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WWDC 2001 Excerpt

By Larry Peng

This report is a combination of my notes, as well as links to more specific topical summaries posted by other people in Apple developer community. Attendance is up 20-25 percent over the record attendance of last year. There is 4000+ people attending. The bulk of the increase is from Unix and Java developers.

Steve's opening line:

"Why did I come back to Apple? I did not want to use a Windows box for eternity!"

There were a few hardware announcements:

- Starting today, the 17 inch CRT is end of life. Apple no longer makes external CRT's, everything is panels.
- New 17 inch flat panel model introduced today. Up to 1280x1024 for \$999.
- Cinema display price drop to \$2499. 15 inch panel price drop to \$599

Avie Tevanian took the stage to talk about OS X from a software engineering viewpoint. He emphasized the major goals of OSX:

1. Unix power plus Mac simplicity
2. Open Standards
3. Killer graphics
4. Enabling killer apps
5. Deep Internet integration
6. Seamless mobility
7. Global Citizenship
8. Gentle migration
9. Digital Hub

For the full-length detailed report of the WWDC 2001 by Guild member Larry Peng, go to <http://www.bobrk.com/lmms/mac/wwdc/wwdc01.html>.

OS X Overview

Contributed by Apple Rep Andrea Barr

X Overview

- The central characteristic of the Mac OS X architecture is the layering of system software.
- The four distinct, interdependent layers of system software are application environments, application services, core services, and Darwin.

Application Environments

- The application environments layer includes Classic, Carbon, Cocoa, Java, and BSD Commands.
- Mac OS 9.1 is the basis for the Classic environment, allowing previous versions of most Macintosh software to work just as they do in Mac OS 9.1.
- Classic provides a single seamless environment in which users can run Mac OS 9.1 applications on a Mac OS X system.
- Carbon is a Mac OS X application environment that features a set of programming interfaces derived from earlier versions of the Mac OS.
- Optimizing applications for the Carbon environment means converting them to modern Mac OS X applications and involves recompiling them with a new set of Carbon APIs. Macintosh applications that have been recompiled with these APIs can run as stand-alone applications in Mac OS X, and do not need the Classic environment to run.
- Cocoa is a powerful object-oriented software development environment--included with Mac OS X — that features graphical tools, rich frameworks, and a predefined application infrastructure that supports rapid development of sophisticated applications.
- Whereas Carbon simplifies the Toolbox layer, Cocoa simplifies the development layer. As does Carbon, Cocoa allows developers to create applications that are optimized for Mac OS X. Cocoa includes a set of frameworks with programming interfaces in both Java and Objective-C. It is based on the integration of OpenStep, Apple technologies, and Java.
- Java 2 support is built into Mac OS X. The Java 2 implementation in Mac OS X is designed to allow maximum Java application portability and cross-platform functionality.
- Java developers can migrate quickly to Cocoa. The Cocoa API is accessible from Java. The advantage is that there are millions of Java programmers in the world-- increasing the pool of talent who can write software for Mac OS X without having to learn a new language.
- The BSD Commands environment is a special optional environment for developers that allows them to use standard BSD tools, utilities, and scripts.
- The full BSD command set is accessible from the Terminal application, and its support for POSIX APIs makes it easy to port existing UNIX applications to Mac OS X.

Application Services

- The application services layer incorporates the system services available to all application environments that have some impact on applications' graphical user interfaces. It includes Quartz, QuickDraw, OpenGL, Apple Type Solution (ATS), and QuickTime.
- Quartz is designed for the display of two-dimensional text and graphics, delivering on-the-fly rendering, anti-aliasing, and composition of PostScript graphics with pristine quality.
- OpenGL is an industry-wide graphics standard for developing portable 3D graphics applications. OpenGL is specifically designed for games, animation, CAD/CAM, medical imaging, and other applications that need a rich, robust framework for visualizing shapes in two and three dimensions.
- Apple Type Solution (ATS) provides support for a wide variety of font formats including OpenType, TrueType, and Type 1.
- QuickTime 5 includes a new user interface, media skins, an enhanced DVD codec, and provides enhanced support for AppleScript, Macromedia Flash, and MPEG-1.

