

## Upcoming Programs

### November

#### Upgrading Your Mac

- Which upgrades work, which ones don't
- Issues to consider, when is it the right time, hard drives, memory, etc...

### December

#### Annual TMUG Holiday Party

#### Video Podcasting

- A how-to guide

### January

#### Backing Up Your Mac

- A step-by-step guide
- Issues to consider

Here's your chance to contribute to the newsletter. Send articles to Melanie Crain, [hcrain@nc.rr.com](mailto:hcrain@nc.rr.com). They will magically appear in a future issue of *Get Info*.

## PREZ SEZ



*President Duane Reaugh*

What a week to be on a cruise in the World of Apple. I missed the iPod nano announcement. What a great example of Apple design and technology! Weighing in at only 1.5 oz and .27 inches thick, that is amazing. And what more amazing is you can order one with engraving and actually get one shipped in 24 hours. Delivery is probably 3-4 days since they are not shipping from a US destination. I like my iPod shuffle but it lacks the controls and the LCD window the mini and the regular iPod have. The new iPod nano satisfies that requirement and more.

In other news, I have not seen much press on the SMB support in Tiger. SMB is the file access technology used in the windows world to access servers and workstations over the network. Apple has supported the windows disk file format and the DOS file format since forever. If you are planning to use a USB flash drive in both worlds, you have to use the DOS/Windows format since Windows cannot read the Mac format. Apple SMB support has always been good but a little lacking. Tiger greatly improved that support. If you live in a cross platform network world, you will find the new Tiger a great improvement.

The meeting topic for October will be about VoIP or Voice over IP. You can make phone calls from you Mac to anywhere in the world. If the calling party also has a phone attached to their Mac, the call is free. If not, it is only pennies a minute. We will also discuss converting your home phone to VoIP. The discussion will compare the various options and plans that are available!

— Duane



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<http://www.tmug.org/>

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

### 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](mailto:palmnews@tmug.org))

<http://tapit.interpup.com>

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## MEETING HIGHLIGHT



Stefan Jeglinski congratulates Matt Lemieux on winning the door prize, a one-year subscription to *Mac Addict*.

### Opera Now Free

Perhaps acknowledging the difficulty of selling a Web browser in today's Internet, Opera has freed its Web browser. While you can still choose to pay for Opera 8.5, which also features chat, contact, email, and other related features, that fee now covers support, not the software.

Opera is offering one year of 24-hour-turn-around email support for \$29; otherwise, the browser is free. Opera's browser is a bit quirky in how it renders CSS and handles JavaScript, but some folks swear by its fast rendering and certain subtle features. The company has increasingly moved into mobile and embedded browser development, in which revenue comes from licensees who pay a per phone, per customer, or per copy of software sold license. Adobe, for instance, embedded Opera's technology into Adobe



GoLive CS2 product for better pre-viewing of pages. Discussion on TidBITS Talk also points toward Opera earning sufficient money from ads shown along with search results from Google.



<http://opera.com/>  
<http://db.tidbits.com/getbits.acgi?tlk-thrd=2720>

## FileMaker Pro 8 Gets Serious

by William Porter [wp@polytrope.com](mailto:wp@polytrope.com)



On August 29, 2005, in the keynote address at FileMaker's annual developers conference in Phoenix, FileMaker, Inc. President Dominique Goupil announced the immediate release of FileMaker Pro 8 and its more powerful alternative, FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced. FileMaker had never released an upgrade at its developers conference before, but the timing was significant. FileMaker 8 is a release for developers in the broadest sense, from what I call "active end users" to experts doing full-blown application development in FileMaker. And that raises an interesting question: Who is FileMaker Inc. trying to reach with this release? Is FileMaker still an easy-to-use database for the little guy, the list-maker, and the do-it-yourselfer? Or is it turning into a powerful development platform that blurs the line between programming and scripting? I think the answer to both questions is yes, but the yes answering the latter question is louder.

<http://www.filemaker.com/products/fmp/>

<http://www.filemaker.com/products/fmpal/>

**PRO 8 FOR NON-PROS** — FileMaker users fall broadly into four categories: passive end users, who launch FileMaker

Pro simply to use databases designed by others; active end users, who may create their own simple databases or design their own reports; more ambitious do-it-yourself developers, who, while not full-time FileMaker jocks, are brave enough to venture beyond simple lists and work with relationships and perhaps even scripts; and fulltime developers who push FileMaker to the limits on a regular basis. FileMaker Pro's target audience has always been the active end users and do-it-yourselfers, for whom FileMaker's ease of use has been more important than its power. FileMaker 8 has a lot for these users.

