

Gecko

A Newton Magazine

November 1997

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Newton Evangelist Items



Tips, Wish list items and more!



Submissions? Gecko Awards..

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What Newton Inc. Can do....



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Don't Forget to read **THE PUBLISHERS PAGE**



Made With A Mac

....Brain Organised by Newton

Publishers Page

Well, Here we are in a new issue. If you are reading this in living color, you are aware that I have published this issue in Adobe Acrobat format. The reason may be less clear though, so here goes.

I have been toying with this for quite some time. I originally published Gecko in DocMaker Format. For those of you unfamiliar with this, it is a stand alone product made for the Macintosh. The beauty of it is that you do not need to have a reader program (as does Acrobat) and that it is somewhat Hyper Card like. In other words, you can skip from page to page. The minus was that it is rather top heavy. The code required to run is built into the document and therefore is in actuality downloaded each time to go somewhere to get it. Another big minus was that it was unusable for Windows users.

Acrobat has a few good points and that is why this issue is in this format. First of all, After you download the reader, it can be read by almost anyone on the planet. Readers are available for Windows, Mac, Unix and OS2. Just about covers everyone. For the Newton...The book version is available.

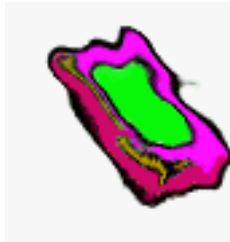
Another reason is that the magazine is somewhat large for a "web" magazine. You must wait a lot and a fair amount may go unread due to lack of time, etc. This way you have the entire file and can read it at your leisure. Save them for further reading or even pass them along to your co-workers.

Well, I hope you will enjoy the issue. As always, your comments and suggestions are most welcome.

Just send them along to: geraldfox@aol.com



Catamount *software*



Home Inventory Version 1.0

Reviewed by Steve Cagigas (steve_cagigas@bigfoot.com)

In the Home Inventory user manual, Hardy Macia says, "After waiting almost 4 years for a Newton based home inventory program to be released by someone, I decided it was finally time I wrote one." Well, everyone should be glad that Hardy did. I created a home inventory a few years back, when I first bought renters' insurance. It was painful and time consuming to traipse around my home, scribbling information in a notebook, then transferring it to a desktop database. In fact, it was such a pain that it's been a good five years since the last time it was updated.

If you've ever made a claim against your property insurance, you know how important a thorough home inventory is. A Newton is the ideal tool for compiling a home inventory -- it combines the data gathering and data entry tasks, and thanks to Home Inventory's intelligent user interface, considerably improves the speed and accuracy of data entry. Home Inventory's primary screen identifies the item name and serial number, and includes three tabs -- Basic, Extras, and Notes -- to keep information organized. The Basic tab contains information such as item location, condition, and value; Extras allows you to identify the insurance policy covering the item and other less commonly accessed info; and Notes provides (you guessed it) a free area for special notes or sketches. Overall, Home Inventory provides twenty-three fields to document virtually anything about any item. Most of the fields have editable pop-ups associated with them, so fields can be customized as one pleases.

Catamount provides Home Inventory desktop connectivity via the Revelar Connection Utilities (RCU), and includes the RCU template file in the Home Inventory distribution archive. I have to say that, despite initial misgivings, I really like this approach. By employing RCU to interface with the desktop, Catamount has provided a standardized interface, rather than waste time and effort creating their own special, custom desktop software to interface to the Newton (a la Sine of the Times' BluePort or Catamount's WildCat applets).

I normally include any product peeves here, but I really couldn't find any in Home Inventory. With Home Inventory, Catamount has found a niche, and filled it with yet another great product.

Pros:

* Desktop connectivity via RCU.

- * Clean user interface simplifies data entry.
- * User customization is supported, and very simple.
- * Very nice on-line documentation.
- * Enhanced NOS2.1 keyboard support.

Cons:

- * I still have to climb under the desk and behind the entertainment center to get serial numbers...

The Bottom Line: Four-and-a-half geckos out of Five
It's from Catamount Software. 'Nuff said.

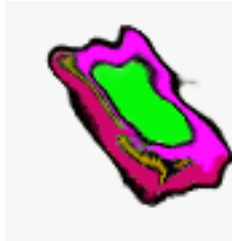
Product Information

Home Inventory Version 1.0
Home Inventory Management Application
Commercial, 50.00 US\$
(Trial version available online)
Published by: Catamount Software
e-mail: info@catamount.com
www.catamount.com
(802) 372-9512

ROADRUNNER TRACKS

ALWAYS ONE STEP AHEAD!

THE WEDGE



The Wedge

Reviewed by: Stuart Ungar (Haikustu@aol.com)

Gecko Rating 4.0

Type: accessory

Purpose: to hold that precious newton on your desk

One of the best things about the Newton Message Pad is that so many people and small companies have taken up the task of developing products for the platform. Roadrunner Tracks is one such company. Having devoted users coming up with solutions offers a unique high-level of commitment and support to users. I found this to be especially true with Roadrunner tracks.

Janet Dalton Honeck and her husband Mellow founded the company. Their first product was the popular Barrier Newton screen protector. The Wedge continues their tradition of simple quality solutions to basic Newton user needs.



The Wedge is a simple modern stand. It is available in either clear or black and is amazingly sturdy. The stand is similar to stands you would see in book stores that hold up featured selections. What makes this stand different, and especially useful for Newton users, is it holds the unit at the proper angle, has non-skid "feet" adhered to the bottom to hold it steady, and has two holes drilled on the left and right top sides so southpaws are comfortable placing their pens in the stand too.

The one minor problem I had with my stand is one of the rubber feet was placed just a little higher than the one to its side. This made the stand rock a bit like a chair with one short leg. When I made them aware of this, Janet said she never heard of this happening and would seek a solution for me. She promptly got back to me

with information to fix it. All through dealing with the company, they have been quick, responsive, and have maintained a good sense of humor.

