A client wants you to create a presentation of the
prototype software you're developing. You don't want
to use the actual software because of its instability, but
you want to showcasesome of the interface design and its
operating features. Static screen shots are an undesirable second choice. What can you do?
Faced with a similar situation, we turned to a nifty piece of software called CameraMan.
CameraMan allowed us to create in two days a 30-minute presentation using QuickTime
movies within a PowerPoint document. With our AV Macintosh, we then transferred the
presentation onto an SVHS tape, added a narration with technical notes and sent it to our
client 3,000 miles away.

Actually a set of three applications, CameraMan allows you to capture on-screen activity to a
QuickTime file as it happens on your screen. You can then edit the resulting movies and then
share them. CameraMan App allows you to configure the screen capture parameters and
control the screen capturing process. CameraMan Edit allows you to perform some
rudimentary editing of the captured QuickTime movie. MoviePlay allows others to view the
QuickTime movies you create.

Using CameraMan is very straightforward. If you've ever captured a screen using the
Macintosh shift-command-3 keystroke, then you can use CameraMan. Using CameraMan
App, you designate which key combination starts recording screen activity. While recording,
all mouse movements, dialog boxes, menu selections, and window activities are captured to
a QuickTime file. Besides being able to capture on-screen activities, you can capture a single
screen shot after a selected period of time. This is extremely valuable if you want to capture
the screen with a specific menu command highlighted from a pull-down menu—something
you can't do with the standard shift-command-3 keystroke.

Once you've stopped recording, you can open and edit the movie with CameraMan Edit.
With this program, you can perform basic editing functions such as cutting, shortening,
lengthening, or inserting selected movie segments. The interface is pure Macintosh, using
click-and-drag conventions and standard QuickTime movie controls. The powerful part of this
application, though, lies in its ability to let you add or edit the movie's soundtrack. In its
default setting, CameraMan automatically includes the sound of a mouse click in the movie
whenever you click the mouse while recording screen activity. You can add additional tracks
with narration, sound effects, or voice annotation.

Another feature provided by CameraMan is the ability to insert existing movies within the
movie being edited. Using this feature, you can sequence movies captured separately into a
single movie. This flexibility allows you to repurpose existing QuickTime movies rather than
having to recreate movie segments. You can also insert still images for use as titles or
transitions.

What if you want to capture activity on a portion of the screen only? CameraMan allows you
to do this, as well as adjust the frame capture rate, capture the screen in black and white or

in full color, and set playback parameters so the movie will recognize specific screen sizes.

The only drawbacks to CameraMan are the file sizes, which can become very large very quickly, and that movies can't be saved in MPEG or AVI formats. If you need to do a significant amount of editing or modification of the movies, you will probably want to use a more specialized program such as Adobe Premier. CameraMan's incompatibilities with other applications are listed in the release notes (significant applications include Deneba Canvas and Fractal Design Painter). A Power Macintosh-native version is due out later this year.

f you need to capture screen activity in QuickTime format for use within a presentation or for training, CameraMan is a great tool. Given its low cost, clean user interface, and potential utility, everyone working in multimedia development should consider adding this program to their toolbox. For the creation of computer-based training materials, we consider CameraMan a must-have tool.

pp002502@interramp.com

nBase Technologies, Inc. $40 US.
Requirements: System 7.1. Contact:
(714) 830-5691, www.onbasetech.com.

The War of the Browsers between Microsoft
and Netscape will have one certain effect: both
companies will be falling over each other to provide consumers with more and more powerful features. As the beneficiaries of this corporate battle, users can only hope that this evolution will include improvement of the built-in bookmark (or favorite) management tools to bring them up to even basic functionality. Until that day arrives, however, there is an increasing number of alternative solutions for anyone wishing to add a little order to his or her junk drawer full of URLs (uniform resource locators, a.k.a. Web address). One of the strongest URL organizers is OnBase Technology's DragNet.

DragNet combines powerful editing, searching, categorizing (and cross-categorizing)   and hot list functions. Its operation is hampered by its inadequate browser integration, but there are signs that this integration gap is closing.

Running as an external application, DragNet interacts with your browser not only to launch

sites but also to capture new ones. It also allows for easy manual entry of those web addresses you wrote on tissues and never actually visited and bookmarked. This is especially useful if you are having trouble getting to a busy site, but don't want to lose the address—currently no browser allows you to bookmark a site before you access it, or to type in the address by hand and then visit it later. It is also a fairly simple procedure to import your browser's bookmarks.

As DragNet's name implies, nearly all functions can be performed by dragging and dropping. Want to put an address in your hot list? Just grab it from the Address window and drop it on a button. Want to search for a duplicate address? Drag it to the search window. DragNet also allows dragging of hyperlinks (the embedded addresses in Web pages) and current URLs (the site your browser is looking at) from some browsers. Unfortunately, Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Explorer are not among them. These two browsers, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the browser market, allow dragging and dropping of hyperlinks, but they do not support DragNet's ability to drag current URLs.

DragNet is built around multiple windows, each with a different function and organizational structure. There is considerable overlap in what each of these windows does, and they are, to a large extent, redundant. This, however, is a plus—rather than being told how to use the program, you can decide which method best suits your taste and habits.

The Addresses window, in which all editing is done, is used most often. From this window you can enter a title for a site (upon which the item will be indexed), its URL, and a description of what you will find at the address. A drop-down menu is available to select a category for classification of the item. One of the truly useful features of this program is the ability to cross-categorize items; with the Category menu, you can assign as many classifications to an entry as you see fit. Also included in the Address window is a record of the date the address was recorded and the last time it was viewed. This comes in handy to weed out stale and unused entries. The only problem with the Address window is that it does not allow for easy scrolling—you can either move one item at a time, or go to the beginning or end of the index. If, for example, you want to update an address somewhere in the middle of your list, you have to click through many entries to get there.

The Directory window lists entries in a Finder-like hierarchical structure organized by category. It is through this window that categories are created and edited, and it is a simple matter to classify or cross-list addresses.

The Searcher window offers the easiest way to find an address. This window allows fairly complex and intelligent searches to quickly find a URL or all entries relating to a particular keyword. This is where DragNet really excels. No other program of its kind has such a powerful and accessible search function. Anyone who has bookmarks numbering in the triple digits will treasure DragNet for this feature.

The Hot List window gives you single-click access to your most frequently used addresses. This window offers ten customizable buttons, each of which can be set to a favorite address. In addition, you can assign six favorite categories to drop-down menus from which their contents are accessible.

The one thing that keeps DragNet from being a must-have utility is its inadequate browser integration. For example, to capture an address when the browser is in the foreground, you must switch to DragNet and click the Get URL button. One way to solve this problem is by downloading an extension available at OnBase's Web site which links Navigator's Make Bookmark command to DragNet so that activating it captures the bookmark in DragNet, not Navigator. It should be noted that, for some reason, this works with the menu command but

not on the keyboard equivalent (Command-D), so while it is an improvement, it is not ideal.

ragNet is a smooth, thoughtfully designed utility. Its few problems are minor and don't outweigh its usefulness and flexibility. We hope future versions will increase its cooperation with Web browsers, but for now, DragNet is among the best bookmark utilities.

gak@spots.ab.ca