

# *Philofaxy* 2006

## **BLogBooker**

From Blog to Book.

'[HTTP://PHILOFAXY.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://philofaxy.blogspot.com)'



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1	January . . . . .	7
	Successful Hack Deployment (2006-01-03 16:31) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	7
	Silence (2006-01-24 08:51) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	8
1.2	March . . . . .	8
	Boo! (2006-03-13 18:52) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	8
	Why Must You Torture Me? (2006-03-16 08:39) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	9
	The Eagle Has Landed. Repeat. The Eagle Has Landed. (2006-03-21 19:58) - Spiral Stairs	9
	Hello, Please Meet Philo (2006-03-25 19:11) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	10
	Thou Shalt Lay Flat (2006-03-27 13:00) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	14
1.3	June . . . . .	16
	Philofaxer's Reign of Autocratic Terror Ends; Coalition Government Appointed (2006-06-20 17:42) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	16
	Reporting for Duty (2006-06-21 06:32) - Nan . . . . .	16
	Mama's Family (2006-06-21 10:35) - Nan . . . . .	17
	The 99-cent solution (2006-06-21 15:50) - Nan . . . . .	18
	Links Added (2006-06-22 17:57) - Nan . . . . .	22
	Dirty Little Secret (2006-06-22 20:20) - Nan . . . . .	22
	Calamity Befalls Even the Righteous (2006-06-23 08:39) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	24
	The Scientific Method, Applied (2006-06-24 10:47) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	25
	Mama's family, part deux (2006-06-25 01:23) - Nan . . . . .	27
	It's Working... (2006-06-25 03:37) - Nan . . . . .	28
	Done!! (2006-06-26 18:39) - Nan . . . . .	28
	The BS (2006-06-28 00:15) - Nan . . . . .	29
	You Can Quote Me (2006-06-29 19:27) - Nan . . . . .	30
	Tyranny of the e-Majority (2006-06-30 08:42) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	32
1.4	July . . . . .	34
	And then there were two (2006-07-01 22:07) - Nan . . . . .	34
	Summer Doldrums (2006-07-06 23:32) - Nan . . . . .	35
	A Tumbleweed Rolls Through (2006-07-10 22:36) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	36

	What's Working (2006-07-11 20:12) - Nan . . . . .	37
	What do you write with? (2006-07-15 06:31) - Nan . . . . .	39
	Famous Filofaxers (2006-07-17 14:20) - Nan . . . . .	40
	Back in Black (2006-07-19 18:27) - Nan . . . . .	41
	First Sketch (2006-07-22 04:23) - Nan . . . . .	42
	Writing vs. Doing (2006-07-24 18:47) - Nan . . . . .	42
	Forthcoming Emissions (2006-07-25 14:48) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	43
	Russian Nesting Dolls (2006-07-26 09:40) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	43
	A Rock, a Hard Place, and Some Complaints About Each (2006-07-29 09:31) - Spiral Stairs	46
	R.I.P. (2006-07-31 20:51) - Nan . . . . .	50
1.5	August . . . . .	52
	Regrets, I've had a few... (2006-08-03 20:04) - Nan . . . . .	52
	Warning: Off-Topic Beauty Ahead (2006-08-05 14:17) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	53
	Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes... (2006-08-08 14:18) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	55
	Tab Time (2006-08-09 23:42) - Nan . . . . .	57
	Super Tabs! (2006-08-12 21:21) - Nan . . . . .	58
	More on Tabs. (And I mean that the way it sounds.) (2006-08-14 13:37) - Spiral Stairs .	58
	A Quick Query (2006-08-14 13:47) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	60
	Cliff Diving (2006-08-15 09:05) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	60
	For the Filofax User Who Has Everything Except This One Thing (2006-08-17 08:40) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	62
	The Motherlode (2006-08-18 14:40) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	62
	The Eaglet Has Landed (2006-08-22 10:49) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	65
	Notebookism (2006-08-29 20:53) - Nan . . . . .	67
	Mini-Lode (2006-08-31 20:16) - Nan . . . . .	67
	Everything New is Old Again (2006-08-31 22:23) - Nan . . . . .	68
1.6	September . . . . .	68
	New Beginnings (2006-09-01 18:23) - Nan . . . . .	68
	Mercilessness (2006-09-04 21:00) - Nan . . . . .	70
	Rhetoric (2006-09-06 08:57) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	70
	9/11 Neediest (2006-09-11 21:52) - Nan . . . . .	72
	Writing Down the Vote (2006-09-13 10:09) - Nan . . . . .	72
	Project: Reorganize (2006-09-14 09:28) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	73
	Putting Off Procrastination (2006-09-17 18:27) - Nan . . . . .	74
	Leather Tickler (2006-09-20 00:08) - Nan . . . . .	76
	Road Trip (2006-09-23 02:44) - Nan . . . . .	76
	Pencil News (2006-09-25 09:13) - Spiral Stairs . . . . .	77
	Madison Signatures (2006-09-27 21:55) - Nan . . . . .	78