The Wedge is a welcome addition to my Newton arsenal. The Newton charging station I have is great for charging the batteries, but not for viewing the unit while I'm seated. The stand works especially well with the Newton keyboard.

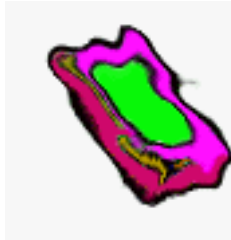
Pros: Sturdy well-thoughtout product. Small friendly company. Reasonable price (\$19.95) and two color choices.

Cons: Mine wobbled a bit. Would be nice if there was a way to elevate the unit in landscape mode.

Available from: Selected dealers listed on their web site:
www.roadrunnertracks.com



True North Software



Out of Pocket

1.5.7

Review by: Gerald Fox (Geraldfox@aol.com)

Out of pocket is, as the name suggests, an expense account manager. If you need to keep track of spending and such on a trip, this program fills the bill.

True North (<http://www.northisup.com>) sent this program to me several months ago and while I had planned to review it at that time, I decided to hold off until a recent business trip to give it a more full and complete workout.

The program sports a very clean and easy to access interface. Launching the program places a neat looking ledger book on your screen with four buttons for entering expenses. Pressing the "travel" button allows the user to enter an expense covering several possible scenarios such as airfare, Car rental, lodging, taxi and several others. Not covered in the pop up list? There is also an untitled selection in the pop up as well. To complete the entry, simply fill in the amount, and other information and you are soon finished. The pop up lists really cover a wide variety of options and the information you are asked for will depend on which you choose. For example, Selecting "Airline" will ask you for the Airlines' name while choosing Limosine will ask you for the company name and the destination.

Travel by Steam Locomotive often and want a new type of expense listed? No Problem! You can add items (and remove them) by going to the preferences area. Although all of the options for doing this customisation are not always completely obvious, and it did take me some time to figure out how to print for example, I suspect reading the documentation would be time well spent.\

I have rambled on quite a bit about this but it should suffice to say that filling in one of these slips is intuitive and at the same time simple. One very nice feature is the small Dollar sign NotePad button. I have Backdrop Plus as my backdrop application and it places a nice and unobtrusive dollar sign icon there. Tapping on it allows me to enter an expense without actually launching Out of Pocket. A Neat and time saving touch!

The other three buttons that can be accessed are Meals, Auto, and Misc. The last includes 12 items ranging from Fax to Tolls.

To get on with my story, I found it a very useful item during the one month I was travelling. I entered several items a day and Out of Pocket handled it quickly and easily producing a nice day to day record as well as summary of expenses. With this in hand, dealing with the front office of the University I work for was infinitely simpler.

Bottom line is that this is a very well designed program that will save you a lot of time and effort on your next trip. It may not save you having to lug around all those receipts, but it will make getting reimbursed a much less emotionally trying experience. If you are travelling, buy it!

Gecko Rating: 4

Pros: Clean well designed interface. Easy and not intrusive to use.

Cons: Some options are not easily noticable but that may be nit-picking.

<http://www.northisup.com/html/home.html>

General Feedback

feedback@northisup.com

Sales

sales@northisup.com

Custom Development Inquiries

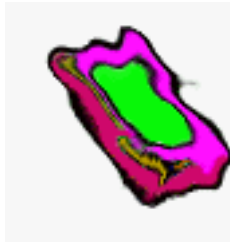
custom@northisup.com



Is it? Maybe!

One thing for sure, It IS well designed and easy to use. Although there are other options, this is a program that will not dissappoint you!

G. Fox



The Luna II

Review by Stuart Ungar (Haikustu@aol.com)

Newton solar charging station from KISS Solar System
Gecko Rating: 5

It's first thing in the morning, the sun just came out a couple hours ago and is rising in the sky. That is good news for my Newton. Yes, you heard me right.

I am using a Luna solar panel from Keep it Simple Systems to juice up my PDA. I have had great success using the panel to trickle charge the rechargeable batteries in my Message Pad. I must admit that in addition to being a Newton addict I am an alternative energy freak. And, with the Newton being such a power miser, using this device with the Message Pad is a marriage made in heaven.

There really isn't much to the Luna II. But simplicity is part of its beauty. The panel itself is about four inches square. The people at KISS have designed a minimal, attractive carrying case for it that doubles as an adjustable stand for the panel. Thorough instructions are included on how to angle the unit to get maximum sunlight.



I found that even during overcast days the panel recharged the batteries when the unit was off. In fact, during the last couple of months using the Luna II I have only used my Apple Charging Station once (For a trip to New York City when I forgot to plug in the panel the day before).

When you order the solar panel it comes with the case, a six foot cord (so you can catch that breeze in the shade while the panel does its job in direct sun),

a suction cup to attach it to a nearby window (home, car, or plane), and thorough literature which includes the instructions and information on their other products (like their Powerbook panels).

Using the Luna II takes a little getting used to at first. It is important to have the panel at the proper angle to get the most power and I found myself buying more suction cups so I could secure it to my window with two and not be worried about it crashing down if my cat decides the cord is fun to play with.

The Luna II is available for \$99.00. The Luna II is also available from several retail catalog outlets. I have seen it advertised for \$89.95 by MacConnection 1-800-800-2222 (www.macconnection.com).

I am an unabashed supporter of solar power as a viable energy source. The products from KISS seem to be a fantastic first step in acceptance of solar energy.

So, what are you waiting for? You bought that Newton to keep you organized, keep you mobile, and lets face it, it's just damn cool. Come on, pucker up and contact KISS.

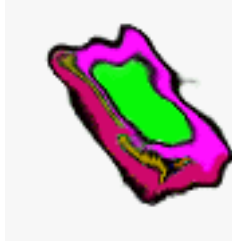
Pros: Good for the environment and amazingly cool.

