

june 16, 2006

product dozens

We didn't think we'd get **Product Showcase** finished today, and we were right – the product queue is still bigger than the news queue, despite word that Bill Gates is stepping down in over two years, so we thought we'd try briefing items this morning and hitting the big stuff – Parallels Desktop, textSOAP 5, Fetch 5.1, TechTool Pro 4.5.1, etc. – in a later-Friday

combined issue. But when we saw that MacZOT is offering HoudahSpot for free today only, and the benefits of Circus Ponies Notebook 2.1, plus a few other things we haven't seen mentioned elsewhere, we knew we had to bring you this dozen this morning. We've got more in the queue, but there's some lesser-known stuff worth your examination as you prepare for the weekend. **Hidden wonders, page 1.**

product showcase

the week's homestretch

A bevy of briefs and backdoor wonders

1 Notebook 2.1 (v245)



The US\$50 **Circus Ponies Notebook** really is a comprehensive computer version of a notebook, minus the scribbling. It's not a drawing program, but it allows outlining, media storage, linking between pages, action items, and just about anything else you'd want. If you can type it or if it's already on your computer (even on a Web page), you can stick it in a notebook. The company provided us with evaluation licenses for WWDC 2004 two years ago, and we used the program to take notes throughout the conference. It doesn't always do exactly what we expect, particularly in moving between cells, but it's hard for us to articulate why. Muscle memory is ingrained, and when you press arrows or modifiers expecting something, you can't exactly say why you expect it to work – you just do. But it's been getting better ever since, and remains our choice of applications for writing and organizing real notes. We even keep our internal style guidelines in Notebook.

Now at version 2.1 (v245), Notebook is finally a universal binary and a free upgrade for all Notebook 2.0 owners. The [list of changes](#) is long and impressive, and not necessarily even in order of relevance. You have to read way down the list to discover that Notebook 2.1 adds support for the three-column

Cornell Note Taking system, “the most widely-used system for taking lecture notes in North American education.” A new “starting Point” panel offers to set you up with pre-configured notebooks for a variety of common tasks, from organizing your to-do list to writing a research paper, “get organized for college,” “plan a trip,” or even “Prepare for a trial” or “Organize a TV or film shoot.” (OK, maybe they're not *all* common.)

The update reads and writes notebooks faster and creates smaller files, though you won't see changes until you modify and save a page in a given notebook. You can now “undo” past the last point where you saved a notebook, or in programming terms, saving no longer clears the undo stack. Version 2.1 includes a .Mac Backup 3 “QuickPick” for notebooks, adds syncing action items to Microsoft Entourage, and adds lots of new features to the iCal and date management support.

Improved printing and PDF generation includes printing “divider” pages (like a tabbed divider in a physical notebook, with a table of contents for the following section) with the page numbers as printed and not just as seen in the online notebook. Version 2.1's PDF export also generates internal PDF links for intra-notebook links, a very cool feature indeed. The update also adds support for the third-party “LinkBack” publish-and-subscribe **2** ▶