For active end users, entering and finding data in version 8 is easier than ever. Finally, typing a few letters of text in a field prompts FileMaker to suggest the completion; for example, you type "ro" and FileMaker suggests "Ron", and if you continue typing "rob", the suggestion changes to "Robert," and so on. It's easy now to configure a date field so that a calendar drops when the user enters the field; the user can select a date from the calendar rather than having to type the date. Finding dates is easier now thanks to several new shortcuts; for example, it's possible now to search for September 2005 by typing "9/2005" instead of a proper range ("9/1/2005..9/30/2005"). And finding records that match the current record in a given field is now a snap: just click on the field and use the Find Matching Records command. FileMaker 8 also finally adds support for mouse scroll wheels.

Once you find the records you're interested in, FileMaker 8 can save reports directly to PDF or Excel files. (The save-as-PDF feature is available to FileMaker users under Windows as well as Mac OS

X, because the feature uses technology licensed from Adobe and built right into FileMaker and does not depend on Mac OS X's support for printing to PDF.) Even better, since FileMaker 8 lets you use calculations to specify the options for your mailing, it's now easy to use FileMaker 8 to send out email announcements to many different recipients, with each recipient getting a completely personalized message.

Another, somewhat less successful, feature for active end users is the Field List Filter. In previous versions of FileMaker Pro, users with access to the export or sort dialogs might have to face long and

bewildering lists of fields, some of them perhaps oddly named. To find fields in related tables, you had to know how to select another tab occurrence from the list of table occurrences at the top of the field list. In short, it was quite confusing.

In FileMaker 8, when the user accesses these dialogs, the default field list shows only the fields displayed on the current layout. This works great, provided the developer who designed the layout placed only fields that the user might want to sort on or export data from. The problem is that this often will not be the case. I use many global fields on nearly all layouts as buttons. Users who access the Export Records command from one of my layouts will see not only the data fields they're interested in, but also a list of all those global button fields, something that in previous versions of FileMaker would have remained unavailable. I'm lukewarm about this change. It gives me, as developer, some options I didn't have before. If I script the access that users have to these dialogs, I can also

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### *FileMaker Pro 8... continued*

go to a layout displaying only the desired fields before showing the dialog. So it's not a step backwards, but it's not a big step forward, either. What I'd like instead is the capability, in the Define Fields dialog, to control whether fields are visible in these dialogs or not.

Do-it-yourselfers will appreciate FileMaker 8's capability to create a new table on the fly when you import data from an external file. In the past, you had to define a table and fields first, then match fields carefully. Converting an Excel spreadsheet — or an export file from another database tool — into a FileMaker database has never been easier.

The award for the niftiest new feature for users who design layouts has to go to the new Tab Control feature. A Tab Control object lets you put a bunch of different groups of fields on the same layout in the same space, but show or hide them selectively, depending on which tab a user clicks. For example, if you didn't have enough space to show both home and work addresses on a layout at the same time, you could create a simple two-tab Tab Control object, put the home address fields into the rectangular space owned by one tab (which you would label "Home") and put the work address fields into the other tab's space (and name that tab "Work"). Back in Browse mode - the state of a file when the user is viewing and editing records - clicking one tab shows its fields and hides the fields on the other tab or tabs; and vice versa.

We used to be able to fake this in FileMaker by creating multiple layouts. The common parts of the several pseudo-tabbed layouts would be identical and identically placed, so when users clicked on a button that looked like a tab, they thought that only the tabbed area of the screen changed, when in fact, the entire layout was changed. The old way was

tedious and inefficient and caused problems with navigation. The new tab control is easy enough for beginners to master in minutes, but will save both beginners and experts a lot of time.

**VARIABLES** — All the features I've mentioned so far are found both in the standard edition of FileMaker Pro 8 and in FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced. Their presence in the standard edition makes perfect sense, as they involve things that active users and beginning or intermediate developers will want to do. But the standard edition of FileMaker Pro also contains one exciting new feature - support for scripting variables - that I would have expected to see only in FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced, because it is the kind of thing non-expert users are unlikely to use.

