

# *Philofaxy* *2005*

## **BLogBooker**

From Blog to Book.

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# Chapter 1

## 2005

### 1.1 October

#### In the beginning... (2005-10-31 12:35) - Spiral Stairs

In the beginning, there was paper. And it was good. On that paper, I wrote facts, appointments, numbers, and other data of all sorts. And that paper required no synchronization. It required no travel chargers; no screen protectors; no spare styli; no third-party software. It required only a writing instrument, ink, and pressure applied by my wrist sufficient to affix the ink to the paper.

Then came the Fall.

On the sixth day (or circa 1999), I abandoned paper in favor of the Device, a portable electronic machine that, unlike paper, did require travel chargers, screen protectors, spare styli, and third-party software. Slowly, my life seeped out of the paper world and into the digital world of the Device. Appointments went first, followed by phone numbers. Then came shopping lists. And my checkbook register. Soon, my entire life was summarized and collated into digital bins stored inscrutably inside the Device.

The Device gave me a sense of confidence and freedom. I could pick it up without additional thought as to what I needed it for. Whatever eventuality arose in the course of my day, it contained the answer. I coddled the Device, my precious, in brushed steel cases, caressing its glass screen with expensive styli. I gave it all the best third-party software; nothing was too fine for the Device. I even upgraded the Device several times, ushering out the old with a solemn nod and indoctrinating its replacement in a sea of love, with new protective cases and screen coverings.

Paper was a quaint prop from a period piece. Paper was for simpletons, or at least people with simple lives. My life exceeded the bounds of the analog and could be kept in check only by the unbending rules of the digital world. Paper tears and decays; bytes persist forever.

Or so I thought.

A series of problems befell the computer with which the Device mated on a daily basis. The problems were not insurmountable, but solutions were difficult because the computer was ruled by the iron fist of The IT Department. The IT Department frowned on my efforts to install the Device's software on the computer. They "do not support third-party software," said The IT Department. Somehow, though, I thwarted their dominance and succeeded in reinstalling the Device's software.

Then it happened again. And again. And each time, the Device began to feel more like a burden. And other problems arose. I found it very difficult to mate the device with two computers – at home and work – without causing many problems. The Device was testy, perhaps upset with the periodic trauma of reinstallation and recovery. As the Device began to feel burdensome, I felt hopeless. Yes, the Device sucked. But what else could a man do?

It hit me one day as I fumbled with the Device, attempting to translate arcane scribbles on its screen into recognizable text. I remembered the substance that had sustained me in ancient times. A substance that, alchemically combined with ink, could be manipulated in infinite ways. A substance that, depending on my mood, could be as strictly rule-bound as any computer or as free-form as an artist's canvas.

Paper.

I set aside the Device, and bought a Filofax. And it was good. No, great.

The Device now gathers dust, and the Filofax gathers no moss. I carry it with me around the house, to the bathroom, to the family room. I set it next to me in bed.

My relationship with the Filofax is in its infancy. My return to paper occurred in earnest only a couple weeks ago. But I have found there is very little on the internet in the way of planner-love. I know there are others out there, secretly laboring as members of my brotherhood. Planner-lovers, unite! You may be a devotee of Filofax, Day Timer, Day Runner, Franklin Covey, Exacompta, or wall calendars with photographs of puppies and kittens. It matters not. Rejoice in the experience of pen to paper. Rejoice in the use of alphabetic tabs. Rejoice in the critical decisions a planner maker must use: Week on a page? Week on two pages? Page-a-day? Notebook-size? Pocket-size? It's all glorious!

Let us celebrate. And, on the seventh day, let us pencil in, "Rest."

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Fredrik Nordstrom (2005-10-31 15:08:00)

### **The love of pen and paper**

I have had the exact experience as you , with the Device becoming more of a burden than a resource in my everyday life. The Device needed endless updates, synchronizations, software configurations and to mention the worst... it needed charging after just a few hours of work! It ended up with me being afraid of entering stuff into the Device, because who knew how long the battery would continue to keep my notes alive. I'm now, like you, using normal paper planners instead of those evil 1's and 0's, and I will never go back.

I think it will take quite some time before we humans give up pen and paper... if ever it will happen.

Congrats to a very well-written text.

*Fredrik Nordstrom, Sweden*

[fredrik.nordstrom[at]gmail.com]

Anonymous (2005-10-31 16:07:00)

You hit the nail on the head. I have tried to embrace the Device, but without much luck. Save the phone book capabilities, I have not found the Device to be of much use. As far as paper is concerned, you name it, I've used it. Franklin(all sizes) as well as Daytimer and a brief run at the Filofax. Right now, a Month at a Glance and yellow pad are working, but I would like to condense without the creepy Franklin cult/ vaguely conservative religious /feeling. I have an old model Filofax binder that I may put to use. Good luck with the hacks

ana (2005-12-09 16:44:00)

I have been a devotee of The Device for many years now. I'm actually on my second generation of The Device but I frequently long for the simplicity of the paper organizer. Sure, The Device will beep at me to remind me to attend a meeting, feed the cats or stop for milk but I don't store my grocery lists in the Device, for that I resort to scraps of paper, the back of an envelope or the ubiquitous office 3x5. I'm torn between a return to the days without electrical chargers and touch-screen styli and that need to be reminded to scurry off to a meeting. Thanks for giving me something to consider.

Anonymous (2006-12-22 07:54:00)

My first device died in the washing machine. The all singing replacement became cumbersome and unreliable.

I am now going to try a classic filofax. If nothing else this looks good and is a fraction of the price of a worthy device.

## **Choosing My Weapon (2005-10-31 14:23) - Spiral Stairs**

Even though I had organized my life by the byte for several years before making my recent switch, I have a background in paper-usage. During college, I used a Filofax for a while. I stopped not because I didn't like the system, but because my life was simple enough that the effort necessary to manage it on paper was wasted. I had a class schedule that repeated itself each week, and reading assignments that were usually already recorded on a syllabus. There really was no need to remind myself to "get drunk" on the

weekends.

I went to law school next and, surprisingly, it was the same way. It just wasn't that hard to manage in my head and in the margins of my notes. I dabbled in calendars, but never made a commitment. It was after law school that I needed some assistance. That's about when I moved to the Device.

Once I decided to shelve the Device, the big question became: Which planner? My wife recently started using a Franklin Covey planner. It's pretty nice, but the leather binders for Franklin Covey systems can be prohibitively expensive. (And I made the possibly irrational determination that I needed real leather, because the more I value the object itself, the deeper my commitment to it would be.) Plus, there's something vaguely cult-like about Franklin Covey. Right now, I'm not interested in setting life objectives and balancing my yin and yang. I don't want to take any expensive classes, which may or may not involve the chanting of mantras and the writing of additional checks. I just want to centralize some dispersed aspects of my life.

I looked at Day Timer and Day Runner. They both looked amateurish to me. I don't want bold, italicized headings and stylized formats that look like they came out of my ninth grade yearbook. I want my planner to say, "Relax. You're a serious, professional man and here is what your schedule looks like. And here is a serious, professional list of the people with whom you sometimes get drunk." I don't want it to say, "Bang! Zoom! Tomorrow is just a day away! You might as well get drunk now!"

My first decision was abortive. I purchased an Exacompta calendar from Barnes & Noble. I really liked the format and the classy appearance. But it was a spine-bound calendar, not a spiral bound planner. My life couldn't coagulate around it the way I wanted.

I remembered (but couldn't find, damn it) the Filofax I used in college. Classy? Check. Useful format? Check. Understated European cool, kind of like a 3-series BMW? Check. I went online assuming I would find someone blogging about the relative merits of various planner systems. I found fine folks like the ones at [1]Moleskinerie and [2]43 Folders, singing the praises of paper. Clearly, paper is the new black. But I didn't find an obsessive-compulsive site about planners, like I predicted. On my own, I made the plunge and ordered a Filofax. Here are the vital signs of the system I chose:

**Size:** [3]Personal (7.25" x 5.25")

**Style:** [4]Cross (leather, with 7/8" rings and attractive stitching in a cross pattern)

**Color:** [5]Chocolate (I call it "brown")

**Calendar format:** Week-on-two-pages (default system supplied with binder)

**Extra inserts:** Extra lined paper; extra to-do sheets; laminated map of Washington, DC (last two items backordered; not yet installed)

I have the gun; I have the ammunition. The binder came with address pages and index tabs, and a series of somewhat oddly named other tabs: Diary; Notes; Projects; Information; and Financial. I'm still sorting out exactly how I want to use those items. There seems to be some conceptual overlap among the broad terms on these tabs. The diary tab is particularly befuddling. I'm making them work, though. And damn it if it isn't fun.

In my short time with the 'Fax, I've already developed a couple useful hacks for making it work really well. I can't give up all the goods this early in the game, though, so I'll describe them later. In the mean time, please feel free to breathe again. I know the suspense can be agonizing.

1. <http://www.moleskinerie.com/>

2. <http://www.43folders.com/>

3. <http://www.filofaxusa.com/per712x5wits.html>

4. <http://www.filofaxusa.com/percrosnew.html>

5. [http://store1.yimg.com/I/dayplanner\\_1868\\_4267820](http://store1.yimg.com/I/dayplanner_1868_4267820)

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Henry Baum (2005-10-31 15:10:00)

Oooh, I know who this is. I already knew about your notebook fetish. Good to see you back. Yes.

Spiral Stairs (2005-10-31 15:30:00)

Henry, curses! I guess a man's disguise is only as good as the telltale list of links on his blog. It's like a fingerprint – who the hell else would have that motley list?

Amazingly, this blog has existed for about four hours, and I've already received my first spam comment. I think I'll leave it up for posterity (and turn on that word verification thing).

wvn8v (2005-10-31 16:08:00)  
Finally, a blog about Filofax!

pigpogn (2005-10-31 16:18:00)  
You need [1]D\*I\*Y Planner - they're the planner-obsessed people you seek.  
Lots of forms as PDFs to download to make your own pages too.