	Tranquility (2006-09-29 19:44) - Nan . . . . .	79
1.7	October . . . . .	80
	Where do I put it? (2006-10-06 22:18) - Nan . . . . .	80
	Old Traditions / New Lines (2006-10-13 20:13) - Nan . . . . .	82
	New Linkage (2006-10-14 18:30) - Nan . . . . .	84
	Full Day (2006-10-19 20:25) - Nan . . . . .	85
	I had a dream (2006-10-25 09:17) - Nan . . . . .	86
	Sharing the Love (2006-10-27 20:14) - Nan . . . . .	87
	Wikipedia Coolness (2006-10-29 21:56) - Nan . . . . .	88
	All Hallows' Eve (2006-10-31 18:34) - Nan . . . . .	89
1.8	November . . . . .	90
	It's a Way of Life (2006-11-02 19:35) - Nan . . . . .	90
	There You Have It (2006-11-06 21:19) - Nan . . . . .	92
	Holiday Harbingers (2006-11-15 17:16) - Nan . . . . .	93
	Mark Your Meteors (2006-11-17 20:31) - Nan . . . . .	94
	Happy Turkey Day! (2006-11-23 20:03) - Nan . . . . .	95
	Erratum (2006-11-26 17:54) - Nan . . . . .	95
	The Unbearable Thinness of a Year (2006-11-30 22:02) - Nan . . . . .	97
1.9	December . . . . .	98
	WOW (2006-12-03 15:40) - Nan . . . . .	98
	Hugging Big...uh...Trees (2006-12-12 21:21) - Nan . . . . .	99
	Flagging (2006-12-22 21:35) - Nan . . . . .	101
	Winter Solstice (2006-12-23 17:37) - Nan . . . . .	102
	In the Midst of It All (2006-12-24 23:51) - Nan . . . . .	104
	Christmas night (2006-12-25 23:29) - Nan . . . . .	104
	PSA - Free Shipping (2006-12-27 20:30) - Nan . . . . .	105
	Pen Review: Monteverde Mega Inkball (2006-12-28 12:51) - Nan . . . . .	106
	Ripped from the comments: Filofabs (2006-12-30 16:11) - Nan . . . . .	108
	Countdown to 2007 (2006-12-31 20:25) - Nan . . . . .	109



# Chapter 1

## 2006

### 1.1 January

#### Successful Hack Deployment (2006-01-03 16:31) - Spiral Stairs

I would like to report a successful deployment of the [1]cross-referencing hack I described earlier. Today, I had to make a notation of an appointment at 8:00 a.m., on January 30th, for a plumber to come replace our kitchen sink. You see, our current kitchen sink is so old and disgusting that, regardless of soap and scrubbing, all dishes and kitchen gear emerge from it *dirtier* than when they entered it. The garbage disposal, too, makes ogrimish grinding noises and launches minced foodstuffs skyward when its gears turn. Oh, and don't forget the faucet. Hot water leaks from it in an annoying stream unless you use extreme leverage to twist the hot water knob beyond the usual point at which water flow ceases. We have been forced to use duct tape in order to apply this leverage constantly.