When I'm writing a script, I frequently want to grab some values and hang on to them for just a few steps. For example, say I'm writing a script that my users will run to create a note for the current contact record. In this script, I'll probably start by grabbing the contact record's primary key or record ID; the script will then jump to the layout for notes, create a new record, and then return to the original contact layout and enter the note field so the user can edit it. In the past, that contact record's ID had to be stored for two or three steps in a special global field - a field belonging to no particular record and available anywhere. Developers who did a lot of scripting tended to have a lot of global fields defined as temporary value holders.

Things improved somewhat in FileMaker 7, which introduced script parameters. If I had been willing to use two scripts to create a note instead of one, the first script could have passed the contact record's ID to the second script as a script parameter rather than using a global field. Script parameters were a wonderful addition to the developer's toolbox,

but two scripts are not always better than one, and script parameters did not entirely eliminate the need for globals.

Enter script variables. In FileMaker 8, you can define a local script variable right in the script - say, "\$contactID" - using the new Set Variable script step, then access that variable later in the script in a calculation formula, the same way you would have accessed a global field. One advantage of variables is that they can be defined on the fly; to define a global field, it was necessary to exit the script editor, enter the Define Fields dialog, and define a new field. Another advantage of script variables is that they can be either local or global. Global fields were always global, meaning that they could be accessed from any table in the same file, and values stayed set until replaced. Global variables work in much the same way, but local variables are cleared at the end of the script in which they are defined.

Even more interesting is the fact that variables now make possible a variety of file-manipulation features that hitherto required plug-ins, which is worth getting excited about in its own right. I can now write a script that saves a report as a PDF file to disk with a file name that is generated dynamically, like "Acme Q3 Purchases", or I can save a backup copy of my database every time I close it with a name that includes the current date and time.

In many obvious technical senses, scripting in FileMaker is not to be confused with programming. And yet, with the addition of script variables, the distinction between FileMaker's scripting capability and a simple procedural programming language is becoming a bit fuzzier. And that means a serious boost in power for serious FileMaker developers. Using variables as a replacement for global

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### *FileMaker Pro 8... continued*

fields isn't too challenging, but as a practical fact, active end-users and less ambitious do-it-yourselfers don't tend to write complicated scripts, and I doubt they'll make heavy use of variables.

**GETTING SERIOUS** — The product formerly known as FileMaker Developer has, with this release, been renamed FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced. It includes all the features in FileMaker Pro, plus a few features aimed at more advanced developers.

Well, it used to be just a few, and those features weren't too impressive. The old FileMaker Developer made certain things (like stepping through scripts) easier, and it provided a couple of meta-development utilities, but as far as building databases was concerned, there was very little that you could do in FileMaker Developer 7 that could not also have been accomplished in an ordinary copy of FileMaker Pro 7 if you were willing to work just a little harder. (One notable exception was that Developer 7 let you create custom functions.) FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced, on the other hand, gives developers real power to do things that simply can't be done in the standard edition, and it improves so significantly on other developer-oriented features that what before was a convenience is now too good to live without.

I suspect the feature in FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced that most developers will be most immediately excited about is the capability to copy and paste just about any database definition element - tables, fields, relationships, scripts, and even individual script steps - within a file or across files. Suppose you want to add a couple of fields to keep track of the modification date and time for records in every table in a 20-table solution. In the past, you were forced to define these fields in each and every table - very tedious. Now, you define the fields, including the auto-entry options (date

modified or time modified), copy them in one table, then paste them into the field list for each of the other fields. This feature is even more useful with scripts. The capability since FileMaker 7 to put all your tables in one file has encouraged FileMaker developers to start writing more and more generic, reusable scripts. With the introduction of variables in FileMaker 8, generic and modular scripting becomes not only practical, but genuinely worth the trouble. And when you write a well-focused script in one file, you can copy and paste it (or a few of its steps) into another file. Copied script steps can only be pasted into another FileMaker script; you can't paste script steps into a text editor. Nevertheless, code reusability is now a reality in FileMaker.