Cons: It would be nice to have the option of buying different size cords for the unit. They should throw in a couple more suction cups for proper fastening and in case you lose one.

KISS - Keep It Simple Systems
<http://wildwestweb.com>

Keep It Simple Systems
32 S. Ewing, Suite #330
Helena, MT USA 59601
US & Canadian Sales: 800-327-6882
Tele: (406) 442-3434
Fax: (406) 457-0460

e-mail: SolarInfo@wildwestweb.com



MessagePad 2000 Pen

One of the first things owners of MessagePad 2000 units will notice is the vastly improved pen that ships with it. Apple has done a much better job of actually making something that feels like a pen instead of a much too short piece of plastic.

Those of you who desire a more realistic pen like feel though will certainly be interested in these quite affordable pen replacements from PDA Panache.

The Pen the people at PDA Panache sent me is a sleek black with silver band. It has a very durable high quality pen point. The pen point is guaranteed forever and will be cheerfully replaced if it ever wears out or such. I have used pens from this company for more than two years and have yet to have even the smallest problem with them.



The reason for using one of these is twofold:

First of all, they look much nicer than the Apple offering. Secondly, the feel is much better.

What I mean by this is that the weight and balance are very nearly perfect. It is the

difference between using a "bic stick" and a fine pen from Cross or Shaeffer. Well, you get the idea.

The Pen fits securely in the normal MessagePad holder just like Apples and pops out with a click just as Apples.

Basically, I love this Pan just as I have loved the one I used on my 130. No Matter which MessagePad you own, they have a great pen replacement for you.

Pros: Great Feel, Sleek Look!

Cons: a bit pricy.

Gecko Rating 4.5

\$32.95

1-800-270-7196

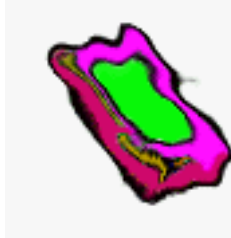
Order 24-Hours a Day

International Calls Use: 1-516-467-4042

FAX: 1-516-467-6329

E-Mail: Panache@li.net

<https://www.pdapanache.com/pdaorder.html>



Sound Off Review

Review by: Gerald Fox (geraldfox@aol.com)

Sound Off is a neat little item that makes your Newton a lot more personable. If you are a Mac User, you may remember a little program called Sound Master. What that did was link actions to sounds. In other words, you could set the program to make a Star Trek door opening sound that would play when you opened a file or launched a program. While this program is not capable of managing quite the range of choices the desktop program could, it does allow for about as much flexibility as is possible on the Newton.

What it will let you change are the following sounds:

- System Alert
- System Alarm
- Sleep
- Wake
- Wake Up Screen
- Validate Pim
- Send Beam
- Engage Beam Receiving
- Found Items
- Send Beam
- Engage Beam Receiving
- Receiving Beam
- Cancel Beam
- Sent Fax
- Accepting Fax
- Received Fax
- Open Calls
- Auto Dock Backup

and several more related to faxes, beaming and such.

With the basic choices built into your Message Pad, this would seem kind of boring to say the least but with another reviewed item (Sound Icon Maker) creating new Newton sounds is as easy as drag and drop. If you don't have that program, no problem! Deep focus has several sound collections on it's web site for you to choose from. I have a virtual Data (Star Trek TNG) on mine saying things like "Artificial dream state will now commence" when I turn it off. You can download my

“Data” collection from the Gecko web site.

After installing the program, you have but to launch it and select the sounds from pop up lists next to each action. Sound off will bring up a listing of the built in sounds along with whatever you have installed. One note. I found many of the sound icons I created went to the unfiled folder. This is messy and they do not need to be there. If that happens to you, move them to the Extensions folder.

I like the program and must admit that Deep Focus did a nice job of putting it together. I still would like to see a few more basic options included such as

- Launch a Program
 - Open the Extras Box
 - Trash
 - Rotate Screen
 - Restart
 - Change Store
- and whatever else !

To be fair, some of these items according to Deep Focus were devilishly difficult to access. But hope still springs eternal. Keep at it!

Pros: This is about as good as it gets for customization on the Newt!

Cons: Several basic functions not yet supported

Bottom Line: If you want to hear your Newton or Emate sound as cool as they look, this is a must see item. Download it from the Deep Focus web page today!

Gecko Rating: 4 for Cool!

Deep Focus Designs

Single license registration cost is US\$30.

Site license registration cost is US\$300. (1 mile radius)

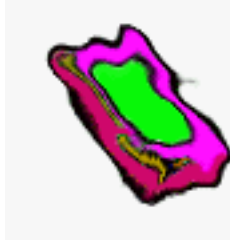
A) World Wide Web at: <<http://order.kagi.com/?6M>>

B) WWW Secure (SSL) Connection: <<http://order.kagi.com/?6M&S>>

C) Other payment options

<<http://www.deepfocus.com/newton/HowToPay.shtml>>

<http://www.deepfocus.com>



Sound Icon Maker

Review by: Gerald Fox (geraldfox@aol.com)

Let me begin by saying that this is a rare review as it does not itself run on a Newton MessagePad. It is a Macintosh program that will allow the user to create Newton Sound packages that can then be loaded and accessed by the Newton MessagePad/Emate.

What this program does is translate System 7 sound files and AIFF sound files. Using this program is simplicity itself. Simply drag one of the above files onto the SoundIcon Maker icon and it will automatically be translated into a Newton Package and placed in the same folder the original item was in. Have several sounds you want changed? No Problem! Simply select all the icons and drag the bunch at once to the Sound Icon Maker Icon and they will all be translated in a matter of seconds. Drag and drop ease.