So the whole apparatus has got to go.

I noted the appointment, but there was so much information to accompany it! The name of the company, their phone number, the name of the person with whom I spoke, the price I was quoted, the name of the person who will be coming that day. That would dominate the tiny area for January 30th. So, I simply wrote "8:00 a.m. - Plumber (N7)". Now I know that page 7 of my Notes section contains the relevant data. Page 7 contains other, unrelated data as well. It doesn't matter, as long as it is all accurately cross-referenced.

Voila. Now I can do other things that day.

1. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2005/12/preaching-to-choir.html>

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Nan (2006-03-14 08:54:00)

The cross-referencing idea is interesting! The main reason I use a Filo instead of a bound book like Moleskine is that I'm worried I'd forget my own numbering system. And seeing any kind of cryptic code, or even some abbreviations, momentarily knocks my brain for a loop and ultimately makes me avoid the planner.

With a Filo, you can move pages to right where you need them, and I do spend a lot of time opening and closing rings all day!

For information like you're describing, I would start a separate page and store it under P for Plumber, or maybe S for Sink. (To make that decision, I'd ask myself under which letter I'd be most likely to LOOK for it later.) Then, when I had an appointment with the plumber, I'd move the page to that week in the calendar, so I'd see if when I needed it. Later, I might put the page back under P so I'd have my notes in front of me the next time I called the plumber, or if it's a one-off project, I'd file the Filofax page in the same manila folder with material related to the repair.

## Silence (2006-01-24 08:51) - Spiral Stairs

Is it happening again? Am I abandoning a project that showed such promise?

Uh, yes. For now.

The reasons are twofold:

(1) There are personal things going on in my life that are occupying a substantial portion of the space in my brain, which is limited to begin with. Don't worry (if you were so inclined), it's nothing bad. In fact, it's generally good stuff. But it is, nevertheless, stuff.

(2) When I started this blog, I picked an almost absurdly narrow focus. A really narrow focus is fine when it is paired up with equally deep dedication. The problem is, I've been fooling you all a little. I like my Filofax, to be sure. But I am not, in fact, obsessed with it. On the weekends, I sometimes don't even look at it. I know, what kind of self-respecting Filofaxer am I?

The issues obliquely referred to in (1), above, are substantial, and would themselves justify some period of extended silence on my part. But the issues discussed in (2) are, in some ways, a cover for my own laziness. I never intended for this blog to be solely about the mechanics of Filofax-usage. Rather, I intended that my use of my Filofax would be a jumping-off point – a straight man, as it were – for broader diatribes, odes, and miscellany. So my silence goes as much to my lack of inspiration as a writer as it does to my lack of inspiration as a Filofax-user.

So there it is. I make no promises about anything (ever, in any part of my life, for any reason). For all you know, I may spray off a series of ten blog entries in ten days. Then again, I may not speak again for weeks. Stay on your toes! Isn't this exciting?

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Anonymous (2006-02-11 08:48:00)

You make no promises?! About anything in your life?!

Aren't you married?!

Another fizzle...

Nan (2006-03-13 08:35:00)

I'm so glad I found your blog! I'm a filofaxer recently emerged from 7 years of Palm pergatory. I was wishing there were a "moleskinerie" site for filofax people, so I googled "moleskinerie filofax" and there you were!

## 1.2 March

### Boo! (2006-03-13 18:52) - Spiral Stairs

See, I was just testing you with that extended silence. If you're reading this, either you've been waiting for my next post with bated breath or you are yet another misguided Googler, stumbling into this space because you were looking for a pornography storage solution called File O' Fucks.

