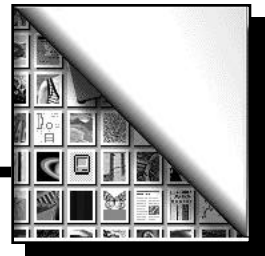# *Kudo Image Browser*

How to find a needle in a haystack

How many clip art files do you have? Scattered over how many disks? If you've got more than a few dozen files the job of finding just the one you need when you want it can be a pain. When your collection grows to several hundred files on floppies, SyQuests, and CD-ROMs you need professional help in the form of an image cataloging tool.

The idea is to have an application that can collect thumbnail views (mini-images) of all your graphics and catalog them into a graphics database. When you need an image, you can search this database looking through the thumbnails or searching for certain images with keywords. Two very popular image cataloging tools are Fetch and Kudo. Several months ago Fetch was demonstrated at one of our meetings by the developer. It was very impressive.

Kudo is the subject of this review. It is a similar product who's main focus is the easy cataloging and retrieval of graphic images. Kudo's claim to fame is its simplicity and clean interface.

Getting Started

Before you can catalog a group of images, you must create a catalog file in the usual Macintosh way with the New Catalog…menu command. Kudo prompts you for a name, creates the catalog and asks for the folder or disk to scan for images to put in the catalog. If you are running System 7 you can drag the folder you want cataloged onto the Kudo application icon, and Kudo will create a new catalog and scan the folder automatically. You can open more than one catalog file at a time, just as all real Macintosh applications should.

Updating a catalog or adding to it is done with the Add/Update… menu command. A dialog box prompts for a folder or disk to scan, just as in the initial catalog creation process. Modified images replace the old versions and new ones are added. Too bad you cannot just keep feeding in disks and let Kudo gobble them up; you must select a new scan target each time.

Catalogs need not be saved; in fact there is no Save menu command. Kudo behaves like many database applications by automatically saving changes as they are made. This is handy and avoids data loss.

Viewing, Searching, and Sorting

Now that you have a catalog, what can you do with it? It's easy to look at the images; the catalog view can be a matrix of thumbnail representations of the images (Gallery View) or a vertical list showing each image and the stored information about it (list View). For any image you can get a preview of the original file without opening (or even having) the application that created it. If you want to open the file, you must have the creating application; Kudo will reveal the actual location of the file so you can double click it to launch the creating application.
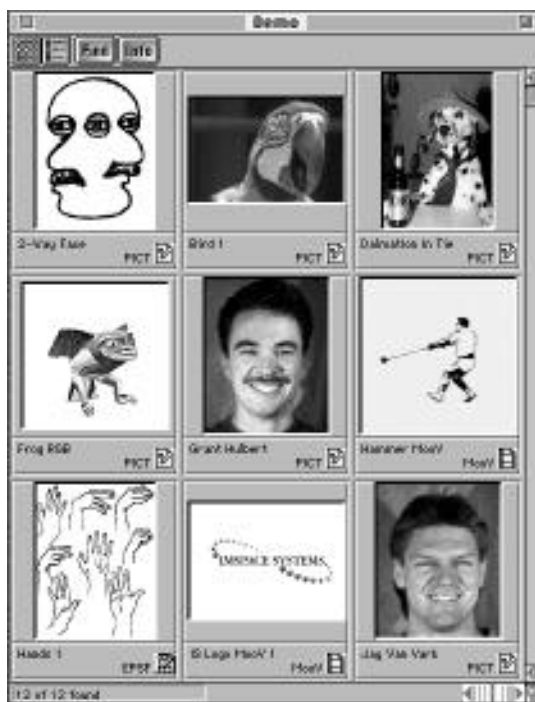
In most cases I would imagine that all your cataloged images will not be stored online. They may be on other SyQuest cartridges, CD-ROMs or floppy disks. If you attempt to preview or reveal an off-line image, Kudo will ask you to insert the proper disk (it asks for the disk by name) and try again. I wish Kudo would ask for the disk and then open the file without my having to insert the disk and reissue the preview command.

Kudo saves information about each image in the catalog. It knows the file name, file size, created and modified dates, storage location, file kind (PICT, Photoshop, etc.), and free form notes supplied by the user. These notes are important for finding images later when you need them. The idea is that you en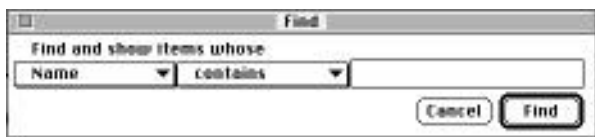ter key words for each image which can be searched for later. The "Info" command gives you a dialog box with this information, but it is frustrating that you cannot enter notes into this window. You must select the List View and enter data into the notes area in that view only.