There are a few rules. For example, sounds must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Uncompressed sound samples
- 2) Monophonic (single channel)
- 3) 8 or 16 bit.
- 4) Standard sampling rates of 8000Hz, 8012Hz, 10800Hz, 11025Hz, 11127Hz, 21600Hz, 22050Hz, 22254Hz, or 44100Hz.

Ok No mumbo Jumbo. Easiest is to just drag stuff to the icon and see if it works. I had a few that sounded kind of odd after translation but just scrubbed them out. (deleted them in Newton-ese)

You can download a working version from the Deep Focus web site and while it is fully functional, larger sounds will require that you register it. Thus creating that Borg Phaser blast sound will work on an unregistered copy, the longer "This unit has functioned well in spite of Human interference" spoken by Data will not unless

you pay for the program.

Pros: Easy to use. Simple.

Cons: Nit picking . . More sound formats supported.

Bottom Line: If you want to create your own set of sounds. This cannot be beat!

Gecko Rating: 4.5

From Deep Focus Designs

Single license registration cost is US\$30.

Site license registration cost is US\$300. (1 mile radius)

A) World Wide Web at: <<http://order.kagi.com/?6M>>

B) WWW Secure (SSL) Connection: <<http://order.kagi.com/?6M&S>>

C) Other payment options

<<http://www.deepfocus.com/newton/HowToPay.shtml>>

My Two Cents

by Mike Williams (indymike@indy.net)



Newton Inc. R.I.P.

Steve Jobs is temporarily but firmly in control of Apple as this is being written. An independent Newton Inc. lasted from July 2 until September 19, 1997. But why do we care? This column is about the Newton after all, not the company, isn't it?

The answer to that question lies buried deep within the corporate paperwork which granted Newton Inc. its "independence" from Apple. I can only surmise that Newton Inc. was very much like Claris Corporation -- independent, yet never far from the Apple family tree. This is not necessarily bad, but we have been down this road before, awaiting a Claris IPO that never quite materialized. Whoever ultimately takes charge of Apple, whether by anointment, appointment, or appropriating the power, will still have a major effect on the Newton platform.

In light of these recent developments we'll move on to other issues and speculations. The number question in my mind now is will the Newton survive? To that I would answer a hardy yes. Apple desperately needs profits right now and hope for the future. Newton provides both. With the Microsoft deal announced at MacWorld, the war between Windows and Macintosh is officially at an end. A period of operating system detente is at hand.

If the computer for the "rest of us" is quite possibly no longer the Mac as we knew it what will Apple do? Since ascending to the head of the company Steve Jobs has consistently spoken of leveraging Apple's strengths in markets where they remain strong, i.e., education, desktop publishing and web content creation. Where does Newton fit in? In the form of the eMate, and its speculative cousin the bMate, Newton may become the computer for the rest of us. With high end laptops consistently hovering around the \$3,500.00 price point how many schools, small businesses or non-profit institutions can afford to equip their students and middle managers with such devices? Yet in this age of information management how can they afford not to provide these same people with tools to write reports and tap into the larger information network via an intranet or the Internet at large? A sub-1,000.00 dollar machine with a reasonably sized keyboard, enough memory, and easy connectability to a network or mothership desktop computer would seem to fill the bill nicely. A bMate marketed against a Win CE unit comes out looking like a serious competitor for getting real work done instead of an organizer on steroids.

What about the MP2000 and its descendants? Vertical markets which do not

require extensive typed input seem logical choices for this ultra-portable device. Health care and field automation could be the targeted vertical markets of choice. Simple data collection and check-the-box type forms are ideal for non-keyboard users. As a simple presentation tool the MP2000 is only now receiving the necessary video out PC-Card and software tools. Just imagine an entire hospital equipped with Newtons instead of paper charts, or your local utility's meter readers with Newtons, or just hooking up your Newton for a canned presentation.

The Net Computer must also surely figure into Apple's plans. By all accounts Macintosh System 8 is great, but at somewhere between 80 and 120 megabytes just for the operating system it is hardly a contender for a small ROM based OS. But how can the message of all this potential get out without adequate advertising and marketing support? It cannot. Fortunately Apple has retained the same agency that produced its legendary 1984 Superbowl television commercial. Steve Jobs is nothing if not an innovative marketer. Both Newton and Apple need innovating marketing to survive. Newton's chances are far better at this point from within Apple, than Apple's chances were without Newton. Newton Inc. Rest In Peace.

Northern Lights

By Bobby Zamarron (bzamarron@juno.com)



The Vacation...The Continuing Saga

It's really been a great summer up North. We've had a few rainy days in Alaska but nothing too severe. Let me just say that the great days outweigh the few rainy ones. My family and I have been preparing for a "Lower 48" vacation for a few months now and, of course, with the requisite "To Do" list which keeps growing and growing every time we take a breath, my trusty Newton is there to save the day!

I'm still using the old 110 but what a handy, determined little machine it is. Item after item is being added and my Newton keeps chugging along asking for more. To keep things interesting, we thought inviting some friends from Japan to stay with us would be perverse but fun--so we did and it was. And there was my Newton happily storing every bit of information I could key in. From "must have" items to "don't forget" ones, my Newton kept my brain organized. Then, some appointments came up and those had to be added, too. No sweat. Maybe it was because I was using it so much, but along the way, I had to recharge my X-Pack battery. Whew! Okay, let's see, gearing up for our vacation, friends from Japan (with two kids--one 5, the other 18 months) living with us, appointment after appointment, family calling to let us know how close it was to the day we arrived (God bless them)--oh, I almost forgot--we also volunteered to watch the smallest dog in the history of earth who within 10 minutes of arrival to our backyard escaped!

We spent two days searching our neighborhood in Anchorage (btw: no, I did not enter "Find world's smallest dog" as a "To Do" item in my Newton). We knew with all this, our long awaited vacation to the "Lower 48" would be much appreciated and enjoyed.

With proper respect to my 110, I thank it, my wife thanks it, and my daughter thanks it! So, of course, the first AND last item entered in my Newton is "Take Newton!"