1. <http://www.diyplanner.com/>

Anonymous (2005-11-02 10:53:00)

I believe the "Diary" tab is for the calendar; at least, that's how I've always used that tab, as I've heard calendars referred to as diaries.

I too have recently made the conversion back to Filofax! Huzzahs.

Spiral Stairs (2005-11-02 12:17:00)

D\*I\*Y Planner looks interesting. I honestly don't know if I have it in me to take on the task of reformatting the various pages of my Filofax. At least until I identify glaring inadequacies, I'll stick with the default.

And to the anonymous tipster on the "Diary" tab: Damn it if that doesn't make sense. Consider the tab moved. Thanks.

Anonymous (2005-11-16 06:40:00)

Filofax make a set of 6 numbered tabs which make more sense to me. Where's the value in a "Diary" tab when the ruler/bookmark will always take you to the current date? Why have a "Financial" tab with just one or two sheets behind it?

My six tabs are:

- 1 Notes/Inbox
- 2 Next Actions, Calls, Errands
- 3 Waiting For, Maybe Get
- 4 Projects
- 5 Information
- 6 Addresses

Spiral Stairs (2005-11-16 08:50:00)

To the most recent anonymous commenter: I actually get a fair bit of use out of my "Financial" tab. I keep my checkbook register back there, a record of my savings account balance, and a running list of charitable donations. I also have some blank expense sheets that might prove useful the next time I travel for work.

The "Diary" tab doesn't serve much purpose, true, except that by putting in front of the calendar I give the whole binder logical coherence. Everything has its tab.

Anonymous (2006-10-09 21:17:00)

If you think about it, not only is the "Diary" tab made superfluous by the "Today" marker, but the "Addresses" tab is really unnecessary, since you have alphabetical tabs for your addresses and phone numbers.

So I also use simple numbered tabs:

- 1) Notes/Inbox/Ideas
- 2)Someday/Maybe/Goals
- 3)Person-Specific Agendas/Context Specific Lists
- 4)Information/Reference
- 5)Projects

Zedzian





pigpogm (2005-11-02 14:00:00)

I think the more serious concern is losing a finger when those rings \*snap\* closed.

Tangerine (2007-03-26 13:54:00)

In case there are any newcomers like me compulsively reading 2005 Filofaxy posts, I reverted to paper 4 years ago after tech support at work erased all data from my Palm and PC. Whoops, sorry, he said. So I don't think we are at greater risk for catastrophe with our Filos in hand.

## **Certainty, Chance, and Ink (2005-11-03 09:23) - Spiral Stairs**

What good is paper without a pen? It can still be used for making paper airplanes, but it would be really stupid to use overpriced, pastel-colored Filofax paper for airplanes. So when I made The Switch recently, I had to come up with a writing implement. I already have piles upon piles of pens at home, most of which have been inadvertently (no, really!) taken from various jobs in the past decade. I have a habit of sticking pens in my pockets when I get up to go to a meeting, and they're usually still there when I empty out my pockets at home. So there's been a slow, steady migration of office products from my desk into pen storage receptacles in my home. The pens run the gamut: I have felt-tips; I have ballpoints. I have thick, rubber-coated pens; I have stick-like implements that look like eyeliner applicators. I have green; I have red; I have blue; I have black. I have pens with hotel names on the side. (It's a real weakness of mine: pads and pens inscribed with hotel names. Now that I mention it, it goes beyond pads and pens. We have a basket full of shampoo, conditioner, soap, shower caps, sewing kits, lotion, and mouthwash from various hotels. God, what a freak I am.) I also have a Mont Blanc rollerball that my Dad got me for high school graduation in 1990. Over the years, I have made various attempts to make the Mont Blanc my primary pen. But – and I hope this is not sacrilegious – it doesn't write very well. It usually hums along well for a couple weeks, and then it starts skipping badly. A fresh refill will lead to the same result. On top of all those pens, I also have pencils. In 1997, while I was in law school, I worked for a summer at a law firm that kept all offices and conference rooms stocked with pencils stamped with the firm's name. They were too good to pass up, so I accumulated a few dozen at home. They're just wood, not mechanical, pencils. Because I have so many, I generally just stop using one when it gets blunt, and move on to a sharp one. So I have a few dozen really blunt pencils at home. I have a few mechanicals sitting around. I bought a bag of them when I was briefly into Sudoku puzzles.

Most calendar users use pens, it appears. Pens are far more pleasant to write with. There is a pleasing sensation of pressure and release when you apply pen to paper. Pencils, on the other hand, scratch along the surface like a nail on brick. The usual hard-leaded pencil makes faint markings, too, with a low level of contrast against the paper. A bold blue pen is easier and more pleasing to read.

However, and here is the kicker: Pens cannot be erased. Pencils can. For the Filofax user, this presents an interesting conundrum. Plans change. Airlines cancel flights. Meetings get moved. People change their phone numbers. The way I see it, I have three options in dealing with these uncertainties:

1. Use a pen and the scratch-out method of planner modification. This is a low-maintenance approach, but leads to a messy planner. At the same time, though, there's something satisfying about scratching something out with a flourish and making new notations. It's artistic, it's a license to violate the lines on the page. It's fun, like playing in the mud or running through the rain without an umbrella. But when plans change repeatedly, the fun stops and your planner page can start to look like a Jackson Pollock painting.

2. Use a pencil and the erasure method of planner modification. Neat, orderly. But completely unaesthetic. There's no fun in it, and your eyes have to strain to discern the pencil's faint markings. There's no art in it, either. This is what an accountant would do. I am a lawyer, which is totally different.

3. Use moveable Post-It, or similar, notes. Ah. A clever end-run around the permanence of ink. Apply ink to the Post-It – and move when necessary, or replace when plans change substantially. Another advantage is that it preserves valuable calendar space on a small-format planner. In my Filofax, for instance, I would be hard-pressed to fit a lot of specific data about an appointment into the area allotted for the day. I can, however, put that data on a Post-It and stick it right on top of the page, preserving

the option of writing appointments on the space below. However, this approach does take some effort. Plus, it may look nerdy.

Thus far, I am using a hybrid of all three approaches. I use the pen for things that are unlikely to change. If I have a pencil handy, and I need to write down something that likely could change, I'll use it. And I'm open to the Post-It idea. When I had to record some flight information relating to a trip my wife is taking next week, I used Post-Its. If the flights change, I can discard the notes. I can also temporarily remove the notes if I need access to the calendar space below.

The pen vs. pencil vs. Post-It debate is likely to rage on in my life for some time. Hopefully, the distraction will not be so great as to utterly paralyze me.

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Henry Baum (2005-11-03 12:08:00)

My pen is a blue Pilot precise V7 rolling ball-fine.

DougallMac (2005-11-03 13:28:00)

I veer between the pen and pencil methods but I might try the post-it method - the potential to get tied up in different colours for different projects could get beyond nerdy though.....

wvn8v (2005-11-03 13:44:00)

Have you tried installing a different brand of refill in your Mont Blanc rollerball? I'm not sure if they will fit, but I use Pilot G2 (gel) ink refills in my Waterman rollerball pens.

I have found that most expensive pens write terribly when using the original manufacturer's ink refill, with A.T. Cross being the worst of all.

MN (2005-11-03 15:43:00)

I use an ink-and-stickie system: reliable people get ink on the page; chronic reschedulers have their appointments recorded on the pagemaker-sized post-its (I tend to write small), so most of the calendar space for the day (for the week-per-spread) is still visible, but the appointment is in its proper place.

But I sometimes like a messy page—because life is messy. Along those lines, in order to foil my OCD-addled rxn to stress (colorcoding), I attempt to use as many different colored inks as possible.

I like fountain pens best of all, with generic felt tips pilfered from the office a close runner up.

Glad the Diary tab tip was helpful. Oh, and I love this blog.

Spiral Stairs (2005-11-03 17:14:00)

wvn8v: Actually, all I've tried are the Mont Blanc refills. What kind of crazy, mixed-up world do we live in if another company's refill works better? I'll give it a try. I don't know if my fat Mont Blanc will fit in the itty-bitty leather loop on my Filofax though. Nevertheless, it would be worth it to get that expensive pen into some kind of rotation.

mn: Thanks for the kind words. I just cut a pad of the littlest Post-Its I have in half. (Using my handy Filofax ruler, I see they are 2" by 1.5".) I may use the half-size ones in the way you describe. Like you, though, I think there's something about a messy page.

Pencil Revolution (2005-11-10 16:11:00)

A very soft pencil like a Palomino or Mitsubishi might solve the faintness problem.

Fisher makes a "Space Ball" refill that fits most rollerball pens on the market, with the help of the attachments the refills come with. It's still really a ballpoint pen, but Fishers are very very dark and dry very quickly:)

<http://thewritersedge.com/visit.cfm?a=refills.SSBR-xB>

chaoticset (2005-11-12 02:29:00)

Eraseable pens. What greater compromise could there possibly be but that unholy aberration of science?

## Feeding the Animal Within (2005-11-04 08:36) - Spiral Stairs

During the day, I keep my Filofax next to me at my desk. (One minor design deficiency I've found is that it doesn't lay flat very easily. So I have a sort of teetering v-shaped thing on my desk that I flatten out manually when I need to consult it. Maybe the spine will loosen up over time.) When a new appointment, phone number, or other data point arrives, via e-mail or otherwise, I get a little zing of pleasure when I realize I get to write it in the Filofax. I want to fill its pages with data, but it's still so new to me that most of it is blank. (I do, however, have an epic set of data points in the calendar for February, when my wife and I are taking a two-week trip to India. Now that's a trip that calls for serious planner deployment.)

Although my life is not unexciting (by my low standards), I don't have a constant flow of appointments and other data to put in the Filofax. So, for much of the day, it sits on my desk looking forlorn, and I make empty promises to it about the future. But I don't feel bad just for the Filofax. I feel bad for me too: I want to replicate that zing of pleasure caused by data-entering.