The Find command allows you to search all of the information stored with the images. You enter the kind of information needed and Kudo searches, returning a catalog view of only those images matching your search criteria. But you cannot then create a sub search of the selected group. So after searching for all PICT files, you cannot then search for all file names containing the word "Bird," creating the result of all PICT files with "Bird" in the filename. I think Kudo needs stronger search options for such multiple criteria. There is also no way to save the results of a search for later use.

Sorting the catalog is similar to finding, in that the same criteria apply. You can choose to sort by any of the information stored. Just as with finding, you cannot do multiple sorts such as by type first and by name within types. And you can't save a sort result either.

Riffle

A feature unique to Kudo (as far as I know) is the Riffle option. This is a thumbwheel-like device in the bottom right-hand corner of the catalog display window that allows you to zoom through the images saved there. You can riffle forwards or backwards and change speeds from slow to so fast you can hardly tell what you're seeing. It's like fast forward or rewind on your VCR.

Getting Images Out

Loading up a catalog with images, sorting, and searching them is all very nice, but the real objective of Kudo, or any other image cataloging program, is to get the images you need into the application you need them in. At this task, Kudo excels; it supports three methods: traditional copy and paste, place, and drag and place.

Drag and place is the best. If you are running System 7 and have a Kudo Place Pack for your application (my copy came with packs for PageMaker and QuarkXPress), you can just drag the image thumbnail from the Kudo catalog window into the target application's window! It's that easy; the original file is placed. (Of course a big monitor helps too.) Imspace Systems claims to be working on Place Packs for other applications. I hope they make one for Kudo; surprisingly, you must copy and paste to move images from one Kudo catalog to another.

If you don't want to drag and place you can just use the Place menu command. Kudo lists any open applications supported by Pack Packs in the Place menu. Just select the thumbnail of the image you want and select the Place command; the target application will place the original file of the image.

Formats to Order

Support for many file formats is important as graphic images come in many forms. Kudo uses the Claris XTND system, a system of file translators first pushed by Apple, to handle the diversity. XTND files are supplied for **epsf, pict, tiff, gif,** Kodak Photo CD, Adobe Photoshop, QuickTime, and several other multi-platform formats.

File Size

Keeping all those thumbnails and information about each image takes some space. An empty catalog is a slim 24 bytes. Each image added requires 16K for its thumbnail so that a catalog with 100 images would require about 1.6MB of disk space. That can add up after a while, so judge your hard disk size needs with the number of image thumbnails you expect to have in your catalog or catalogs.

Other

If you'd like a hard copy of your catalog, the Print Catalog command will print thumbnails 9-up on letter size paper from the gallery view. Sometimes flipping through a notebook of thumbnails is even faster than using the computer!

For those who would like a non-graphic database of their images, Kudo will export all the information saved for each image into a text file suitable for importing to a database program such as FileMaker or 4th Dimension.

Technical Support

As I started this review I ran into a major problem. Kudo would not read EPS format files and catalog them! This was such a significant shortcoming that I could hardly believe it was true, so I called the publisher's toll-free technical support line. All the support personnel were busy so I had to leave a phone mail message with a short description of my problem. I figured I'd be lucky to hear back in a few days.

But it didn't take that long; it didn't even take an hour. The return call to me quickly found the problem—there's a bug in the XTND for EPS translation distributed by Claris with FileMaker Pro. The file is named EPSF and has a creation date of June 19, 1991. As Kudo comes with all its own XTNDs, I deleted the offending file (along with the XTND Translator List file in my Preferences folder), and all the EPS reading problems disappeared. None of this bothered FileMaker Pro, as it appears to use the Kudo supplied XTND without complaint.

Toll-free technical support is very rare these days; and even rarer is quick response from the usually overburdened toll-free staff. Imspace should be complimented.

Good Enough?

Kudo is a very good image cataloging application; but it's no match for Fetch. If you need a simple application with a clean interface and good features, Kudo will serve you well. At the price, Fetch is no match for Kudo.

by Bob Rockefeller
© 1993 The Savannah Macintosh Users Group

Kudo Image Browser
Imspace Systems Corporation
4747 Morena Blvd. Suite 360
San Diego, CA 92117
1-800-488-5836
1-619-272-4292 Fax
1-619-272-3420 BBS

System Requirements
Macintosh II and above, portables and SE/30
System 6.x (System 7.x recommended)
4MB RAM
2MB hard disk space
MacWarehouse Price: $99

Just before press time, we received a notice of Kudo Image Browser 1.1. The new version supports Drag and Place to Illustrator, Photoshop, Premiere, FreeHand, and Fractal Painter. Users can now create a self-executing catalog, catalog sizes can be larger, and keywords can be entered directly into the information box, as well as several other enhancements.