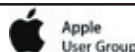# Macaholics UNANIMOUS

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My Top 10 Notes About TopXNotes

by Sue Beal

In March we welcomed back James Lee, President of Tropical Software, Inc., makers of TopXNotes. Known as the #1 Mac user group presenter in the Southeastern U.S., Jim is always good at "info-taining" our group, and we were pleased to see him again.

What is TopXNotes?

TopXNotes is a notepad-style personal organizer made specifically to run on Macintoshes under OS X. Inexpensive, unobtrusive and just plain handy, this little gem is right at your fingertips when you need it.
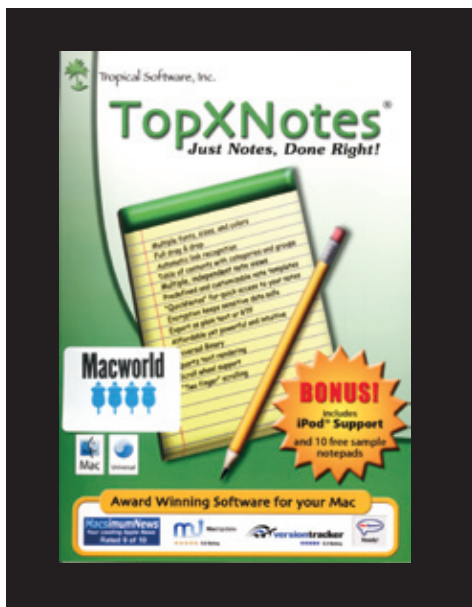
Why TopXNotes?

OK I admit it — I'm an organization junkie. I enjoy the benefits of knowing where I can quickly put my fingers on whatever I need. While my home is neat and organized, I found I had little files of "stuff" stashed all over my computer. I'd made the leap to get things off of Post-It notes and into the Mac, but files were everywhere, in different folders, in several programs —Databases, Excel, Word— I even had nested folders within folders, using notes to myself as the file names!

TopXNotes gives me one place to put everything - securely and neatly. It's flexible enough to allow the user to do things their own way - it doesn't dictate how I choose to organize things, it just gives me a handy framework to get the job done. And that's why I love this little utility!

Top X Surprises

Jim announced that TopXNotes is now available in 34 Apple stores! You can also download it from the Apple online store, or from the website, **tropic4.com**. Tropical Software offers a free trial version on their website, and you can also sign up for an e-newsletter, *Notes on Notes*, to help you get the most out of it.

TopXNotes recently received a four (out of five) mouse rating from Macworld Magazine, and has received very positive reviews in major online and print publications.

Create, View, Access and Organize

These are the 4 things you can do with your notes with TopXNotes.

Basic Notes

You can customize the look of your notes, and add emphasis where needed, using all the Apple fonts, and an array of colors - color for the text and/or color behind it, and even "emphasis color" which is like using a highlighter. You can use bold, italic, condensed, expanded and shadowed type, and you can align the text right, left or center.

NoteOrganizer

The NoteOrganizer is an overview of your notes, allowing you to group them (sort of like folders in the Finder's list view.) You can drag and drop them to reorganize your thoughts. You can categorize them, and assign colors and icons to help you better recognize the ones you use more often.

There are tabs in the NoteOrganizer, so you can sort them by Groups, Notes, Category, Date Created or Date Modified.

MultiView

You can click a button and create a MultiView window. You see the orga-nizer on the left and one or more notes to the right of it. When you click in the body of a note, all the controls in the window jump under/over that note and apply to it; it is the active one.

At this point, Jim used the example of shopping on the web. This is the use I will be adding to my personal repertoire, it will be so much better than what I have been doing.

Jim had two lists, which he showed side by side in MultiView. One had websites with the username and password for each, and the other had credit card numbers and other info. He could pick the website, go to it (live linked URLs!), copy and paste the password, then, when checking out, also copy and paste in the credit card number! I have never stored my credit card numbers on my computer because I was too paranoid about security. But since they would be safely encrypted and password protected, I can do this and save so much time! Great tip, Jim!

QuickNotes

QuickNotes is both a category and a system — when you assign that category, the note shows in a special tiny TopX icon called Quick-Notes. The QuickNotes icon is a global floating window which is always on top of other windows on your screen. Clicking on the QuickNotes icon drops down the QuickNotes note access menu containing your "Top 10 Notes"— always available for rapid and easy access.

More Cool Features

- Drag & Drop Notes: you can drag them out of TopXNotes to the desktop and they will show up there as an RTF (Rich Text Format) files.

- Export Notes: Save any note where you want it, in RTF or TXT format.

- Export a Group: They export in TopXNotes format, which is handy for

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TopXNotes

exchanging notes with friends who also have the package.

- Drag & Drop between notes by dragging and dropping between note views.

New Features, New Versions

The newest release of TopXNotes is 1.4. The newest features include:

- Spell Checking
- Insert Date/Time
- Note Info now contains number of lines and characters
- Keyboard shortcuts added

The latest release includes all of the above features plus 10 sample notepads to get users started.

For those of you who are still running Classic, there is a Classic version still available on the Tropic4 website.

TopXNotes for iPod

Classic iPod support is now built into the package, which includes the ability to download select notes and groups of notes into your Classic or video iPod. For those of us who don't have a GPS in the car, you could have directions stored in the iPod for navigating... how cool is that?

And... this just in... an iPhone and iPod Touch application is on the way!

Security

Originally, the package came with one encryption password. The password was used as a key to scramble the data (which, without encryption, was stored as a simple, unsecure RTF file).

Now you have a choice of protecting all of your data with one password, or only protecting the notes you consider sensitive.

You can set a different password for every note if you wish, but this is not recommended, because if you forget the password... well, you know!
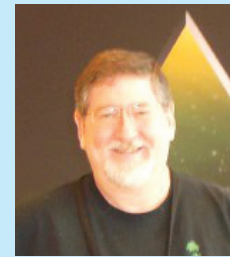
Nuts and Bolts

All of the TopXNotes data is stored in one data file, which can be encrypted, and you can set up regular, automatic backups, so your data is always safe and secure. After using the software for over three years, I can also say that it is extremely stable and I have never had a problem with it.

My Top Ten TopXNotes Features

This package has a lot of nice things built in... here is a list of my Top Ten:

1. Backup file settings - save as many copies as you want, pulled at an interval you set.

2. Not only can it recognize URLs when you type or paste them in, but it can set them up as friendly links. What this means is, instead of "https://secure.tropic4.com/WebStore/index.php?" you can have the blue underlined link say "Jim's Website" and click on that, hiding the messy URL.

3. Global Find and Replace editing capability with case matching.

4. Free updates on the website, and

Jim Lee himself will help you if you need it!

5. Help is built in and easy to access. There is no printed manual to store.

6. QuickNotes' tiny pop-up window is optional, you can turn it off in preferences. (I like it off!)

7. Widen the Organizer window and you see more info about your notes - date created/modified, for example. You can sort by these, which can sometimes help you spot things when you can't remember what you named them (yes, it happens to all of us, not just you!).

8. Predefined and customizable notes templates get you started easily.

9. Functions can be accessed through the menus or by using toolbar buttons.

10. You can print your notes easily if the need arises. One note or all of them.

Thanks, Jim, for another informative evening and a great product! MU