one hundred
BEST FREEBIES

Enhance your Mac—and your life— without spending a cent.

ON THE DISC

100 Best Freebies URLs, Asteroid Storm 1.2.1, Blues Music 1.2, Carbon Copy Cloner 2.1.6, Clutter 1.0d11, Flaming Pear Freebies 1.6, Font Explorer 1.0, IX Screen Effects 1.2, Little Office 1.6, Slick Sampler, SpirographX 1.0, Splat 1.0 demo, TinkerTool 2.32, and Xinema 1.0.3

Like a kid in a candy store, you're surrounded by tempting goodies every time you venture onto the Web. A ton of them are free. And free is good.

The problem is that scads of those freebies aren't worth downloading. There are a precious few, however, that can change your life for the better.

So how do you sort through this barrage of no-cost offerings?

Easy. You let us do it for you. Our expert team of picky penny-pinchers scoured the Web far and wide to bring you 100 free apps, add-ons, and services—each of them a treat, each of them tested and certified compatible with Mac OS 10.2.

Oh, and by the way, our definition of "free" includes donationware— freeware created by folks who will accept any monetary appreciation you'd care to shower upon them out of the goodness of your heart. We didn't, however, include shareware, which the authors *expect* you to pay for. (And remember: Not paying for shareware is double-plus uncool.)

With a Mac and a Web connection, the world is your digital oyster. So without further ado, here's the official *MacAddict* guide to the best 100 things out there waiting for you—all for the low, low price of zip, zilch, zero, nada.
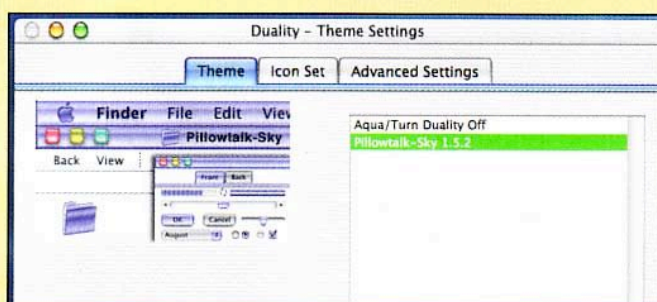
by David Weiss

Customization

MAC OS X THEME CHANGER

Duality	Mac
http://conundrumsoft.com	OS X

Apple doesn't encourage people to tinker with the look and feel of Mac OS X. But that didn't stop the Conundrumsoft folks from creating Duality, a utility that lets you replace your user interface with alternative themes.

Themes alter the look of windows, menus, icons, cursors, progress bars, and such. Duality makes it simple to switch from one theme to another, and to easily return to your original look, keeping a backup and offering a restore feature. Each time you launch no-cost Duality, however, you have to deal with a pop-up window asking you to upgrade to a Pro version—for a fee, natch.

Duality puts a new face on your Mac.

MAC OS X THEMES

AquaWorld	Mac OS X,
www.stretch.tc/aquaworld/home/home.html	donationware
Max Themes	Mac OS X,
http://homepage.mac.com/max_08	donationware
Pillowtalk-Sky	Mac OS X
http://lonestar.utsa.edu/llee/res/themes.html	

Once you've installed Duality, you can download and use a stunning variety of Mac OS X themes. We recommend the site AquaWorld, which offers subtle and classy themes—if you're into subtle and classy. For example, the Underling theme turns your close, minimize, and maximize buttons into suns and moons, and ClearAqua makes your menus and title bars transparent.

The Underling theme from AquaWorld makes subtle but pretty changes to your windows and menu bar.

Max Themes is another good themes site. The Mac OS 9 Platinum theme will take you back to the good ol' days when you were young and innocent, and the Windows XP theme will probably tick you off. Finally, Pillowtalk-Sky is a purplish, candylike theme that will appeal to the bubblegum set.

DESKTOP PICTURES

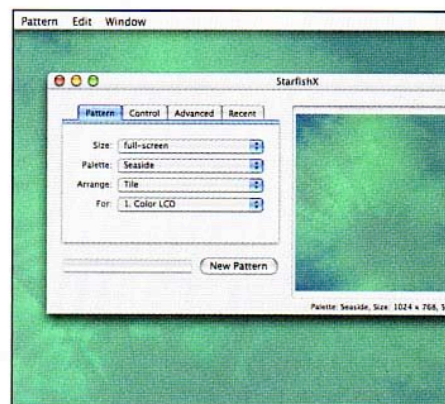| Press Plus	Mac OS 9
www.pressplus.com/content/wallpaper	and OS X
About This Particular Macintosh	Mac OS 9
www.atpm.com/5.11/desktop-pictures.shtml	and OS X
Digital Blasphemy	Mac OS 9
www.digitalblasphemy.com	and OS X
StarfishX	Mac
http://homepage.mac.com/mscott/starfishx/starfishx.html	OS X

Sometimes called *wallpaper* by folks on other platforms, desktop pictures are the ultimate way to make your Mac your own. Any image file that fits your screen's resolution will work as a desktop picture, but if you need help, the Web is there for you.

At Press Plus you can find stock photos of beaches, sunsets, and other natural surroundings, offered in resolutions of 1024 by 768 and 800 by 600 dpi. Similarly, at About This Particular Macintosh, you'll find 1024-by-768-dpi shots of the Bahamas, Niagara Falls, and other places you wish you were. Digital Blasphemy has images that verge on the phantasmagoric. Some images are free, and some require membership.

StarfishX generates random desktop patterns based on parameters you set, such as screen size, color palette, and tiling style. It takes a few minutes to do its work, but when it's done it immediately applies the new pattern to your desktop. It also saves the pattern, should you want to switch back to it after using a different one.

StarfishX whips up its own desktop images based on parameters you set.

ICONS

The Icon Factory	Mac OS 9
www.iconfactory.com	and OS X
pic2icon	Mac
www.sugarcubesoftware.com	OS X

When it comes to customizing your Mac, there's nothing like new icons. Just select a hard disk, folder, or file, then press Command-I, select the icon, and paste another icon right over it.

The Icon Factory has dozens of cool icons arranged on well-organized pages. Check out Xtra Drives, a set of Mac OS X hard-drive icons that'll deck out your disks in jaguar fur, cowhide, and other wacky textures (blame Apple for starting this animal-fur trend).

There are dozens of utilities to create your own icons, most of which cost at least a little money. But here's a tip: Create your own icon using Photoshop or another graphics tool, then convert it to an icon using pic2icon, which creates 128 by 128 Mac OS X icons from any image or folder of images.

▶ **Customization continued...**

SCREENSAVERS

Steve Dekorte's ScreenSavers www.dekorte.com/Software/OSX/ScreenSavers	Mac OS X
iX Screen Effects http://illumineX.com/software/index.html	Mac OS X
Fluid ScreenEffects www.concepthouse.com/products/Fluid	Mac OS X, donationware
SETI@home www.setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/download.html	Mac OS 9 and OS X
xbMovieMaker http://perso.club-internet.fr/bgaufier/downloads.html	Mac OS X

No, you don't need a screensaver anymore; CRTs don't get *burned* by static images like they did when screensavers were first invented. But they're still fun.