Newton Talk

By Mike Manzano <lynx@poboxes.com>



Visually Speaking

There is nothing more useful than a blank sheet of paper when trying to communicate a new concept to another person. It's amazing how a bunch of squiggles and lines can convey much more than thirty minutes of spoken word.

Humans are visual creatures. Given three pictures of animals versus three words naming those animals, anyone will be able to pick out the chicken faster from the set of pictures than from the words. Images are Good. It's amazing, then, to think that the Newton's sketching abilities weren't design better. I think in the battle to create excellent text recognition, the graphics got left behind.

My MessagePad 2000 is my second Newton. The one I had before this one was an old Original MessagePad. I can definitely say, when contrasting the two operating systems, that text processing has greatly improved. However, drawing images and figures didn't seem to get changed much at all, if any. Drawing quick sketches is fine, but when using the shape recognition mode, it's a pain. Editing existing images is close to impossible. Unfortunately, it is the shape recognition mode that could really show off the power of the Newton. Imagine not just scribbling a picture, but instead drawing a perfect diagram without any more effort than scribbling it. Newton, Inc., listen closely - here's what you need to do to make the Newton really shine:

(1) Get rid of the notion that text necessarily flows parallel to the top of the screen. You've already let me rotate the screen, now let me rotate a block of text to any arbitrary angle. In fact, let me rotate anything I draw as well.

(2) People like to point at things. Give me an easy way to draw nice-looking arrows, pointers, text call-outs, etc. That alone would make diagramming a breeze.

(3) When I'm drawing something, I draw an element, label it with some text, then

draw another element, and label it with more text. I repeat until finished. Having to use that little button to switch recognizers slows me down a great deal. In the original MessagePad, you could have both recognizers active at once. This feature was removed to increase recognition accuracy. Fine. No problem with that. But let me switch recognizers without having to relocate my pen.

(4) Sometimes using a metaphor to describe software creates a paradigm rut in which the software needlessly exhibits the characteristics of its real-world counterpart. The notepad is a prime example. The notepad is not paper. There's no need for to be as static as paper. Let me take a drawn object, a group of words, a group of objects, or whatever I want, and link it to another name, note, or date. Imagine having a diagram of a car, where you can click on a wheel, and it takes you to another note that describes that wheel. Or, imagine writing a term paper in Works, and linking blocks of text to notes in the notepad. Instant annotation without needlessly building in an explicit "annotation" feature.

(5) Adding a grayscale screen to the MP2000 was arguable a pretty good idea. However, Apple stopped short and didn't do anything with it. I have one word for them: anti-alias. At this point I think I'd pay \$50 for a friggin' anti-aliased font, not to mention anti-aliased lines and curves.

Now, of course, it doesn't have to be Apple that does this. In fact, it's probably something a third party could do. I believe, however, that this functionality should be built into every MessagePad out there.

Apple should set one of its goals to be to find ways of integrating the MessagePad into every-day tasks. The Newton shouldn't just replace the method in which we do things, it should help to do them better. But that can't start to happen until the tools are at least as good as what we have now.

lynx@poboxes.com
(<http://www.bisc.com/lynx>)

The Big Picture

By: smcgirr@concentric.net (Shawn McGirr)



Perception and Reality

Apple came out with it's "big" media blitz a few weeks ago by advertising Steve Job's animated cartoon, "Toy Story." Two ads appeared over roughly a two hour span. Apple advertising appeared to be back.

One of the things I've noticed over the years as a substitute teacher is that perception is more important than reality. This doesn't mean that I'm endorsing a hypocritical moral lifestyle, simply making an observation on human character. As a sub, the number of calls I receive is generally based on how well a job I do. If I do a whole lot of yelling and ship a few of the known miscreants to the assistant principal's office, I gain a reputation as "tough" sub. If I let the kids walk all over me, I'm known as the "easy" sub and the teacher's won't request me or at least nail down everything that is usually left loose in a classroom. If I ship a kid who is a known deviant and who begins to push my buttons early in the hour, the class tends to straighten up and follow directions. They don't necessarily know that I'll ship anyone else, but they don't know that I won't either. I've gained the perception that I'm going to bust the next kid for breathing wrong.

So what's this got to do with Apple? Perception is more important than reality. No one knows if I'm a tough sub or not. I can choose to manipulate that perception through my interactions with the students. Likewise, Apple doesn't need a few intellectual commercials. It needs something that is small, but effective and is everywhere. A small Apple logo on the baseboards around NHL hockey rinks. Nothing else. Just the logo. Key advertising boards in the seven large markets with the logo. Just the logo. Small bits of advertising on sports programs. Stuff like that. It doesn't have to be big, just everywhere.

There have been other companies with perception problems. Remember Sears a number of years ago? Big scandal with Sears' automotive department and their catalog sales were slipping in a big way. Sears made a big public apology for their automotive department and then spent a large chunk of time and cash changing the public's perception. They changed their slogan and targeted a key market of shoppers. Now when you hear the Sears jingle, it's not about Craftsman tools necessarily or riding lawn mowers. It's about their "softer" side and the products that aren't associated with any scandal in the automotive department.

My whole point in summation, I guess, is that it isn't impossible to change perception, even if it differs from reality, but it takes a constant effort and a consistent effort. I'm looking forward to seeing more of Apple's advertising in the future. I hope.

Me and My eMate

By: smcgirr@concentric.net (Shawn McGirr)



Back in the Trenches

This is the continuing saga of Me and My eMate. Our six week mission: To explore new facets of the eMate, to boldly go where no substitute teacher and eMate have gone before . . . !

I'm looking forward to the upcoming six weeks. I will be pulling a long term subbing assignment in a real classroom and be recording real grades. I haven't had the opportunity as yet with my eMate to fiddle with a grade program (lack of test subjects, you might say.) I plan on putting the eMate through some paces and see how well it performs in a middle school environment.