A rather less-dramatic enhancement in FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced is the capability to create tooltips, the little information balloons that appear automatically when the user hovers the mouse pointer over an object such as a button or a field for a short time. Tooltips can also be calculated rather than hard coded, so they can be used for many purposes: for instance, you could use Tooltips to convert dollars into pesos or Euros, to convert English measures to metric, to translate field labels into another language, or to explain data-entry problems.

The new Data Viewer is a complement to the rather basic debugger that has been FileMaker Developer's most used feature for years. The Data Viewer makes it possible to monitor the values stored in "expressions" (that is, fields and/or variables) as you step through a script. This is a major plus for developers who do a lot of scripting! I do have a couple of complaints about the data viewer, however. First, it doesn't always realize immediately that the value in an expression has changed. FileMaker, Inc. is obviously aware of this problem, because the engineers added a "Refresh Values" button right there on the Data Viewer utili-

ty window. My other complaint is that you can't save expression sets. It would be especially nice to define a set of expressions to be monitored in a particular script and save them in the script, or at least to save them in the current file.

The most powerful and, I think, the most surprising new feature in FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced is support for custom menus. It's now possible to create fully customized and context-sensitive menus in a FileMaker solution. Yes, you can finally disable that pesky Window menu without using a plug-in, but that's just for starters. You can create your own lists of commands for different menus, and if you wish, you can attach your own scripts to those commands. So, for example, instead of disabling the native FileMaker menus that many users are familiar with, you can simply disable or delete particular scripts that you don't want users to have access to (Delete All Records was my first choice), or you can substitute your own script for the default action assigned to a command (so users issuing the New Record command trigger your more intelligent new-record script instead of creating a record directly).

**SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE** — FileMaker Pro 8 uses the .fp7 file format introduced last year with FileMaker Pro 7. This means a copy of FileMaker Pro 7 can open a file created in FileMaker Pro 8 and vice versa, although, of course, features specific to version 8 will either be ignored (tooltips, for example) or break, perhaps badly (such as tab controls). On a more positive note, because the majority of FileMaker's features are still processed by the client rather than the server, it's possible to use FileMaker Server 7 to share a FileMaker 8 database that employs most of the features mentioned above, and users on the network who open that database in FileMaker Pro 8 or FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced are able to use the database just fine. This is good

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## Office 2004 SP2 Enhances Entourage, Fixes Bugs

Microsoft has released Office for Mac 2004 Service Pack 2 (SP2), which fixes bugs in all the Office programs and provides notable enhancements to Entourage, the email, calendaring, and contact management part of the software suite. Entourage 2004 SP2 features enhanced support for Microsoft Exchange Server, making it easier for Mac users to coexist in a predominantly Windows and Outlook environment. Specific improvements include better email and calendar management, enhanced public folder support, faster client-server synchronization, improved access (with full browsing) to the Global Address List, and enhanced delegate

access that makes new setup possible entirely through Entourage without needing to use Outlook on a PC. Entourage 2004 SP2 requires Exchange 2000 or later, and some organizations may need updates to Exchange.

Although Entourage was the only program with significant new features, all the other Office programs received numerous bug fixes and security improvements. You can read the full list at the link below, but we're happiest about the promised performance improvements in Word 2004 SP2 and the fix for the bug that crashed Word when you updated Table of Contents

fields contained in a table cell, the two of which had been forcing us to rely primarily on Word X for our Take Control ebooks. Many of the bugs fixed resolve crashes, so if you've had trouble with Office 2004 applications crashing, be sure to install SP2. You can download Office for Mac 2004 SP2 via the Microsoft AutoUpdate utility, or from Microsoft's Mactopia Web site; it's a 57 MB download.

<http://www.microsoft.com/mac/autoupdate/description/AUOffice20041120EN.htm>

<http://www.microsoft.com/mac/downloads.aspx>

### *FileMaker Pro 8... continued*

to know, as FileMaker Server 8 has not yet been released (it's expected sometime within the next few months).

