

NoteBook 1.2 and NoteTaker 1.8

SEPARATED-AT-BIRTH DIGITAL DIARIES

You use iPhoto and iTunes to organize your digital snapshots and songs. Wouldn't an iNotebook app be handy for keeping track of your thoughts and other digital-lifestyle debris? NoteBook and NoteTaker are two virtual journals that share a common heritage in an old NeXT app called NoteBook. Separated at birth, the two apps execute a similar notebook interface with varying degrees of svelteness and success.

Both NoteBook and NoteTaker initially present themselves as a spiral-bound notebook on the Mac desktop. Basic use is simple and intuitive—just start typing, and add as many entries as you wish to a page. The notebook metaphor continues with section tab dividers—you can add sections and new pages as needed, and the notebook document automatically updates its table of contents to match.

Both of these digital journals are voice aware, so in addition to typing you can talk to your Mac and record audio notes. You can also log URLs, PDFs, and QuickTime-compatible files via drag-and-drop methods, as well as pipe in digital photos direct from a camera, then put them all in context with typewritten notes. Now your brainstorm, blackmail photos, and secret plans for world domination remain consolidated, organized, and searchable.

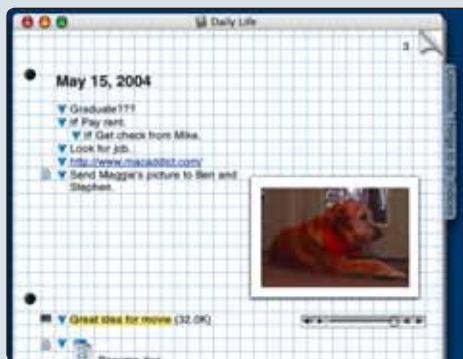
There's no end to the usefulness of this concept; both apps let you keep as many notebook documents

as you wish. Sure, you can take running notes with TextEdit, but the flexibility or organizing power of NoteBook and NoteTaker make them more appealing. For example, both programs let you choose whether to link to image and file documents on your hard drive or embed the files directly in the notebook document.

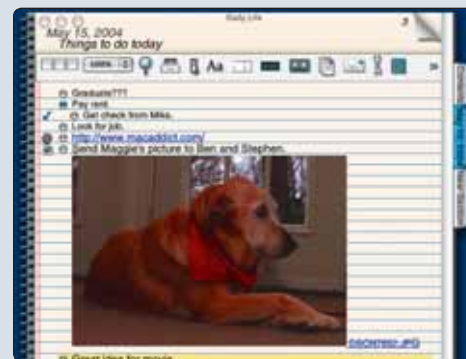
So which of these apps reigns? NoteTaker has more customization options, command sets, and tricks, though some of these are gratuitous.

user interface, and snappy performance provide a more Mac-like experience. NoteBook exports plain text, RTF, and XML formats, and its HTML export was flawless. The program continually updates its internal index, so it's always up to date when you need to find or browse your URLs, keywords, imported files, highlighted text, or other categories. NoteTaker, on the other hand, only indexes when you tell it to.

NoteBook has other endearing refinements too. For example, you



NoteBook 1.2 If you want a simple journal without toolbars, Web browsing, and slide shows, NoteBook is for you.



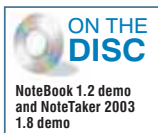
NoteTaker 1.8 We're content with just the section tabs, but if you want your journal weighed down with frills, try NoteTaker.


The toolbar and pull-down menus are crowded, but NoteTaker provides more export options, pumping out single pages or whole notebooks as PDFs, RTF files, plain text, XML or Word documents, or in NoteTaker's proprietary NTML format (NoteTaker Viewer is required to read NTML, but it's a free download from www.aquaminds.com/viewer.jsp). You can also use the Create Web Notebook feature to export HTML, but section-heading links to included pages didn't work in our simple test notebook.


NoteBook's clean appearance, simple

can rename new section tabs without returning to the table of contents, as NoteTaker demands you do. The keyboard left- and right-arrow keys flip pages in NoteBook but not in NoteTaker. NoteTaker has a 128-page PDF manual that's necessary reading, whereas NoteBook's HTML documentation is short and sweet.

If we wanted a complex notebook app, we'd wait and use the one that's coming in Microsoft Office 2004. Since we prefer elegant, capable simplicity, we're all over NoteBook.—Tom Lassiter



NOTEBOOK 1.2	
COMPANY: Circus Ponies Software	PRICE: \$49.95, \$29.95 academic
CONTACT: 415-695-3100, www.circusponies.com	REQUIREMENTS: G3, Mac OS 10.1 or later, 256MB RAM recommended
GOOD NEWS: Simple to set up and use. Automatic indexing on the fly.	MacAddict RATED  GREAT
BAD NEWS: Fewer organizational and custom-formatting options.	

NOTETAKER 1.8	
COMPANY: AquaMinds Software	REQUIREMENTS: Mac OS 10.2.1 or later
CONTACT: www.aquaminds.com	PRICE: \$69.95, \$39.95 (academic)
GOOD NEWS: Offers more organizational and formatting options.	MacAddict RATED  SOLID
BAD NEWS: Complicated by superfluous features. No autoindexing.	