



## Review by Pete Burkindine



5.0 Stars – 1 Star Poor, 5 Stars Excellent

**Title:** TextSpresso

**Version:** 1.2

**Developer:** Taylor Design

**Price:** \$29

**Contact Info:** <http://www.taylor-design.com/>

**Genre:** Text Editor

**Requirements:** Any Mac or 100% compatible with a 68020 or higher processor, Mac OS 7.x or higher, at least 2.5 MB of hard disk space, 2 MB of free RAM for PowerPC, and 2.5 MB free RAM for 680x0.



## The Problem with the World Today...

All you punk kids, that's what! Using your Microsoft Word, and your AppleWorks! Back in **my** day, we edited text by hand! None of this fancy-schmancy styling and graphics, no sir, just plain old-fashioned text. Notepad and TeachText, that's what I grew up on, and it was good enough for me! And don't even get me **started** about your WYSIWYG HTML editors! Lazy ingrates! You can't learn a few simple commands?

For people like me, there's only been one choice for brute text editing — BBEdit, from Bare Bones Software. It's fast and feature-rich, and, as Bare Bones says, "It doesn't suck™." Only problem is, the full version is hellishly expensive at \$119, and BBEdit Lite (the freeware baby brother of BBEdit) just can't do everything we rugged freehand editors need.

What were those of us in the low, low, low income bracket to do? Edit our web pages with SimpleText, 32k at a time? Resort to Windows? Surely, we thought, a day will come when text editing will be powerful and cheap!

Well, that's a tad melodramatic. I'm just trying to set you up because the product I got to check out this month wowed me, and I want you to buy it. It's called TextSpesso, it's from a company called Taylor Design. It's won awards out the yin-yang. It's poised to fill the niche left open by Bare Bones — inexpensive software for people who need a lot of functionality.



## **It's Just a Text Editor, Right?**

"What's the big deal?", I thought to myself when I first heard about TextSpesso. The market is flooded with cheap or free text editors trying to outdo SimpleText without diving overboard into the realm of word processing giants. I didn't think a text editor could possibly impress me without writing my midterms for me, or possibly formulating a procedural plan for world domination and carrying it out in the background.

The thing that makes TextSpesso different is this: it brings text cleaning into your text editor. One of my first reviews for this magazine was a comparison of textSOAP and TextCleaner Lite, two utilities designed to remove or replace undesirable elements in your text files. They were both fine, but very limited, and I can't say I've used either one much over the following year or so. TextSpesso, on the other hand, does everything either of them can do (and quite a bit more) to clean your text, and also has the advantage of being a completely functional and powerful text editor. Let's get down to it and have a closer look...

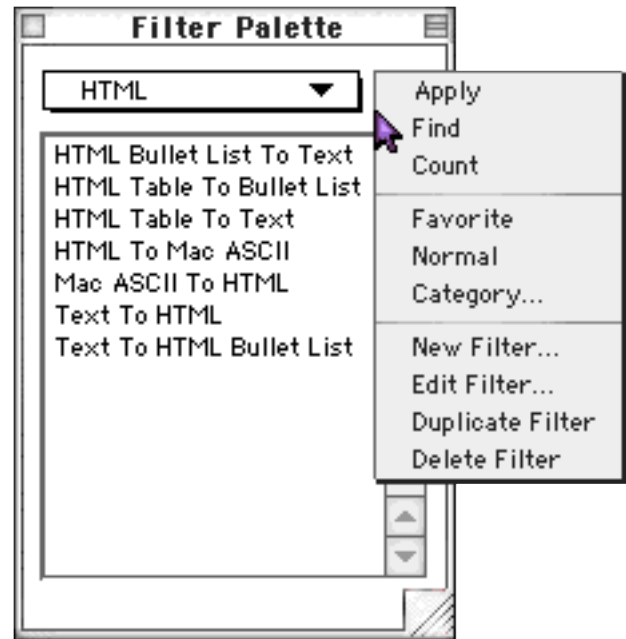


## **Clean As a Whistle**

I'm assuming most of my readers know how text editing works, so I'm not going to talk a terrific lot about the trivial and uninteresting aspects of this product. (TextSpesso features Letter-by-Letter Typing™®© and automatic carriage-return action when the end of the line is reached! Amazing!) What I do want to talk about are all the innovative and smart ideas Taylor Designs put into TextSpesso.

We'll start with a look at the fantastically amazing and useful text cleaner. The task most people use text cleaners for is a fairly mundane one — cleaning all the forwarding >'s out of a joke they had e-mailed so they can print it and stick it on their cubicle. What they **could** use a text cleaner for is another story — preparing their book to be published, putting their theses online, printing important emails for their records, or even pretending to be working while playing Quake 3 (ahem, Morgan).

So what does a good text cleaner do? This one comes with 90 built-in filters, about four times more than any of the other text cleaners, each of which can cull through your text for some specific problem spot — say, multiple spaces or HTML tags — and eliminate it or replace it with something more appropriate. It also has a powerful filter editor you can use to get rid of whatever you want. I really don't like that letter "g" you're always seeing, and I can finally do something about it. 25 letters is plenty! Who's with me?



## Filters of Choice (for the Discriminating Gentleman)

It's a tough thing to paw through all 90 included filters and come out with the few that are most useful. Fortunately, Taylor Design has grouped them into several categories, and has also included a section for you to store your favorites. There are filters to strip out extra carriage returns, filters to change everything to lower- or uppercase, and filters to change "smart" to "dumb" quotes; filters to convert your text files from PC formatting to Mac formatting; and filters that keep your oil clean for 6,000 miles or more. Still, I think I get the most use out of the suite of filters Taylor Design puts in the Favorite category. Each of these half-dozen filters performs a range of functions that clean up internet text, switch Mac text to PC and vice versa, and prepare your text files for net or paper publication.



