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Volume 30, Issue 10

mini'app'les newsletter

the minnesota apple computer users' group, inc.

OCTOBER 2007

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 7:00	2 OS X 7:00	3 6:30	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 7:00	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Q&A 7:00	23	24	25 7:00	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1 **Board of Directors**
mini'app'les members welcome
Merriam Park Library
1831 Marshall Avenue St. Paul
Tom Gates 612-789-1713

2 OS X **OS X SIG**
Atomic / The Foundation
901 North 3rd street Suite #115
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

3 **AppleWorks SIG**
Penn Lake Library
8800 Penn Ave S Bloomington, MN
John Hunkins, Sr. 651-457-8949
hunkins@mac.com.

10 **Microsoft Word SIG**
Eagles lodge
9152 Old Cedar Ave. Bloomington
Tom Ostertag, E 651-488-9979

18 **Macintosh Consultants SIG**
Perkins 7:00 AM
6920 Wayzata Blvd
Golden Valley
Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124

VectorWorks SIG
CJR Office
Charles Radloff 952-941-1667

22 Q&A **Macintosh Q & A SIG**
Questions & Answers
Merriam Park Library
1831 Marshall Avenue St. Paul
Les Anderson 651-735-3953

25 **FileMaker Pro SIG**
Partners
2250 terminal Road
Roseville, MN
Steve Wilmes 651-458-1513

For the latest information please visit **http://www.miniapples.org**

mini'app'les

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P.O. Box 796, Hopkins, MN 55343

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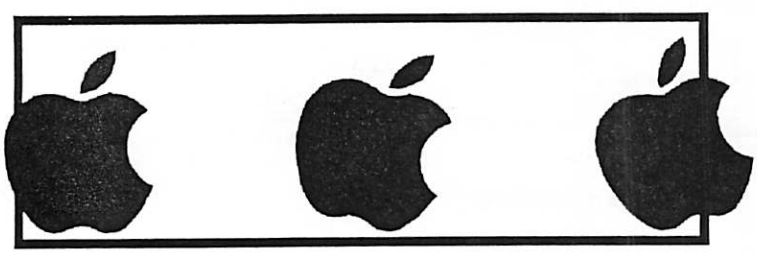

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Deadline for material for the next newsletter is the 1st of the month. An article will be printed when space permits and, if in the opinion of the Newsletter Editor or Manager, it constitutes material suitable for publication.

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November 2007 Preview

Here is the tentative calendar of our Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings for November 2007. Please pencil these events on your calendar. As always, when doubtful of a SIG date, time, or location, confirm with one of the following:

- At www.miniapples.org
- The cognizant SIG Leader

Tuesday	November	6	OS X SIG
Wednesday	November	7	AppleWorks SIG
Tuesday	November	?	VectorWorks SIG
Wednesday	November	10	Microsoft Word SIG
Thursday	November	18	Macintosh Consultants
Thursday	November	22	FileMaker Pro SIG
Monday	November	26	Mac Q & A SIG

Members Helping Members

Need Help? Have a question the manual doesn't answer? Members Helping Members is a group of volunteers who have generously agreed to help. They are just a phone (or an e-mail) away. Please call only during the appropriate times, if you are a member, and own the software in question.

Apple II / IIGS Software & Hardware	1, 3, 4
AppleWorks / ClarisWorks-Draw	4, 5
Classic Macs	
Cross-Platform File Transfer	3
FileMaker Pro	
FirstClass	
iMacs	6
iPhoto / iTunes / iMovie	
Mac OS Classic	4, 6
Mac OS X	
MacWrite Pro	
Microsoft Excel	2, 3, 7, 10
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MYOB	7
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New Users	1, 6
PhotoShop	
PowerBooks / iBooks	6
Power Macs	
QuarkXPress	10
Quicken	2, 7
QuickBooks and QuickBooks Pro	7
WordPerfect	
VectorWorks	8