So what's a moderately-but-not-excessively-busy guy to do? Here's what: Planner Grazing. Planner Grazing is the act of picking up one's planner and flipping through each of its sections idly. The Planner Grazer has no particular goal in mind; there is no appointment that must be immediately recorded; there is no phone number about to slip out of memory. The Planner Grazer merely luxuriates in the splendid variety of data receptacles in the planner. In the process of grazing, the Planner Grazer will remember things and record them. Paging through the calendar, he might say, "Oh, I remember that my friend Joe's birthday is October 2. Let me write it in." Or, paging through the address book, he might say, "Oh, I remember that my friend Joe sent me an e-mail with his new address. I will retrieve that e-mail and write down the new address." Paging through the notes section, he might see an idea for a story that he recorded a few weeks ago, and say, "Oh, I would like to make Joe a character in that story. Let me note that." Flipping through the financial section, the grazer might say, "Oh, I forgot, that prick Joe owes me \$60. I will make a note of it, and make a reminder to bust his kneecaps."

It's not unfun. I probably find it particularly fun because the Filofax is still new to me. The novelty of being able to flip through the four corners of my life so quickly and haphazardly is exciting. Also, as my Filofax assumes an increasingly central role in my life, Planner Grazing may become obsolete. I may reach the state of Planner Nirvana, in which there are no details of my life uncaptured in my Filofax. Perhaps I will tire of Planner Grazing, or it will become unnecessary. But for now, I'll keep chewing my cud.

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Brian (2005-11-04 12:33:00)

This is great stuff. Keep it up. Sadly, I must admit that I identify with everything you've written so far I've just never been man enough to write it down myself.

MN (2005-11-05 18:00:00)

I'm so glad you've come up with a name for Planner Grazing. I thought I was the only one.

## Faith in the System (2005-11-06 17:40) - Spiral Stairs

A large subset of the planner-using world is comprised of people who subscribe to one "system" or another of keeping their affairs in order. One that gets a lot of attention is "Getting Things Done," or GTD. If you somehow found your way to this site, it's quite possible you already know all about GTD. You may even be a GTD devotee.

I first heard of GTD when I ran across [1]43 Folders, a site whose obsession with paper and productivity dwarfs mine. My first thought was, "Hey, 'Getting Things Done' – that sounds great. Who doesn't want to get things done?" So I trotted off to Borders to see if I could find this book that has inspired such a fanatical following. Man, was I disappointed when I saw it. It has the most boring cover, with a totally boring looking man on it. [2]Check for yourself. Couldn't he have worn corduroys and Pumas? Or at least a black turtleneck? How about growing a quickie goatee or something? Sheesh. He looks like the

man that I am deathly afraid I may be becoming: Yes, he may Get Things Done. But does he have any fun doing it? Does he loosen his tie doing it? I'm a damn lawyer, and I don't wear a tie unless something beyond my control compels it.

Why do people think you need to wear a suit and tie in order to Get Things Done? I Get Plenty Done when I'm wearing tee-shirts and paint-sparkled shorts. In fact, if I need to look like the GTD guy in order to Get Things Done, let them stay undone.

I got beyond the cover long enough to open the book and flip through it. It quickly became apparent to me that Getting Things Done the GTD way requires work. There was lots of terminology I didn't understand. There were decisions to make about tickler files and folders and crap. As it turns out, all the Things you need to Get Done do not Get Done simply by adopting Getting Things Done. That was highly disappointing to me, and I didn't buy the book.

But some people are really into it. Some people are really into Franklin Covey too. The level of devotion that these people possess is creepy to me, and it makes me wonder whether they have reached a point where devotion to Getting Things Done exceeds the Things themselves in importance.

The Things are what are important to me, and I typically Get Things Done without subscribing to a system. However, for many, the system itself takes on religious dimensions. They are rules that must be followed, or the most dire of consequences will follow: You will fail to Get Things Done. Similarly, if you fail to adhere to the Ten Commandments, another dire consequence will follow: You will Go To Hell. All systems, be they organizational or religious, rest on the faith of the adherent. The adherent must say, "I trust in this set of rules. I trust that it will lead me to the promised land. As a result of that trust, I will follow the rules unerringly."

GTD is one thing; Franklin Covey is another thing entirely. I would not be surprised if that company actually seeks tax-exempt status as a religious group. I tried to go to a Franklin Covey store in a local mall a few weeks ago. I was greeted with a sign that said (paraphrasing), "Sorry, it's Sunday, and our organization believes Sunday should be the day for our employees to take stock and recharge and otherwise improve themselves." Hmm. Closed on Sunday, huh? Sort of like ... THE SABBATH. It made me afraid to get into Franklin Covey. Would I be allowed to watch football on Sunday? Or would I have to lie still all day, meditating on my core values?

Franklin Covey also evangelizes. Our local Target sells a low-cost version of the Franklin Covey system called "365." You can buy a binder with inserts for something like \$10. Those cheap binders are missionaries that Franklin Covey has sent into the riff-raffy world, like free literature from Jehovah's Witnesses. Pretty soon, though, you're writing the big checks at the real Franklin Covey store. (But not on Sunday.) The Target models are gateway drugs; real euphoria must be purchased at the mall.

That's what I like about the Filofax: It's not religious, it's not dogmatic. It's spirituality divorced from ritual. Filofax doesn't tell you how to chant your mantras or perform self-acupuncture. It is just pieces of paper in a nice binder, configurable in whatever crazy-ass way you want. My Filofax didn't even come with suggestions on how to put it together. It had a set of cryptically named tags, various kinds of forms and paper, and a binder. And the package said to me: "Take me, pillage me, do with me what you will." Filofax is spiritual, not religious. Filofax, for all its Euro-coolness, is hippie at heart. "Hey man, I'm here for you. Rearrange me. Fold me. Cut me into useful pieces. Put crap into my slots. It's all copacetic, man."

I hope I'm not alienating my fledgling readership, since I believe that some of the Googlers who find themselves here may be seeking just what GTD and Franklin Covey are selling. To be fair, I haven't given GTD or Franklin Covey a fair shake. But I also haven't given evangelical Pentecostalism a fair shake. In both cases, I don't feel like I'm missing much.

1. <http://www.43folders.com/>

2. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0142000280/002-0844872-1170404?v=glance>

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mng (2005-11-07 11:20:00)

Rather apt parallels, religion and planning system, esp for me: after brief but intense explorations of nearly every major world religion, I now claim to be a born-again-atheist; after dabbling with the FCovey and GTD systems, I'm once again a Filofax free-for-all devotee. I'm all about configuring things any crazy-ass way I like.

On the other hand, I did walk away from FCovey and GTD with a few useful concepts and tricks. I think the

most important is the FCovey distinction between what's important and what's urgent.  
Now go sit in the corner and contemplate the quiddity of post-it yellow.

Anonymous (2005-11-08 17:20:00)

"In both cases, I don't feel like I'm missing much."  
What an oxymoronic statement.

Loi (2007-05-20 02:18:00)

To be frank, it doesn't sound like you've checked Covey out too much.  
The reason I believe they're off on Sunday is for their 7th habit (Sharpen the Saw). Your lack of understanding in that area was what led me to believe you hadn't actually checked out Covey.  
I sort of understand your anger with GTD. I felt very stressed when I was on GTD. It was very hard to tell what was important & what wasn't.  
Simply put, GTD is a track to run on. You take what you like (I liked their inbox), leave what you don't.  
Your comment that GTD & Covey believers were something like fanatics (it was never quite said though it was implied) worried me. To me (a Covey believer & GTD dabbler), you sound like a fanatic; just like the way GTDers & Covey believers sound to you.  
To the person who said they were an Atheist. I am also one & still believe in Covey. Covey isn't a religion (although admittedly it has the feel of a philosophy\*).  
I don't know much about Filofax. I plan to check it out once I finish this post.  
Nice speaking with you & sorry for the long post.

-Loi

For those who don't know the difference between a religion & a philosophy consider this:  
Buddhism is a philosophy, Christianity is a religion. Christianity has a set of rigid principles that one must (or at least is supposed to) follow. Examples- No premarital sex, alcohol etc.  
Buddhism on the other hand, has no real principles. The religion encourages individuality to the point where almost anyone could be a buddhist.  
(Note: Not all Buddhist religions are like this. Only certain ways are like the one noted above.)  
Those familiar with LaVey would understand.  
(Note: This is not an official definition although many refer to religion & philosophy as such.)

Nan (2007-05-20 17:39:00)

Thanks for your comment, Loi

fizbin54 (2008-06-21 14:39:00)

Just to clarify, Christianity is not a set of rules: it is God reaching out to man because He loves us. The rules are there to show us how we should live, for our own benefit, but God knows we don't and He loves us anyway. Christianity is about love, caring, and forgiveness. If that wasn't your experience, then try another group of Christians.  
The Franklin Quest (before Covey) approach is to identify what is most important to you, then break that down to what you do everyday: "When your daily tasks are in line with your governing values, then you have a credible claim to inner peace." Nobody uses the system exactly the same way; it is meant to be customized. Most people probably have never had the training, so use it like any other day planner.  
I used to use Franklin Classic (never tried GTD). But now I keep virtually all info in my Treo smartphone and keep a Filofax Mini (Franklin makes a very similar one) in my shirt pocket just to jot down notes. I want to try a handwriting recognition program like Graffiti some time to see if I could do everything on my Treo. But I do miss the focus the Franklin system brings to tasks for each day. I would be interested in a Treo version of the Franklin system.

Anonymous (2008-11-17 23:48:00)

Guh, this was weak!  
People are enthusiastic about the other systems because they work.  
You may have no trouble getting things done - in which case why the hell are you looking into systems for getting

things done?!?!? Just go do them and leave others to their own methods.

You have evangelized Filofax here just as much as others do for their preference only you predicate your choice on your ignorance and prejudice of those other systems. (That and stupid superficial reasons like goatees and aesthetics)

The moment you are able to help as many other people get organized and be more productive as GTD or FCovey I guarantee that you will have as many 'devotees'.