One good place to find cool screensavers is **Steve Dekorte**'s site. Our favorites include SkyFly, which shows a 3D landscape of grassy hills you can fly through with paper airplanes, and NeHe Particles, a shimmering, fairy-dust-like cloud of swirls.

Many of IllumineX's **iX Screen Effects** are geometric—reminiscent of screensavers of yesteryear—and include a (now retro) zooming-through-space screensaver that used to be all the rage. The iX Xirtam screensaver shows a Matrix-style shower of flickering green ASCII characters.

One awesome screensaver is **Fluid**, which slowly drowns your screen in liquid until it becomes a slowly undulating pool that's so mesmerizing you won't want to get back to work. See if that excuse flies with your boss.

SETI@home's main function is to aid in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI). When your Mac is idle, it contacts the SETI project headquarters for a chunk of data to crunch, processes the data, then passes back the results. SETI hopes it's only a matter of time before "hello, earthlings" appears in the sea of background noise.

Want to create your own screensaver? Download **xbMovieMaker**, and convert any QuickTime movie into a screensaver.

Design Tools

FONT UTILITY

TOP PICK

Font Explorer http://pages.infinit.net/trottier/fexpl.html	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Apple's Key Caps utility shows you a map of your keyboard and how the characters change when you press modifying keys—but to find out the key combinations for more-rare characters, you must resort to trial and error. Also, Key Caps can't tell you how to make the accent in café—very inconvenient if you run a French bistro.

So use **Font Explorer** instead. In a single window, Font Explorer shows you all of a font's characters, including punctuation, accents, and special characters. Just click a character, and Font Explorer tells you the magic key combo that creates it—even those pesky accents.

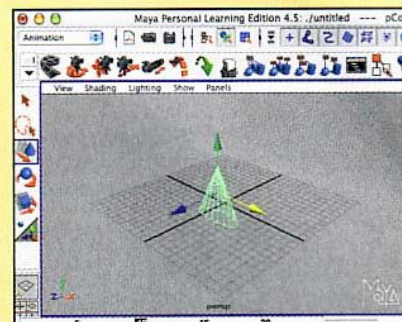**Font Explorer turns a font into a creative palette.**

HIGH-END 3D APP

Maya Personal Learning Edition www.aliaswavefront.com	Mac OS X	**TOP PICK**

Maya is a 3D authoring tool with highly sophisticated animation skills. How sophisticated? You've probably seen a few of the movies in which this app has starred: *Spider-Man*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Shrek*.

Now here's the cool part: You can check out this $1,999 tool for free! Just download the **Personal Learning Edition**, which includes extensive training materials. The Learning Edition really is just for learning, though; saved files show watermarks, and the file format isn't compatible with pro production software.

Maya Learning Edition is 3D boot camp.

THUMBNAIL CREATOR

ThumbnailMaker www.dekorte.com/Software/OSX/ThumbnailMaker	Mac OS X

ThumbnailMaker couldn't be easier to use: Just drag images onto ThumbnailMaker's window and boom! Insta-thumbnail. You can also set options like width and height, of course.

POSTSCRIPT INTERPRETER

MacGSView www.cs.wisc.edu/~ghost/macos/index.htm	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Occasionally, even shareware powerhouse GraphicConverter ($35, http://lemkesoft.com) needs a little help opening files, particularly PostScript files from Quark, Illustrator, or InDesign. **MacGSView** converts EPS and other PostScript files into the rasterized information that GraphicConverter—or any other app that isn't PostScript-savvy—can understand.

ANIMATION TOOLS

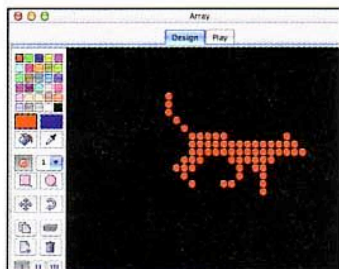|	
MorphX www.orcsoftware.com/~martin/Morph.html	Mac OS X
Cartoon Editor www.personal.utulsa.edu/~jeremy-wood/editor	Mac OS X
Array www.mediumk.com/array/index.html	Mac OS X

What would it look like if you were to turn into an elk? We don't really want to know—but if we did, we'd use **MorphX**. Give this app two images, and it will create images showing the metamorphosis of one image into the other. You can save your morphed images as QuickTime movies or as a series of still frames.

Sure, you can create vector animations with Macromedia's Flash MX—but that's for pros (and rich

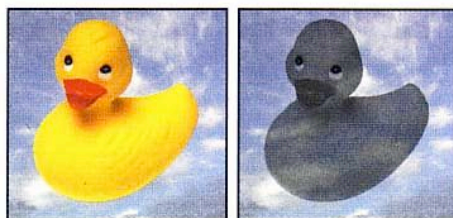**MorphX can turn a human into a line drawing in five quick steps.**

Array says it with Lite Brite. And nothing says *classy* like Lite Brite.

people). For the dabblers—and cheapskates—there's **Cartoon Editor**. It's got a humble-but-serviceable set of drawing tools and gradient effects, and it can handle animation, which you can save in QuickTime format.

Array helps you create any type of animation you want—as long as you want it rendered as Lite Brite pegs. True, Lite Brite doesn't have the most photorealistic resolution, but there's a lot you can do with it—create a scrolling text effect or a movie marquee, for example. But please use this tool responsibly. We've seen a lot of bad Lite Brite images in our day.

PHOTOSHOP ADD-ONS

Flaming Pear Free Plugins www.flamingpear.com/download.html	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Splat demo www.alienskin.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Sue Chastain's Photoshop Actions http://graphicssoft.about.com/library/free/blfree_psactions1.htm	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Plug-in filters add spice to Photoshop, but they often come at a price. Not the **Flaming Pear Free Plugins** pack. This baby offers cool, quirky

Flaming Pear's Ghost plug-in can turn rubber duckies into ghost duckies.

effects like Ghost, which turns a layer into a monochrome, transparent object similar to colored glass.

Alien Skin's **Splat** demo is a set of filters you can use for free, for 30 days. And in those 30 days you can do a lot of damage with Splat, like using the Frame filter to create realistic frames and mattes, or adding decorative edge effects with the Edges filter.

Sue Chastain, card-carrying member of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals, has saved a few of her best moves as Actions, which the likes of you and me can download and run. Sue's Action Set provides some wacky 3D effects with type, while Sue's Cartoon Actions offer some inventive ways to turn photos into illustrations.

MACROMEDIA FIREWORKS ADD-ONS

Kaleidoscope	**Color Glow**	Mac OS 9 and OS X
www.macromedia.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm		

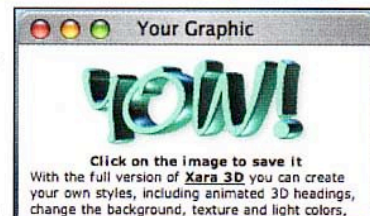**Kaleidoscope is a Fireworks add-on that puts swirling colors in motion.**

Macromedia's Exchange Web site includes a great collection of inexpensive and often free stuff from a large and growing network of users and third-party developers. Two of the great finds on the Fireworks Exchange are **Kaleidoscope**, which generates complex, colorful gradient patterns you can easily incorporate into your design as backgrounds or design elements, and the **Color Glow** effect, which turns up the heat on selected colors in existing images.