1.	Les Anderson	651-735-3953	DEW
2.	Mike Carlson	218-387-2257	D
3.	Tom Ostertag	651-488-9979	EW
4.	Bruce Thompson	763-546-1088	EW
5.	Pam Lienke	651-457-6026	EW
6.	Richard Becker	612-870-0659	EW
7.	Ardie Predweshny	612 978-9774	DEW
8.	Charles Radloff	952-941-1667	D
9.	Chuck Hauge	612-963-5064	DEW
10.	Ron Heck	651-774-9151	DEW

D: Days, generally 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
E: Evenings, generally 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
W: Weekends, generally 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Volunteers needed for members helping Members.

Please call at reasonable hours, and ask if it is a convenient time for them. By the way, many of these volunteers can also be contacted on our BBS. We appreciate your cooperation.

If you would like to be a Members Helping Member volunteer, please send an e-mail message to John Pruski on our BBS, or call him at 952-938-2818, with your name, telephone number, contact hours, and the software or hardware areas you are willing to help others.

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Mail inquiries to: PO Box 796, Hopkins, MN, 55343
Phone inquiries to: John Pruski, 952-938-2818

The AppleWorks (AW) Special Interest Group (SIG)

Submitted by Harry Lienke

The AppleWorks (AW) Special Interest Group (SIG) meets the first Wednesday of every month, unless it falls on a holiday. A group of AW users gathers to learn more about the various components of the AppleWorks all-in-one program: word processing, database, spreadsheet, drawing, and painting.
Attendees often come with questions about specific aspects of a problem they encountered while using AppleWorks; the question/problem may be something one of us has experience with, or it may be a conundrum for all. We work together as we attempt to find a solution. The combined efforts may result in "aha" moments for us. Although AppleWorks is no longer being developed or sold by Apple, folks continue to use it because it works. We have fun working together on problems or simply exploring aspects of the program we haven't used much.

Hands on: Getting down to iWork '08

Submitted by John Pruski

By Ryan Faas
September 17, 2007 (Computerworld)

With iWork '08, the latest generation of its office suite, Apple has given Mac users a powerful alternative to Microsoft's Office for Mac. This new version finally offers an alternative to Excel called Numbers, a spreadsheet tool unlike any that has come before it. It also adds some great new features to iWork's other two applications -- the presentation program Keynote and the word processor Pages -- including a few that many users felt were lacking in previous releases.

For example, all the iWork applications now present a contextual Format Bar that displays only the controls or commands relevant to a selected item. This makes it easier to locate specific image effects, text styles or even spreadsheet functions based on what you are working with. In many cases, the Format Bar brings up commands that were always commonly needed but used to be buried somewhere in one of the tabs of the Inspector palette.

Sharing and collaboration seems to be an overall key focus in iWork '08. Pages, Keynote and Numbers all offer a variety of export and sharing options that range from integration with Apple's iWeb to, in the case of Keynote, publishing directly to YouTube.

And collaboration isn't limited to just putting your material out there. All three applications have excellent comment and markup support, allowing multiple users to easily make suggestions, explain changes, and provide information about whole sections or single items in a document.

They also offer the ability to open documents saved in the native Open XML format used by Office 2007 for Windows (though exporting files to Office still puts them in Office 2003 format). This is a major achievement for anyone who needs to exchange files with Office 2007 users, since it means that you don't need to make special requests if you're the only iWork user on a project. It also makes iWork a more reasonable choice in a wide range of environments.

Evident across the board is Apple's continued commitment to providing users with high-end templates to use as a starting point for projects. The design quality and visual impact of the templates in all of the iWork apps is superb, and unlike the templates in most office suites, these actually include sample content (and, in the case of Numbers, functions and formulas) so you truly see how to use the design. This is particularly helpful in Numbers, which includes templates for things that you might never think about using a spreadsheet for, such as planning a dinner party, a vacation itinerary or a home improvement project.

