

iKinook

READER



#1

random bits and bytes of fannish interest

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In this Issue

Chris Garcia brings us triumph over desperation, if not actual triumph.

Cricket J. Greebo brings us something special. A small dead animal, I think.

Mo Starkey brings us a most excellent cover, *Aztec Circuits*.

The editor brings us rationalization.

Editorial Musings

Andrew Trembley

A few weeks ago someone gave me an iPad. Don't ask.

Someone gave me an iPad.

The problem? What the hell do you do with an iPad? It's not an iPod. It's not itty-bitty with tons of storage for music and video. It's not an iPhone. It doesn't have anywhere-you-go 3G connectivity that makes the iPhone an exceptional mobile computing platform. Nor does it have the boatload of apps that the iPhone does (and iPhone apps on the iPad are just sad).

It's a tarted-up thin client. It's got a decent web browser, decent mail and decent personal information manager tools.

But damn, it's pretty. The screen is gorgeous. The virtual keyboard is large enough to use efficiently.

And that got me to thinking. When I plugged it in, iTunes suggested I install iBooks. I did, and got the free edition of *Winnie the Pooh* that came with it. I figured out how to load other books (not purchased from the iTunes Store), and loaded up my Aussiecon 4 Hugo Voters Packet.

The first thing I learned was the iPad was, while not a Kindle, Nook, Sony Reader or other ePaper display device with huge battery life, still a very nice eReader.

I also learned not all PDFs are created equal. Most of the PDFs read nicely. Some didn't. James Morrow's *Shambling Towards Hiroshima* was laid out in 2-page spreads, not efficient (horribly small) for reading in vertical orientation, and still a bit small in horizontal. Felix Gilman's *Thunderer* was exported for print, giant over-print areas and registration marks and all, with the actual text taking up only the center area of the page.

Charlie Stross and Paolo Bacigalupi (and, of course, their publishers) submitted *Palimpsest* and *The Windup Girl* in both PDF and ePub format, so I loaded the ePub files. Not surprisingly, iBooks provides a bit richer an experience with ePub files.

Thus came the idea: Fanzines have adopted PDF, but except for iBooks that's not eReader friendly. Why not make a fanzine formatted for eReaders?

Yeah. Famous last words.

Kind of like "Everyone said I was daft to build a castle on a swamp, but I built it all the same, just to show them."

As it turns out, the eBook world is a mess. There's Kindle. That only supports Mobipocket, Topaz and AZW (Amazon's DRM-wrapped Mobipocket). Sony, Barnes & Noble, Adobe and Apple all support ePub, but ePub is a notoriously shaky standard. Implementations vary greatly, and each vendor has ignored portions of the standard and extended it in non-standard ways.

All that chaos aside, eBook standards are actually pretty simple, where "simple" equals "restrictive." That's not to say you can't design and produce an attractive eBook, you just have to look at your tools in new and different ways. I dusted off my inDesign and Dreamweaver, pulled up a few tutorial videos and eBook blogs, and got to it.

So remember that bit about the eBook world being a mess? Yeah. It took a few hours to beat inDesign into submission, and a few more hours to get it to export a rudimentary ePub book with decent flow and navigation. I reached a point where I could quit and went out to drink. The next day I spent more time whipping my new ePub book into shape with a nice design, well as nice as I could both produce myself and display on an eReader.

In the process, I encountered a lot of bugs and undocumented (or at least inadequately documented)

features. That's just within inDesign, Adobe Digital Editions and iBooks. We'll see how well other readers display this.

Still, I think it's worth it. What you see before you is an eReader 'zine. It looks pretty nice, if I say so myself. It's got content, and the process of creating the 'zine makes it easy to publish that content.

It's my hope that you will enjoy it.

About the Author

Andrew Trembley is your esteemed editor. By day (for varying definitions of "day") he runs an email system for a public university.

How to Make a Terrible Documentary

Chris Garcia

It was like they knew exactly what button to push to get me to humiliate myself. For years, hell, DECADES, I've wanted a high-quality video camera. I've had terrible cameras, Hi-8 being the best of them, but a real HD video camera? I've never had enough money to even consider being one of them. Cinequest, the film festival I've volunteered for since 2000, offered to let me have a Cisco Flip Camera *if* I could make a movie with it to show at an upcoming digital arts festival. How could I say no? What choice did I have?