Core Services

- The core services layer incorporates those system services that have no effect on applications' graphical user interfaces, and comprises Carbon Core, Core Foundation, Apple events, and Open Transport.
- Carbon Core includes Carbon managers, which offer low-level services (advanced memory management, protected memory, symmetric multiprocessing, and preemptive multitasking) to all application environments.
- Core Foundation is a framework that provides fundamental software services useful to application services, the application environments, and to applications themselves; and also enables easy internationalization through Unicode strings.

- An Apple event is a high-level event that applications can send to other applications on the same computer, on a remote computer, or even to themselves. Apple events are the primary mechanism for interapplication communication in Mac OS X.
- Open Transport is the primary user-level networking and communications software for applications optimized for the Carbon environment.

Darwin

- Darwin is the core operating system of Mac OS X.
- Mach and BSD are the primary components of Darwin.
- With protected memory, Mach ensures that an application cannot write to another application's memory or to the operating system's memory.
- With preemptive multitasking, Mach watches over the computer's processor, prioritizing tasks, making sure activity levels are at their maximum, and ensuring that every task gets the resources it needs.
- With advanced memory management, like other virtual memory systems, Mach maintains address maps that control the translation of a task's virtual addresses into physical memory.
- Symmetric multiprocessing (SMP), which enables the system to automatically use both of the computer's processors to complete tasks faster and save customers time. The two processors share the same memory, have equal access to I/O devices, and any task can run on any processor.
- Application multithreading allows applications to distribute a processing load among separate threads, and manage them so that no one application can monopolize the processor.
- Darwin includes networking protocol stacks and services, file systems, and device drivers.
- Darwin supports many different file systems and volume formats, including Mac OS Extended (HFS+),
- Universal File System (UFS), Universal Disk Format (UDF), Network File System (NFS), and ISO 9660.
- A device driver is a component of an operating system that moves data to and from a device, as well as controls that device. For development of device drivers, Darwin offers an object-oriented framework called the I/O Kit.
- Mac OS X supports Point-to-Point Protocol over Ethernet (PPPoE), a networking protocol for connecting multiple computer users via Ethernet to a remote site through a cable modem or similar device. PPPoE allows users to share a common digital subscriber line (DSL), cable modem, or wireless connection to the Internet.

To view this information on the web, including a useful glossary of Mac OS X terminology, go to at <http://www.bobrk.com/lmms/mac/osxglossary.html>.

Return of the MacMole

Long ago, in the Year of our Lord 1984, the Macintosh was born at Apple Computer. This was not, however, the only new life which came from the company in that fateful year. One of the Apple janitors had a pet mole, Jenny, who was pregnant. One evening, instinctively sensing that the birth was about to take place, Jenny the Mole decided to venture outside of her normal home of the broom closet to locate a better nesting place. Inside of an empty Macintosh casing, Jenny gave birth to the world's first and only Mac Mole.

The Mac Mole was a secret mascot of Apple, a favorite amongst many of the Apple engineers. The Mac Mole was a curious and adventurous soul, perhaps a bit too curious. One summer night, when the Mac Mole had reached teenagehood (in Mole years of course), he walked across a mother board of an open Macintosh unit which still had power hooked up. There was a loud sizzle, and sparks flew everywhere. There was an odd smell in the air, kind of like chicken. The Mac Mole, however, was no where to be found.

Rumor has it that the Mac Mole burrowed under the earth that night, in the center of the Apple campus. Over the years that followed, tales were shared of chance sightings of the infamous mole, but none of these mole sightings could ever be confirmed. There finally came a day when most accepted that the Mac Mole had met his maker.