ONLINE 3D TEXT TOOL

Xara3D Sampler www.webpagedesign.com.au/heading.html	Mac OS 9 and OS X

If you're looking for a way to spruce up some boring ol' text, try turning it 3D. Just enter a word or phrase directly into the **Xara3D Sampler** Web site, and then choose fonts, colors, and styles to create a 3D version of your text. Xara3D Sampler will even create a .png file of your 3D text.

The Xara3D Sampler puts your message into 3D.

IMAGE FINDER

Peeper http://homepage.mac.com/petite_abeille/Peeper	Mac OS X

Drag any volume or folder into **Peeper**, and it searches through sub-folders, applications, and files, and digs out every (and we mean *every*) graphic—including images, icons, cursors, and tools. Click any image Peeper comes up with to get its file name, drag an image out of Peeper to copy it, or double-click to open it.
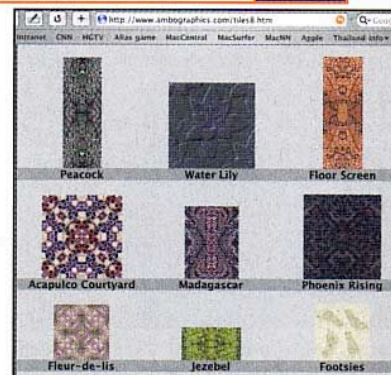
FONTS, BACKGROUNDS, AND BUTTONS

Free Mac Fonts www.freemacfonts.com,	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Adobe Euro fonts www.adobe.com/type/eurofont.html	Mac OS 9 and OS X
AAA Buttons www.aaa-buttons.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X
AAA Backgrounds www.aaa-backgrounds.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Ambo Graphics www.ambographics.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

There are hundreds, nay, thousands of free fonts out there, but some font sites will bombard you with pop-up ads before you get near a single font, while others are Mac-unfriendly. Never fear. **Free Mac Fonts** shows you previews of Mac fonts on its very first page.

If you're using one of your old, old favorite fonts and you need to express a price in Euros, you may find that the font is Euroless. No problem—just download the free **Euro fonts** from Adobe. You'll get a serif, sans serif, monospaced, and bold Euro,

You can download any of these backgrounds from Ambo Graphics for free—provided you use them on personal Web sites.

all of which are neutral enough to blend in with most body fonts.

There's no paucity of free fonts, but there's even less of a shortage of free art on the Web—and most of it will make you wince. There are a few sites, however, that offer slick images, particularly for Web designers. At **AAA Buttons**, for example, you'll find a whole lotta buttons, many created with Aqua in mind. At **AAA Backgrounds**, you'll find cool abstract designs, simple textures, and faux effects, such as cloth. **Ambo Graphics** also has a great selection of artistic backgrounds, buttons, and bars.

iStuff for iApps

iMOVIE PLUG-IN

TOP PICK

| Slick Sampler | Mac OS 9 |
| www.geethree.com | and OS X |

iMovie 3 comes with a variety of effects, but Gee Three's **Slick Sampler** adds even more transitions and filters to Apple's DV-editing app. Transitions include the ubiquitous Barn Door (creates the effect of an opening-and-closing door), Drip (which looks like dripping paint), and four others.

Slick Sampler includes three filters. The Film Noise filter takes your clean, smooth DV footage and makes it look as though it were

captured using an old 8mm camera—and it's more convincing than iMovie's Aged Film effect. Solarize blasts your clip with extra light. X-Ray doesn't show you the bones inside of your subjects, but it does turn clips into a spooky negative monochrome.

Slick Sampler's Burst transition puts more oomph in your iMovies.
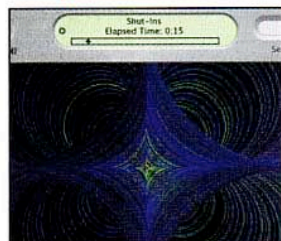
iTUNES PLUG-INS

Vortex	Mac
www.trinfinitysoftware.com/vortex.shtml	OS X
Fielder	Mac
www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/audio/fielderitunesplugin.html	OS X

The iTunes Visualizer does an excellent job at interpreting your music, but sometimes you want something a little different. **Vortex** is a little more geometric, a little more stately, and a lot more subtle, using circles that change in color, size, and position. **Fielder** will appeal to your analytical side, displaying a row of lines that represent your audio's tonal range. The length of each line represents the amplitude.

Vortex gives iTunes alternative swirls.

iCAL CALENDARS

Movie Calendar	Mac
www.apple.com/ical/library	OS X
American Politics and Government Calendar	Mac
www.icalworld.com/gov.html	OS X

It's hard to keep track of everything in this crazy world; shared iCal calendars can lend a hand. One of our favorites is the **Movies** calendar, which advises you of upcoming movie release dates. You might also want to raise your civic awareness by subscribing to the **American Politics and Government** calendar, which will help you keep your finger on the pulse of congressional happenings, as well as remind you when it's time to vote. You do vote, don't you?
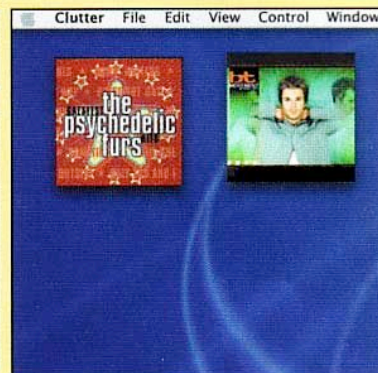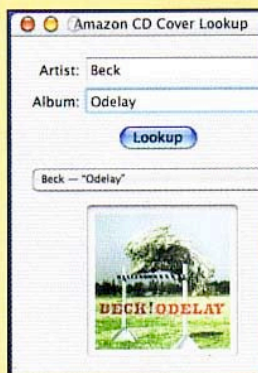
Sound Bytes

MP3 CUSTOMIZATION TOOL

| Clutter | Mac |
| www.sprote.com/clutter | OS X |

TOP PICK

The extraordinarily cool **Clutter** looks up any CD from Amazon, finds the cover image, and makes an icon from that image that you can stick on your desktop. When you double-click these icons, they play the CD using iTunes (provided that album's in your iTunes library or the CD is in the drive).

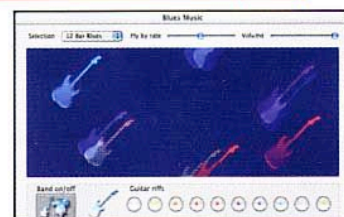Look up any album in Clutter (left) to clutter up your desktop.

MUSIC CREATION TOOL

| Blues Music | Mac |
| http://homepage.mac.com/davidahmed/bluesMusic.html | OS X |

There's no need for talent when you have **Blues Music**. Just choose one of three backgrounds (12 Bar Blues, Shuffle, or Rock the Blues), and you'll hear the bass and drums. Then it's up to you to press the guitar-riff buttons to produce a flawless—albeit cliché-ridden—solo to soar above the other instruments.