Speaking of clients, what about that first category of users I mentioned, the passive end users? These are the folks who never define a field or even tweak a layout, who have no use for the relationship graph or ScriptMaker. They use FileMaker only because it's required to open the databases that they are required to use. FileMaker Pro 8 has a lot for them, too - a lot that they have no use for at all, namely, all the development features. In short, FileMaker still has no thin client. The problem is, the competition does - in the Mac world, I'm thinking of Servoy and 4D. I suspect that FileMaker, Inc. thinks of FileMaker's Instant Web Publishing (IWP) feature as a kind of very thin client, since a user needs only a Web browser to access an IWP-enabled database. Instant Web Publishing improved a lot in FileMaker 7

just over a year ago, but it was not a focus of FileMaker 8, and it still has a ways to go before it's fully usable. I doubt FileMaker, Inc. has any interest in an inexpensive version of its software that does nothing but run databases built by other users with FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced. But it seems to me that something halfway between the current standard edition of FileMaker Pro and a thin client might serve both FileMaker, Inc. and its customers well. The "lightweight client" I have in mind would cater to list-makers and very basic do-it-yourselfers, permitting, say, creation of no more than three tables, and providing access only to certain basic script steps. Something for FileMaker 9? I doubt it, but I would love to be surprised.

Conclusion — Anyone familiar with FileMaker's history will acknowledge that this is not only the best FileMaker ever, it's also a significant improvement to version 7, which shook up the FileMaker world just last year. I recommend any-

body who does more than very basic development work upgrade to FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced; you may never use custom menus, but the capability to define tables on import and to copy and paste tables, fields, scripts and script steps will make converting and consolidating your multi-file FileMaker 6 solutions much easier than it was in FileMaker 7.

FileMaker Pro 8 is priced at \$300, and upgrades from FileMaker 6 and 7 are available for \$180. FileMaker Pro 8 Advanced costs \$500, with upgrades from FileMaker Developer 6 or 7 priced at \$300.

*William Porter is a former classics professor who, in 1998, gave up academic tenure to pursue "other interests," including developing database applications. An Associate Member of the FileMaker Solutions Alliance, William is currently working on a book about FileMaker Pro 8 for No Starch Press.*

## CoreMusings: Web Browser Roundup: Part 2

By Dan Pourhadi, *The NorthWest of Us MUG* ([www.nwou.org](http://www.nwou.org)) and *Northwest Passages* newsletter

Last month, I reviewed three Web browsers for the Mac – Firefox, Camino, and OmniWeb. My point was to show you, dear readers, that there are some good alternatives to Safari and Internet Explorer; alternatives that many would never think to use.

Well, it turns out that many readers actually enjoyed reading helpful information. This unusual — and arguably unholy — reflection forced me to pause and contemplate my goals when writing this column: Do people want to read my incessant, opinionated diatribes regarding the Mac World, or do they want to read “useful” articles that “assist” them when “working” with their Macs? Apparently — and call me crazy here — it’s the latter. Who’d’a thunk it?

Since response to last month’s column was so positive, I decided to extend it and look at three more Web browsers available for the Mac platform. I bet you didn’t even know so many existed, did you?

### Opera

Opera is a fairly-powerful Web browser designed to be a full-blown alternative to Internet Explorer, on both Windows and the Mac. Like most other browsers, Opera sports tabbed-browsing, sophisticated bookmark management, and a quick-search field next to the address bar.

And, um, yeah. That’s Opera.

Truthfully, Opera is pretty unimpressive. It offers nothing spectacular — like the advanced tab-management in OmniWeb or the full range of plug-ins for Firefox — and is not very intuitive compared to simpler browsers like Safari. Keyboard shortcuts, which are typically uniform

across different browsers, are sporadic and inconsistent, and fiddling with bookmarks can be a Royal Pain In The Rear.

But not all’s brain-numbingly la-la in Opera Land. Opera does come with an integrated e-mail and RSS client, both of which rest in a sidebar next to the Web page viewing area — a nice feature if you’re inclined to constantly check your e-mail; but it takes up a good deal of space and is tedious to continually open and close.

OK, that’s it.

See, folks, this where I elaborate on all the extra neat-o features in Opera, like the e-mail client thing, the note-taking doohickey, and the various browser tool-bars. But as I’m sitting here, trying to figure out what that button does and why it’s placed Here as opposed to being There, and why a particular sidebar disappeared and where the heck to find it...well, it’s occurring to me that this app wholly resembles a bureaucratic Board of Directors: dozens of good ideas smashed into a single project, but no idea really presenting itself well. It’s so disorganized and counter-intuitive, finding what you want to find and configuring it to work the way you want it to work is like training a cat to sit — it’ll stare at you, taunting your every effort, then walk away and pee on the carpet.