I don't predict you can though. Evangelize your own systems and hate all you want but to me that sounds pretty judgmental and not better than the negative assessment you give towards others.

P.S. what's with the boring site? I would hope that after trashing someone else's book cover you might bring a little bit more to the table than a stock brown template and a cheese ball pic....

Nan (2008-11-19 09:09:00)

Hey, Anonymous - I can't respond directly to your criticisms of this post, because I didn't write it. It was written by the originator of the blog, who no longer writes here.

I do think, however, that there's a misunderstanding on your part. No one here is trying to become an expert or guru or evangelist. The blog's about sharing our own experiences, opinions, and advice about using Filofaxes in our lives. Most of the commenters get that, and we have some lively conversations going on in the newer posts.

But thanks for reading, and I agree the blog needs a redesign. This is just one of Blogger's templates. It's on my to-do list, probably for next year.

Sorry you think I look like a cheeseball.

AngelSeraphGurl (2009-01-04 12:55:00)

May God Bless you for this—the real one, not the planning system. I am SO VERY glad I found this article. I am a Franklin Covey junkie—much to the chagrin of my own family and friends. I have abandoned all that I previously knew to pursue the FC system. It is hypnotizing—it is a religion, and after many years I finally had to admit myself into rehab. There are 12 step groups for those of us who decided to actually give up on pursuing life on life's terms, just to "organize" all day. I have even heard that there are strange cults, above who's portcullis rests a single binder, complete with instructions on how to plan one's life—down to the minutest detail. However, once one becomes part of this cult, you realize that you will never get out, and that it will actually take all 24 hours of every day to plan your days, resulting in NEVER getting to actually experience those planned out days. Take it from me—don't get started—once you pick up that first form and start writing you will never stop. You will wind up in a jail, an institution, or just sitting in a cafe all day writing about what you want to do with your life, yet never doing it. For those of you still suffering—I urge you to just put down the pen, get filofax, or ANY other system. Do not succumb to covet the Covey system. You will lose family, friends, and possibly your home. Get help—take it one day at a time and NEVER go back to the Covey. N.E.V.E.R. \*God, grant me the serenity to accept my days without endless forms to fill out, the courage to face life without an intricate planning system, and the wisdom to recognize the EVIL Covey—Wherever it may exist!

Nan (2009-01-05 18:55:00)

Hi AngelSeraphGurl - Thank you for your comment, and I hope you enjoy reading the rest of the blog! I used Covey for a while, but I found it didn't help me do or know what I wanted to do.

fghbn (2009-02-06 03:10:00)

Youth is not [1]wow gold a time of life;[2]world of warcraft gold it is a state of mind; [3]cheap wow gold it is not a [4]Maple Story Accounts matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees;[5]mesos it is a matter of the will, a quality of the imagination,[6]wow gold kaufen a vigor of the emotions; it is the freshness [7]wow gold of the deep springs of life.[8]maple story mesos Youth means a tempera-mental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of 60 more than a boy of 20.[9]wow gold farmen Nobody grows old merely by a number of years.[10]maple story money We grow old by deserting our ideals.[11]ms mesos Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, fear, self-distrust bows the heart and turns the spring back to dust. Whether 60 or 16, there is in every human being'[12]wow powerleveling s heart the lure of wonder, the unfailing childlike appetite of what's [13]maple story money next and the joy of the game of living.[14]powerlevel In the center of your heart and my heart there is a wireless station: so long as it receives messages [15]maplestory powerleveling of beauty, hope, cheer,[16]world of warcraft power leveling courage

and power from men and from the Infinite, so long are you young. When the aerials are down, and your spirit is covered with snows of cynicism and the ice of pessimism, then you are grown old, even at 20, but as long as your aerials are up, to catch waves of optimism, there is hope you may die young at 80 !

1. <http://www.wowleveln.de/>
2. <http://www.kaufen-wowgold.de/>
3. <http://www.wowgoldvip.de/>
4. <http://www.maplestoriesmesosstore.com/maple-story-account.asp>
5. <http://www.mesosoon.com/>
6. <http://www.wowpl.de/>
7. <http://www.kaufen-wowgold.de/buy-gold.asp>
8. <http://www.maplestoriesmesosshop.com/>
9. <http://www.wowgoldvip.de/buy-gold.asp>
10. <http://www.mesosoon.com/>
11. <http://www.mesosoon.com/>
12. <http://www.wowleveln.de/power-leveling.asp>
13. <http://www.maplestoriesmesosshop.com/maple-story-mesos.asp>
14. <http://www.wowpl.de/power-leveling.asp>
15. <http://www.maplestoriesmesosstore.com/maple-story-power-leveling.asp>
16. <http://www.kaufen-wowgold.de/power-leveling.asp>

## Time Machine (2005-11-08 08:46) - Spiral Stairs

I was rooting through my drawers the other day for a pen, and I ran across one of these bad boys:

✕

I was disappointed to find that all its ink reservoirs had dried up. I have no idea how long it's been with me; it's probably moved from house to house for years without ever alerting me that it had fallen into disuse. A couple days later, I saw this close relative in the wild:



I don't recall ever seeing the orange-barreled, or fine-tipped, version of the Bic 4-Color before. But when I saw it, I had the same reaction I have whenever I run across a new flavor of Pringles or Doritos: I Must Have It. \$1.99 and a short car ride later, I was ripping open the package at home. As I got my paws on the pen, I felt a curious metamorphosis. I looked down: My shoes had become navy blue Roos, with tiny side pockets and velcro straps. My contact lenses disappeared, and in their place I was wearing thick, brown-framed glasses. My hair, oh my hair: It suddenly was present along the top edge of my forehead, where it had not been present moments before. But it was unruly and helmet-ish. My metal-banded analog watch became a black plastic Casio digital watch with (could it be?) a calculator pad.

Yes, I had been transported back to 1982, when I was an awkward fourth-grader and the Bic 4-Color was what my Dad carried around. I would play with it incessantly, clicking colors up, clicking them down, trying to trick the pen into having two colors deployed at once. I would unscrew its parts and disassemble the fiendishly simple interior structure. I would draw epic pictures of fantasy worlds, each nation-state bound by borders of different colors. (It so happens that, if you have access to four colors, [1]you can



draw any map without two regions sharing a border of the same color.) But the real significance of the pen was not what I did with it, but the fact that it was my Dad's pen. It's what he used to do whatever he did to be a man. It's what he used when he did whatever he did to generate and sustain all that he had provided for me. It was his mystical tool.

Now I have my own.

I was really disappointed to find that it doesn't fit in the pen loop of my Filofax. And, truth be told, it's not even that pleasant to write with. But it gives me pleasure just to look at it, and feel its unabashed hard-plasticness. No "soft-grip," ergonomic construction here. It's just a no-nonsense, rock-hard tool for color-coding.

Maybe I'll get my Dad one for Christmas. I'd bet he would get the same kick out of it I did.

1. <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/Four-ColorTheorem.html>

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focusfinder (2005-11-11 05:26:00)

I went right back in time there with you, past you to 1964 - and my three colour torch appeared too, in white red & green!

Cheers,

Peter Bryenton

[www.brypix.com](http://www.brypix.com)

Phil Hair (2005-12-09 21:29:00)

As a computer programmer, I have made a point to use Bic 4-color pens for about 25 years. They are excellent for marking up computer listings. I use red to mark errors, black to mark corrections, and so on. I've purchased replacement ink (rather than replace perfectly good pens), and carried them everywhere. The only unfortunate thing about them is that they smear, so the first thing I do every day is to wipe each color on paper.

## **Hacking Off (2005-11-09 19:18) - Spiral Stairs**

Most of what I've written so far here at [1]Philofaxy has been useless gibberish. I've prattled on about stupid crap, without providing any advice or tips that might improve anyone else's Filo-life. Today, my plan was to post for everyone's enjoyment my first - what do the kids call it? - "hack," and show everyone how perfect it is for every possible use. Here's the hack, and here's how the plan went awry.

The Filo-folks sell a product called a [2]"Jot Pad." In essence it's a little pad, about the size of a square Post-It but oblong, with holes punched so the individual pieces can be inserted willy-nilly into the Filofax binder. Take a look:

✖

When I saw this thing, I thought it would really meet several needs of mine. First, I need some ad hoc system for introducing more information into the binder than can fit on one day's space. Post-It notes are one method, but hole-punched pads like this seem like a great solution too. Second, I would like a non-invasive way of keeping a to-do list in front of me when my Filofax is open to the current calendar page. (To-do items in the designated to-do section of the binder tend to be, well, undone.) Third, I want some way of inserting "floating," or non-date-specific, reminders into future pages of the calendar. For instance, let's say I wanted to travel to Egypt a year from now. (I don't.) I might think it's too early to start patrolling travel sites for fares now. But maybe I think I would like to start doing that in, say, March. I could insert a floating reminder into my calendar in March. If March rolls around and I'm really busy, or my plans have been delayed, I could just take out the little slip and re-insert it into June. Voila! A tickler.

My enthusiasm for the Jot Pad waned a bit when I saw it cost \$4 for a package of three tiny pads. Hmm. Perhaps I could ... hack up a solution. So I took some of my Filofax lined paper (expensive in itself, but it was handy) and started cutting it up. I cut several pieces into useful, Jot Pad-sized bits. Here's a photo of my creation, in the wild:



[3]

(You now know that I have to clean my bathroom. My wife is out of town and I promised it would be clean before she gets back. Thus, ten minutes before her flight lands, I will be furiously scrubbing the tub.) This system has worked well for the past few weeks. As the picture shows, I've primarily used my hacked-up bits for the second usage outlined above (a very current subset of my to-do lists). And every time I open the binder, I smile and think, "I did that." I guess it's what people with kids think when they look at their children sleeping. For me, it's scraps of paper.

