

Marco Polo 2.0.5



Where there is a need... there is Marco Polo.

If you utilize your Mac in an office or home office environment, you're probably managing a large volume of information; and you might even be spending great amounts of time looking for one specific sheet of paper. Henceforth, where there is a need...there is Marco Polo by Mainstay. The current version as of 11/93 is 2.0.5

Marco Polo is a deep archival, retrieval, and distribution application with a multitude of features: file compression, keyword search and strike capabilities, individual or work group use, password security, and a smooth intuitive interface among them.

Marco Polo offers an archive method that retains the familiarity of paper-based storage, yet goes *beyond* that. Marco Polo images documents from within any Macintosh application using the Marco Polo Document Creator Chooser resource. Thereafter they are stored in a Document Center (DC). The Chooser resource images any paper-based document using the built-in scanner interface. Also, you can attach the original format file to an image document, allowing instant access to the actual original file directly from within Marco Polo.

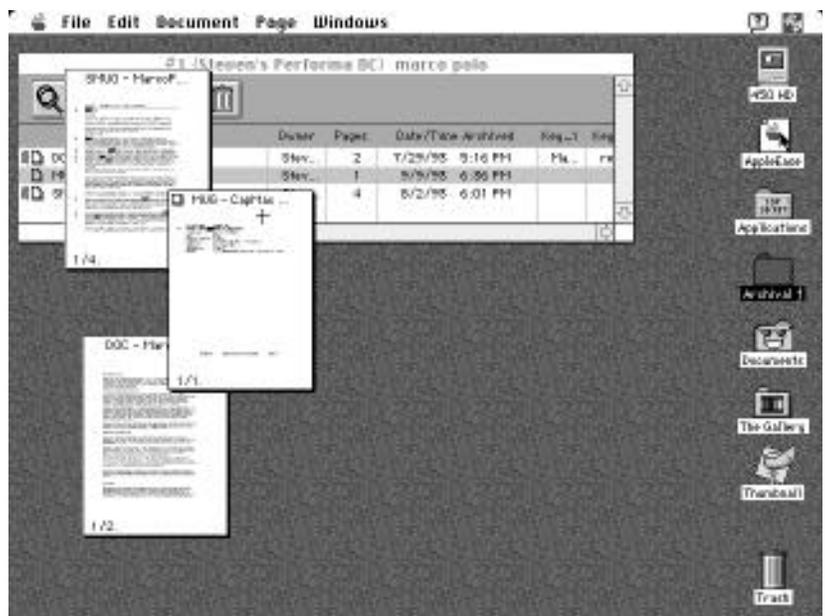
The specification of a folder for archive purposes—what Mainstay calls a drop folder—is a simpler method of archiving documents. This method utilizes the many automatic filters in Marco Polo to directly archive files without using the Document Creator. File formats that are directly archived by Marco Polo are PICT, TIFF (I could not get this one to work for me), EPS, text, MarkUp, MacPaint, and Glue. Marco Polo 2.0 also supports XTND translator files, allowing direct archive of files from applications that support the XTND translation scheme. For XTND translation, the appropriate filters and extensions must be installed in your System Folder. Files archived from a drop folder are deleted from the folder once they are in the document center.

Marco Polo 2.0 finds your information quickly and easily. Group and search your files based upon their titles, authors, date archived, six user-definable keywords (see Addendum), or the actual page contents! The application literally bolts through hundreds of pages to find that one name, address, or phone number you so desperately need. In addition, Mainstay provides its Marco Polo customers with an excellent 336-page manual that has detailed graphics, a demo walk-through, and some good either/or case situations—but I have a feeling that you won't need to refer to it that much, considering the fluidity and ease of use to be found in Marco Polo.

Scans processed through third-party OCR software (Apple or Twain-compliant), are also searchable for text within the document. Image documents with textual information, which are those imaged from within applications or processed using OCR soft-

ware, can be exported from Marco Polo as ASCII text files, accessible by almost any other Mac application.

All pertinent documents listed in your queries can be viewed, in miniature, from the desktop. The contents of any mini-page are the actual representation of your compressed (LZW-Huff) files...and can be sent directly to your printer without slow decompression or other wasted steps. This in itself is a great time-saver, as it allows you to view, say, Microsoft Word, Adobe Illustrator, ASCII text, and Pagemaker files in unison without



running multiple applications. Even better, any query can be more narrowly defined in an infinite number of Boolean subsets...especially useful if you have 50 files belonging to one client.

Marco Polo compresses and decompresses image documents on-the-fly during viewing. However, Mainstay has not positioned Marco Polo as a compression utility (Decompressed to DC file sizes did not compare favorably to results typically achieved with Stuffit Lite), so there is not much attention given to the amounts of compression achieved.

One plus, Marco Polo doesn't restrict the kinds of files it will archive, you can easily store EPS graphics (Clip Art DC), sound files (System Suitcase DC), postscript fonts (Fonts DC), and even view Quicktime movies.

Marco Polo can also work wonders in reducing time spent online reading material; with a flick of the mouse (many good shortcuts here), one can easily archive for offline reading the text in any open window. Or if you're like me, you never close any window... and can archive all your topics/conversations at the end of your

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Marco Polo (continued)

session by clicking on each window and selecting “Archive (Print...)” from the file menu.

Minor drawbacks as noted include confusion at launch about which DCs are to be opened when multiple Document Centers are present (this was more pronounced on the IICI). I could not get a mini-page displayed correctly for any TIFF file (see Addendum). In two instances I experienced data loss when I exported compressed documents back to the Documents folder in their native state (for example: “This file is not a PageMaker publication file.” 7009:20481). And, finally, the annoying fact that files trashed through the Marco Polo Interface are *completely* irretrievable even when running Unerase under Norton Utilities 1.1.2. You’re out of luck if you inadvertently trash a document or pick the wrong file—it’s gone for good! The logical workaround involves exporting to the desktop and trashing from the Finder. Hopefully Mainstay will address this non-retrievability issue in subsequent versions. Manual addition of large file blocks (let’s say 75) routinely yielded bus errors and bombs on both models, so when archiving data in this manner it is better to do so in small blocks.

Those small gripes aside, the people at Mainstay have deservedly earned my approval for a great software package that I have enjoyed using. The few flaws I experienced with version 2.0 seem minor when compared to its power, usability, and elegance. I whole-heartedly recommend it to those who might benefit from simplified organization in their style of work.

Addendum

In the short time that has elapsed since the release of 2.0, an updater has been made available—version 2.0.5. This version fixes one of my major gripes: TIFF files can now be archived via the drop folder without the need of an XTND translator. The ability to edit existing keywords directly was not present in 2.0, but is now. Additionally, hyphenated words can now be up to 29 characters in length. Scanner support has been improved with the addition of an Archive button to the scanning window (when using an Apple scanner only), and visual feedback during the processing of scans has been tweaked. Beyond those new features, minor bug fixes were acknowledged, and excellent Customer Support was provided in the way of an updater diskette delivered to the registered user on a timely basis. One really must commend Mainstay for making this updater as painless as possible; all I had to do was discard two items and drag/copy replace them. Marco Polo 2.0.5 works with existing 2.0 Document Centers, no need to remove any existing files!

by Steven Farmer

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Marco Polo updater 2.0.5 was tested on a Macintosh IICI and a Performa 450, both running under System 7.1

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List: \$395

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