While the spirit of the Mac Mole thrived at Apple in the years that followed, there were a few engineers who believed that it was more than just a spirit that wandered the campus as night. It is believed amongst these elite engineers that the Mac Mole came out late at night to test the resolve of Apple engineers, to help keep them on their toes during their long night hours. It was also believed that one day the Mac Mole would emerge and engage in full time activities to ignite renewed energy and enthusiasm in the Macintosh community.

Indeed, after years of working the underground, in 2001, the Mac Mole emerged in full daylight. At first, sightings of the mole were sporadic. Some say he was making up for lost time with frequent visits to the beach, fast food establishments, and all night Marathon net matches. After this short excursion, the Mac Mole went about his task of engaging the Macintosh community. His first target: The Lockheed Martin Macintosh Guild.

Known for his mischievous sense of fun and quick wit, the Mac Mole set out to infiltrate a Mac Guild contest. Partly to keep the contestants on their toes, and partly because it was just plain fun, the Mole went undercover, secretly thwarting the efforts of would-be prize winners, ensuring that any Mac prize that was won would be earned with great fortitude.

Welcome to the 3rd Annual Mac Guild Contest! This year's contest includes more great prizes from companies such as Macromedia, QPS, Apple and Microsoft. We started with 10 contestants, but only one will emerge the winner! To read all about it, and to stay current with the latest happenings, visit the MacMole web sites at:

- MacMole Home Page:** <http://pascal-central.com/macmole/>
- MacMole Contest Rules:** <http://pascal-central.com/macmole/rules.html>
- The MacMole Contestants:** <http://pascal-central.com/macmole/players.html>
- Contest Sponsors:** <http://pascal-central.com/macmole/sponsors.html>



SORENSEN VIDEO 3.0, BY SORENSON

Reviewed By Bill Catambay

Have you ever wondered how web sites post Quicktime videos that only take up 5 MB of space, especially when a 2-minute Quicktime video that you record takes up 600 MB of disk space? The answer is Sorenson Video.

Sorenson Video is the Quicktime standard for high-quality video compression on the Macintosh and Windows platforms. This review is for Sorenson Video 3 for the Macintosh, using a G3 running OS 9.0.4 and a G4 running OS 9.2.1.

Sorenson Video is a Quicktime codec, a compression coding scheme which is displayed in the list of compression options when exporting video from a Quicktime movie.

The installation is pretty straightforward. Once you run the installer on the CD, all the appropriate extensions are loaded into your system. After rebooting, the next time you export from Quicktime, the Sorenson Video compression option is included.

To export using Sorenson Video compression, you must use the Quicktime Player application. Choose the Export option from the File menu, and choose "Movie to Quicktime Movie" as the export format. In the Export dialog, click on Settings to get the Settings dialog. Click on the Settings button to get the Compression Settings dialog, and there is where you choose Sorenson Video 3. To change the Sorenson specific settings, click on the Options button in the Compression Settings dialog.

No special skills are required to use Sorenson compression. When exporting a video to a Quicktime movie, the default settings for Sorenson will suffice for most of your compression needs. For the video professionals, however, Sorenson offers a variety of options. In the Sorenson specific settings, you are presented with tabs for Summary, Encode, Playback, Streaming, Masking, and Watermark. The Summary tab displays a basic summary of the Sorenson specific settings in effect. The Encode tab allows you to set flags, such as bi-directional prediction, playback scalability and quick compress. It also provides settings for Automatic Key Frames and Minimum Quality. The Playback tab allows you to toggle Image Smoothing and assign a Media Key. The Streaming tab allows you to enable streaming, with options for package slice size and refresh rate. The Masking tab allows you to enable masking, and provides lots of options for the masking. Finally, the Watermark tab allows you to add your own watermark to the video, with settings for position and opacity.

