

CAMP

June 2004 Newsletter



The Capital Apple Macintosh Performa User Group will meet on
Wednesday June 9, 2004
at
7:00 pm. at Gardiner Area High School.



Jeff Frankel Will demonstrate iPhoto 4



*Meeting location: Gardiner Area High School
Room 204*



Office 2004 First Impressions—

It's The Little Things That Count

Jeffrey Frankel, CAMP Secretary

I'm sure all you Office aficionados have read about the new blockbuster features in the recently-released MS Office suite, Microsoft Office: mac 2004. New additions include such things as the audio-capable notebook layout for Word documents, a revamped scrapbook, a genuine page layout view for Excel documents, and a presenter notes layout for PowerPoint presentations. The crown jewel of the upgrade is the Entourage Project Center module, a hub of sorts for all the organizational and substantive components involved in any major, well, project that one may undertake.

I've taken a look at a few of these, but I'm even more impressed with the many small changes in this latest Office iteration. It's the little things that count, and attention to detail shows in the many incremental changes sprinkled throughout Office 2004. My first impressions follow.

Project Gallery

Not to be confused with Project Center, Project Gallery is the template launchpad for new documents that first debuted in MS Office for Macintosh 2001. The jazzed-up Project Gallery in Office 2004 not only creates new documents from templates, but also has tabbed windows named Recent (for opening your recent Office documents), Project Center (to open any projects you've got going), Customize (for setting Project Gallery preferences), and Learn. Of these, the Learn tab warrants special merit. The Learn window displays templates for complex documents: a brochure, flyer, letterhead, newsletter and report. Unlike ordinary templates, these templates include detailed how-to explanations of the various Office tools and techniques used to create them. I haven't looked at all the templates, but the one's I've opened offer an excellent gateway (Gates-way?) to the awesome versatility of this software.

[Tip: As in previous versions of Office, you can access the Project Gallery at any time via the command-shift-P keyboard shortcut.]

Word

When I looked through the Project Gallery templates I was surprise not to find any for calendars. I'd always envied the calendar wizard included with Windows versions of Office, and was hoping to see it here. The new Formatting Palette, however, picks up much of the slack, and then some.

Less Is More?

Successive versions of Office for Macintosh have accustomed us to expect more of everything (other than printed documentation). The Office 2004 installation CD (at least, the installation CD for the parent and student edition) actually offers less of a few things—specifically, clip art and office assistants. Office 2004 ships with only a small fraction of the clip art formerly bundled with the program, and only one office assistant—the venerable Max (i.e., little computer-head guy). I'm puzzled by the retreat, but I don't regard this as a deal-breaker. Microsoft offers a superb searchable free clip art library on the internet. (See accompanying article) And if you own an earlier version of Office for Mac, you can resurrect the missing assistants by copying the files to /Application/Microsoft Office 2004/Office/Assistants/, where they'll function as cheerfully (or obnoxiously) as they did in the past.