I've had a chance to put the drawing program to good use lately. Lesson plans can be a tricky thing to put together. When I was working on my first teaching certificate, I was given a handy lesson plan form to work from. This made planning a lot easier. I knew what the teacher expected and the teacher could easily find parts of the lesson because it was organized a certain way on the planning sheet. Alas, I begin work on my next certificate and I'm going to school at a university that doesn't have/use planning sheets. Stuff is all over. Teachers search for stuff and students worry that they'll find it. Why not use the handy form?

I used Claris works to create my first copy of the form and it came out nicely. Because I'm on the go all the time, I can't sit down at my Mac and just crank out a lesson plan on my prepared Lesson Plan stationary. Hence, I need my eMate. I need to be able to crank out a lesson plan on the same stationary as what is on my Mac, but be able to do in on my prep hour.

I went into the drawing program and created the box frames and other necessities that I would need to match the basic requirements of the form. I had what I needed and set out into the jungles of . . . a middle school.

The plans came out decently. The lettering and the placement came out polished. I was able to grid parts of the lesson successfully and the eMate even remembered what text I was using and (for the most part) what size font. This is not to say that all of my efforts met with success. The box lines are rather bold where they overlap and if I choose to underline a title of a book I plan on reading to the class, the whole text is underlined (same for italics). If I cite a text or work, I have to create a separate text box which takes time from the process and requires some

pinpoint work with the stylus.

Given the purpose and planned limitations of the eMate, it suits a rough draft or a daily planning thing, but I plan on polishing it up and reworking the drawing aspect before I turn it in to my professors.

Newton Inc. Top Ten

Top Ten Suggestions for Newton, Inc.

Well, Newton Inc. is history but there is something useful for Apple to learn here anyway.

- 1) Learn from history and license.** The Newton OS is your greatest asset. There are many corporations that can utilize and spread the Newton OS as a standard. These may be other PDAs, smart restaurant touch terminals, smart phones, etc.
- 2) Creative marketing.** Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream made it to the top by implementing innovative, sometimes quirky, strategies... but they worked to build a loyal and large following. So, set up an 800 number for user suggestions, give out Newton promotional items to users that spread the Newton gospel to other potential users, hold contests.
- 3) Get the Newton out to folks that are amazingly creative.** Give them to artists, musicians, inventors (not just software developers) with the understanding that they must come up with innovative uses for the Message Pad and what they create can be used to market the machine.
- 4) Have fun!** What was the first thing I remember about seeing my first Newton MP? The crumpling paper animation. Embrace that spirit of play.
- 5) Go out on a limb and knock our sox off.** Don't underestimate the end user. If you put out a better product, work hard and still lose, at least you failed trying.
- 6) Any color as long as it's black.** Offer us the Newton in different case colors and sizes. Maybe even have a limited edition where artist create unusual cases (a la swatch watches) this will also serve to get you more free press.
- 7) Make it easy to use.** Take a long hard look at what shareware and software is being developed (and what people are using) and incorporate the best in the machine.
- 8) Expand the emate concept in classrooms.** How about multimedia smart blackboards that can network to emates.
- 9) Put out a Newton with a color screen and price it low.** Get us hooked then sell us the latest and greatest.
- 10) Listen.** Talk to home-makers, teachers, artists, students, and musicians. Find out what wants and needs are out there and deliver.

New use for older Message Pads.

Are those Newton MP's gathering dust on shelves and in closets since you bought your MP 2000? Now there is a way for them to spring back to life.

I am the director of a non-profit organization. Our main activity is publishing *Word Dance*, a quarterly literary magazine for and by grade-school children. Through seeing their own work in print the youngsters get a real ego-boost and develop a love of the written word.

We are a young but growing organization with limited resources. We have a real need for Newton Message Pads (any model) for use by interns, volunteers, and in classrooms. Such a donation is tax-deductable and helps us a great deal.

Please email me if interested in learning more
(haikustu@aol.com).

Or you can contact me by phone or mail (302) 322-6699.

Stuart Ungar, Director, *Word Dance* for children, PO Box 10804,
Wilmington,
DE 19850.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request.

Stuart Ungar, Director (haikutsu@aol.com)

Newton Evangelist



What is a Newton Evangelist anyway?

A: Quite simply, A Newton Evangelist is a person who so believes in the power of his Newton and makes a conscious effort to show and sell this item to those he comes in contact with.

You may show it to friends, a stewardess on the plane, or to your childrens teacher. You are a person who instantly reacts when someone says "What is that you are writing on?"

What Can you Do?

A: Well, One thing is that you can share your stories with others. This can take a number of turns. For example, You can write a note about how you convinced a friend to buy a Newton, A story about how you are using your Newton, Celebrity Newton sightings, Wish list ideas, or any other neat stuff you have seen or heard.

Flexability is the key here!

To participate: (Please **DO!**) send email to me at: **Geraldfox@aol.com**

In the subject area please write **Evangelist** so I will know it's something to look at and not another damn junk mail (spam) letter. (Hate Those!)

This Month's Items:

From: - ckazoun@hotmail.com

An Evangelist item by:Chafic Kazoun

Country of Residence: Lebanon

Evangelist item: Recently while I was visiting the states I was stuck on the train. Ofcourse I pulled out my mp2k and did some work and played a little. A person behind me happened to see me. He was interested. I made sure to get friendly and showed him the machine. HE was amaized. I told him of the price and ofcourse he thought it was expensive, but I told him to think about what it can do and how it compares to wince. It is worth the money. At one point he asked to keep in touch and I inputing his name into my names section and he loved it. He wanted one but could not afford it. He said he would reccomend it to his brother who wants something like this. I find it a goal for all of us newton users to advertize the newton. If I reach one person a week or a month... At least amaize someone once a week and get someone to buy one once a month than I can make a difference. Why not all of us make it a goal too. We have to realize that for the Newton to succeed people need to keep using it and for it to gain or keep its market share. If this does not happen we will lose it....