The Sorenson specific settings interface was very simple to use, both in terms of a good interface design and organization. What I didn't like was the number of foreground-only dialogs that I had to go through until I got to Sorenson's preferences. A foreground-only dialog prevents you from doing anything else while the dialog is open, such as switch to your desktop or another open application. If you find that you need to look somewhere on your disk or in another application to determine a setting, you have to cancel all the dialogs (a total of 4), go off and do what you need to do, then reopen each dialog in succession. By the second time you go through this, it begins to get annoying.

The compression for Sorenson Video 3 (SV3), which is the heart of the software, is fantastic. Sorenson Video 2 (SV2) was great, and version 3 is that much better. It is advertised as providing better video than Sorenson Video 2 at less than half of the bit rate, delivering twice the compression speed (up to three times the speed when using Variable Bit Rate). In all my tests, I found this to be quite accurate. For example, I recorded a 454 MB movie and exported it using both SV2 and SV3. The resulting size of the compressed file was about the same for both exports, but SV2 took 4 minutes to export while SV3 only took 2 minutes. This was using QuickTime's medium quality setting. The quality seemed very decent, about the same for both. In another test, I set the Quicktime setting to high quality, and a 568 MB movie compressed to 53MB in 25 minutes. For a high quality output, it was very impressive.

With the speed gain over SV2, SV3 is a must have. You get great quality videos in half the time that SV2 created them (just as advertised). The only "gotcha" that users should be aware of is that SV3 only works with Quicktime 5 or better technology. If you are running Quicktime 4.x and export a movie using SV3, that movie will not play in your Quicktime Player. The two negatives to that is that it forces you to upgrade to Quicktime 5 (and the upgrade is not free), and for your potential audience, those who don't have Quicktime 5 (and don't want to upgrade) will not be able to view your movie. For this reason, be sure to keep SV2 around just in case.

Summary

Sorenson Video 3 is a remarkable compression product for Quicktime movies. Its compression technology works magic in reducing the size of a movie while maintaining good quality video. In many cases, I could barely tell the difference between the original and the compressed version. For streaming video over the web, SV3 is the key to creating a downloadable movie of a manageable size. The only negatives I found were the multiple dialogs required to change Sorenson settings, and QuickTime's lack of support for export background processing. After I was done testing this product, I was left desiring a standalone product that allowed me to export in the background without all the Quicktime Player extra dialogs. It would also be nice to see an estimate of how much time is left in the export, something which Quicktime Player does not provide. That aside, and despite the dependence of SV3 on Quicktime 5, I highly recommend Sorenson Video 3. For the novice user, it's a necessity for taking your home recorded movies and making them small enough to share over the web or through email. For video professionals, it's simply a must-have product for your video compression needs.

(It is noted that Sorenson recently announced a new product called Sorenson Squeeze that may provide the standalone program that would resolve the negatives mentioned above. I have not yet worked with the product, so for this review, it remains only a possibility.)

Pros:

- Amazing compression of videos
- Twice as fast as Sorenson Video 2
- Hosts a lot of professional options, such as Masking and Watermark.
- Excellent quality compressed videos
- Easy to use

Cons:

- Does not support background processing
- Annoying number of dialogs before getting to Sorenson settings
- Creates movies that are not viewable on any version of Quicktime before version 5
- For the home hobbyist, SV3 may seem a bit pricey

Overall Rating:

4 1/2 out of 5 Mice

DREAMWEAVER 4/FIREWORKS 4 BUNDLE, BY MACROMEDIA

Reviewed by KC MacGregor

Dreamweaver 4 Fireworks 4 Studio retail price: \$399
(Each purchased separately costs \$299 for a total of \$598)

First consider this: Nielsen, the same company which compiles ratings for television, tracks internet use and for the first week of August this year they show that the typical user spent three hours a week surfing the web and no more than 52 seconds per page on average. That's less than a minute for a web site designer to get the attention of the person surfing that page, less than a minute to convey enough information to make the viewer want to return. Every web page designer, professional or amateur, wants that audience to stick around long enough to see the site and get its intended message.