As helpful as this can be for new users, however, the sample content can become annoying after a while when you already have a clear idea of where you want to go with a new document. You can create your own blank templates by deleting the sample material and saving the empty pages as a new template; and many of the templates in iWork '08 have the welcome ability to add a new blank page, in addition to the content-filled pages that were always there. Still, I would have preferred to see Apple include some layout-only, contentless templates for Numbers and Pages.

Pages

When asked about how previous versions of Pages compared with Word, I would often say that it was more like a combination of Word and Publisher -- a hybrid word processor and layout tool. This was one of the things that you either loved or hated about the program. One of the best things Apple did with this new release was to give Pages two distinct modes: one for word processing and one for layout, with separate templates for each mode.

The separation of these features makes it much easier to use Pages for straight word processing. You can open a template and just start typing without worrying about placement (either on a single page or multiple pages), but you still have the option of placing graphics and manipulating text boxes if you want. If you really want to lay out a brochure or newsletter, however, where control of text positioning and flow between specific

text boxes across multiple pages is critical, Page Layout mode is a better choice. You can create any layout in Word Processing mode that you can make in Page Layout mode -- it's just clumsier.

Pages Page Layout mode

Pages '08 lets you work in an uncluttered Word Processing mode. (Click for larger view.)

Page Layout mode in fact gives consumers much of the capability of professional tools like Adobe InDesign and QuarkXPress at a fraction of their cost. It doesn't offer the final printing and prepress options or the typographic control of a pro tool, but those aren't things needed by home users or even many small businesses. And for those who do or will need professional tools, Pages makes a good steppingstone because it relies on the same basic methods as the more expensive applications. The new version doesn't have more layout features than Pages '06 had, but some have been made easier to use, and separating them from the bare writing tools makes them seem more distinct and professional.

The only problem with this separation of working methods is that you cannot switch between them. If you create a word processing document because you want to focus on text content but later decide you want to lay it out as a booklet, you can't simply switch modes to get full access to the Page Layout mode's features. Instead, you need to create a new Page Layout document and then copy and paste your content into text boxes and rearrange or link them to flow your text. Choosing which mode to use could also be confusing to new users.

Beyond the new separation of tasks, Pages has gotten a few other useful new features. One of the ones I found the most exciting (mostly because I use the equivalent in Word almost constantly) is a Change Tracking option. Anyone who collaborates using Word has probably used this feature even if they haven't always loved Microsoft's implementation of it.

Pages implements tracking changes better than Word because it offers a variety of ways to display changes, including a browser panel that is considerably easier to use than the views included with Word. Anyone who has tried to decipher a Word document in which more than two people have made changes will immediately notice less eyestrain and confusion when using this feature in Pages.

Even better, Pages can not only track changes in its own documents but seamlessly track changes in and export changes to Word documents as well -- properly identifying the author(s) of the changes, too. In fact, Pages '08 does a great job of working with Word, both when opening highly formatted Word documents and exporting them back Word. Even Page Layout mode documents filled with style and format options retain almost all, if not all, of their look after export.

As powerful as Pages is, longtime and heavy users of Word may find some features still not quite up to par. Word is more flexible at creating mail merges, for example: Pages can do mail merges but relies on contacts stored in the Mac OS X Address Book application or as vCard files. While Pages can create tables, it can't convert existing text to a table. And Pages can format text to look like an outline, but it can't make a functional collapsible outline the way Word can. If your work depends on any of those features (or similar specialized tools), you'll have to find workarounds or keep Word around.

Keynote

Keynote has always been a great presentation tool. Its array of stunning templates and transitions, easy access to content via the iLife media browser, and the range of visual effects and 3-D charts have always made it an attractive alternative to PowerPoint. In iWork '08, Apple found some great new features to add to Keynote's already impressive repertoire.

