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## Wading into the Paperless Office

Many of you, *Wired* has begun wading into the electronic publishing ocean. While we haven't yet discovered the perfect boat to use in, we're happy to report that we have located a serviceable set of wings.

Adobe's Acrobat is a document description language intended to use electronic documents that look like their paper counterparts. Pretty well rounded, though somewhat limited, in its features. The interface currently consists of three Acrobat apps: Acrobat Reader will create Portable Document Format (PDF) files from most applications through the PDF Writer utility. The Acrobat Distiller is used to make PDF files from PostScript output of complex documents and page-layout files. Acrobat Reader contains document display, text editing and printing functions.

Acrobat maintains the integrity of the design of a document in a compressed file. Artwork can be compressed using either JPEG



**Acrobat:** Make electronic documents that look like their paper versions.

or ZIP compression methods. Text can be searched or copied for use in a different application. Any part of a PDF file is linkable to any other part of the file. By using Exchange you can create a rudimentary but effective database for any PDF file. Acrobat uses a couple of generic multiple-resolution fonts to adequately emulate most typefaces; or you can include specific fonts in the PDF file, as long as they are Adobe fonts. Use of other companies' fonts might be a copyright violation. Including fonts that increase the file size, however.

Though the retail price is about \$25, Acrobat Reader will be available at a lower cost. For a couple of weeks last September it was available through ZiffNet on CompuServe for the price of the download, and it should be showing up on various CD-ROMs in the near future. The interface would serve as a more than adequate front-end for creating a publication on CD-ROM. But it's not the interface for interactive publishing: Don't hold your breath waiting for links to audio or video files. — Eugene Mosier

Acrobat Reader Kit (10 users): US\$700. Adobe Systems: (800) 272-3623, +1 (415) 961-4400. Check for PDF files from the pages of *Wired* in the *Wired* area on America Online.

## Cure for the Crooked Neck

Plantronics makes the Cadillac of telephone headgear. The PLX-400 and the PLX-500, aimed at small businesses and work-at-home professionals, both weigh under two ounces. The reversible boom lets you wear the set over either ear while the microphone picks up your every word. While not CD-quality, the sound is still pretty good: Gone are the echo and wind-tunnel effects that have plagued consumer headsets for years.

The PLX-400 has a built-in telephone keypad, complete with redial and "flash" buttons. The PLX-500 plugs into a conventional telephone



### Posture protection.

through the headset jack, making it ideal for multi-line phones and digital PBX systems. Both units feature a volume control and a mute button.

Best of all, these headsets let me talk on the phone while using both hands to type, straighten my desk, or cook dinner — all without having to hold the telephone cocked between my ear and shoulder. That, plus a few trips to a massage therapist, should cure the neck and shoulder problems I've been having for the past few years. — Simon L. Garfinkel

PLX-500: US\$69.95, PLX-400: US\$79.95 Plantronics: (800) 544-4660, +1 (408) 426-5858.

## Surrealistic Puzzles

In a computer game, it's not to be reminded that it's music, and a strong experience. Such is the case with the brothers Rand and Rob's programs *Munhole* and *Myst*.

The CD-ROM-based *Munhole* is the most intense virtual journey I've seen. It's a brilliantly designed set of mazes, puzzles, and traps. The standard for this type of adventure game is the photo-realistic puzzle type adventure game. The abilities of a motion picture.

The story behind *Munhole* is the invention of Atrus, and his architectural marvels. It's a puzzle to piece together the man and his family. As one

## Japanize Your Code

*Understanding Japanese Information Processing* (with convenient "lay-flat" binding) is a nerd's-eye view of the problems of cracking the Japanese software market. In particular, the process of making Japanese-language software. While there's more technical detail than the average *Wired* reader will want to wallow in, it's worth taking a look because it shows just how



### Buzzword: Japanization

complicated it is to get a computer to work in Japanese — a language with four different sets of characters (one Western, two Japanese, and one Chinese) containing over 10,000 symbols. And despite all the brouhaha about penetrating Japanese markets, no such book seems to have been written before — John Browning

*Understanding Japanese Information Processing*, by Ken Lunde, US\$29.95. O'Reilly & Associates, (800) 998-9938, +1 (707) 829-0515.

### Puzzles — not buttons.

of lapping waves, the dark mystery begins.

It appears that Atrus's books that physically describe. But something were destroyed in the process. By solving *Munhole*, alternate worlds to solve.

The multiple world palette of colors, seen behind each world, the complexity of the "sets," surprise. While playing their radiance.

The only common good book, one rush quickly. Don't fret it.

So, take your time. *Myst* requires a hard disk space and works. — Gareth Bran

*Myst*, \$59.95, Brudersbund (800)