A couple days ago, I found out that the [4]Container Store is a Filofax reseller. And there's a Container Store near me. I went last night; it was like a trip to the amusement park. There, before me, were numerous Filofax add-ons, including fabled ones straight from the pages of Filo-fantasy novels. City maps galore. Zip-lock envelopes. And, oh yes: the hole punch that you can carry in the binder.

Resting quietly amongst the chaos was a pile of Jot Pads. "Ah, my friend. I don't need you, although you are indeed pretty," I thought. Though it pained me, I walked away from the display and left the store. I browsed at the Apple Store for a few minutes, then at Eastern Mountain Sports. But I could hear the Jot Pad calling to me. And doubts about my haphazard solution crept into my head. It's only four dollars. And the edges are all perfectly straight; the corners are right angles. Mine are all askew and half-assed. And they are sized for insertion into the slots that are already in the inside of the binder, unlike my homemade ones which aren't sized for such a precise purpose.

How could I resist that siren call? I went back to the Container Store and bought a pack of Jot Pads. Then I went home and threw away the home-made Jot Pad sheets I'd been using. (Except for the lone page pictured above.) It was like burying a pet.

So much for my hack.

1. <http://www.philofaxy.blogspot.com/>

2. [http://homewares.abcaz.co.uk/5\\_1111901/organisers-diaries-and-address-books/filofax-m2-jot-pad-blue.html](http://homewares.abcaz.co.uk/5_1111901/organisers-diaries-and-address-books/filofax-m2-jot-pad-blue.html)

3. [http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/7152/1811/1600/DSC\\_0001a.jpg](http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/7152/1811/1600/DSC_0001a.jpg)

4. <http://www.containerstore.com/>

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mn (2005-11-09 20:16:00)

Using the jot pad-sized sheet for floating reminders is a great hack.

You might think about investing in a nifty tool: a paper cutter or guillotine. Relatively affordable, and you can always have straight edges and right-angled corners.

Spiral Stairs (2005-11-09 20:25:00)

mn: You know, I have a paper-cutter I use for cutting photographic prints that should do nicely. In my compartmentalized mind, I hadn't even thought of using it for ... um ... paper.

Anonymous (2005-11-10 06:13:00)

I think you said you're in the DC area. At Tysons Corner Ctr there is a store I believe is called Everything English and they have an awesome Filofax collection.

Spiral Stairs (2005-11-10 09:14:00)

Ah, I just looked at the Tysons directory and see the "English Trading Company," which sounds like what you're

talking about. I've actually browsed there before, but I didn't notice the Filofax stuff. I'll probably check it out this weekend. Thanks.

## Pencil Illin' (2005-11-13 22:20) - Spiral Stairs

Some days, I worry about world peace. Some days, I worry about my family. Most days, though, I worry about what writing implement I should carry in the lone pen loop in my Filofax. To date, I've been using a nondescript, black-barreled Uniball (blue ink). But, as I've [1]noted before, ink carries with it a price: The price of permanence. A choice made in ink cannot be undone. A choice made in pencil, however, is inscribed only in dust. And we know how permanent dust is. (It blows in the wind.)

I'm a man of impermanence, not permanence. So I've switched to pencil. The problem with the usual wooden pencil, though, is twofold: (1) You have to have access to a sharpener at all times; and (2) it doesn't stay in a typical planner pen loop, because it is a cylinder of uniform diameter. Problem No. 2 is probably decisive; Problem No. 1, however, is no small matter. In combination, they left me with no choice for general planner usage: mechanical pencils. The folks at [2]Pencil Revolution have assured me that mechanical pencils are not necessarily evil. (They say that, but I note a conspicuous lack of mechanical pencil porn on the site.)

I didn't find myself near an art supply store this weekend, so I settled for Staples. And I settled upon the Pentel Sharp 0.5mm. It's a somber, professional black-barreled thing. The package touts it as the leading tool for technical users. That was enough for me. There's no nonsense with it. No finger-operated clicker. No gel-filled thumb rest. Just hard black plastic, a chrome pocket clip, and lead. It's made in Japan, too. It feels good in the hand and is very amenable to the obsessive-compulsive pen/pencil-twirling thing I do with every writing implement I hold. (You probably know what I'm talking about, because if you don't do it, you've seen weirdos in the back of the room doing it. I'm so good at it I can do it with a pool cue.) The only disappointment so far is that the eraser is really small. Plus, you have to remove a small metal cap to get at it. I'm so lazy that the effort of exposing the eraser is likely to be sufficient to make me use the scratch-out method instead of the erasure method of correcting mistakes. Nevertheless, I know the eraser is there, and I will sleep better at night knowing that what I've written in my Filofax is subject to change.

1. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2005/11/certainty-chance-and-ink.html>

2. <http://www.pencilrevolution.com/>

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Pencil Revolution (2005-12-04 17:48:00)

Greetings! May we quote from this on PR?

Spiral Stairs (2005-12-04 19:22:00)

I would be honored to be quoted by the Revolution!

Arkady Renko (2005-12-14 10:23:00)

I totally agree, the Pentel Sharp is a fantastic mechanical pencil. I've been using the yellow (0.9) for ages. Actually, I've been using my current one for over four years.

Funny thing about the Sharp... I'm staying in Japan right now, and the other day a grad student at the next desk leaned over, and asked if he could borrow my sharp, and I was kind of surprised that he knew the model name. But it turns out that the Japanese name for a mechanical pencil is "sharp." Maybe that's why Pentel chose that name?

I remove the metal clip though, which is one of the first things that drew me to this pencil, it was easy to remove the clip without mangling the pencil.

I really like the "drafting type" pencils, they seem to be no-nonsense, and long lasting. The new Pentel Graphgear 1000 looks pretty good too, but I don't think I can remove the metal clip... so I dunno about that :) But it comes in a whole bunch of lead sizes, which I think is the mark of a serious pencil.

Arkady

Anonymous (2006-04-01 10:36:00)

I have a Filofax Cross Personal in Black and have to say I adore it to the point that even though its black I don't want an accidental ink spill to ruin it. Additionally I change info in my organiser from time to time and for this reason and for aesthetic reasons too I use a Staedler Pencil (Mars Lumograph - colour: Mid Blue) in 'H'. It is angled with 6 sides to it (Hexagon?) I cannot live without these and have bought a pack of 12 which I just swap each time the one I am using goes a bit blunt. Yes, the pain in the derrier point is that you do need a sharpner and eraser near by. But I find that I infrequently need to sharpen because of my investment in multiple pencils, plus a 'H' lead is long lasting (the lead colouring is pleasing). Lastly can I point out that these Staedlers do not slide out of the pen loop as long as you haven't already stretched it out! Enjoy! Alia...

Anonymous (2007-09-08 20:55:00)

God's Pencil: the Sanford Logo II (pun intended), .7mm (also available in .5mm but this is more prone to breakage), black plastic (burgundy and teal also available—bah), made in Japan, chrome tip and pocket clip. Sliding, retractable sleeve protects lead and pockets. Fits easily but snugly into broken-in Filofax loops. Last but not least: a 2 inch long eraser that lasts forever. After forever, the eraser is easily replaceable for your next lifetime.  
DJ Rainer

### 'Tis the Season For Regret (2005-11-15 08:51) - Spiral Stairs

No life is without regret. In the past, I have regretted (1) being such a lame-o in junior high, and thereby failing, year after year, to follow through on my summer resolutions to be cooler and ascend the social ranks; (2) deciding to go to law school at a stage in my educational career when I should have been considering all my options, like being a ski bum or pot dealer (or both); (3) eating the chili cheese omelette I had on Sunday morning, which wreaked havoc on my digestive tract for two full days; (4) buying a Volkswagen Jetta, which was a big piece of crap with key mechanical components falling off willy-nilly; and (5) buying a travel clock at Eddie Bauer that, despite having a radio, inexplicably lacks tuning buttons or presets and forces me to perform all radio station navigation functions with a single "scan" button.

Those decisions haunt me. Now I can add one more to the list, and it pains me to say it: I regret purchasing the "personal" size Filofax instead of the larger, A5-size Filofax. Phew. There, I said it. It's no small matter to admit. I've invested an amount north of \$100 in my Filofax, what with the fancy leather cover and the overpriced Filofax inserts I can't resist. I've also now invested a fair bit of time and energy into the thing. I've entered appointments and the like stretching far into 2006. I've transferred all my phone numbers into it. I use it as a check register. And let's not forget all the notes and data it carries.

My regret began to crop up last week, when a couple co-workers, one female and one male, noticed my Filofax on my desk. (Believe it or not, I do not walk around my office announcing that I have a separate life in which I refer to myself as "Philofaxer" and am obsessed with paper and calendars. For better or worse, I've decided to keep those facts largely secret.) My female co-worker said, "Oh, that's so cute." My male co-worker said, "What is that, your purse?" I said, "No, and I'm comfortable enough with my masculinity to carry around a small, intricately-stitched leather tote-like object."

But am I?

A few days later, I found myself in front of a large Filofax section at a local store. And there I saw the A5 size, for the first time in the flesh. It was expansive, hulking, manly. It wouldn't even fit in a purse, let alone be a purse. It seemed eminently practical, too. I occasionally run into issues with the amount of space afforded to me on the personal-sized calendar pages. I have to use a cross-referencing system involving the "Notes" section of the binder to give myself enough space. (That's a hack I intend to write about soon.)

More than all of that, though, the A5 size would not make me feel like a girl.

For a brief moment, I considered chucking my personal-size Filofax and going all A5. But how would I explain that to my wife? "Honey, remember how I spent more than \$100 on a calendar mere weeks after you spent \$10 on yours? Well, that's garbage now and I've bought an even more expensive system that

will require the repurchase of all enclosures and inserts, and a weekend of time to transfer all my data into it. I love you.”

No way. She already thinks I’m insane. That would move me from insane to rabid and undesirable. So I’m coming to grips with my regret. Maybe next year, for my birthday, or for Christmas, I will ask for an A5-size system. And then I can proudly display it to my male co-workers, pounding my chest and throwing feces at them. Until then, I’ll be keeping my ”cute” Filofax well below radar altitude.