Blues Music helps you tell it like it is, blues-style.

WAKER-UPPER

| mp3 alarm clock | Mac |
| www.sugarcubesoftware.com | OS X |

Why wake up to crappy talk radio when you've got a Mac full of MP3s? Use **mp3 alarm clock** to set as many alarms as you want, using as many MP3s as you want. You can schedule different alarms for each day and there's even a snooze option for those of you who sleep next to your Mac.

Waking up is hard to do, even when it's to your favorite song.

SOUND-FILE CONVERTER

SoundConverter www.dekorte.com/downloads.html	Mac OS X

This simple app converts sound files to and from a good selection of formats, including WAV, AIFF, and SND. SoundConverter sports a single window with a single menu that allows you to choose the file type you want to convert to. Simple. Effective.

LIVE365 STREAMS

Hawaiian Rainbow www.hawaiianrainbow.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Dubstream www.dublab.com/help.asp?bhcp=1	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Attention Span Radio www.attentionspanradio.net	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Live365 is an Internet radio hub that expands your listening universe way beyond iTunes radio stations. Simply sign up for a Live365 account (www.live365.com), and you can play any of its stations from within iTunes. Here are a few stations that got our toes tapping.

Hawaiian Rainbow brings you the lovely, lilting sound of the islands, ranging from stirring instrumentals to downright kitschy ballads. Too mellow? Try the glitzy, upbeat, ever-peppy sounds of dub. With Dubstream, you can create a club ambiance around your Mac instantly.

Attention Span Radio is your source for rollicking instrumental fusion. You can hear plenty of synth, crashing cymbals, elaborate melodies, bass solos, and wanton experimentation. You can even catch the occasional live recording mixed in with the studio sounds.
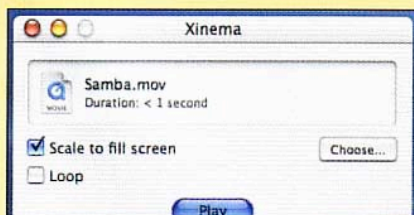
Video F/X

QUICKTIME UTILITY

TOP PICK	**Xinema** http://lighthead.sytes.net	Mac OS X

You don't need QuickTime Pro to play movies at full screen—not when you have Xinema. While movies are playing, you can use a

Using this simple app, you can get your QuickTime movies playing at full screen.

small, floating transport control to pause, play, or rewind. You can also opt to hide this transport and use keyboard commands instead. With the keyboard, you can do even more: Jump to specific frames, move forward or backward frame by frame, or adjust the volume.

DISK SPACE CALCULATOR

VideoCalc www.ifthensoft.com	Mac OS X, donationware

If you know how many seconds of digital video you can store in a gigabyte of disk space, you're smarter than we are. VideoCalc takes care of the hard math—just enter the particulars about the size of your hard drive, and VideoCalc will figure out how much footage you can bring in.

FINAL CUT PLUG-IN

Silk and Fog www.chv-plugins.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Silk and Fog are subtle effects that essentially cast a silky, blurry shroud over your selected clip. They offer no parameters—you get what you get—but they might fit the bill for that special shot.
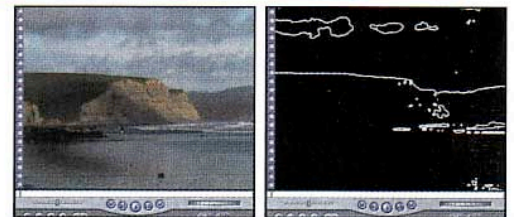

Silk and Fog create a dreamy haze over your clips.

FINAL CUT/AFTER EFFECTS FILTER

Cartooner www.borisfx.com/download/cartooner_landing.php	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Cartooner is a wild filter that traces the basic contours of your scene using a thick bright line. The result is a scene that looks hand-animated.

Cartooner provides an interesting hand-drawn effect.

Office Gadgets
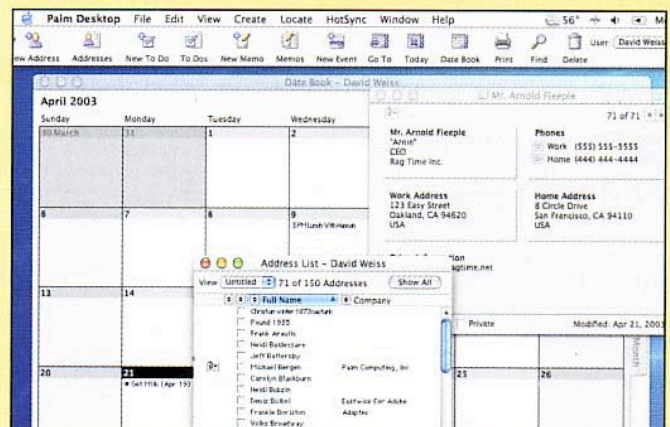
PERSONAL INFORMATION MANAGER

Palm Desktop www.palm.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X	**TOP PICK**

No, you don't need a Palm handheld to use Palm Desktop, the venerable PIM that Palm ported eons ago from Claris Organizer. Although Palm Desktop is free, it's no wimpy little utility. It's a calendar, a to-do manager, and a contact database rolled into one.

Palm Desktop lets you sort using your own categories, so you can choose to view, say, only your co-workers or your weekend buddies. You can also quickly look up contacts from the Dock, and like any good life-organizer, you can set alarms for those pesky events you wish you could forget about (call dentist, pay taxes, attend mother-in-law's Tupperware party).

Palm Desktop is a PIM that means business.

▶ **Office Gadgets continued...**

DOCUMENT-READING UTILITY

Palm Reader www.palmdigitalmedia.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

You also don't need a Palm handheld to take advantage of **Palm Reader**, which lets you view eBooks on your Mac (sorry—it doesn't tell fortunes). Pick a favorite font and text size, add bookmarks, and take notes. The next time you take an interstate bus ride, download a book or two to your laptop first.

FILE SERVICE

AntiWordService www.devon-technologies.com/freeware.html	Mac OS X

Are you mad at Microsoft Word? So mad that you're just not going to take it anymore? If you don't feel like shouting out your window, here's another way to protest: Install **AntiWordService** in your Library, and edit your Word files in any Cocoa-based text editor, such as TextEdit.

BLUETOOTH REMOTE CONTROL

Romeo www.irowan.com/arboreal	Mac OS X

Here's a little something for your fancy Bluetooth phone and fancy Bluetooth Mac. **Romeo** lets you control your Mac with your phone. You can move the cursor and broadcast clicks (among other maneuvers)—perfect for advancing Keynote slides with your phone while leaving one hand free for wild gesticulations.

Control your Mac with your Bluetooth phone.