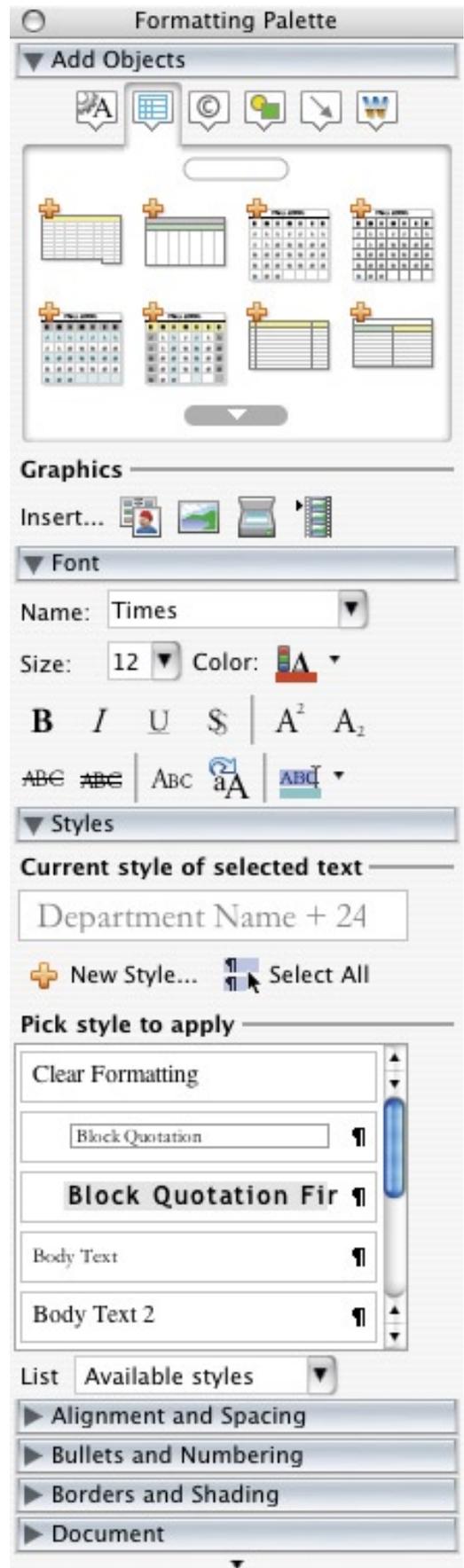


The Formatting Palette is a context-sensitive sidebar, first included in Office for Macintosh .vX, that consolidates in one place many of the nested dialog boxes ordinarily accessed from the menu bar and many of the shortcut buttons and dialog boxes ordinarily accessed from a toolbar. The new Formatting Palette (see illustration) packs considerably more punch than its predecessor. At top is a new Add Objects pane which allows you to instantly place your choice of 17 table/spreadsheet objects—including four styles of monthly calendar—at your insertion point. The calendar objects are easily resizeable and easily editable. (You can also insert AutoText, symbols, AutoShapes, lines and WordArt from the Add Objects pane.)

If you've ever found yourself pushing the old Formatting Palette around your screen to view your document text beneath it, you'll definitely appreciate the new timed transparency behavior of the new one. Click the Customize Formatting Palette... selection at the very bottom of the palette (not visible in the sidebar) to access a preference pane where you can specify the degree of transparency, the time before fading, and configure many other settings as well. If timed transparency is still too intrusive for your tastes, you can, alternatively, have Word minimize the Formatting Palette (i.e., shrink it onto the Dock) after the specified timeout period—and even designate the minimize effect to be used! The new palette also snaps to the side or bottom of my monitor, to the bottom or side of a toolbar, and to the bottom of the menu bar. The Formatting Palette also functions in Excel.

Word's new Compatibility Checker notifies you of document elements that may not display properly in earlier versions of Word. I discovered how this works when helping my wife edit a scientific paper she wrote that uses the “μ” symbol. It turns out that μ is a Unicode character that will not display properly in earlier versions of Word for Macintosh. Unicode support, I believe, is also new in Word 2004, which closes a feature gap in Word between the Windows and Mac versions. On this same note, Word *finally* autocorrects common fractions to display in typeset style (e.g., type “1/2” and you get ½), and automatically displays ordinal numbers in the same fashion (i.e., type “2nd” and you get 2nd). Word has done this for years in Windows—feature parity at last! Unfortunately, Word 2004 still does not allow the user to turn off the header and footer display in page layout view, a valuable aid for long document editing which the Windows version has had for years. On the plus side, Microsoft fixed a minor but annoying bug involving dates. In Word .vX, any default date and time format you specified in the Insert --> Date and Time... menu selection wouldn't “hold.” Now, it does. And I also like the new preference item that controls whether the paragraph mark (which contains all the formatting information) gets selected when the user selects a paragraph.