The first new feature is easy slideshow animations called Smart Builds. At first, I didn't see the point to these since Keynote can already cause items to appear on a slide in sequence, with great transitions. But what Smart Builds let you do is create an animated slide show within a slide. Simply choose an animation -- such as Spinning Cube or Turntable -- drop the pictures you want to use into the Drop Zone (which looks very similar to a Drop Zone in iDVD), and you have a great 3-D animation in which one image is replaced by the next, running within a slide while the rest of the slide's content remains visible. With a technique referred to as A-to-B animation, advanced users can even manipulate exactly how animations and related effects display and set options for specific images.

Keynote Smart Builds

Keynote's Smart Builds let you create animations that run within a slide.

Another feature that ratchets up the already impressive graphics support is something called Instant Alpha (available in Pages and Numbers as well). Instant Alpha allows you to select and mask out backgrounds in any image in a slide. The process is similar to using the "magic wand" selection tool in Adobe Photoshop and similar graphics applications, although the operation is much more fluid and intuitive. The power of Instant Alpha isn't that it offers something new (using a graphics application, you can get the same effect, after all). The difference is that now you don't need to go to a graphics application to get it. You can do it right in Keynote with a very easy-to-use interface and without modifying the original image file. Note: This feature doesn't work on images included in a Smart Build.

The new tools for creating slides, however, aren't what impressed me the most about Keynote '08. That would have to be the ability to record a voice track for a presentation. This is a feature that takes Keynote from being useful for giving lectures in person to a tool for recording and presenting them to anyone, anywhere.

Many lecturers give copies of their slides (either as Keynote or PowerPoint files or as PDFs) to people who can't attend a presentation or for reference to attendees. Being able to give someone a copy of the entire presentation, including the narration, is

a huge step beyond that. And the ability to essentially give the presentation remotely by putting it on the Web or by sending someone the file makes Keynote a phenomenal education and training tool.

Keynote takes this feature and runs with it, giving you a wide range of video formats to export a presentation with voice-over. Like the new version of iMovie, it even includes direct publishing to YouTube. Or, if you want do more with your presentation, Keynote allows you to send it directly to almost all of the iLife applications for further editing or distribution. (Ironically, iMovie is the only one not included, though you can export a presentation as a QuickTime movie that can be imported into iMovie.) Particularly worth noting is integration with GarageBand, which allows you to turn a presentation into a video podcast with very little effort.

Numbers

Pages and Keynote both received noteworthy feature upgrades in iWork '08, but it is the addition of Numbers that has gotten the most attention, and with good reason. Numbers is unlike any other spreadsheet tool I've ever seen. The first time I used it, my first thought was, "This is so cool," followed by astonishment that I'd actually thought of a spreadsheet application as "cool." But that is what makes Numbers defy any prejudices one has about spreadsheets. It is intuitive and easy to use and, more important, gives users a chance for creative expression that is completely unexpected when working with a spreadsheet.

Numbers does this by moving beyond simply being a generic grid of blank cells on a worksheet. In fact, it doesn't use worksheets in the traditional sense at all. It's based on a concept of Sheets and Tables in which Sheets are pages that contain Tables, which in turn are essentially self-contained spreadsheets (complete with a grid that is only fully displayed when the Table is selected). Each Sheet can contain one or more Tables as well as text, graphics and charts, turning a Sheet into a complete information package.

The concept of multiple Sheets and Tables is as ingenious as it is attractive. A document for planning an event, for example, can contain separate Tables covering attendees, tasks to accomplish, a schedule for event activities, contacts for service vendors, and cost analysis. Each of these can be placed on a single Sheet, and you can drag tables around on the Sheet (or even from one Sheet to another in the same file) to organize and document the information.

The Event Planner is just one example of the wide range of templates that Number includes, from grade books for teachers to home improvement projects; they really help you begin to see everyday uses that you might never have thought of using a spreadsheet for. (There are templates for the less surprising budgets and expense reports as well.)

Numbers templates

Numbers comes with templates for standard as well as unexpected spreadsheet tasks.