DATABASE APP

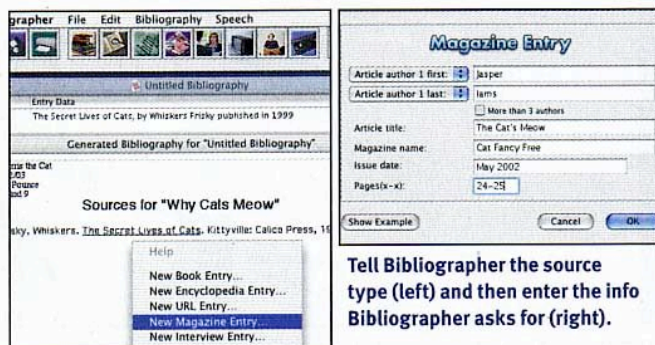| **Little Office** www.timbri-online.com/LittleOffice	Mac OS X, donationware

If you have a small business, and you want a simple way to keep tabs on your inventory, **Little Office** is a humble alternative to throwing time and money into more-involved apps such as FileMaker Pro or MySQL—just use its templates to keep track of orders, customers, sales, and other such lucrative activities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FORMATTER

Bibliographer www.stanford.edu/~tristanh	Mac OS 9 and OS X

You're trying to pull together a bibliography, and you don't remember all the formatting rules. Thankfully, **Bibliographer** does. Just tell it what kind of source you used (for example, book or magazine article), enter the pertinent info (author, title, and so on), and Bibliographer will format your entries appropriately.

Tell Bibliographer the source type (left) and then enter the info Bibliographer asks for (right).

CONTACT MANAGER

Sbook www.sbook5.com	Mac OS X

Sbook is a simple, small contact application. Its main strength is its search function, which can quickly find any and all information in any field of any record in its database. For example, if you don't remember the name of that guy from Apple you met, just type in *Apple*, and *Steve Jobs* will pop to the top.
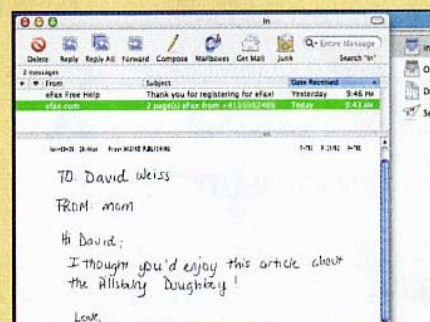
Communication

WEB-BASED FAX SERVICE

eFax www.efax.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X	**TOP PICK**

You don't have to run down to Kinko's every time someone sends you a fax—unless, of course, you like hanging out at Kinko's. All you need to do is sign up for a free account with **eFax**, give out the fax number bestowed upon you, and faxes will arrive as TIFF files in your email in-box. You can't *send* faxes with the free version though—for that, you need eFax Plus, which costs $9.95 a month. Signing up for eFax Plus also yields you a local fax number; the free version gives you a fax number with a random area code.

eGads! When you sign up for eFax (top), you can receive faxes via your eMail (above).

LOCAL NETWORK MESSAGING APP

Shout http://homepage.mac.com/nebagakid/software/shout/index.html	Mac OS X

Phone, fax, email, paging...perhaps there aren't enough ways to bug people these days. Well, thanks to **Shout**, a Rendezvous-based messenger, there's one more. Run the server app on your Mac, and send messages to anyone on your local network. To see the Shout server's message, just run the client and subscribe to the service.

WEB MAIL

MyMacMail www.mymacmail.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X
TheCrazyOnes www.thecrazyones.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Yes, it's a crying shame that Mac.com email addresses are no longer free. Luckily, you can still get the *Mac* back into your email address. **MyMacMail** will assign you a *yourname@mymacmail.com* address,

along with 10MB of mail storage space. Yes, you're gonna get a few ads here and there as you check your email, but the service keeps it to a minimum. For those with a bit more Mac fervor—"the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers"—you can get a *thecrazyones.com* email address. **TheCrazyOnes** service will also give you 6MB of storage.

SCREEN-SPYING UTILITY

Spy www.silvernetwork.net	Mac OS 9 and OS X, donationware

If you want to show someone what's on your screen, you could email them a screenshot—better yet, you could use **Spy**. All you do is launch the Spy Server, press Start, and you'll be assigned an IP Address. Send someone that address and they can see your screen via a Web browser.

Utilities

SYSTEM COPYING UTILITY

TOP PICK

Carbon Copy Cloner www.bombich.com/software/ccc.html	Mac OS X, donationware

Carbon Copy Cloner creates a bootable copy of your system in a jiffy.

Before Mac OS X came around, moving to another Mac meant just transferring a few crucial system folders and your data. Nowadays it's a royal pain: Many crucial files are invisible, making it impossible to find everything you need to move.

Enter **Carbon Copy Cloner**. This sweet little app creates a bootable copy of your system (you can also use it to make regular ol' non-bootable backups). It has a clean, simple interface—all you do is choose the source and target disks. You can also tell Carbon Copy Cloner what to ignore, such as files you've already backed up.
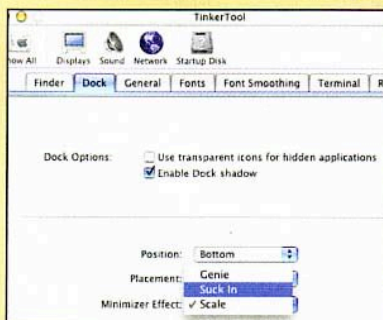
SYSTEM TWEAKER

TOP PICK

TinkerTool www.bresink.de/osx/TinkerTool2.html	Mac OS X

For those of you who don't want to get your hands dirty hacking Mac OS X, **TinkerTool** is a great catch-all system-preference app for making all sorts of miscellaneous OS X system adjustments.

TinkerTool is a great catch-all utility.

With TinkerTool, you can opt not to show the rectangle effect (a series of animated black rectangles that appear when you open a file), add Quit to the Finder menu, and turn on a shadow around the Dock, among other things. You can also change the system font, move the Dock to the top of the screen, and choose the Suck In window-minimizing effect (a variation of the Genie effect).

QUARTZ EXTREME UTILITIES

Quartz Extreme Check www.entropy.ch/software/macosx/#quartzextremecheck	Mac OS X
PCI Extreme http://pages.cthome.net/zacks	Mac OS X

If you've upgraded to Jaguar, its Quartz Extreme graphics acceleration feature may or may not be running. To find out, you could check Apple's site to see if your graphics card supports Quartz Extreme, but the easiest way is to run **Quartz Extreme Check**, which will just flat-out tell you if Quartz Extreme has kicked in or not.
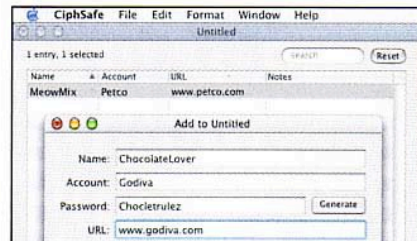
According to Apple, Quartz Extreme only runs when you have an AGP graphics card. But why listen to Apple? (We don't, as evidenced by our PowerBook autopsy, p39.) **PCI Extreme** will force a Mac with a PCI Radeon card to use Quartz Extreme.

PASSWORD-MANAGEMENT APP

CiphSafe www.withay.com/macosx/ciphsafe.html	Mac OS X

Another day, another password and user name. **CiphSafe** is a vault for all your secret account information and other stuff you don't want to write down—and it's much easier to use than Apple's Keychain. It can also generate passwords for you, using good cypherpunk sense.