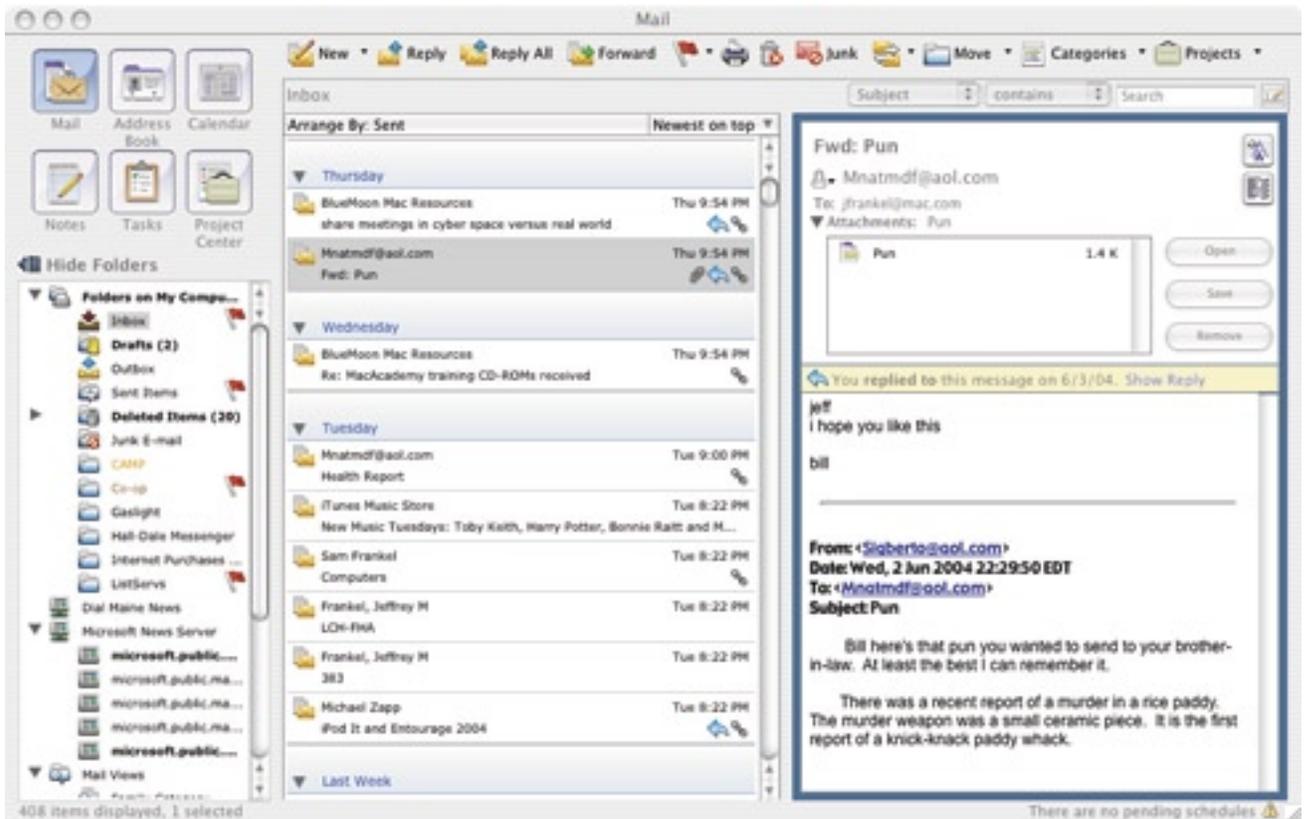
Microsoft has vastly improved the integration of its rich on line clip art gallery with the Macintosh operating system. If you download via Microsoft Internet Explorer, Office will offer to associate clip gallery



documents with the Clip Gallery application. The result is that downloaded clips will automatically launch Clip Gallery and display the clip on your screen for easy insertion into your document. Support is not as robust in Safari, which can only download clips to your desktop. But unlike my past experience, double-clicking a downloaded clip now does launch Clip Gallery and display the clip, which was something I always had to wrestle with previously. And finally, as in Word for Windows, clip gallery files can now be copied and pasted into non-Microsoft applications.

Entourage

I haven't had occasion to explore Project Center yet, but there's plenty to like in the new Entourage. First and foremost is the new vertically-oriented window configuration for news and email, which displays your folder list, message list and preview pane (i.e., message content) as three side-by-side columns. (See illustration) But don't worry...other configurations remain available. The vertically-oriented view also lends itself especially well



to threaded viewing of news messages. This requires the user to create a custom arrangement in the View --> Arrange By --> Edit Custom Arrangements... dialog box, but the results are worth it.

