This file is a condensation of the text from Sampletype. To get started in a hurry, print it out and read it; it's a handy reference for when you're in the middle of something and don't want to open the Sampletype stack to dig out some obscure command I hid. If you have the chance though, read the Sampletype stack.

Hypertype

This is my first attempt at a text processor. I've loved word processors for the power they gave me over my words, but there's always been something missing about them. It's great to be able to keep four years of papers on a hard drive, but what's the point if they only exist as mirrors of printed versions, more easily edited but otherwise the same?

HyperCard was the natural environment for this experiment, a good place for prototyping. I hope now to take some of these ideas and make them into a stand- alone text processor with a bit more flexibility. That may be a while in coming, so I hope you enjoy this in the meantime. And send your shareware fees ($15) to me, the lost author, to help support continuing work.

Hypertext

Hypertext is just another way of presenting information. The author gives (more) control over how it gets read to the reader, allowing them to find their own paths through a jungle of information. If the links are designed intelligently, the reader shouldn't get lost, though they might have no idea of their precise location at any given moment. It's like reading an encyclopedia, jumping from entry to entry. The computer takes care of all pageflipping, allowing the reader to browse the offerings or move in for greater detail. Text is no longer only linear, as it is in books, for instance. Left-right down the page still works (right now), but turning the page is a whole new experience. The straight lines are only fragments.

Links are the real key to this project. Links are what makes hypertext different from ordinary text, taking advantage of the computer to jump between different, but usually related, ideas. This version of Hypertype only uses the simplest of links – any word for which there is a matching card is effectively a button, though users can of course put their own buttons in stacks. The backbranch key allows users to jump back through links; there are no real dead ends, though there may be a few blind alleys. The more thought given a stack, the more loose ends, the fewer dead ends. And there is no real end to a stack. There's definitely a beginning, but no end unless you're into creating one.

The card metaphor of HyperCard has made my hypertext into notecards linked by magic buttons of words. The structure of the stack is pretty simple. The physical order of cards means nothing – I'd hate to read one of these in strict sequence. Every card's name is the line name, a space, and then the number of that card within the line. This card, for instance, is "Structure 1". The headline of every card is just the card name, though on the first card, the "1" disappears. There's a "Base 1" card that's the foundation of the hypertext, so I wouldn't use Base as a line name, (and Help is also already used), but anything else should work. Backbranch just pops through the list

of jumps made, taking you back to the last jump you made. Nothing too complicated.

Creating

    Creating stacks with Hypertype should be fairly easy. Make a copy of the Hypertype stack, then open it. The first card is a control card that lets you get started. 'New line' sets up a line for you to use for whatever you like. Any time the name of that line appears in the body text of the stack (in this box, basically), it's a button, and clicking on it will bring the reader to the first card of the line. If the reader is already in that line, nothing will happen. Highlight the "Open Body" box to type whatever you like into this field, and hit "New Card" if you need more cards to explain this particular line of thought. I like one-card lines, preferring chopped-up fragments to long rambling, but whatever. Click on next card for more ways to build.

    The "Show Footnotes" button reveals another text field, one without hypertext. It's a good place to put stuff you don't consider real important (or academic citations, if you're doing something academic.) Unlock it with the "Lock Footnotes" button if you need to enter something.

    To get bold, italic, underline, or grouped text, just use Ctrl-B, Ctrl-I, Ctrl-U, or Ctrl-G. Ctrl-P or Ctrl-N returns you to plain text. I know Ctrl characters are nonstandard for this, but I don't want to cut out HyperCard commands either, and this seems to work. Try to leave bold italic to hypertext.

    The control card is the first card of the Hypertype stack, and usually the last of a finished stack. Originally I didn't think I'd need such a device, as the structure of the program is really quite simple, but then I realized more and more than I needed specialized functions for setting up a stack that really shouldn't clutter up the rest of the stack. Visual effects, a setting for field-type on the body cards, and export button, the ability to delete lines easily, and an author's name box all struck me as important functions that didn't belong on every card. To get to it, hit Command-M, for the message box, and type 'go to card id 2843'. That should work no matter where in the stack it may be hiding.

    When you're done writing, or just want to check out what you have so far, click "hypertextualize" on the control card. This should set all the hypertext to bold italic & grouped, so that names of lines containing multiple words will also work. Unfortunately it seems willing to accept only the first occurrence of a line name on a card for hypertextualization, a limitation I haven't yet been able to get around.

    "Export text to file" is handy, allowing you to dump all the text to a text file for use in another program. You lose all the links of course, but there are times when giving in to harsh reality is a necessity.

    When you're done, "Hide first card" moves the control card to the back of the stack and a line of your choice to the vaunted first card position. Command-4 or, if that doesn't work, "go to card id 2843" will get you back to the control card if you need it.

**   If you're paranoid about losing the menu bar, just hit Command-Space. It may cut off headlines a bit if you're working on a small screen Mac, but it's probably a lot more convenient for users with larger monitors to have the menu bar. If you always want to**

have the menu bar, remove the "hide menubar" command from the on openStack procedure of the stack script.

Limitations

This isn't quite the text processor I'd like it to be. It's slow (though I work on an SE, so of course it's slow). HyperCard is not always the friendly environment it would like to be (the find command needs a find next in field), but generally it works okay. My ideal is of course the unreachable Microsoft Word + links, but I suspect that's a ways off. And some of the hypertalk programming is spaghetti. Feel free to unmesh my

mixed up lines of code. I ain't perfect, and right now, if it works, I've settled. The next version is the one I'm thinking of, the one that might make this stuff really work. This design: well, it's a prototype, and there's nothing wrong with that. It just ain't perfect. So it's shareware.

Shareware

Okay, okay, I never paid shareware fees for a lot of the stuff I've used. I know it seems like a pain, and no one publishing shareware really expects to make a fortune doing it. But I hope this stack is exciting enough to make all of you potential authors pay the $15 fee. (People who are only readers of stacks created with this don't have to pay - if I did that, who'd want to ever use this?) Anyway, send all comments and checks to:

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No, I'm not on BITNET or INTERNET or any of that. I used to be, until they gave me that diploma. Nowadays, I work at Kinko's Copy in Ithaca, serving college students and random residents. Not a bad life, I guess, though I'll probably head out of here ASAP for grad school.   This program is ©1992 Simon St.Laurent. Feel free to distribute it, of course. I'll send updates of my forays into hypertext to anyone who sends the fees. Promise.