**From: - 100745.443@compuserve.com OR
newtonshop@incomm.ch**

An Evangelist item by:Jean-Louis Pitteloud Country of Residence:
Switzerland

Evangelist item: I so loved the Newton that I started a NewtonShop in the Geneva Lake Area; in Lausanne more precisely. I found a small shop (a business Internet service company named InComm) and I'm taking about a fourth of the surface. I opened at the end of Nov96 and have sold quite a few MP 120's, 130's and especially MP2K's since then. I don't work full time yet, but it's expanding quite well since the coming of the MP2K and I'm expecting to work full time from Sept. or Oct. 97 (that is very soon ! Today's date is 21Aug97). I probably will open something similar in concept in Geneva itself and be present 3 days of the week in Geneva and 3 days in Lausanne (40 miles inbetween). If you're crazy for the Newton and could spare some time and find a shop to let you have a shop in the shop DO THE SAME. Our opening hours are 5 to 7 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 12 to 4 PM on Saturdays. It's possible to do it parttime! And it can become fulltime too!
Jean-Louis

From: - kas@c031.aone.net.au

An Evangelist item by:Keith Sheridan

Country of Residence: Australia

Evangelist item: During a consultation with my doctor this morning he asked me what I had in that black leather case in front of me. Out came my trusty Newton and I spent 10 minutes explaining its capabilities - particularly the fact that it has allowed me to almost entirely do away with my old laptop. We discussed the little guy's email, fax, word processing, spreadsheets, etc. capabilities; and I explained that there were a number of medical applications which allowed for patient tracking, drug database access, etc. He was especially impressed with the lack of keyboard, the boot time (i.e. about 2 seconds as opposed to his laptop's 3 minutes) and battery life. He told me that up until then he had been seriously considering a Nokia 9000 Communicator (the mobile phone with email & fax capabilities, etc.). Well, he is now a Newt convert and will be buying one in the next few days !

Gecko Award Winners

These are the best as chosen by the Gecko Staff and you!

Namigator Another catamount product! This is recommended by not only our reviewers but by many readers as well.

Making the Grade Newton. This is the Cadillac of Newton Grade keeping. Fully featured and well designed. Free upgrades forever too. If you are a teacher, it doesn't get better than this!

StartBar 1.0 If you have a MessagePad 2000, you will want to have this. The folks at Standalone have scored again with this wonderful utility. The basic premise is to add multi-finder qualities to the Newton experience. Insanely great!

Font Pack II I love this! For \$15.00 you get several Laser ready fonts for your Newton. Making great looking documents on the Newton has never been easier.

NewtsCase One of the most useful utilities Packages I have seen. If you have a Newton, You need it!

Aloha Get your aol email on the Newton. If you are an America On Line member. You need this!

More Info from Silverware comes very highly recommended by several members of the Gecko Staff.

Apple Newton Keyboard If you have a Newton and do not have one of these, Get One! This is by far the best thing since cream cheese! No Kidding!
Kwik Menu: If you get one and only one commercial product for your Newton, This should be it. This is by far the most useful and well thought out utility for the Newton MessagePad.

PDA Panache The first thing any new Newton user should do is get rid of the chintzy Pen that comes with all Newton MessagePads. PDA Panache provides a superior product at a reasonable price. Available in Gold or Silver (I like the Gold best) the pen feels good and makes the Newton experience much more like writing on Paper. Gordon Gecko says "Just get it!"

QuickFigure 3.1 If you must use a spreadsheet on your Newton, then this is the one I recommend. Not anywhere near as fast as a desktop but far better than the competition. Great transfer utility so backing up is a snap!

Tips and Such



Type: Tip

Name: Jax

Email: Jaxone@aol.com

No rumors of the NEW newton 2100?????!!!! Get yer reporters out there..... significant speed boost, better screen and all that stuff.... Thought you'd have the scoop. Gotta keep up with Newton, Inc. Jax ;-)

Ed. Sorry Been out of the country for a while. Heard the rumors but didn't do an October issue.



Type:Wish List Item

Name: Jeff Shepherd

Email: jeff@trg.saic.com

I kind of miss the tables format with the funky lettering you had in the earlier issues. However, your reasons for changing seems sound. With the header links at the top, it would be less confusing if you had some delimiter between the topics like a comma or verticle bar (|). Everything run together gets confusing. Here, however is the real reaon I'm sending you this note: I would like the header links to

be duplicated at the bottom of each page. That way when I am done reading the page I can jump to the next one without having to scroll back to the top. Even better would be a forward/back or previous/next link at the top and bottom so we could just read everything front to back, however, I understand that sort of HTML that changes with every page is more trouble than a unified header/footer that can be pasted without modification onto every page. - Jeff - p.s. I'm looking at this 'send' button at the bottom here and my note isn't really a tip but a comment on your web page design. I hope this isn't automatically posted to a web page.

Well, it is posted. That said, I do appreciate your ideas and such. I hope you like this new format as well. Thanks and keep the comments coming!



Type:Wish List Item
Name: PAUL CLEVERLEY
Email: CLEVERLEY@CARDIFF.AC.UK

IT WOULD BE NICE TO SEE A A DECENT AUDIO IN/OUT PORT ON THE 2000 SO AS WHEN FULL PC/MIA MODEM/MOBILE PHONES (LIKE ERICSON HAVE PRODUCED) BECOME AVAILIABLE THE 200 BECOMES AN INSTANT MOBILE HANDS FREE COMMS SOLUTION

Sure Would! Ed.

