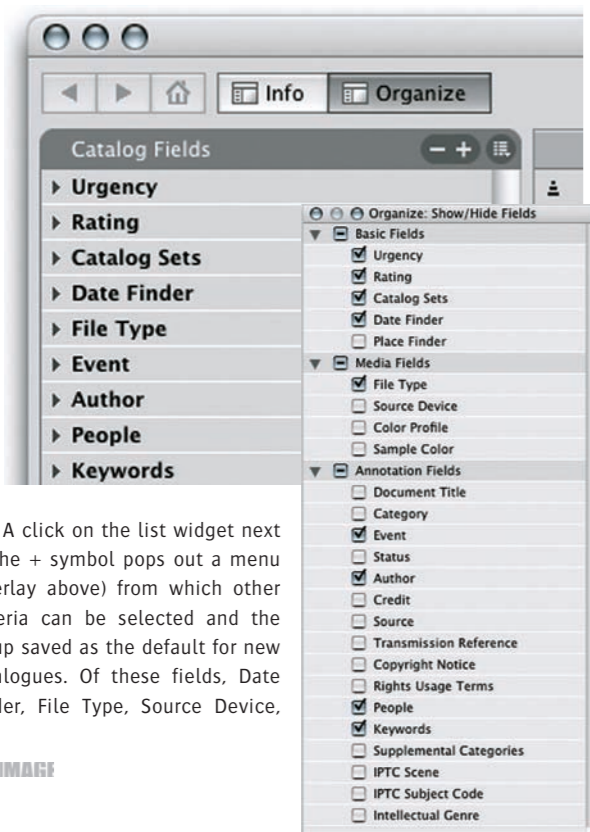


## THE ACADEMY OF PLUMBING 9 – GETTING ORGANISED: HOPE LIVES E(X)TERNAL

Ha! Next week, he said, last month. It's fortunate I have such understanding clients, isn't it? I have to have, being an incorrigible purveyor of puns as crap as this month's headline. Anyway, if you've been following along at home you'll now be keeping your important data within your Home folder, be a dab hand at file navigation in OS X using nowt but a pair of Finder windows set to Column view, and whacking things under the Spotlight with abandon. However, as we also discovered last week, even though Spotlight can look inside text and text-based documents, Apple haven't seen fit to allow it to look at all image file metadata. I wonder why not? Spotlight's abilities can be extended by using plug-ins and this looks to me like an opportunity for an enterprising programmer to write a full-featured image-metadata plug-in, but sadly I am not that programmer and even if I were, Spotlight cannot search disks which are not connected and online. We therefore have to turn to third party tools, of which there are many, but the one I'll refer to most is iView MediaPro (<http://www.iView-multimedia.com>), or Microsoft Expression Media is it is henceforth to be known.

### EYE THAT VIEW

Apple has done a decent job with its preset choice of folders within your Home folder, and by default, image files are routed to your Pictures folder when imported by iPhoto or its pal Image Capture. This is all well and good for consumers but we tend to need rather more storage than that, to back it up, and to make it available across our studio networks. Where to put it? An external drive or several is the answer and we know all about them already. But how do we find our data when it's spread around all over the place on external drives, some of which might not be connected to your Macintosh? We store records of it in iView MediaPro catalogues, that's how, and use them to find our stuff based on a whole load of file attributes that we haven't even had to bother to put in there ourselves, because the Finder, EXIF and IPTC did it for us. Here's what iView MediaPro 3 can use by default to find files:

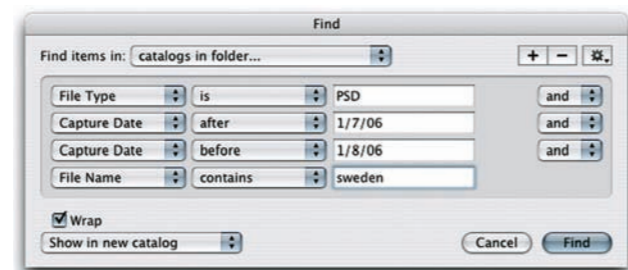


A click on the list widget next to the + symbol pops out a menu (overlay above) from which other criteria can be selected and the setup saved as the default for new catalogues. Of these fields, Date Finder, File Type, Source Device,



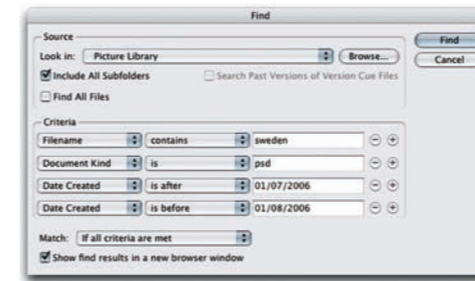
Colour Profile and, if set up in your camera, Source are all data types which already exist in your image files, no matter which format they are in. Here's a shoot chosen at random (above), and dropped into an iView MediaPro catalogue set to only display files in the Adobe RGB colourspace:

Without any effort whatsoever on my part, iView MediaPro makes it pretty easy to locate a specific image or set of images from my archive. Things get even more efficient if I properly annotate my pictures with captions, genres and keywords, as I will discuss next month, because all of these become search criteria and grist to the mill for iView MediaPro's Find function. Let's have a look at it, still based upon default information. I shot some stuff in Sweden last July and prepared some of those files as layered Photoshop documents for printing. Now I can't remember where I put them or in which catalogue I saved them. So, I set up the Find window thus. iView MediaPro asks me where I want to search and I select my entire Picture Archive volume. It then proceeds to search on these criteria through all catalogues on that volume, whether open or not, and reveal the results in a new, blank catalogue. I quickly find what I'm looking for.



