of GoldfishSoft, manages to take you from an overview of AppleScript's underpinnings in Panther (OS 10.3) to as far as you care to get involved with the Script Editor.

There are examples of some of the most common repetitive functions accompanied with scripts, thorough explanations, graphics and sidebars. You are also instructed how to download the "Missing CD," which contain all of the examples and exercises from the book.

The book is broken down into four major sections:

- **AppleScript Overview** – where the glaze is wiped from your eyes and all your fears dissipated
  - **Everyday Scripting Tasks** – actual hands-on scripting with applications that you probably use on a daily basis
  - **Power-user Features** – learn how to get the most out of your scripts so your computer does the work while you sit out side on the porch experiencing day-light
  - **Appendices** – Part One, lists OS X friendly scriptable programs; Part Two, how to move your old HyperCard scripts into AppleScript; Part Three, references to more books and Web sites
- The author writes in such a calming voice that actually makes this manual a page turner! You'll be amazed at how easily you learn AppleScript as he builds upon each successive lesson. And if you've never delved into scripting functions for your Mac, you'll be amazed at just how powerful this unheralded application can be. And how much you'll want to roll up your sleeves are get immediately to work.



This may be the push that you need to start getting under the hood and fine tuning your machine to be the Mac of your dreams.

**Pros:** Easy to read and follow; be the envy of your friends by knowing the meaning of boolean.

**Cons:** This could be the start of a major addiction; I'm old enough to be the author's father.

## ... the Fine Print

*The Executive Committee passed the following Standing Rules which were submitted by the Treasurer, Jeff Cole:*

**TMUG Door Prizes:** Only members in good standing may participate in the monthly drawing. Only members who are present may receive 1 ticket each, unless officers present agree to authorize additional tickets for a special event. Only members who are present may win. For the sake of fairness, members may

not transfer their tickets to others when leaving a meeting early.

**TMUG Raffles:** Anyone may participate in a raffle. The Executive Committee will determine the number of tickets to be printed, drawing date, and ticket prices. Anyone may purchase any number of raffle tickets. To win, one need not be present at the raffle drawing. The entrants' tickets shall include their

e-mail address and/or phone number. On the drawing date, a winner ticket will be drawn. If the winner is not present, 2 additional tickets will be drawn as alternates in case the winner cannot be contacted within 30 days. At that time the 2nd ticket will be declared the winner. If that person cannot be contacted within 30 days, the 3rd ticket drawn will be declared the winner.