Entourage also offers to verify your setup of new email accounts. When you create a mail account in Entourage, the program will connect to the ISP and test your POP and SMTP mail settings. Nice touch.



New in Entourage 2004 is the ability to insert background graphics or in line pictures into email. (The Entourage welcome message provides a good example of how a background graphic displays.) However, Entourage does not let the user specify a default background graphic in the manner of specifying a default signature. I've overcome this shortcoming with a freeware Applescript for Entourage written by Paul Berkowitz called Message Template X (v1.1). When I want to send mail, I hit the command-control-N keyboard combination to create a new outgoing message with the background image, signature and any other standardized elements already in place. Microsoft Outlook for Windows has had this capability for years, and I'm glad that Entourage, with a little third-party help, has finally achieved parity. [Note: If you use any version of Entourage, Outlook Express or Eudora (or iTunes, or Safari, or inDesign, for that matter) there is a pile of extremely useful scripts available at scriptbuilders.net, which is a section of the macscripter.net web site.]

Be aware that if you embed a background graphic in your email, the message size (and upload/download time) will correspondingly increase. The background graphic I'm currently using appears to add about 20+k to the size of the email, depending upon message length. That's the rough equivalent of a small jpeg photo on the web.

Excel

I haven't used Excel 2004 much, but did take a look at the new page layout view. What a breath of fresh air!

Unlike Word documents, many spreadsheets are created with little regard for the printed page. Perhaps for this reason (or possibly, the converse), Excel never offered any really easy way of seeing how a workbook would look in print. Until now, the frequent result of hitting the Print button was many wasted sheets of paper that were impossible to assemble into anything presentable, much less intelligible. To avoid this nonsense I would call up Excel's page break view to see how bad the mangling would be, and would then either use the "squish to fit" print option if feasible, or else start readjusting column widths, playing with type size, etc.

The new page layout view ends all that agony. Just like Word's page layout view, the Excel counterpart displays a graphical representation of your page in the designated orientation (i.e., portrait or landscape), shows your content within the active margins, and shows all header and footer information. If your columns spill over into an adjoining page, it's an easy matter to narrow them to fit. Users of Excel XP (the current Windows product) will drool with envy.

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There's much more that I haven't explored myself. You'll find lists of major changes in the printed Getting Started booklet that ships with the CD, the New category in Project Gallery's Learn window, and in Help.

Office 2004 is an upgrade of outstanding fit and finish. If you spend a lot of time in Microsoft-land, I heartily recommend it.



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CAMP just purchased a four-disk MacAcademy set of training CD-ROMs covering Mac OS 10.3 (Panther). The four volumes include eight hours of content. Our past experience with MacAcademy products has been extremely positive, and we have high hopes for the new volumes. They will be available for loan beginning with the June meeting. We may also play portions of the CDs as meeting program material next school year. Here is the list of topics covered:

- Trouble-free installation techniques
- How to use and customize all menus
- How to take advantage of built-in help menus
- How to use and customize the time saving dock
- How to customize your screen with windows, modes, and views
- How to set your system preferences
- How to customize your internet access, views, and preferences
- How to organize your files to fit your needs and work routines
- How to customize your tool bar
- How to search and find files and information
- How to deal with printing and font issues
- How to correctly install OS X applications
- How to deal with OS 9 and Classic issues
- How to backup your computer and your files
- How to share files and deal with network issues
- How to set up security, protect your information and files
- How to use all of your OS X utilities
- How to quickly use all the new Panther features
- How to save time, money, and energy by learning your operating system features from A to Z

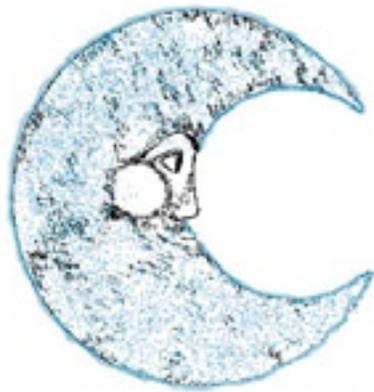
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Jeff Frankel

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