My best advice for those of you eager to find a browser that doesn’t rhyme with “Ferrari” or “Ballot Box” is to go to [www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com) and check it out for yourself.

Following the trend of Web Browsers That Start With The Letter “O,” Opera,

like OmniWeb, is not free. They do offer a “free” version (wink, wink, nudge), but there’s a big-honkin’ banner advertisement at the top of the browser window.

Purchasing Opera will set you back \$39 — a wad of cash better spent elsewhere.

(Editors Note: Since this writing, Opera’s price has changed: It is now free from [www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com).)

### Shiira

Shiira is a browser that just screams “Computer Science student with too much time on his hands.” The best way to describe the intent of this browser is to think of a timid, weakling Safari on steroids. Unfortunately, the intent was better than the execution.

Shiira boasts most of the features common in many other browsers, and takes a special interest in out-Safari’ing Safari: it uses the same Konquerer engine, and has designed its tabs to look and operate very similarly (ie, each tab has a close button and a load-indicator).

But Shiira does offer some interesting doo-dads that set itself apart from the browser we all know and love. Take, for example, Tab Exposé. If you have a window full of tabs, finding The One That Has What You’re Looking For could be as tedious as scratching an itch on your own back; in Shiira, however, clicking F8 magically takes those tabs and presents the pages across the screen the way Exposé presents regular windows. Select the page you’re looking and blammo: no more exhaustive searches.

Another impressive feature of Shiira is the ability to load multiple links with a

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## Links to cool, interesting and useful information for user group members.

compiled by The MUG Center, <http://www.mugcenter.com>

### Create a free 'light' QuickTime Pro Player

To get two free QuickTime apps with several functions missing from the standard OS X player, including copy, cut, paste, trim, export, etc., first visit the QTKitImport page on Apple's Developer site.

<http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20050814095714156&lsrc=osxh>

### 10.4: Control UPS via Energy Saver preferences panel

I am not sure what types of uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) this works with, but I know it works with my two APC Back-UPS ES 725 devices and OS 10.4.2.

<http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20050817215930870&lsrc=osxh>

### MacBasics 30:

#### Getting 'Smart' with Spotlight

I've talked a little bit about Spotlight in this column before, but I've learned more about it using it the last few months.

Where I've found it to be invaluable is inside Apple's Mail program.

[http://www.macsimumnews.com/index.php/archive/macbasics\\_30\\_getting\\_smart\\_with\\_spotlight/](http://www.macsimumnews.com/index.php/archive/macbasics_30_getting_smart_with_spotlight/)

### Mac OS X Hints:

#### Quicker Custom Icons

Use the clipboard's intelligence to save some time when pasting custom icons.

<http://www.macworld.com/weblogs/macoshints/2005/08/quickercustomicons/index.php?lsrc=mwrss>

### Extract a PICT of Keynote slide

Simply drag the thumbnail of the slide from the leftmost column in Keynote's Navigator view to the Desktop, or any other visible Finder window.

<http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=2005082603292490&lsrc=osxh>

### What Is Automator (and Can It Make Your Life Easier)?

Automator provides an intuitive drag-and-drop workbench for quickly streamlining repetitive tasks. Here's a look at creating workflows and working around Automator's inherent limitations.

<http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2005/09/06/what-is-automator.html?CMP=OTC-13IV03560550>

### Find Missing FireWire devices

After an app (VirtuFrame) crashed my Mac Mini, I discovered upon rebooting that my LaCie external FireWire drive was no longer visible. I disconnected and reconnected the cable several times, to no avail.

<http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20050825040102452&lsrc=osxh>

### Tricking Out iTunes

If iTunes' capabilities don't make your world as musical as you'd like, turn to these hacks and plug-ins.

<http://playlistmag.com/features/2005/09/tickitunes/index.php?lsrc=mwrss>

### 10.4: Two Ways to Bypass Spotlight 'find-as-you-type'

Spotlight has one "feature" that many people find quite annoying: as you start typing, Spotlight immediately starts matching results. If you have a large hard drive, and there are lots of matches, this can get quite annoying....

<http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20050830161129512&lsrc=osxh>

### Single use only, modifications prohibited

The Ninth Circuit has created box-wrap patent licenses. Now the label on the box that says "single use only" is given force of law, and if you refill the cartridge you are liable for patent infringement.