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mn (2005-11-15 10:08:00)

Hee, your purse!

You need to buy for those women that work in closest proximity to you the Pocket-sized Filofaxes that come in magenta, sky blue, and floral prints.

penatwork (2005-11-15 13:46:00)

mn has the right idea for those girls saying ”cute”.. (though I get that about my linuxfund creditcard all the time)...

All the guys I know with a filofax (or similar) have personal-sized and my husband does too (abeit the [1]cross-black-slimline one that he gave to me several years ago when my old filofax wore out– i didn’t have enough binder space so after trying it unhappily for a year i gave it back to him and bought my current one [zipped [2]Lyndhurst]) .. but as for the a5 .. it’s so big and expansive and i wouldn’t have to worry so much about having ”perfect” (little) handwriting to fit everything... but how to justify shelving my perfectly good personal-sized filofax... \*sigh\* i don’t like ”girl” things despite being one (i carry a BAG not the p-word) but i have never had someone say it was purse-like!

1. <http://www.filofax.co.uk/store/SEURLF/ASP/SFS/DISPLAY./SIZEID.4/RANGEID.13/DSIZEID.4/SFE/organiser.htm>

2. <http://www.filofax.co.uk/store/SEURLF/ASP/SFS/DISPLAY./SIZEID.3/RANGEID.23/DSIZEID.3/SFE/organiser.htm>

wvn8v (2005-11-15 19:06:00)

I went through the same dilemma several years ago and solved it by purchasing a great A5 deal on eBay.

\$30 for a zippered black A5 Durham (msrp \$165) in mint condition.

I carry the personal size on a daily basis for normal daily planner stuff and the A5 for when I make presentations / speeches.

Anonymous (2005-11-16 06:32:00)

Ah - the eternal dilemma. I personally have been through Deskfax (B5), A5 and Personal planner sizes, and currently use a Filofax Berkeley Slimline Personal.

The slimline binder demands iron discipline in archiving out all the usual cruft that accumulates in larger/thicker binders.

The main drawback is that you’re left with precious little space for contacts, but a flash drive gets over this limitation and is in some ways easier to maintain. My core list of 40 or so contacts is printed out on a single sheet of Filofax computer paper using 7.5pt Georgia font which provides superb legibility.

Portability is essential, and I’d advise you to stick with the Personal size - carting around several pounds of paper gets old really fast.

Spiral Stairs (2005-11-16 08:46:00)

So, it appears that contrary to what my wife assures me, size *does* matter. I do feel better about having a rinky-dink personal binder after reading these comments.

Anyway, like I said, changing course now would be an expensive proposition that would require full spousal approval. That would be difficult to obtain. I broached the idea last night of buying a new computer to replace my 2-year-old 12” PowerBook. It was vetoed before I finished talking.

A.K. (2006-04-01 11:04:00)

Trust me what the people above have said is true. You don’t need the A5. Its too big to carry around. It’s a one location kind of diary.

If you are as obsessed/nutts as me then I will let you into my secret. I have 3 filofaxes - yes three. The A5 is for work only... strictly. I've filled it up with business cards and contacts and a time management calendar/diary (Finsbury A5 Black)! This works for me as I need something that will inspire the bosses when I have nothing else to offer. :)

The personal is for home/personal use - useful for my GTD methodology (David Allen) and a central repository for all my important stuff (Cross Personal Black).

The last is a Slimline (Cross Black) for my handbag which is filled with maps of London, loads of notepaper, a pul our calendar, and important lists/errands/reminders. This one was unnecessary but I spent years stuffing loose bits of paper into my handbag and losing them, this way I am mega organised without having to carry the weight of a larger filofax. I don't have a diary I rely on in it. Also, it looks good and if I lose it I can cry about the money I lost (ebay: £30) rather than important data.

## Moneyballpoint (2005-11-16 08:54) - Spiral Stairs

The whole idea of this blog is to give me an outlet for my inner nerd, and to give others who express their nerdiness through the use of a Filofax (or related planner-type thing; or who just like pens, pencils, and paper; or who are otherwise insane) an outlet for doing the same. I suspect that most of you express your inner nerd in other areas of your life, too. For instance, some of you may be baseball nerds.

I have a slight case of baseball nerdiness. It falls well short of obsession, but I don't mind perusing the occasional copy of [1]Baseball America, and I've read [2]Moneyball.

If your inner nerd expresses itself through both office supplies and baseball, then take a look at these: [3]Ballpark Pens. These are pens made out of the wooden seats of historic baseball parks. Here's one:



They appear to be made in conjunction with [4]the Wooden Pen Company, which touts these "fine writing instrumetns [sic]" on its site. (I guess they use pens so much they're unfamiliar with the spell-checking functions available to them electronically.)

For that bizarre subset of the population that is really into both baseball and writing instruments, this is quite the combination. The pens are pretty spendy (mostly within shouting distance of \$100). And most will not fit in your planner's pen loop. Plus, they're ballpoints, and you probably don't like ballpoints. But dammit, they're cool. Worth it? I don't know. I'll probably agonize over that question for a year or two, like I do with most expensive questions. But if someone gave me one, I'd smile. So would your inner baseball nerd.

1. <http://www.baseballamerica.com/today/>

2. [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0393324818/qid=1132149482/sr=8-1/ref=pd\\_bbs\\_1/002-0844872-1170404?v=glance&s=books&n=507846](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0393324818/qid=1132149482/sr=8-1/ref=pd_bbs_1/002-0844872-1170404?v=glance&s=books&n=507846)

3. <http://www.ballparkpens.com/index.html>

4. [http://www.woodenpenco.com/category\\_s/18.htm](http://www.woodenpenco.com/category_s/18.htm)

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## A Play in Three Acts (2005-11-17 14:52) - Spiral Stairs

ACT ONE

Date: 1986.

Place: Nondescript public high school classroom in quiet midwestern town.

Scene: Ninth-grade chemistry class.

Characters: Philofaxer; Jeff.

Philofaxer and Jeff sit at a two-seat table at the rear of the classroom. Each is outfitted according to then-prevailing styles. Philofaxer wears a striped rugby shirt with a Polo symbol and stonewashed Levi's 501 jeans that his father purchased for him reluctantly, questioning why he should pay a premium for a red pocket tag, when K-Mart's "Rustler"-brand jeans were cheaper but just as well-made and durable. Jeff wears a cream cable-knit sweater with a dramatic v-neck and pleated khaki trousers. Underneath the sweater, a pink polo shirt. Below it all, burgundy penny loafers.

JEFF: I can't wait for college.

PHILOFAXER: Yeah.

JEFF: You know the best thing about college? We can wear what we want.

PHILOFAXER: Right.

JEFF: I'm going to wear a jacket and tie every day. In college, that doesn't make you a dork.

PHILOFAXER: Man, that would be awesome.

JEFF: And I'm going to carry a briefcase.

PHILOFAXER: Yeah, a briefcase. That will be SO slick.

ACT TWO

Date: 1994.

Place: Bucolic college campus.

Scene: Decrepit den of iniquity, in which Philofaxer ekes out a pathetic existence among piles of filth and debris, sliding through his senior year of college in an alcohol-soaked fog.

Philofaxer wears a tattered Pixies tee-shirt and shorts manufactured by cutting the legs off a pair of ratty painter's pants. No briefcase is to be found; instead, ashtrays, empty beer bottles, and upended bags of Doritos are scattered about. Jeff is long gone. (Philofaxer hasn't seen him in years.) In his place, an unshaven, semi-drunk lump of near-humanity.

PHILOFAXER: Man, I love college.

SEMI-DRUNK LUMP OF NEAR-HUMANITY: So do I. Pass the Doritos.

PHILOFAXER: They're on the floor. There. And over there. And there's some under your shoe.

SEMI-DRUNK LUMP OF NEAR-HUMANITY: Are you going to class today?

PHILOFAXER: I really don't see why I should.

SEMI-DRUNK LUMP OF NEAR-HUMANITY: Neither do I. Hand me that Dorito that's stuck in your armpit.

ACT THREE

Date: Today.

Place: Office.

Scene: Desk.

Philofaxer is typing out a stupid blog entry because he is bored. On the desk in front of him is a Filofax, open to a page of notes about potential blog entries. One potential blog entry says, "Piece about how Jeff and I thought we would wear jackets and ties every day in college, and carry briefcases. Note how that did not happen, but almost: now you keep a suit in your office and you carry a Filofax." Philofaxer contemplates the great arcs we carve through life, and finishes the stupid blog entry.

Done.

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buzzgirl (2005-11-17 17:17:00)

Bravo! Bravo! Encore!

mn (2005-11-18 09:25:00)

You mean they let you wear a suit and carry a briefcase every single day?

This reminds me of when wearing makeup seemed like something I wanted to do, whereas now that I frighten small children without it? Not so much.

I hope the toting of a Filofax is on some level a comfort.

## A List of Lists (2005-11-22 08:44) - Spiral Stairs

Remember the Book of Lists? I have very specific recollections from my childhood relating to the book of lists. One of my Mom's best friends was a boisterously gay man, Darrell, who babysat me occasionally. (I mention that he was gay because, in mid-1970s Kansas City, homosexuality was not exactly sung from the rooftops. It took a while for my child-mind to grasp his status. Of course, the beauty of the child-mind is that it seemed inconsequential to me – different, but inconsequential.) He lived alone in a sparse apartment. When I spent the evening there, he would entertain me with hilarious impressions and stories. Darrell also had a copy of the Book of Lists, and after laughing ourselves silly, I would relax in a chair and pore over the lists. I was, perhaps, six or seven years old at the time, but I already had a fascination with categorization, organization, and comprehensive accounts of facts.