I've produced a half-dozen short films and a feature-length documentary, but I've never made a film myself. I'm of the 'write checks and wipe noses' school of production. I have no idea how to light, how to edit, how to do anything technical at all. When I got the call, I figured I'd get some folks together to do the heavy-lifting and then we'd do it as a group. This would have been a great idea, except my filmmaker friends are friends I made from hanging out around Cinequest, so many of them had already been called

on to make their own movies. This limited my options, and when I started asking around, no one was available to help me out. I spent a week trying to come up with a crew, and then I figured it out – I was on my own.

I gave this some time to sink in. It wasn't ideal, I knew that, but if I kept it simple, I could make it happen. I started to sketch out ideas and I finally came up with something through a bit of luck. A group of Steampunks were having a picnic and after that, they were coming up to the Computer History Museum to get some photos and see a demo of the Babbage Engine, our 19th Century Technology computer that we've had for the last couple of years. I knew that my co-editor for *Exhibition Hall*, Ariane Wolfe, would be there, so I would interview her, and then I'd get a four minute tracking shot of the steampunks enjoying the engine, some close-ups of the engine operating, and then lay that video over Ariane's interview. This would be very nice, and as a long-time fan of tracking shots, it would make me happy.

This would have worked, but there were two problems. Without any crew, I would be shooting it all myself, and as I had no equipment, I wouldn't be able to light and I'd have to use the sound off the

camera. This wasn't ideal, but what other choice did I have? The time came, and I made a simple SteadiCam using a small still camera tripod and a pair of large C-clamps. I was rather proud of it. It wasn't great, but again, it's what I could make happen. It was heavy as hell, but that was OK; I am willing to suffer for my art.

The folks showed up and they went off to the demo... along with about a similar number of non-steampunk. This was OK, I could show how they were mixing in with the regular folks, but there was a problem: space. There was no way I could get a single long shot with all those people around. I could only get shorter shots, which I'd have to splice together. This sucked because I didn't know how to edit! Troubling! I got some footage, and that was that. I then interviewed Ariane and she was amazing. She answered 5 questions, all of which came out great. I loved the way she did it, and since I wasn't going to be using the footage, I just sorta set the camera down and let it run very close, so I'd get the best possible sound off the camera.

Now, this Flip Camera was great. The video quality was Ultra HD, crisp, clear and amazing. The sound was amazing, but I didn't know that at the time. I had no way to watch the footage except off the tiny

2.5 inch diagonal screen on the back of the camera and the tiny speaker. The system requirements for the camera were nuts. Literally every computer made more than two years ago would be useless for the camera, couldn't load the software, format the images. This made it ever worse since I don't have access to any computers that could possibly use the camera, and that made it even harder. One of the guys at work had a MacBook I could use, but only for a couple of hours. It was better than nothing, so I jumped on it.

This was bad.

I had three hours to import the videos, *LEARN HOW TO USE IMOVIE!*, and then edit the footage into some sort of shape. This was not easy, but after managing to import everything, I picked it up pretty fast. I got the basics, and after about twenty minutes, I had figured out how to detach audio, which made it possible to actually do what I had conceived of... only without the footage that would have made it possible. Still, after fiddling with it, I had this soundtrack that was really good, the microphone on the camera was really good and the video quality, while poorly-lit, was very clean, very sharp. The editing was terrible. The camera was shaky, though better than if I hadn't used the World's Cheapest

SteadyCam, and the timing was off because I didn't have time to trim the clips to fit proper, so it sorta seemed like a bunch of random images put over a decent interview.

There were a couple of piece where Ariane would talk about something and the footage would fit right nicely, like the time she said she liked the brass and technology, and I happened to be on a shot of the Babbage Engine, which was nice. If I had been doing this a radio documentary, it would have been dope.

So, I turned it in. I still haven't heard if they're going to use it, I don't mind either way. If they use it, I'll have a terrible documentary shown at a huge digital arts festival. If not... well, then they have taste.

I just hope they let me keep the camera!

About the Author

Chris Garcia is a part-time filmmaker, part-time faneditor, less-time-than-he-should historian and museum curator and a full-time raconteur. You can find his other writings in fine 'zines like *Journey Planet* and *Exhibition Hall*. You can find more of his other writings in *The Drink Tank*.

Kittonlife

Cricket J. Greebo

Today I tried something new. It was very exciting.

My name is Cricket J. Greebo, but some people call me the Kitton. I am the best Kitton. I am the only Kitton. I live with Mr. Lance and Ms. Joanne. I also live with the other Kittons, I am not sure how to feel about that. They are not me, but they are Kittons. I am the only Kitton. But now I live with Other Kittons. It is Too Confusing Entirely. I will tell you about something else now.