One sure way to do that is to create pages that look good, have interesting content, that load quickly, and where the dreaded "under construction" button doesn't linger on the page month after month. Software like Dreamweaver is aimed at helping you to achieve these goals and more.

Macromedia has bundled its latest Dreamweaver and Fireworks into a Studio bundle which makes it less expensive to buy together than separately. Dreamweaver software helps you to automate the production and maintenance of your web site, saving you, the web site designer, from time-consuming repetitive tasks. If you are creating a web site with multiple pages that contain similar content, such as navigation bars, banners, or buttons, Dreamweaver allows you to update those elements on every page with ease. If you were the designer of an on-line catalog, for example, you could use Dreamweaver's templates feature to quickly change your shopping cart button, company logo, promotional banners, etc., without having to find and change the html code for each element individually. This ability to facilitate consistency of production with ease of operation is a hallmark of Dreamweaver 4 and Fireworks 4, and is especially important to designers creating complex sites.

In their user manual, Macromedia characterizes Dreamweaver as "a professional HTML editor for visually designing and managing Web sites and pages", but then goes on to say that "Dreamweaver makes it easy to get started and provides you with helpful tools to enhance your Web design experience." Easy to get started? That might be somewhat of an exaggeration. Dreamweaver's complexity, terminology, and quirky interface (combining Mac-like flexibility with Windows-like "nope, guess again" inflexibility) make it a bear to take on. It's power, extensibility, and customizable nature, however, make it a bear worth taming.

Requirements

According to Macromedia, Dreamweaver 4 needs a Power Mac running Mac OS 8.6 or 9.x, with:

- 32 MB of RAM plus 135 MB of disk space
- A 256-color monitor capable of 800 x 600 pixel resolution
- A CD-ROM drive

I think what they meant to say was that you'll need 32 MB of RAM just for Dreamweaver itself, because it indeed uses up about 32 MB of RAM. And what happens if you want to run your integrated Studio partner application, Fireworks? In my case, I got the **error dialog**:

**There is not enough memory to open "Fireworks 4" (12,094K needed, 11,445K available)
To make more memory available, try quitting "Dreamweaver 4".**

I guess the good news was that it didn't pick on some other application for shut down.

To run Fireworks 4, according to Macromedia, you need a Power Mac (G3 or higher recommended), running System 8.6 or 9.x with:

- 64 MB of RAM plus 100 MB of available disk space
- Adobe Type Manager ® 4 or later for using Type 1 fonts
- A color monitor (1024 x 768 resolution, millions of colors recommended);
- A mouse or digitizing tablet
- A CD-ROM drive

Once I had everything fired up, including Internet Explorer and Netscape, I had only 1 MB of unused RAM left (out of a total of 128 MB). Not a lot of wiggle room left, is there? OK, I admit I boost up Navigator's memory for stability reasons, but what if I want to run other applications like PhotoShop or Flash or BBEdit (which Macromedia thoughtfully includes with this Studio bundle as a demo package, and which can be invoked directly from a Dreamweaver pull-down menu).

Using Dreamweaver

Dreamweaver offers three basic types of information on its use: Guided Tour movies, Tutorials, and Lessons, and you don't want to skip over them. In the user manual, Macromedia suggests you "start by reading the parts that are most relevant to your level of experience." But it then goes on to virtually identical advice to both "HTML Novices" and "experienced Web designers who are new to Dreamweaver". To wit:

1. Begin by watching the Guided Tour movies.
2. Next, work through the Dreamweaver tutorial to learn the basics of using Dreamweaver.
3. Work through the lessons for the topics that interest you.
4. Read "Dreamweaver Basics" for a further overview of the Dreamweaver user interface.

Becoming a Dreamweaver user feels like you're joining a club. This is not a bad thing. For example, there's the Dreamweaver Support Center: "The Dreamweaver Support Center Web site is updated regularly with the latest information on Dreamweaver, plus advice from expert users, examples, tips, updates, and information on advanced topics.