Adding text boxes or graphics to a Sheet is as easy as adding them to a slide in Keynote or a document in Pages. Simply click a button to get a new text box, complete with all the text formatting tools you'll ever need. For pictures, bring them in from the iLife media browser or via drag and drop from the Finder, and get the same 3-D effects, masks and resizing options found throughout iWork '08.

To add cell and table formatting as well as colors to a table, you can just select from a list of predefined Styles; you can also modify an existing Style and save it for later use. Formatting of individual cells is done through the Format Bar or the Inspector. You can't save a cell style, but you can copy and paste the formatting from one cell to another. Cell options include conditional formatting that changes the look of the cell if it meets specific criteria – you can make a bill that's past due display in red, for example. One of the most fun options is the ability to use images as the background fill for tables. Talk about making a spreadsheet look good.

Setting up charts is beyond simple: Select a Table and choose a chart type. (And if you choose a chart without selecting a Table first, Numbers will create one appropriate to the type of chart.) Like Tables, you can move a chart anywhere on a sheet or onto a different Sheet from the Table that it is based on. You get an entire range of 3-D effects as well as predefined color sets (or you can drag color samples to specific pieces of a chart if you want to make your own color palette). You just click the appropriate tab in the Inspector palette to change from one chart type to another. Never has making charts and graphs that look this good been this easy.

Doing calculations is just as easy. Common functions are immediately available from a menu in the toolbar, and many of them automatically act on the numbers in the column of the cell you assign them to. For example, if you select a cell at the bottom of a column and choose Average from the Function menu, the cell will average all the cells above it. You can specify specific cells to include in a function as well, and as in Excel, you can do so by just clicking each cell – no need to type the row and column number. A particularly nice touch is that the functions are aware of the column headers, so that rather than reading "=AVERAGE(C2:C9)," the cell's value will read "=AVERAGE(Math Test)" or whatever.

If you do need more advanced formulas, there are more than 150 functions that you can use, all of them comparable to their Excel counterparts (which is great if you open an Excel file or need to export for Excel users). None of the engineering and database functions available in Excel are duplicated in Numbers, however, and only about half the statistical functions have equivalents. (For a fuller breakdown, check out the list compiled by blogger Jaime Curmi.) Furthermore, the pivot table feature is not included in Numbers. As a result, serious number crunchers may feel more than a little hemmed in, and any longtime Excel user will probably need some time to get used to the new graphical world that Numbers offers.

Numbers Sort and Filter Panel

You can not only sort your entries, you can easily filter them as well. One easily overlooked set of features is in the Sort & Filter Panel, which

allows you to not only sort data in a table but also filter the results. In this aspect, Numbers behaves almost like a database by letting you see only data that you want (transactions before a given date, people who have confirmed to attend an event, bills that are unpaid, invoices over a certain amount and so on). The process of setting filters -- basically the familiar Mac approach of choosing search criteria from pop-up menus -- is much easier and more capable than performing equivalent tasks in Excel.

Speaking of Excel, Numbers can easily open Excel files. For a number of the Excel documents I've tested, Numbers invited me to review minor warnings after opening them, mostly dealing with formatting issues and one or two formulas. And in some cases, heavy calculations in an Excel document that I opened in Numbers seemed to take longer to process than they did in Excel or in a similar document created from scratch in Numbers, even after the Excel document was saved as Numbers file.

Numbers also exports well to Excel. Each Table in a Numbers document becomes a separate worksheet when exported, and the first page of the converted document presents a summary of which Tables were converted into which worksheets. Images included in a Numbers file, as well as any charts, are placed on a separate worksheet as well. Other text content and much formatting are lost during the export process, but comments are preserved. Numbers also supports export CSV files for use in other spreadsheet applications or databases.

Show Print View is another great feature it would be easy to miss. Not only does it show you how your current sheet will print, but you can directly edit anything while in it. You can resize or filter a table to fit on one piece of paper, move a graphic or change styles, all on the fly and while seeing how changes will affect the output. You can even edit data or formulas.