[http://www.makezine.com/blog/archive/2005/09/single\\_use\\_only.html?CMP=OTC-0D6B48984890](http://www.makezine.com/blog/archive/2005/09/single_use_only.html?CMP=OTC-0D6B48984890)

### View Larger Version of Recent iChat Buddy's Picture

If you frequently change Buddy Pics as part of the ongoing repartée with one of you iChat pals—and your pal does likewise—you may find yourself squinting without success as you try to figure out what that latest 32 x 32 pixel...

<http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20050828010409813&lsrc=osxh>

### Mac OS X Hints: Build a Better Safari

Here's how to use Apple's open-source WebKit to build a newer Safari.

<http://www.macworld.com/weblogs/macoshints/2005/09/bettersafari/index.php?lsrc=mwrss>

### Create Overlapping Events in iCal's Day and Week Views

iCal is relatively unique among calendaring applications in that it leaves no margin next to events in Day or Week view to aid in the creation of overlapping events.

<http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20050901175839198&lsrc=osxh>

### Google Gmail Notifier for Mac OS X

A quick tour of Google's new Gmail Notifier for Mac OS X. It's easy to install and it works great.

<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/wlg/7722?CMP=OTC-13IV03560550>

### Vodcast Video Tips

Preparing an instructional video or vodcast? Check out these tips for producing better videos.

<http://www.macworld.com/weblogs/mac911/2005/08/vodcasttips/index.php?lsrc=mac911blog>

## StuffIt Deluxe 10 Plays with Tiger

by Adam C. Engst, [ace@tidbits.com](mailto:ace@tidbits.com)

Allume Systems, now owned by Smith Micro, Inc., has released the latest version of their venerable compression and archiving utility, StuffIt Deluxe.

Improvements in StuffIt Deluxe 10 fall largely into two categories: low-level improvements in its compression engine and support for new technologies in Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger.

<http://www.stuffit.com/mac/deluxe1>

StuffIt Deluxe 10 costs \$80, with upgrades from previous versions of either StuffIt Deluxe or StuffIt Standard Edition priced at \$30. It requires Mac OS 10.3 or later.

### Under the Hood

Most notable of the low-level improvements is StuffIt Deluxe 10's new capability to compress JPEG photos by an additional 30 percent. As you likely know, JPEG files are compressed using a lossy compression approach that throws away data that's not essential to the image. In contrast, compression software like

Spotlight to index the file names of items inside StuffIt, Zip, and Tar archives. It worked perfectly in my testing — immediately after creating an archive Spotlight could find files inside it based on name. StuffIt's Spotlight Importer does not enable Spotlight to search the full text or other metadata of archived files; perhaps we'll see that in a future version of StuffIt Deluxe.

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For Automator, Allume created four actions that enable Automator workflows to create StuffIt, Zip, and Tar archives, and to expand archives of any type. I'm already contemplating how I might be able to use these actions to help automate the process of creating and uploading new Take Control ebooks, since there are a fair number of steps in the process. I may also look into StuffIt Express PE, which ships with StuffIt Deluxe and enables users to create drop box applications that can also automate a whole slew of file compression and transfer tasks. The version of StuffIt Express PE that ships with StuffIt Deluxe 10 adds support for direct uploading to and downloading from .Mac iDisks.

The final low-level improvement is faster performance when using the StuffIt X archive format. Allume claims that the "Better" compression method (as opposed to "Faster") can now perform the same compression about 20 percent faster than in previous incarnations.



StuffIt Deluxe or Mac OS X's built-in Zip archiving tool uses only lossless approaches from which an original file can be expanded perfectly. Generally, compression software doesn't even try to work on already-compressed files like JPEG images because there's little, if any, size reduction to be achieved. That's why the fact that StuffIt Deluxe can further reduce the size of JPEG images by up to 30 percent is so astonishing (I saw compression amounts ranging from 24 percent to 31 percent in my tests). Keep in mind that this 30 percent extra compression

### And into the Tiger Cage

The three marquee features of Tiger are, of course, Spotlight, Automator, and Dashboard. StuffIt Deluxe 10 adds support for the first two, and when I chatted with Jon Kahn of Allume about the release, he said they really tried to come up with some sort of a Dashboard widget that would be helpful, but they just couldn't think of one that was more than a gratuitous nod to the technology.