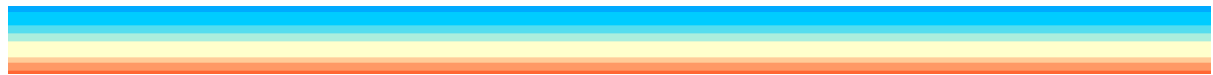


Type:Tip
Name: T. Naiman
Email: naiman@bellsouth.net

Looking for a good case for your MessagePad 2000 with a BELT CLIP? I know it sets off every Geekometer in the building, but having the Newton on a hands-free

belt clip is extremely convenient (apologies to certain women and those others who are occasionally without belts). I stumbled across a great product: Company: OP/TECH. Location: Bellgrade, Montana. Phone #: 1-800-251-7815 Alternate Phone #: 1-406-388-1377 Product Name: Photo/Electronic Soft Pouch. Size: Large. Colors: Black, Steel, Forest Green, Royal Blue. Price: \$16.95 plus shipping and handling. The Large Photo/Electronic Soft Pouch from OP/TECH is not made for the Newton at all, but makes a great case. It is made of highly durable neoprene (very cool and sporty) with a strong plastic belt clip on the back. The case is like a sleeve of neoprene that the Newton slides vertically into, with a neoprene flap covering the top and a plastic "side squeeze" latch in the front to fasten it securely closed. The only down side to this case is the fact that it is a little too small for the Newton 2000 (I didn't try any of the other Newtons). That sounds bad, I know, but the neoprene is very stretchy. So it's a tight fit at first, but loosens up after a while. What I did was a sort of unorthodox "dilation" of the case by putting something much larger than the Newton in it overnight several times (I found that three VHS videotapes together worked great). Now it's perfect! Well, the case is still a little snug, but hey, it's only \$16.95!!! If you want a belt clip, GIVE THIS A TRY!!

Thanks for the Tip. GeekoMeter? Hmmm.....



SEND US YOUR TIPS AND WISHES...

To participate: (Please **DO!**) send email to me at: **Geraldfox@aol.com**
In the subject area please write **Tips/Wish List** so I will know it's something to look at and not another damn junk mail (spam) letter. I get several a day now at my aol address. Stuff with non-comittal subjects like "Hi There" get wiped without a look as they are usually Porn site advertisements. Well, Nuff Said!

Writing for Gecko

Well, I and several others put a lot of time and effort into getting Gecko out each month. We could really use some help.

Generally, I try to review 7 - 10 products a month. and as many Commentary columns as I can get. This is difficult to do when enough people are not contributing so.... I would like to find several people willing to write ONE Review or Commentary item each month and send it to me on time. (without nagging)

Writing Commentary

Are you a lawyer, teacher, health care professional?
Why not write a monthly commentary section?

This section is really open to most anything you would like to do. For example if you are a health care professional, you could discuss trends in Message Pad development and the impact it may have on health care. How to use the Newton for keeping records, billing, and just about anything else you can think of. Discuss and recommend software (provided you are not the author) and in general comment on anything that suits you.

Gecko is read by at last "rough" count some three thousand or so people a month. It is free and there is no advertising. The quality of the magazine is largely up to you, the reader.

So, if you are interested in writing commentary, here is what you should do.

1. Write a column, with title, and send it to me.
2. Do this every month. (due date is the 1st of each month)
3. send me a web site url if you have one.

That's it! Not so tough once a month is it?

Thank you very much for your support.

Jerry Fox

Writing Reviews

Step one: Check and see that what you are interested in has not been done recently. Look in the reviews section for this information. I would like to suggest that you write one review each month and email it to me by the 1st of each month. Shareware reviews are fine as are commercial and freeware reviews. In most cases, content and style are up to you. You can look at the reviews in the current issue for style guidelines. Generally though, I do not interfere much in what reviewers write as long as it is in good taste and is fair to the company involved. If questions arise, I will contact you about possibly re-working an item but so far this has not come up much. If you can COMMIT to one review a month, that will be really helpful. Also, as to the "what shall I review", well if you have not seen it reviewed recently, then feel free to do it. If I get two reviews for the same package, I will publish both. Sometimes it's good to get two views of a product. Different angles and all that. Still if you want to avoid this, drop me a line and I will try to work things out. I'd like to have included in the review the following parts: a. Gecko rating 1-5 b. Publisher name, and email addresses as well as phone info if available. c. Type of software. Shareware (also how much \$\$) Commercial (Ditto \$\$) d. Purpose of the software. e. The review itself. Size is not a consideration on the web. Long or short is OK. f. Pros and Cons g. Bottom line...

Also...If you can send screen shots and such, all the better. Company logos are a help as well.

Lastly, If you are going to review items each month, send me a short self description with any web pages etc that you have up. I will add the links to Gecko. Last note.. Perhaps the a-g outline looks daunting but

really I think it should be a few hour or less job each month. Not too much and well appreciated by the Newton Community. Again thanks a lot for your help. I look forward to receiving your reviews.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF GECKO...

SEVERAL INTERESTING REVIEWS ARE SLATED...

World Conquest from Tactile ... Challenge your computer to a game of Risk!

NewtCase 3.1 ... A very useful collection from ICS

NS Basic... Well, I've promised this for months now and while I believe it easy to learn and well designed, have not had the time to really sit down with it. Maybe this month!

Graffiti 2.0 OK, Long out... but I just got a copy. Is it worth buying? Maybe!

FreezeMan ... Good stuff for managing your packages and precious heap!

Gecko's List of Gifts for the Newton owner in your life!

More? You bet! Not sure at the moment but expect the best in Reviews
Commentary and

Copyright Stuff

Everything you see here is copyrighted by Gerald Fox.

You may read this magazine, make copies of it (as long as you don't change it) and give it to your friends. You may include it on CD collections if you like. Hey! I'm easy!

You really should:

Ask though before printing any part of this magazine in advertising or in commercial endeavors.

Thanks a lot!

Gerald Fox

geraldfox@aol.com