That fascination never went away. My Filofax now functions as my personalized Book of Lists. Here is a list of the some of the lists in my Filofax:

- Window installers. We need new windows.
- A list of the courses my wife and I had at our extravagant anniversary dinner a few weeks ago. (It took place [1]here. The dinner was so clearly the most amazing dining experience I've ever had that, the next morning, after the wine-and-food haze had subsided, I had to record every morsel we tried.
- Local sources for Filofax supplies.
- Ideas for this blog. (And this idea isn't even on it!)
- Restaurants I want to try, subdivided into "big deal" restaurants and regular old restaurants. There will soon be another subset, for "Restaurants to suggest for my wife's birthday," which is on January 9th.
- List of compact digital cameras that may be suitable replacements for my old one.
- A list of the names of all the people I have to buy Christmas presents for, with space to indicate what present has been purchased. There are 20 names on the list so far, and nothing purchased.

All of the above lists are in my "Notes" section. I, of course, have a separate set of To-Do lists. Perhaps someday I will regale you with them as well. In the meantime, please contemplate the above.

(And, it turns out, the Book of Lists is [2]still around – there's even a [3]"New" Book of Lists, which is confusingly labeled as the "original." So you don't need to make your own lists, if you don't want to. They come pre-made.)

1. <http://www.restauranteve.com/>

2. <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1841955531/002-0844872-1170404?v=glance&n=283155&n=507846&s=books&v=glance>

3. <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1841957194/002-0844872-1170404?v=glance&n=283155&%5Fencoding=UTF8&v=glance>

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mn (2005-11-22 10:02:00)

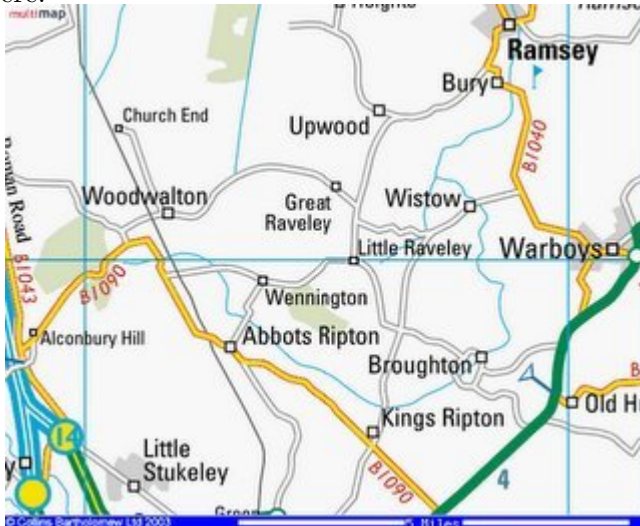
I often find myself writing a list of lists I need to make.



**Philofaxy's Scheme to Dominate World Affairs Continues (2005-11-23 08:38)**  
**- Spiral Stairs**

If I haven't mentioned it already, my goal in maintaining this blog is to take over the world. Through clever subversion, I expect that every person in the internet-accessible world will eventually be attracted to these pages, where I will introduce subliminal messages that will have the effect of giving me total mind control over all readers.

As evidence that my plans are proceeding apace, I present this fact: Philofaxy has had its 1,000th visitor. I don't know who you are, but I know you come from Little Raveley, which sounds like a lovely place. It is here:



[1] According to the infallible [2]internet, Little Raveley is only 751 acres, and it "consists of clay land, most of which is agricultural. The land is fairly level being for the great part a little more than 100 ft. above sea level. There was once a considerable stretch of woodland along the south-west border of the parish. Raveley Wood within the parish has disappeared but its name is preserved in a farm, but Wennington Wood, just outside Abbots Ripton parish, still exists."

I'm somewhat surprised Little Raveley has internet access, because "[t]he village lies on the winding road from Broughton to Great Raveley at a point where a branch road goes westward to Wennington and Abbots Ripton. It consists only of the church and a few farm houses and cottages, together with some council houses."

If that sounds attractive to you, "The average selling price for property in Little Raveley over the past twelve months has been £180,363. Most of these properties were existing terraced houses. Thirteen have been sold here at an average price of £175,687, which is around the national average for existing terraced houses and is just above the average selling price in Cambridgeshire for this property type." I don't know what that funny symbol after those numbers means, but I think it has something to do with money.

Check out [3]one of these beautiful homes:



I would love to live in a 13th Century church. God might not appreciate the things I would do in it, but he's probably given up hope for me anyway.

Thank you, Little Raveley. When I have assumed my rightful place as Supreme Philofaxer and World Despot, I will reserve a place on my cabinet for you. How about Secretary for 6-Hole-Punched Maps?

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/7152/1811/1600/Map.gif>
2. <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/HUN/LittleRaveley/>
3. <http://www.primelocation.com/SACA75399>

## Let Us Celebrate (2005-11-23 12:16) - Spiral Stairs

Here in the U.S., though not in Little Raveley, tomorrow is Thanksgiving. (My Filofax helpfully notes that tomorrow's Thanksgiving holiday is observed only in the U.S.) As a result, I will be spending a substantial chunk of the next several days engaged in traditional American Thanksgiving activities like fighting traffic, cursing, stuffing food down my gullet until I pee gravy, beaching myself on a couch and caressing a remote control for hours on end, observing the drunken antics of usually staid relatives, and otherwise honoring the memory of the peace struck between Native Americans and this country's European forefathers. (Right before those forefathers ran the Native Americans out of town and onto undesirable plots of land.)

So, if you will also be engaging in these traditional American activities, have a good Thanksgiving. If you won't, then have a good Thursday. Either way, there will likely be no additional Philofaxing until next week. Try to carry on with some semblance of normalcy.

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## A Very Philofaxy Holiday (2005-11-30 12:24) - Spiral Stairs

I've returned from my Thanksgiving vacation. It was, as expected, full of unreasonably long and unpleasant drives, surreal family situations, and overconsumption of food and alcohol. I would not call it "relaxing," but it was reasonably okay.

My Filofax was barely touched during the break. I brought it with me, of course. But there wasn't much scheduling or data-consulting necessary. The one thing that I have kicked up to full speed in the Filofax is my Christmas gift planning page. Three columns: (1) Name; (2) Gift Ideas; (3) Gifts Purchased. Column 1 is full. Column 2 is about half-dull. Column 3 is almost completely empty.

I think I am fully onboard with the Pentel Sharp 0.5mm mechanical pencil. It fits well in my pen loop and makes adequately dark markings on the page. Also, it makes me feel like a professional draftsman, especially when I twirl it around my thumb absent-mindedly. It is one of the simpler mechanical pencils out there. I don't know whether it has changed substantially in decades. There is no gel cushioning; no "finger-clicking" lead advance system; no funky color scheme. It's an unabashed black plastic tool, thank you very much, and it will not be apologizing for that. Nor will I be apologizing for it, as it has become my friend.

P.S.: My boss referred to my Filofax as my "purse" again. This man must be stopped, or my already low self-esteem will be beaten into further submission.

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wvn8v (2005-11-30 22:27:00)

I've been carrying a Filofax for 15 years and have had it called a "purse" so many times I've lost count. Don't sweat it,; it's your life, your money and most importantly, your time.

Henry Baum (2005-12-01 15:19:00)

I hope people are not disappointed in their dull gifts. (sorry, couldn't resist)

Spiral Stairs (2005-12-01 17:07:00)

Criminy, Henry. I do let the occasional typo through, but that one's bad. And I usually catch them pretty quickly. But I kind of like it, and thus will leave it.

Joseph K (2005-12-01 22:54:00)

"Purse?" Ridiculous. Pocket book? Maybe. Seriously, though, its because of your moleskine blog entry on the old blog that I got one myself. It's important to remember...

wvn8v (2005-12-03 12:37:00)

Thought about the "purse" comment some more over the last couple of days.

I have noticed that Filofax has been gravitating more towards the female sector in terms of products. There are

very few of the new style Filofaxes that are "masculine" looking to be carried only by men.

I carry a Winchester Textured Calf model I bought in 1996 that is no longer available. It is decidedly "manly" in heft, appearance and size (personal with 1-1/4" rings).

It is now beginning to fall apart and Filofax no longer honors their free repair service. So I am resigned to holding it together until Filofax begins serving the male market again.

My wife carries the Cross model in cherry red and it is more feminine looking than the one I carry, though the brown Cross looks less so.

Anyway, carry what you want.

Spiral Stairs (2005-12-05 08:28:00)

wvn8v: Hmm. I think you just called my Cross model a purse.

Just kidding. However, I think a planner that is small and chubby naturally looks somewhat feminine.

I haven't discarded the option of moving up to A5.

Anonymous (2006-01-08 18:25:00)

I really like the "cool" factor of the Filofax that my Franklin never had. It's just that all of the Filofax/moleskine etc hacks that I've read about somehow mirror the big blank Franklin Classic second page. What to do?

Anonymous (2006-10-04 20:50:00)

The Pentel P205 has been around for ages. I probably stole my first one from my dad in 1980.

## 1.3 December

### Mulling the Moleskine (2005-12-08 08:55) - Spiral Stairs

How can one talk about paper without talking about [1]Moleskines? I don't know. They are, after all, the 800-page gorilla of the back-to-paper movement.

I have many complex, conflicted thoughts about the spendy little black books. I've been trying to formulate a coherent opinion on them, but I keep getting hung up in inconsistencies. One day, I tote around a Moleskine, thinking, "Damn, I can just feel my creative juices flowing. Ideas are flowing out of me like pee, straight onto the pages of this here Moleskine." Other days, I think, "Damn, this thing doesn't comfortably fit in my pocket, it's expensive, and it may be better at creating the illusion of creative productivity than it is at actually inspiring it." On still other days, I think, "Damn, I haven't had a Quarter Pounder in a while. Maybe I'll stop by McDonald's on the way home from work."

I remember reading at [2]43 Folders the wise comment that it is more fun to shop for running shoes than it is to run in them. I am, no doubt, an obsessive researcher when it comes to all purchases, from running shoes, to notebooks, to planners. (Luckily, I hardly ever run.) Is my sporadic fascination with Moleskines a product of that truism? Is it more fun to think about Moleskines than it is productive to actually use one?