I came here in a Box in the Car. I don't like the Box and I don't like the Car. Not at all. They are not Nice. I do not recommend the Box and the Car to anyone. Noone at all. When I got out of the Box, I was very Fraidy, so I hid under the sleeping bag. That was better. When you hide, noone can see you and you are safe. If you hide really well, noone can put you in the Box. This is Important.

I came out and explored the bedroom. It was Nice. There was my Water Dish and a bowl of Food and the Litter Box. That is how it should be. There are many Doors in the bedroom - one for the Bathroom, one for the House, and one for the Closet. I ran very fast and hid in the Closet. That is nice.

When you hide in the Closet, you can see out, but noone can see you. That is better than the sleeping bag. You can see more. It is Important to see more. Then you can watch for people and Other Kittons.

Then I went out and explored the apartment. That was very different. There are many rooms, and there is a Window Seat. I like the Window Seat. You can jump on it if you are a good jumper. I am a good jumper. You jump up, and then you can see Outside. When you can see Outside, that is the best thing. You can watch and see what the Other Kittons and Humans and Dogs are doing. That is very good. You can see them. They can see you. But, they can't get you. This is very Important.

Today was very exciting! I jumped off the Window Seat and walked around the whole apartment. There are many doors. But there are two doors that are the most Important doors. Those are the doors that go Outside. You can tell those doors are different because they smell like Outside. It is hard to go Outside. The humans will try to stop you. They will pick you up and put you back Inside. They get Fraidy when you try to go Outside. But I did it!

I walked very quietly and slowly to the Laundry Room. That is a room with noisy machines. They have Water in them. They are inside the house. I

don't like it. It is not right to put water inside the house. You should not do it. But I was very Brave. I walked to the Laundry Room and there were more Doors there. There is a door to the Bedroom, a door to the Closet, a door to the Other Closet. Those are the Wrong Doors. You don't want them. There is one more Door, that is the best one. That is the Door to Outside.

I found the Door to Outside. It was open. It was propped open with a little chair. I was so slow and so careful. I walked to the Door. Then I walked through the Door. I went through the Door and Outside. I was very Careful. Joanne didn't see me. Mr. Lance didn't see me. I was very Careful. I walked outside and onto the Step. The Step is how you go up and down. It is very exciting. If you have a Step, you don't have to jump. This is good. Humans are not good jumpers, so they like the Steps. I sat on the Step and looked around. I could see a Deck and a Fence and many Plants.

Then I walked off the Step and onto the Deck. The Plants are in a Planter. That is full of Dirt. The Dirt smells good and I like the way it feels. It is cool and nice on my tummy. I jumped in the Planter. Because I am a good Jumper. Then I went in the Dirt. I like it Outside.

Joanne came to the Deck and saw me. She did not get mad. She did not get Fraidy. She just laughed and smiled. Then she took me Inside again. I didn't like it. She said I have to go to the Vet for the Shots. That will be something new too.

About the Author

Cricket J. Greebo knows you can't have something scientific without a kitton.

Administrivia

Andrew Trembley

It's almost over, at least until next ish.

Submissions Guidelines

If you've got something you would like to see on an eReader, please send it to submissions@ereaderzine.com.

This is obviously an ezine, so there's not a lot of limitations on article lengths. Art, on the other hand, may have to be chrushed down to an appropriate size.

This is a pseudorandom 'zine, so there may or may not be a theme.

Articles and art gleefully accepted (don't make me regret that statement).

LoC's

We love to hear from readers. It boosts up the page count and makes this look like a more substantial 'zine. If you want to send a letter of comment, you can email it to letters@ereaderzine.com.

Bugs

Yeah, I know, who ever heard of a 'zine with bugs?

If you've found any bugs in this ezine, send as much information as you can to bugs@ereaderzine.com (so I can gripe about them, and perhaps avoid them in the future).

Bugs and design flaws found this time 'round

I can't begin to enumerate them.

Sorry, that's a lie. Here are a few choice ones:

Widow/Orphan control in ePub is possible, but getting inDesign to apply the right <div> tags is beyond me at the moment. Not fixed.

iTunes covers use a non-standard metadata tag that inDesign doesn't create. Each time I rebuild the ePub, I have to re-add this item to the content manually. I'm not sure if I want to qualify this as an inDesign bug, an iTunes bug or a basic ePub bug, but I can work around it.

Adobe Digital Editions doesn't scale the cover art for the 'zine to fit in the window. Everything else I've tested does. Bad, bad Adobe Digital Editions. Not fixable.

The legalesqe bits

iKinook Reader #1 is edited and published by Andrew Trembley. Submitted content is published by permission of the authors and artists, who retain

their copyrights.