## That Test I Did Last Time

Since we're cleaning up text, I delved into my vast and comprehensive collection of back issues to find the perfect test to put TextSpresso's cleaning capabilities through their paces. The first person to correctly identify the past issue it came from will have wasted their time, and receive a great prize of my choosing. Enter now, and enter often! Official rules may vary.

The text to be cleaned is a mockup of a reasonably realistic e-mail you might receive and decide to print. I ran it through the Net to Text cleaner, which does a suite of stuff to the text, and timed it with my iWatch™.

Without any more ado:

### The Original:

**HEY BILL!**

Just got your last message:

>> Hey Steve,

>> Just wondering if you felt like a round of golf

>> next Tuesday . I know I do!

>> Say hi to joanie,

>> Bill

re: the golf, sounds fantastic, count me *in*! Joanie says hi back, and to come over and visit. Here's a story I got off the internet (<http://www.urban-legends.com>), tell me whatya think...

Hard Drive Icon Takes Over Manhattan

A hard drive icon from a Manhattan women's Apple Macintosh Performa 430 took over the city of Manhattan today. Its motives were unclear.

Catcha at the links,  
Steve

### The Output:

HEY BILL! Just got your last message: Hey Steve, Just wondering if you felt like a round of golf next Tuesday . I know I do! Say hi to joanie, Bill

re: the golf, sounds fantastic, count me in! Joanie says hi back, and to come over and visit. Here's a story I got off the internet (<http://www.urban-legends.com>), tell me whatya think... Hard Drive Icon Takes Over Manhattan A hard drive icon from a Manhattan women's Apple Macintosh Performa 430 took over the city of Manhattan today. Its motives were unclear.

Catcha at the links, Steve

### Too Close to Call:

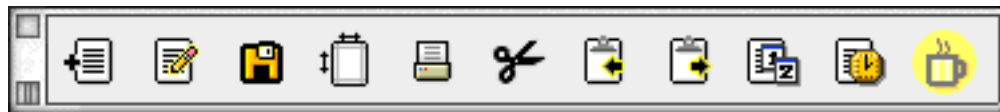
The output is almost identical to textSOAP, and it happened so fast I couldn't time it, so we'll call it "<1 second." It does what it ought to, and it does it fast.



## The REALLY Neat Stuff

My major gripe with the folks at Taylor design is that they are not advertising TextSpresso as well as they should. Sure, it's a text cleaner, but it does so much more, with so much style and grace, that they really miss out on their core audience — people who need a cheap, good text editor.

My favorite things about TextSpresso are all the small touches they put in to make it more useful. For instance, on the well-drawn toolbar



is a button (right next to the coffee cup) that inserts a convenient time stamp into your text, so you can remind your friends that their worthless lives are slowly ticking away with every e-mail. It's also the only text editor I've ever used that has its own cursor (at right) and a selection of a dozen different "busy" cursors, including a HeliCar and the infamous DogCow.

Another powerful feature, called HotFilter, allows you to clean the text in any open application with a keystroke. After assigning a hotkey or even a hot corner of the screen, the user can pull up a window allowing them to select any filter and apply it to selected text. I tried it in Microsoft Word, BBEdit and SimpleText, with the same perfect results in each.

Some other features that I think are really great:

- Autosave that's more powerful and smarter than any word processor's.
- Powerful and fast batch processing.
- Multithreading — even on older systems, without Thread Manager!
- Multi-level undo, made possible by a history list akin to Photoshop's. This feature allows you to go back and compare old versions of what you're working on with nothing more than a click.
- A handy set of filters that does the tedious work of converting a plain text file to an HTML file for you. It's pretty basic, but it can be a real time-saver if you have a lot of files to deal with.
- Menu items to select a word, sentence or paragraph.



## Packaging

I've always been a big proponent of good packaging. Nothing adds more to the life of a product than an attractive and easy-to-understand interface, and TextSpesso has just that. Modern, hip, and well-made icons and custom cursors make the screen a pleasure to look at — a built-in balloon help viewer allows you to find out what anything you point at does without a break in the action — and a free memory indicator lets you know when to save and get the heck out of Dodge. The included HTML manual is comprehensive and well-written, a rare and refreshing break from the terse and mediocre documentation accompanying most internet-downloaded software.



## Whine, Complain, Moan

It's hard to fault this program, but it would be impossible if they added a feature or two. The best step towards near-perfection would be adding an HTML palette and HTML coloring. Also conspicuously missing is a find feature, an unfortunate and annoying omission that limits its usefulness for large-scale editing. With these additions, TextSpesso would leap ahead of BBEdit Lite and become the text editor of choice for those who can't afford BBEdit.



## Why to Buy

What can I say? It's a great program. Its main fault is more of misdirection than any single missing feature. Taylor Design doesn't seem to realize how powerful their program is, and are calling it the best text cleaner on the market. With minor modification, it could be the best text **editor** on the market, and I hope I get to see that happen in my lifetime. You danged whipper-snappers... no respect...

### URLs From this Article:

- Go! ➡ <http://www.taylor-design.com/>
- Go! ➡ <http://www.barebones.com/>
- Go! ➡ <http://www.microsoft.com/>
- Go! ➡ <http://www.studio405.com/textcleaner/>
- Go! ➡ <http://www.unmarked.com/>



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