CiphSafe restores password sanity—although you still have to remember the password to launch CiphSafe.

ENCRYPTION SOFTWARE

PGP Freeware www.pgp.com/products/freeware.html	Mac OS X

You've heard it before, but we'll say it again: Dedicated hackers can intercept and read any Web form, email, or other online missive. And though no encryption scheme is perfect, you can achieve close-to-unbreakable email privacy via the free software provided by **PGP** (Pretty Good Privacy). Just encrypt a message and create an unlocking code for your recipient; just don't distribute this code along with your top secret email. But you knew that. We hope.

FILE LAUNCHERS

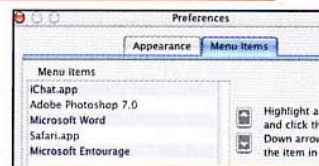|	
Locator www.sebastian-krauss.de/software	Mac OS X
Rocket Launcher http://homepage.mac.com/type_r503/kel9000.html	Mac OS X

Finding files using Jaguar's built-in search is relatively quick, but the Unix locate command is even quicker. **Locator** puts an Aqua face on this command, which makes it easy to use as well as fast. It needs a little time to build a database every so often, though—so cut it some slack.

If you miss the ol' application menu from pre–OS X days, **Rocket Launcher** can help. It puts an app-launching menu in your menu bar, even letting you pick the apps you want to appear there. G'bye, Dock!

Select the apps you want to access from your menu bar (above), and Rocket Launcher will put them there (right).

► Utilities continued...

WEB-BASED STORAGE

Yahoo Briefcase http://briefcase.yahoo.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Quite a few sites offer Internet storage, but our favorite is Yahoo Briefcase. You can store up to 30MB in your Briefcase, and it's both fast and reliable.

FINDER UTILITY

Tree Size www.monkeybreadsoftware.de/Freeware	Mac OS 9 and OS X, donationware

It would be nice to know the size of all the folders nestled inside a particular folder, rather than having to do a Command-I on every single one. Well, that's exactly what Tree Size does. Be warned, though, the program is in German. If you don't sprechen Sie Deutsches, all you need to know is that clicking the active button will run the app and that the button beside the active one means cancel.

Even though you have to navigate folders in German (left), the results Tree Size gives you are crystal-clear (below).

APP-OPENING APPLESCRIPT

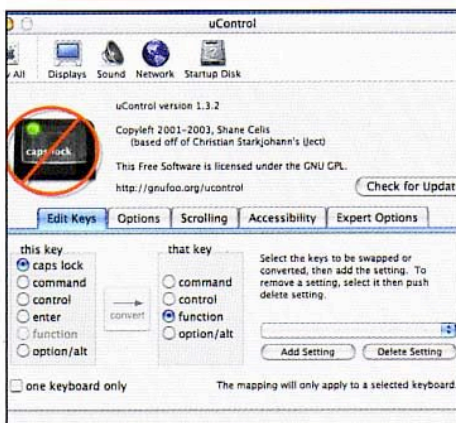| Wipe Creator www.scotlandsoftware.com/products/applescript/index.html	Mac OS X

It's frustrating when the wrong application opens a file. Wipe Creator ensures that files open in the appropriate default Mac OS X application. For example, drop a JPEG created in GraphicConverter onto this AppleScript and your image will open in Preview.

KEYBOARD LAYOUT CONFIGURATOR

uControl http://gnufoo.org/ucontrol/ucontrol.html	Mac OS X

Remap your keys with uControl.

Some folks just aren't satisfied with anything—even their keyboard layouts. If you're one of 'em, take uControl for a spin. This system preference app can turn Control keys into Command keys, give your laptop's trackpad scroll-wheel capabilities, and accomplish other slick maneuvers of this kind.
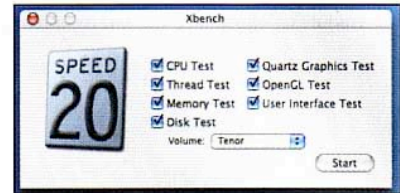
BENCHMARKING TOOL

Xbench http://xbench.com	Mac OS X, donationware

Xbench will measure CPU, RAM, hard disk, and other aspects of your Mac's performance. If you're curious how your Mac stacks up against the other zealous overclockers out there, you can compare your results to postings on the Xbench Web site.

Xbench clocks your Mac so you can back up your speed claims.

Games

MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAMING SERVICE
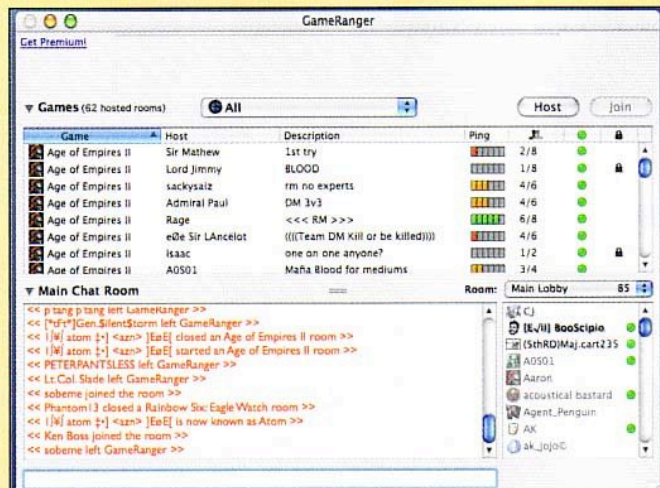
GameRanger www.gameranger.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X	TOP PICK

You've got a hankering to play Ghost Recon, but your buddies are all out on dates or schmoozing at job fairs. Those losers! Luckily, with GameRanger you can find a bunch of new Mac buddies to rumble with.

GameRanger lets you join networked games or start your own, and it supports many newer games, including Tony Hawk 3 and NASCAR Racing 2002. For the less-than-hardcore, GameRanger also supports games like Scrabble and Monopoly. GameRanger features a chat window and the ability to use personalized icons to represent yourself.

GameRanger hooks you up with other networked gamers.

SHOCKWAVE GAMES

Snow Craft www.arcadepod.com/shockwave/gotogame.php?id=1898	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Bookworm www.shockwave.com/sw/content/bookworm	Mac OS 9 and OS X
Gutterball 3D www.shockwave.com/sw/content/gutterball	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Shockwave is Macromedia's technology for delivering multimedia content over the Web—aka supercool games! Many Shockwave games are available for download (usually for a fee), but you can

We killed Kenny! Snowballs become lethal weapons in Snow Craft.

play most of the same games online for free. Just be sure you've got the Shockwave plug-in installed (www.macromedia.com /software/shockwaveplayer).

In **Snow Craft**, two teams of kids who look like they stepped right out of *South Park* battle it out with snowballs. Your goal: to knock the other team senseless before they do the same to you. It's a bit slow, even with broadband, but fun.

Bowl without the smelly used shoes in Gutterball.

Bookworm is an entertaining diversion for word nerds. You try to spell words by connecting tiles—the longer the word, the higher the score.