<http://www.macromedia.com/support/dreamweaver/>

And the Dreamweaver discussion group:

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/discussiongroup/>

After consulting with some fellow novice Dreamweaver users, I found we all agreed: a formal course with an experienced teacher in Dreamweaver can save you a lot of head scratching and gnashing of teeth. This is especially true if you are a Mac-o-phile like myself and not familiar with the oddities of the Windows operating system. I found the Dreamweaver approach to commands and nomenclature was often counter-intuitive, but I am told that this is familiar territory for Windows users. (Check out some pages created by students at a week-long intensive course on Dreamweaver at Phoenix College to see how a class can get you started on the right track:

<http://www.pc.maricopa.edu/departments/art/Sum01Web/>

Using Fireworks

The other half of the Studio bundle is Fireworks 4. Fireworks is the graphic editor component of this duo, giving you tools to create, edit, and animate Web graphics, add interaction and manipulate and optimize images in both bitmap and vector editing modes.

Macromedia themselves wax rhapsodic in their chapter on Fireworks Basics: "Fireworks is a state-of-the-art application for designing graphics for use on the Web. You can edit with vector-object flexibility and apply bitmap effects, including bevels, glows, drop shadows, and PhotoShop filters, that redraw automatically as you edit. Fireworks generates JavaScript, making rollovers easy to create."

Sounds cool. I never got too ambitious in Fireworks, however, but I was thrilled with the animated GIF I created in virtually no time flat. I particularly liked the optimization features that kept my graphic from becoming unwieldy in size, but still clean to the eye. Plus, I was able to insert my animation quickly and easily into the page I was creating in Dreamweaver. Very nifty.

Fireworks offers up to four window views at once of your graphic under different formats (with their sizes and estimated loading times) and lets you choose which one is the best trade-off of quality and efficiency for viewing on the web. Fireworks' rollovers are fun: as the cursor passes over an image another image pops up. Rollovers are used frequently and effectively for dynamic web buttons, as well as other uses.

As with Dreamweaver, Fireworks includes a tutorial ("an interactive introduction to the key features it can be completed in about an hour") and lessons ("from the basics of animation to creating rollovers and pop-up menus each lesson can be performed in about 10 minutes"). These lessons are pretty easy to follow and, once again, I recommend them to the novice as a good starting place. Neither Dreamweaver nor Fireworks is the kind of software that encourages the inexperienced user to plunge in and start creating. You have to work closely within their structure or you'll find yourself with lots of functions that won't execute. But "color within the lines" and you'll be thrilled with the results.

The biggest advantage of Fireworks 4 appears to be its compatibility – specifically the round-trip editing feature – with Dreamweaver, along with expanded export and import options including PhotoShop files. For example, one of my image folders included 80 files, ranging from old 1989-era Digital Darkroom and SuperPaint files to recent Illustrator graphics and TIFF and native-format PhotoShop files. Everything but the Jpeg and GIF-formatted files were invisible to Dreamweaver ó they just were not listed at all (grayed-out or otherwise). Fortunately, and thanks to its dual bitmap/vector nature, all of these images were readable by Fireworks. Best of all, masks and layers/layer names in PhotoShop images import directly into Fireworks as object masks and layers/frame names.

The only caveat I have with Fireworks' amazing capacity to generate graphics is to keep in mind that you have 52 seconds tops to get that viewer's attention. Graphics intensive pages can be sloooooow to load,

and even a low-res graphic can seem to take an eternity to load for those out there with a 28K modem. Remember, not everybody is surfing the web on a high speed T1 or DSL line.