Or, am I deluding myself to think that I think in the free-form, crazy-ass way encouraged by totally blank books? Perhaps it is no accident that, while a Moleskine happens to be in my bag, it is a Filofax that I pull out and use every day.

Some day, I will post the definitive statement of truth concerning Moleskines, and I will tell you all whether they are worth it or not. I can't do that until I make that determination for myself.

1. <http://www.moleskineus.com/>

2. <http://www.43folders.com/>

## Strange Days (2005-12-11 09:07) - Spiral Stairs

I have a long and proud history of quitting. Throughout my life, I have, at one time or another, considered almost every possible hobby my own. Let's review a few prime examples.

- **Writing fiction.** This one has come and gone through my life. When I was a little kid, I wrote short stories about military battles and techno-medieval fantasy worlds. As an adult, I've written short stories about people with ruined families and affective disorders. I've taken a few writing classes. Once, I even sent a story off to some literary magazines for their rejection. One corner of my mind is constantly grappling with the fantasy of devoting myself to writing – maybe even getting an MFA. The other three corners, however, are more interested in TV.

- **Painting and drawing.** I have, again from early age, demonstrated some talent at the visual arts. Again, I've taken some classes. After classes ended, I resumed watching TV.

- **Photography.** Um, ditto. TV.

-  **Blogging.** As most of you do not know, this is my second attempt at blogging. I used to be a contributor to one of the blogs to the left of your screen. (Shucks, no need to be coy. It was [1]Banality Fair.) Then, I sort of lost motivation and quietly ducked out, feeling more shame than pride about my (lack of) contributions to the site.

So here I am, trying again, struggling against the eternal urge to watch TV.

The idea for this blog unexpectedly arose one lazy day. (There was nothing good on TV.) Without doing much thinking, I just started it. I mean, it was up and running less than two hours after the idea sprang up. In my risk-averse world, it was like jumping off a cliff. *Holy crap. What am I doing? What if I quit again? I will have contributed another dormant husk to the growing pile of internet detritus.*

Let me tell you, I am not someone to jump off a cliff. I would never, ever skydive. I wouldn't bungee jump. I've never even been skiing, in part because I grew up in a non-skiing Kansas family and in part because I am afraid I will break my leg. Starting a blog on short notice about something that has been in my life a short period of time – my Filofax – is damned crazy for me.

So far, I'd say the results are mixed. As my past suggests, my motivation – both for blogging and actually using my Filofax – comes and goes. Some days, I'm a pissing racehorse as to both. Other days, I just watch TV.

Right now, I'm sitting on my couch in front of the TV, but the TV is off. Strange days, these are.

1. <http://www.banalityfair.blogspot.com/>

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## Preaching to the Choir (2005-12-19 12:17) - Spiral Stairs

I was watching some movie a couple days ago that contained a scene taking place during a Sunday sermon. It struck me that preachers are the spiritual forebears of bloggers. Every Sunday, a preacher gets up and pontificates to an audience on whatever topic the preacher desires, linked only by a general continuing theme (supplied by the pertinent religion). One week, it's "Our religion tells us this about loving our family." The next week, it's "Our religion tells us this about work." The preacher could get up and tell the flock what their religion tells them about fast food. Or sports teams. Or whatever the hell the preacher wants.

That's blogging.

The preacher has two huge advantages over schmuck bloggers like me. First, the preacher has an audience that believes it may be eternally damned if it doesn't listen to the damned sermon. No Sitemeter is necessary for these preachers; if attendance is low, they can sprinkle their sermons with a few choice words about fire and brimstone to guarantee standing-room-only next week. Schmuck bloggers have to rely on content. Yuck.

The second big advantage is that preachers are expected, generally, to come up with their content once per week. They get a whole fricking week to think about a pet peeve, and then just a half-hour to talk about it. Now that's a cush job.

Which brings me to me. Damn, I'm lazy. I am not even going to make excuses about being busy, blah

blah blah. When a blogger posts an entry like that, it's the surest sign the blog is just beginning to amass a record-setting collection of dust. No, I have time.

I have no excuses. But, if you've made it this far along in my masturbatory rant, you deserve a hack. Filofax – even in A5 garb – is a small format. The calendar pages, in particular, require some compression of thought and expression. If, like me, you are a former user of a Device, then you may be accustomed to unlimited virtual storage in your calendar. Confined to paper, however, you can't make every appointment include every last datum about every last detail.

Or can you? I use cross-referencing. I have numbered every blank page in my "Notes" section. When I make a calendar entry that requires more data than allowed by calendar space, I put the rest of the data on a page in the Notes section. Then, in the calendar entry, I make a notation like "5" "5B" (page 5 or page 5, back). Whammo, blammo. Quick, painless access to storage space of unlimited expansion capability.

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mn (2005-12-21 07:28:00)

Thanks for a great hack. I so often forget I have supplementary notes for items recorded on my calendar.

While the preacher has a captive audience tending to their souls, you have a readership that shows up, precisely, to read your thoughts. That said, keep preaching.

ana Reinert (2006-01-23 22:30:00)

for the record, when you do write, you write well and you make it worthwhile for your followers to return every week for the next sermon.

## **Filofax Nirvana (2005-12-28 16:20) - Spiral Stairs**

I've returned from a whirlwind trip to my hometown of Kansas City, where I dined on steak and barbecue, and reflected on the past year and the one about to begin. For the first time in memory, I'm committing to a couple New Year's resolutions.

First, I resolve to read at least one book per month. I am ashamed to say it, because I think of myself as an intellectual, but my book-reading has been waning dangerously over the past year or so. Indeed, it has waned to the point that a one-book-per-month commitment would be an increase in frequency. It actually pains me to say that. I mitigate my shame by telling myself that the one-book-per-month rule is a minimum, and I really want to read two books per month. (In life generally, I like to set low expectations, for obvious reasons.)

Second, I resolve to put a large number of typed words together in a reasonably coherent order, after which I shall affix the designation of "novel" to the assembled words. (I just can't say "I resolve to write a novel," because it is too much of a failure cliché. Who doesn't want to write a novel? Who doesn't want to lose weight? Who doesn't want to repair all damaged relationships with family and friends? Yet hardly anyone ever does any of them.) For the past couple of weeks, an idea has percolated in my head, and it appears to have matured into something strong enough to support a book-length project. I have never had a shortage of ideas. But they usually lack some key component of readable fiction: plot; character development; being-worth-a-damn. This idea seems to have some meat in it. I fear that it might resemble too closely a book I read about 12 years ago. I have to go back and check – it is possible that every clever detail I have dreamed up has really been dredged from dormant memories of that book. Hope not.

What does all of this have to do with Philofaxy? Not much, but some. I will be maintaining a rotating list in my Filofax of the books that will enable my resolution-satisfaction. And I have already used the "Notes" section to record some thoughts about the planned long, coherent list of typed words. Ultimately, these are pedestrian uses of my Filofax, well within boundaries well-trod by previous Filofax users. But the promise of Filofax is fully realized only when it reflects the drudgery of life. Filofax nirvana – pure Philofaxy – is when the Filofax is a mirror of the user's life. It contains the entire user, nothing more, nothing less, nothing untrue.

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FiloCanuck (2005-12-28 23:51:00)

My dear Philofaxy...your blog has inspired me to return to the land of Filofax! I have been a devoted filofaxer in the past...found the personal too small...the A5...a tad too small...so today bought the grand daddy of filofaxes...the A4 format! So far I love it!!! Good to be back!!

Spiral Stairs (2005-12-29 07:14:00)

Filocanuck, welcome back into the fold. I may someday join you in the society of A4 users. I still grind my teeth every day about the perfect size.

## Changing the World, One Planner at a Time (2005-12-30 12:37) - Spiral Stairs

As I've written before, the Filofax system is peculiarly amenable to wacky reordering, crazy page designs, and other ad hoc usages that are, like, totally wild. Now, mind you, I'm way too lazy to do most of that. Instead, I manifest the inherent craziness of Filofax by using poor handwriting, loopy lines intended to connect two disparate facts or events, and intentionally varying the color of ink or lead I'm using. When I open my Filofax, all of these say to me: "Damn, you one crazy lawyer!"

Since I'm too lazy to do anything other than write badly, I depend on others to make my life easier – and crazier. Here are some ideas along those lines:

- I want a Moleskine whose pages are perforated and pre-punched to fit into Filofaxes. Now that would make me a card-carrying Moleskine devotee.
- What about a Filofax insert that would give me another pen loop? I want to carry two (at least) writing implements. There's no easy way to do this on my personal Cross model.
- I want a checkbook pre-punched for Filofax insertion. Yes, yes, Filofax makes a checkbook holder. But it is overpriced and awkward.
- I want more ruler options. First, I want a clear ruler that has markings for inches. I can't make heads or tails of the metric markings on my clear ruler. And the black ruler is simply a bad idea. Second, I want a ruler that lists all U.S. presidents and their dates of service. I have a full-size ruler that does this. Why can't my Filofax ruler?
- I want a map of Washington, DC that reflects post-1995 changes to the area's transit system. According to the map I have, one of the subway lines I've used regularly for years is merely "proposed."
- Oh, also, I want every single piece of paper in the world that I haven't already mentioned to be sized and punched for usage in my Filofax.

None of this will happen until Filofax acquires a substantially greater share of the planner market. How might that happen? Like the great orator Michael Jackson once said, "I'm starting with the man in the mirror. I'm asking him to change his ways. No message could have been any clearer. If you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make a change!"

Buy Filofax!

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Lee (2006-12-30 06:37:00)

I share your pain. As an avid filofax user for many years I have decided that enough is enough and I've taken a stand to make more people love their filofaxes.

Therefore I have designed a set of funky and fabulous inserts for filofaxes (and yes they are pre-punched).

Check them out at [www.filofabs.com](http://www.filofabs.com) and let me know what you think :)

BlogBook v0.4,  
L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> & GNU/Linux.  
<http://www.blogbooker.com>

Edited: October 2, 2010