### FAIR, BALANCED AND IMPARTIAL

iView MediaPro is an excellent, deep, powerful application that can do far more than is referred to here. Microsoft recently bought it though, and who knows what it might morph into (a Windows-only video encoding and asset management tool, by the look of it), so it's



best to have an eye on possible alternatives. Adobe Bridge can also search on criteria like these, although not nearly as many. Here's Bridge's search window similarly set up (above).

Unfortunately, in this case, for a search to work the image volumes have to be online. Bridge's search window is much more tedious to set up than iView MediaPro's, as it doesn't retain its setup between finds, and it searches rather more slowly because it has to read the metadata within every file on the volume being searched, whereas iView MediaPro only looks inside its own catalogue files. Bridge 2 is likely to be an improvement. Bridge's main advantages over iView MediaPro are that images don't have to have been previously saved in catalogues, and that it comes free with Photoshop CS2. Ironically, a simple online search such as this is well within Spotlight's powers and results are returned within a couple of seconds, rather than a minute or so for iView MediaPro and many minutes for Bridge 1. Where's that programmer?

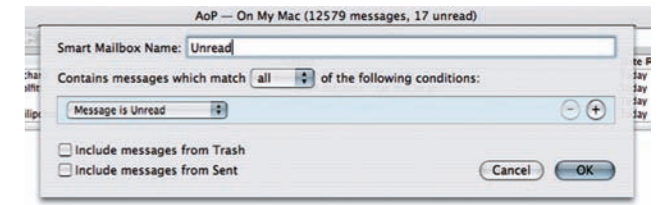
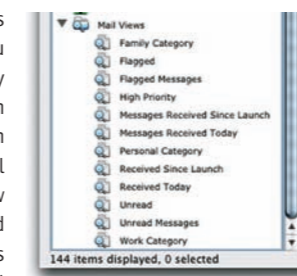


You'll notice the Save button underneath the Search field in this window's title bar. This creates a cute little Smart Folder object which, if double-clicked, expands into a window containing all of those found objects, no matter where they might be located. Handy.

### NAIL THAT MAIL

Smart Folders are quite a smart idea. While we're on the subject of finding things, lets look at something close to all of our hearts: email. In my experience, most of you use either Microsoft Entourage or Apple Mail for email. Entourage has a very useful little feature it calls Mail Views, found in the folder list at the left-hand side of the Main viewer window.

Of most interest here is probably the Unread view. If you use Mail Rules to automatically file messages into folders you can easily miss an unread mail. It can also be tedious to click through all of your folders to read new messages that have been routed into them. Unread simply presents you with all of your unread email messages in one list, no matter which folder they might reside in. This is very handy, and along with Received Today was about the only overview of my email I ever used when I used Entourage. For various reasons I switched to Apple Mail, and immediately missed these consolidated overviews of my email. Smart Folders to the rescue. Here's what you do, to emulate Unread in Apple Mail: From Mail's Message menu, select New Smart Mailbox. Set up the popdown sheet which appears in this way (above right):



A new Smart Folder will appear in the folder list. When clicked on it will display all of your email messages currently flagged as unread. I also find it useful to have Smart Mailboxes for Today's Mail, Yesterday's Mail and This Week's Mail. You can save email searches as Smart Mailboxes, so if for any reason I want to review my correspondence history with a particular contact or group, a few clicks to set up the appropriate search and I can, no matter how I might have filed the original emails. This kind of thing is exactly what computers are for: taking the pain out of finding stuff. It's ironic that so many of us continue to laboriously mouse around when a few minutes setup is all it takes to create genuinely productivity-enhancing thingsies such as these.

### Shortcuts

If you want to be really productive with your computer, Mac or PC, you should aim to be in a position in which you wait for it to think, and not vice-versa. Apart from maximising your computer's RAM memory, the best way to achieve this is to learn the keyboard shortcuts associated with menu entries. They are easy to learn because they tend to be very consistent between applications, for which we must all thank Apple's original team of human interface designers and its stringent programming guidelines. In comparison, the PC was a nightmare of inconsistency until Microsoft finally started to lay the law down around the time of Windows 95, by which time the Mac had enjoyed operational consistency for ten years.

Click on any menu in the Menu Bar and look at the commands listed therein. At the right of the menu, opposite many of these commands, will be a combination of modifier and letter or number keys. Press the combination down together and whichever menu command they refer to will be carried out without the need to mouse to a menu and select it. Save... is always Apple-S; Open... is Apple-O; New... is Apple-N and so on. Some of these shortcuts can be changed and added to: Open the Keyboard and Mouse System Preference, click on Keyboard Shortcuts and have a fiddle. You'll speed yourself up in no time.

### DISASTER RECOVERY

I find many people still without a backup strategy in place. Fair enough: your choice, but ask yourself: what would you really like to lose least of all? Apart from your snaps, probably your email, contacts and diary. Right then. They live here:

- All of Microsoft Entourage's data lives within the Microsoft User Data folder, found within the Documents folder in your Home folder. Drag this folder to another drive and you have a complete backup.
- Apple Mail keeps its data in the Mail folder within your Home folder's Library folder.
- Address Book and iCal keep their data in the AddressBook and iCal folders within the Application Support folder in that same Library folder.
- Your email and other passwords are stored in your Keychain, located in the Keychains folder within your Home Library folder. That's it.