Most notably, StuffIt Deluxe 10 now features a Spotlight Importer, which enables

Spotlight to index the file names of items inside StuffIt, Zip, and Tar archives. It worked perfectly in my testing — immediately after creating an archive Spotlight could find files inside it based on name. StuffIt's Spotlight Importer does not enable Spotlight to search the full text or other metadata of archived files; perhaps we'll see that in a future version of StuffIt Deluxe.

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While we're on the subject of automating tasks, StuffIt Deluxe 10 also includes a new utility called StuffIt SEA Maker for creating self-extracting archives (applications that, when double-clicked, expand the archive inside them) that border on mini-installers. StuffIt SEA Maker actually creates Mac OS X packages that contain the expansion code, the archive to be expanded, and any splash-screen graphics or text files you want to display during the expansion process. You can allow the recipient to choose a location for the expanded files or you can specify a particular location while creating the archive. And, if you plan to be posting

*continued on page 10*

### *StuffIt Deluxe 10 ...continued*

the self-extracting archive on the Internet, StuffIt SEA Maker can optionally put it on a disk image so code that protects users from downloading applications doesn't trip over the self-extracting archive application.

### **StuffIt Standard and StuffIt Expander**

As always, for people who don't need all

of StuffIt Deluxe's power, Allume makes two other packages available. StuffIt Standard Edition 10 costs \$50 (\$15 for upgrades from previous versions, and the demo download is 9.3 MB) and includes DropStuff for creating a wide variety of archives (complete with the low-level improvements in StuffIt Deluxe 10) and StuffIt Expander for expanding them. StuffIt Expander 10 remains free, and it's

worth noting that Apple no longer bundles StuffIt Expander with new Macs or copies of Mac OS X, so downloading a new version manually may become more important than it was in the past.

<http://www.stuffit.com/mac/standard/>

<http://www.stuffit.com/mac/expander/>

## LET'S GO SURFIN' NOW

### *CoreMusings: Web Browser Roundup:*

#### *Part 2 ...continued*

single click. If there's, say, a paragraph of text with links here and there, just highlight the whole paragraph, right-click, and select "Open All Links in New Tabs" — it will do exactly as it says, saving you from having to click, click, click, click to view every page linked in that paragraph.

Shiira, however, has its problems. The Tab Exposé is slow and clunky, and the browser window itself seems bulky, primitive, and even amateurishly designed. The Google search box doesn't have the infamous "SnapBack" feature that so many seem to love, and RSS support is nowhere to be found.

But if, for some reason, you're looking for a Safari-like Safari replacement, Shiira's for you. And for the great price of \$0, it's worth every penny.

<http://hmdt-web.net/shiira/en>

### **iCab**

iCab's website describes this app as "a web browser for the Macintosh"...and that's pretty much all that it is.

The one feature that seems to distinguish this old-fashioned browser that sounds like a menu item at Red Lobster from other, more mature browsers is what the developers call the "Filter Manager." What is the Filter Manager, you ask? To put it simply: It's something you want to avoid. It's a sophisticated set of configurations that you can set for specific Web sites, tweaking them to behave the way you want. Unfortunately, doing so requires reading through a lengthy tutorial and a master's degree in Computer Science. iCab's Web site offers a set of pre-configured Filters, but I can't figure out what the heck any of them do.

Some of you may say that's bad reporting on my part. I say it's good warning to you users out there who are too busy with actual work to fiddle around with things that baffle even the pros. (Hey, I hear that snickering. Shut up.)

iCab offers very little else in terms of a unique browsing experience. It's technically in beta, and free, from [www.icab.de](http://www.icab.de). But be warned: when, or if, it's ever completed, the developers do plan to charge for a "Pro" version.

### **The Conclusion**

While there are plenty of Web browser alternatives out there, it seems smart to stick with the popular ones: Safari, Firefox, and OmniWeb. Supporting the Little Guy is good and all, but when you're looking for something dependable, modern, and simple, you can't go wrong when using a browser that everyone's concerned about. In the end, it really comes down to preference: if you pick the one that feels right — like a brand new car that handles just the way you want — then you'll be happy. If you get one simply because it's "cool"...well, that's why car dealerships don't have decent return policies.

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