The Overall Package

Overall, this package of Dreamweaver and Fireworks puts quite an impressive range of web page possibilities before you. The structure of the two programs is such that you can easily go back and forth between them (assuming you've got the 128 MB of RAM minimum that I recommend), encouraging you to try adding some razzle-dazzle to your site. There's a lot of emphasis on workflow and maintenance in Dreamweaver that I liked, which reminds you in effect, whatever you upload, somebody else will have to download. Sort of the internet version of "What goes up must come down". That means keeping vigilant about consistency in your site within its own internal structure, as well as consistent with the ever-multiplying demands of the web, with all the various browsers and platforms that will view your pages. Macromedia has added some nice features to Dreamweaver 4. The Split Code and Design Views windows allow you to see the html code in one window and see the standard view in another, allowing you immediate visual feedback as you update your code. The ability to default or consistently resize these windows would be a nice option, however, and the code jumps up and down in disconcerting fashion.

For an example, I took some old HTML I created almost five years ago (which opened in Dreamweaver without a hitch). When I scrolled vertically in the image pane, I got a disconcerting horizontal scroll in the code plane as well. Likewise, if I scrolled the code view back horizontally to the left (back to the start of every line), the page in visual view stubbornly scrolls back vertically to the top of the page and vice versa. I was unable to get rid of this quirky behavior.

On the other hand, the roundtrip html allows you to go from Code View to the visual view, and from an editor such as BBEdit to Dreamweaver and back (as discussed previously). The integrated O'Reilly code reference pops up in a menu box and explains the relevant html tag that corresponds to your selection. This is a really cool feature. However, it's a feature you wish could be fully resized as needed for flexibility. Dreamweaver only allowed limited resizing of this feature, and offered no resizing of the tutorial and lessons windows. Given an average size monitor, the screen gets quickly cluttered if you want to keep handy all these fixed displays. A "professional" web designer with a 21+ inch monitor is at an advantage here. On the design side, there is a layout view (as distinct from the standard visual design view). You can use this view to create liquid tables and cells that maintain their size relative to one another when a user resizes their browser window, no matter how many tables are on the page. This is a good feature (albeit, there is an inconsistency in verbiage, with the tool being called the "Draw Layout Table" tool in the palette, but the "Draw HTML Tables" tool in the tutorial).

Given that I was using the Macintosh version of this Studio bundle, why were the tutorials and lessons all showing Windows views and using Windows commands? Granted there is a lot of similarity, but when they were different, it was confusing to say the least. As a Mac user, it still annoyed me to have to cater to Windows quirks, such as forcing a three-letter extension into the file name. For example, I received the following "warning" more than once:

This file has no extension and will be opened in Code View. [Etc...]

I could have checked the "Don't show me this message again", but I shouldn't be getting this message at all.

Accessibility an Added Bonus

Kudos go to Macromedia for addressing the issue of accessibility head-on in Dreamweaver, and if you think accessibility just means specifying ALT text on images, I recommend you check out one or more of the following:

<http://www.section508.gov/>

<http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm>

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

In their own words: "Macromedia supports the creation of great Web experiences that are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities. We encourage the implementation of international standards to guide developers of accessible sites, including the guidelines offered by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)... W3C guidelines on Web content encourage developers to adopt design and coding practices for accessibility, many of which are robustly supported by Macromedia products For the latest

information on product features and resources that support accessible design, please see Macromedia's accessibility page."

You can find this page at <http://www.macromedia.com/macromedia/accessibility/> and the extension it let me download provided an opportunity to extend Dreamweaver's functionality, adding a new "Accessibility" pull-down menu to Dreamweaver in between the "Window" and "Help" menus. Once loaded, selecting "Run Online Report" invokes a web-based tester from UsableNet Inc. Clearly, the ability to extend Dreamweaver developers to create new objects, commands, and behaviors is a powerful function.

What's Not To Love?

For us creative types, formulating the concept and structure and look of a web page is fun, but managing it, keeping it operating smoothly, and updating it routinely is not so fun. Whether you're a professional web site designer or an amateur who knows your way around basic html, the Dreamweaver 4 Fireworks 4 Studio has a lot to offer. With its steep learning curve, learning Dreamweaver did make me cranky at times. Editing html with a text editor is like riding the bus to work. By comparison, Dreamweaver software is supposed to be like driving a Ferrari or a Jaguar. I wondered, would you drive a Jaguar if it was influenced by the Windows user interface? Well, yes, of course you would!