Gutterball is (surprise, surprise) a bowling game, and it effectively captures the aspect of the game where you fan the air in the hopes of directing the path of your ball. Just move your mouse to slowly affect the ball's trajectory. It's also worth checking out Gutterball just for the good old-school funk background music.
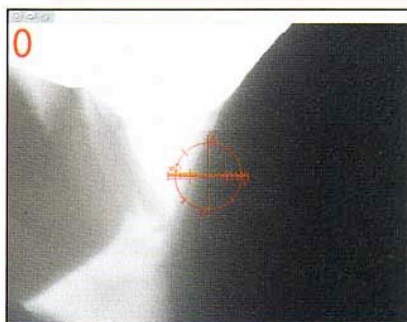
FREEWARE GAMES

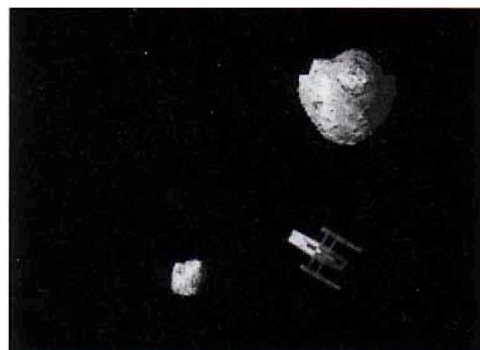|	
3DBlur http://home.fuse.net/obvious	Mac OS X
Asteroid Storm www.zarkonnen.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

Fly through a canyon in 3DBlur—and try not to hit anything, would ya?

3DBlur is a flight sim—but in this case, *sim* is short for simple. You fly through a naturalistic maze of mountains and try not to crash—but there's nothing realistic about your aircraft. It has one gauge, which shows your approximate position, and a single means of control: either your mouse or the arrow keys. Still, 3DBlur is addictive—the farther you

get through the terrain, the higher your score.

In **Asteroid Storm**, you're on a space ship surrounded by asteroids. Sound familiar? Asteroid Storm is an homage to Asteroids, which addicted a generation of arcade-goers, and it doesn't disappoint. The graphics and sounds are impressive, and the explosions are rendered in convincing detail.

Asteroids, anyone? Blast through rocks in this classic space game.

Web Paraphernalia

ONLINE BLOG CREATOR

Blogger www.blogger.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X	**TOP PICK**

If you have something to say to the world, just sign up with **Blogger**, choose from a variety of templates and formats, and post messages via its Web site. What you enter will appear on your own site. Whenever you get the urge to pontificate, just head over to the Blogger site and submit an update. The only catch: Your blog (short for Web log) will bear the Blogger logo—a small price to pay considering how easy Blogger is to use.

Blogger must be good—Dave Barry uses it.

WEB-HOSTING SERVICE

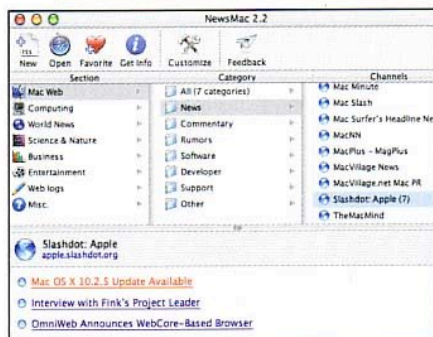|	
Mac Rules www.macrules.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

If you're looking for a place to host your Web site, check out **Mac Rules**, where you can pick up 10MB of server space. To qualify for free hosting, however, you have to offer Mac-oriented content. If you ever wanted to post your own product reviews, rave about the latest gadgets, or rag on Apple's management, this could be the digital soapbox for you.

▶ **Web Paraphernalia continued...**

BROWSING UTILITY

NewsMac	Mac OS X, donationware
http://users.aber.ac.uk/rlp9/newsmac/downloads.html	

NewsMac delivers just the facts.

News Web sites can be pretty distracting, what with all the blinking icons and banner ads. **NewsMac** retrieves the news for you and puts it into a clean, friendly interface. And because it only displays headlines and text, NewsMac is much faster than any browser, and works well even over dial-up.

WEB-DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

MySQL	Mac OS X
www.mysql.com/downloads/mysql-4.0.html	
Dragon Web Surveys trial	Mac OS 9 and OS X
http://wmotion.com/dragon.html	

Say you run a club for Mac fanatics. You don't want to list all the members of your club on a static Web page. Instead, you want your members to be able to search for other members based on a few criteria. What you need is **MySQL**, an ongoing, open-source database that can help your Web site handle dynamic content.

If you want to create a survey that tests potential members to ensure that they're fanatical enough for your club, check out the **Dragon Web Surveys** trial, which (in conjunction with FileMaker Pro) lets you create a Web survey that can receive up to 50 responses.

None of the Above

EGO-BOOSTING WEB SITE

TOP PICK	usoFyne	Mac OS 9 and OS X
	www.usofyne.com	

usoFyne tells you the whole truth and nothing but.

If you're feeling down, go fishing for a compliment with **usoFyne**. Just fill out a Web form with some basic information about yourself, and a real person emails you back a usoFyne—a thoughtful (and ever-so-slightly risqué) barrage of compliments.

Be patient! It took about two weeks for us to get a response, but it was well worth the wait. Here's what usoFyne had to say to someone who was recently laid off: "What is up with that? Getting laid off—you, of all people! You who are so hot and awesome and an important part of the company....Despite your current problems, your amazing awesomeness is full-time, forever..." We've never loved ourselves as much as we do now.

WEB-BASED BULLETIN BOARD

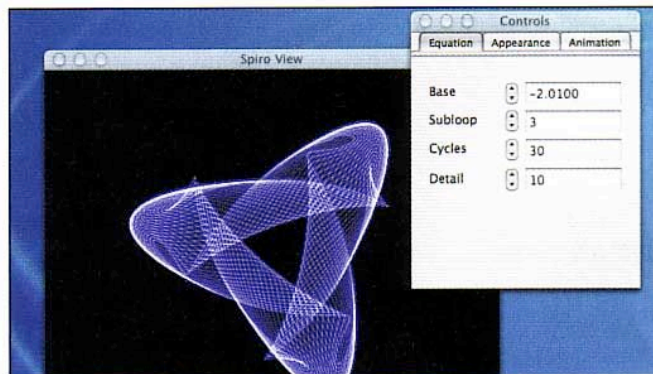| Craigslist Forums	Mac OS 9 and OS X
www.craigslist.org	

Many people know about Craigslist, the bulletin-board-style site with job, for-sale, apartment, and other listings for over 20 cities. But no matter where you live, you can take advantage of the **Craigslist Forums**. Ask for a book recommendation, get advice on how to handle your tyrannical boss, or check out the Missed Connections section, where people post romantic propositions like: "Cute blonde on the StairMaster this afternoon at 24 Hour Fitness: Want to meet for coffee?" Hey buddy, we hope it works out for ya.

SPIROGRAPH CREATOR

SpirographX	Mac OS X
http://homepage.mac.com/solidmag/spiro	

Remember that spirograph-drawing gear set you had as a kid? Here's a digital version—only now you don't have to worry about keeping your pen in the hole. Just play with different settings like color and equation, and **SpirographX** will dutifully draw a spirograph image (or animation, if you wish). You can even turn your animation into a screensaver.

