

The Latest Tech Lineup

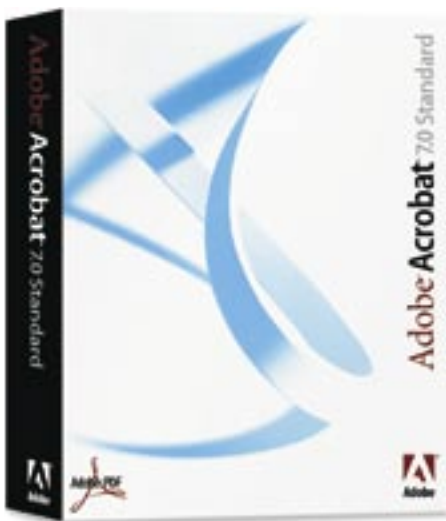
Adobe Acrobat 7

In an previous review in *The Scrivener*, I wrote about Acrobat 6.0. While that version is still the standard for Electronic Filing (EFS), Adobe has improved the software.

Acrobat 7.0—Standard and Professional versions—are faster, easier to navigate, and offer some additional tools over version 6. Speed and ease of use are the two main reasons users will upgrade.

Many Acrobat users tell me that with version 6, they would load up an Acrobat file, hit Print, then go get a cup of coffee . . . because their computer was taking its sweet time to print a copy. Not so with version 7. The program runs faster and smoother and even loads up faster. You're going to have to switch to instant coffee!

With Acrobat as the worldwide standard for document sharing, it is



now faster to create the document as a PDF file. You simply press Print in any Windows or Apple OS software and Adobe does the rest.

In BC, EFS is now a reality and Acrobat makes it possible. Acrobat not only creates the EFS files, it provides the security and digital signature capabilities required to file electronically.

Documents that cannot be created electronically can be scanned. The scanning process is now a one-button operation.

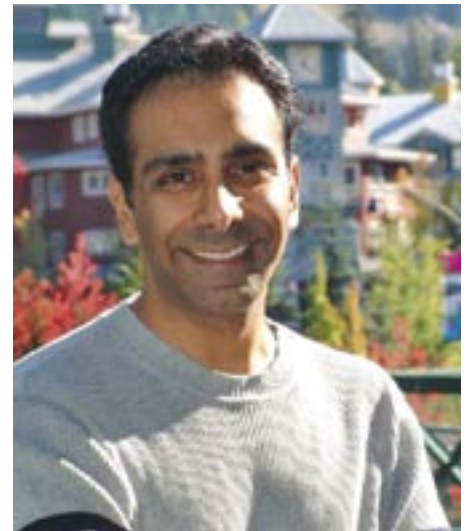
“Organizer” is Acrobat’s new PDF viewer and manager. This little application lets you scroll quickly through previews of all the PDF files you’ve viewed over the past year.

New Security policies let you specify a complex set of password protections (for reading, printing, and so on) that can be applied to a file in a single step. This is a great feature for our privacy-sensitive transactions.

While most users will not need to upgrade to Acrobat 7, this new version does offer benefits for those setting up a new computer or upgrading from Acrobat 6.

Roxio Easy Media Creator 7.5

If you're like me, you hate throwing away anything and that includes documents created on your computer. I have articles I wrote 10 years ago still stored on my computer—and I upgrade it every two years!



One major reason these files stick around is that we're too busy (read “lazy”) to sort them out and back them up. We treat paper documents the same way.

There was a time when CD burning software involved a simple process of locating files on your system, then dragging them onto an image that would burn itself to the end media. While this was fine for basic backup, finding a file you've stored on one of 30 or so backup CDs could get frustrating.

Easy Media Creator 7.5 from Roxio hopes to eliminate the hassles and, let's admit it, the boredom of file backup.

This easy-to-use software will help you locate your files on your hard-drive, regardless of their type—picture files, documents, MP3s—and assist you in backing them up on CD or DVD.

The average CD can hold 700 MB, while a DVD can store 4.7 GB or 8.4 GB (dual layer). That's a lot of storage.