Pros:

- Bundle Price (i.e. it's a \$200 savings)
- Dreamweaver's Template feature
- Dreamweaver Support Center & Extensions
- Fireworks "easy-as-pie" animated GIFs

Cons:

- Steep learning curve
- Confusing terminology
- Quirky interface (e.g. window resizing and scrolling)

Overall Rating

4 out of 5 Mice

3D SPADES DELUXE 2.5, BY FREEVERSE

Reviewed by Judd Spitzer

Imagine yourself in a boat, on the ocean... actually a Trident submarine on patrol. This is where I learned how to play cards, and specifically, Spades. I've seen it all, different options and different rules. Being a seasoned veteran at this game, I decided to tackle it, and on the Macintosh, I found it a game worth tackling.

First off, let me explain a little about the game of Spades. Spades is a four player card game (two teams), that uses a standard deck of 52 cards. The object of the game is get to a predetermined score, usually 500, or 1000 pts. The team to get there wins. Generally, after the cards are dealt, you guess how many "Tricks" your team will take. You earn points by taking tricks. This is done by the person who leads the highest card in a suit winning the trick. It gets a bit complicated, because spade cards are Trump, meaning that if you play a spade, it can take any other suits trick. The person who wins the trick gets to lead the next trick, and everyone must play the lead suit, if they have it, or else they can "sluff" or throw off. Finally, you only want to get the amount of tricks that you guess you will get, or you can get penalized.

There are a few more peculiarities to the game, such as bidding Nil or Blind Nil, and I'll briefly touch upon that throughout this review.

Features

Whether we're talking Hearts, Spades or even Bridge, Freeverse chose to use the same interface. This really makes it easy to learn the next game, because the interfaces are very similar. The graphical backgrounds are stunning, and you really feel like your playing cards at a table rather than just viewing some computer screen.

Next thing is the Puppets. The user is presented with some colorful characters to play with. You're not just playing against the computer; you're playing against opponents like Jen and Hal. You can download other puppets to play with and experience their quirky personalities.

There is an Auto Play feature that will play the best cards for you if you just want to sit back and watch the computer play it out for you.

Scoring is great, because it provides a running score total, providing more realistic play.

The best feature by far, however, is the Freeverse Game Server. Finally, a game that you can play with real people online, and Mac people at that. You can chat with other users at the same time that you're involved in game play with the Freeverse server, and have your messages pop up as speech bubbles above your puppets head. That's right, you get to choose the puppet you want to represent you in the network game. When you're happy or upset, there are emotion buttons that you can press to have your puppet express some emotion to the other users. That adds to the fun as well. Additionally, if you play online a lot, you'll find that you can get a rating to see where you stack up against your fellow players.

I was hard pressed to find any faults with the game. If there was anything to complain about, it was that I couldn't always find people online playing. Increasing the advertising of this feature could help. From a technical note of playing Spades, if a person bids Nil or Blind Nil, it would be nice to have a feature that allows the other team to change their bid. Also, there should be a feature to select a minimum bid that must be achieved. In my past experience, that is generally four tricks. Such an expanded bidding option would enhance the game.

Summary

This game, just as many of the Freeverse Games, is the best computer based Spades game I have ever played. If you haven't downloaded this game yet, I would say it is a must download, and a must buy. It's only \$19.95, and worth every penny of it. You'll swear that this isn't shareware, but a fine piece of commercial software.

Pros:

- Outstanding randomization engine
- Great adjustable computer play
- Good game tutor for those who need it!
- Network play
- Realistic and stunning graphical display

Cons:

- Needs a stronger online presence
- Could benefit from enhanced bidding options

Overall Rating

5 out of 5 Mice

The Mac Guild Newsletter

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