SpirographX nurtures your inner kindergartner.

EARTH AND SPACE

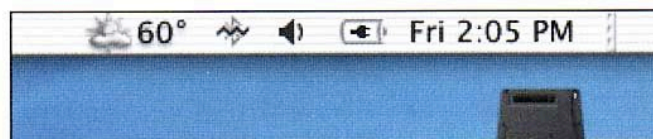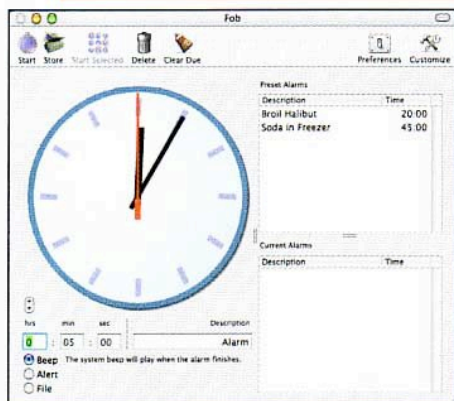| WeatherPop	Mac OS X
www.glu.com/products/weatherpop/index.html	
MoonDock	Mac OS X, donationware
http://homepage.mac.com/garycmartin	
Our Neighbors	Mac OS X
http://homepages.tig.com.au/~cthulhu/sbc/index.html	

WeatherPop shows the current temperature and a weather icon (indicating sunny, partly cloudy, and so on) right in your menu bar. The free version only includes U.S. cities covered by the National Weather Service. **MoonDock** sits where you'd expect and gives you a run-down of the moon's phase, estimated surface visibility, and other lunar info. **Our Neighbors** shows a 3D representation of our sun and its 70 nearest neighboring stars, showing their names and other information. You can rotate the model in all directions, changing your view of the stars in relation to the sun.

Keep tabs on the outside world with WeatherPop.

KITCHEN TIMERS

Fob http://homepage.mac.com/tfinley/LeakyPuppy/fob.html	Mac OS X
Cuppa www.wunderbear.com/cuppa	Mac OS X

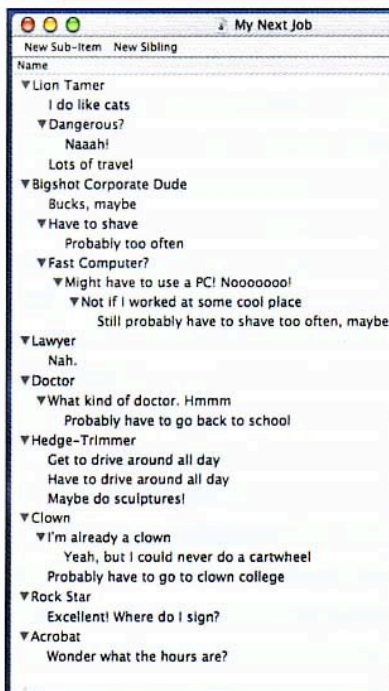Fob will tell you when to check on your culinary creations.

Have you ever been so involved in getting that drop shadow just right in Photoshop that you accidentally burn your dinner roast beyond recognition? You need **Fob**. Fob is a kitchen timer for your Mac that counts down a set amount of time, then chimes when it's time to deal with the meat. **Cuppa** is more specific: It knows how long to steep various types of tea. A teacup icon bounces in your Dock, complete with a spoon-clank sound, when your tea is ready to sip.
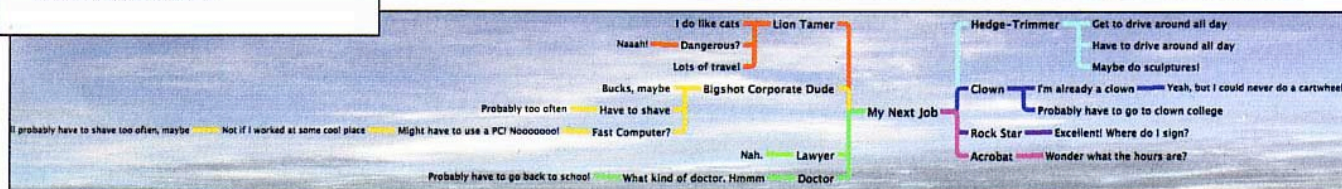
BRAINSTORMING TOOLS

Idea Knot www.StayAtPlay.com/ideaknot	Mac OS X
MyMind www.sebastian-krauss.de/software	Mac OS X, donationware

You know you're a genius, but to convince others of that, your ideas need to be well organized. **Idea Knot** is a simple app that helps you sort your thoughts into categories. **MyMind** is another brilliance-structuring tool that lets you outline your ideas, projects, and so on, and then export them into a graphical flowchart that you can use in apps such as Keynote.

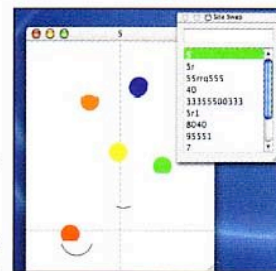Type out your thoughts in MyMind (left), and it will produce a graphical representation of that mumbo jumbo (below).

CIRCUS-CAREER STARTER

Juggle http://home.earthlink.net/~ocb1/mac.html	Mac OS X

So you want to learn how to juggle. **Juggle** shows very simple, clear animations of complex juggling patterns. Even if you can't immediately replicate them using flaming torches or chain saws, at least you can get an idea of what you need to work on.

Juggle preps you for your next job interview.

WEB-BASED ALARM

Birthday Alarm www.birthdayalarm.com	Mac OS 9 and OS X

If you're always forgetting your mom's birthday, the **Birthday Alarm** Web site can help get you out of hot water. Sign up, and it gives you a link that you can email to those special somebodies so they can fill in their vital info. Once their information is in the system, you'll get an auto-reminder a week before the big day.

DESKTOP CLOCK

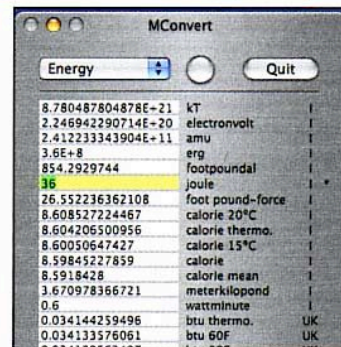|	
Fuzzy Clock www.objectpark.org/FuzzyClock.html	Mac OS X

The problem with most digital clocks is that they're so...accurate. A time of *11:56* doesn't carry nearly as much meaning as *'round midnight*. **Fuzzy Clock** addresses this problem by using terms such as *nearly, almost,* and so on, to express the time. It can also tell you the date, although that info is given precisely—you'll see June 15 rather than "mid-June."

CONVERSION UTILITY

MConvert www.icp.com.na	Mac OS X

How many tablespoons in a liter? Who knows? Who cares? Luckily, **MConvert** does. In fact, it also knows picas, leagues, calibers, bushels, pecks, and then some. Oh, the answer's 67.6.

MConvert knows a hell of a lot about measurements.

David Weiss is a technology writer based in Oakland, California, and has worked at a number of Mac publications. He's downloaded so many free things from the Web that he dreams in RGB.