One final cool thing that I have to mention is the way Numbers integrates with the Mac's Address Book. You can drag individual contacts or groups into a sheet and they automatically format as a table. Or, you can create a table and name the column headers to match specific fields in Address Book; when you drag contacts to that table, it will fill with only those pieces of contact information. It's a perfect way to manage contact lists, guest lists, mailing lists and even invoices.

Overall, Numbers can truly be thought of as the spreadsheet for the rest of us. It may not be perfect for replacing Excel in every situation, particularly in corporate environments that rely on specific functions that are not included in Numbers. But for home users and small businesses, it is a great and inspiring tool and is alone more than worth iWork '08's $79 price tag.

Final thoughts

Users comfortable with Microsoft Office may find it takes time to get used to iWork. Advanced Word and Excel users, especially those who rely on specialized features and functions, will probably find Pages and Numbers to be limited. If you do rely on specific functions in Excel or features in any of the Office applications that are even slightly outside the more general types of usage, you will probably want to download the iWork '08 30-day trial to ensure that the tools you need are there before buying. And, to be sure, the process of having to export files when interacting with Office users could get old quickly if you have to do that regularly.

But overall, iWork '08 is beautifully designed -- a compelling product and great value for consumers and small business alike. It brings tons of innovation over previous versions of iWork as well as many office suites on the market. And it turns typical office tasks and documents into creative outlets. That it offers all that it does for $79 is, frankly, hard to believe.

Ryan Faas is a freelance writer and technology consultant specializing in Mac and multiplatform network issues. In addition to writing for Computerworld, he is a frequent contributor to the Peachpit Press Web site. You can find more information about Faas, his consulting services and recently published work at www.ryanfaas.com.

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The Minnesota Apple Computer Users' Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 796, Hopkins, MN 55343-0796

Membership Application, & Renewal Form

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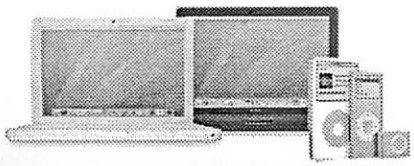

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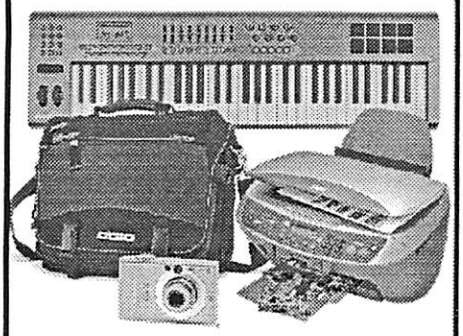

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mini'app'les membership card

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Benefits of mini'app'les Membership:

- Participate in drawings of computer hardware, software, and other computer related materials. Some of the vendors and merchandise mini'app'les has given away include: Connectix software, QuickCam, Quickeys, Peachpit Press books, Macsoft games, T-Shirts, Apple Mac OS X, and many others.

- Mini'app'les members have access to discounts from vendors and manufacturers such as Peachpit Press, Apple, Small Dog Electronics, PowerMax, and others.

- Member Workshops to help members with computer problems. You can bring your equipment in to these events and you'll get support from other knowledgeable members to fix your sick Mac. Some of our members are Apple certified consultants.

- Access to the Members Helping Members network of professional and advanced users of Apple technologies. These members volunteer their time to help other members with pre-sales questions, troubleshooting, and other Apple related issues.

- Opportunities to get involved with other Apple enthusiasts. mini'app'les has several special interest groups, and is always looking for motivated members to help in making them better.

- Access to the mini'app'les online Forum. Why wait for a monthly meeting when you can chat with other members about issues and trouble shooting. Apple products are bought and sold, special events and discounts are posted, and news about the mini'app'les User Group, Apple, and the industry is discussed.

- Subscription to the mini'app'les monthly newsletter.

- Mini'app'les is a non-profit and your subscription is tax deductible (check IRS rules on disclosure).

And you're supporting a great organization that promotes the use and evangelism of Apple Computers!