Easy Media Creator 7.5 can become your CD- and DVD-maker. You can make audio or MP3 CDs, Video-CDs, Slide-Show CDs, or all of those and more, on a blank DVD.

I have put a compilation of my favourite driving tunes onto four CDs. I simply pop them into the car CD player and I'm good to go for four hours of toe-tapping . . . just don't tap too hard on the gas pedal!

If you have LPs or compact cassettes that you can't seem to throw into the recycle bin, don't fret. EasyAudio Capture will grab and convert analogue audio that's fed through your soundcard's auxiliary or line-in. You can even remove tape hiss and pop.

For the more visually minded, there are now video benefits—including capture and extensive editing options—using VideoWave, CineMagic, StoryBuilder, and my favourite application, PhotoSuite.

The folks at Roxio have dropped about 20 different applications into this package so there's something to appeal to all users.

Time for Some Fun

Anybody old enough to vote when Jean Chrétien became Canada's Prime Minister (put away your calculator—that means you were at least 18 in 1993), you would have grown up playing the Atari 2600 video game system.



The 2600 was so popular, it made Atari a household name. My brother and I were fortunate to receive a unit for Christmas 1979.

As with some games available today, the 2600's games were fun, fast-paced, and addictive. Although the graphics were quite basic (compared to today's lifelike animation), the 2600's games had a style all their own. There have been many retro-releases of the popular titles, but not the game console itself.

The Atari Flashback 2 Classic Game Console is now available. It is a stand-alone, plug-and-play unit filled with 40 classic Atari games. The games list includes Adventure, Asteroids, Breakout, Centipede, Maze Craze, Missile Command, Pitfall, Pong, Sky Diver, Warlords, and Yar's Revenge.

The unit is a two-third's replica of the original 2600, complete with two joystick controllers, power supply, a TV cable and, oh yeah, wood panelling. Now your video game system can match your classic Chevy "Woody" station wagon.

The neatest feature is the ability to use all the numerous existing 2600 controllers, for example, paddle controllers, trackballs, etc. How cool is that!

The suggested retail price is CAN\$39.99.

More Fun

You've got your Apple iPod Music Player and you've loaded it with all the tunes you can. That's great if you're taking a walk in the park or sitting on a beach for hours.

If you're like me these days, you spend more time in your car than travelling by foot. I do miss the exercise and fresh air, but I'll have to wait until Summer rolls around.

In the meantime, while I'm in my four-wheel gas-burner, I want to enjoy all my tunes on my iPod. I could just put on my headphones and listen while I drive but not only does that look silly, it's illegal.

Griffin Technology, maker of really cool Apple accessories, has launched their latest iPod accessory: the new iTrip (CAN\$99.99). While the iTrip has been out for some time, the latest version is now compatible with the fifth generation iPods, including the 30 GB and 60 GB Video iPods.



The iTrip allows you to broadcast your iPod songs onto any unused FM frequency, turning your car stereo into an amp for your iPod.

The large, easy-to-read backlit LCD screen makes setting its digital tuner easy and intuitive. A convenient switch on the side of the iTrip makes it a breeze to select broadcast frequency. But you won't have to adjust the settings very often—iTrip remembers its settings for convenience.

One of iTrip's innovative new features (something not found on any other FM transmitter) is the ability to select between LX or DX modes of broadcasting, allowing you to adjust for the absolute best possible audio under real-world conditions.

If you travel overseas, the new iTrip has a US/International tuning mode, giving you access to frequencies around the world. I use my iTrip through the FM stereo available in most hotel rooms.

Power for the iTrip is drawn directly from the iPod or you use Griffin's PowerJolt (CAN\$39.99) car charger (works with iPods up to the fourth generation only), keeping your iPod fully charged at all times.

There are more innovative accessories to spruce up your iPod. Griffin's iBeams (CAN\$29.99) are a snap-on flashlight and a class IIIA laser pointer that connect to the dock connector of your iPod. Hey, you never know when you'll need a flashlight or have to make a PowerPoint presentation and need a laser pointer!

So have some fun with these latest (and retro) technologies. You deserve a break. ▲

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