Either way, feast on these breaking news items.

I never could quite get over my regret over getting a "personal" size Filofax instead of the A4 size. For months now, I've been justifying it. "Gee, isn't this personal size handy and small. Why, it fits in my bag with no problem!" But every time I said that, my boss would pop up from behind a file cabinet and say, "Hey, nice purse."

So, I decided to throw caution and a sizeable chunk of change to the wind. An A5-size, chocolate-colored Cross model is on its way. (Or at least it should be. The folks at [1]Goldspot are masters at setting low prices, but as to quick service: Not so much.)

I'll report back when it's here.

One other thing, not explicitly related to Filofax. My wife is pregnant and we expect to have a little Filofaxer on the ground in August. (See, this is one of the top-secret personal things I was alluding to when I went on hiatus.) We have not yet observed its gender and, thus, by well-accepted laws of quantum physics, it is neither male nor female but instead is a probability wave.

This gives me lots of fun things to write in my Filofax, like "Get on fricking wait list for daycare" and "Write check to fricking daycare people" and "Accompany wife to doctor appointment and pray that no fricking third arm is identified on the ultrasound. Unless it's not a third arm, but just appears to be. In which case, RIGHT ON MY BOY!"

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

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pigpogm (2006-03-13 20:05:00)

A4? That'll store a lot of pornography.

Oh, and congratulations.

Spiral Stairs (2006-03-13 21:55:00)

Oops. I meant A5. (Now corrected.) Still, a good-size vessel for pornography.

Maybe I'll hand down the personal-size Filofax to the kid, for his or her daycare assignments and the like. ("Poop in diaper"; "Cry until objective is achieved".)

Jim Scolman (2006-03-15 15:50:00)

Welcome back and congratulations!

Jim Scolman

[photoday.blogspot.com](http://photoday.blogspot.com)

### **Why Must You Torture Me? (2006-03-16 08:39) - Spiral Stairs**

[1]Goldspot.com, you surely are a cruel mistress. I placed my order for my new, improved, larger, better-tasting Filofax a week and a half ago now, and your website still says it has not shipped. And you have not responded to my e-mail. Nor have I received any damn indication at all of what is going on.

Come to think of it, when I ordered my first Filofax from you, something similar happened. There was an unexplained delay, and there were unanswered e-mails. But it all ended up okay in the end.

Listen, I'm supposed to be telling everyone about how great my new Filofax is. And wouldn't you like it if I could tell everyone how great [2]Goldspot.com is? Also, with each passing day, I lose one day of the included calendar's utility. It will die on December 31st, regardless of when I receive the Filofax. And, as though to add insult to injury, I will have *more and more* stuff to transfer into the new Filofax because I am still using the old one. Please, this will already be a day-long project.

If this persists, I shall have to take a measure most drastic: *I will pick up the phone and call you.* That's right. I will be forced to abandon the emotional fortress of e-mail and attempt to have a human conversation with a regular old human at your company. Highly unorthodox, I know. But soon, I will have no other option.

I don't want to invoke the nuclear option. Please send me my Filofax. Pretty please. With Jot Pad pages on top.

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

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

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### **The Eagle Has Landed. Repeat. The Eagle Has Landed. (2006-03-21 19:58) - Spiral Stairs**

Breaking news: I have received my spanking new chocolate brown, Cross-pattern, A5-size Filofax. A full report will follow, but here are some preliminary impressions:

The Good:

The week-per-two-pages calendar is vertically oriented. I greatly prefer this to the modified horizontal format of the personal size. It also has time designations, missing in the personal size calendar.

TWO PEN LOOPS. Let me make this clear: TWO PEN LOOPS. This is a real boon. I can carry pen

and pencil now.

Blank, not pre-labeled, tabs. I'll have to give them some serious thought.

Pad of pre-punched paper included. Huzzah! It slides into a slot inside the back cover and will really make freeform paper insertion easier.

The Bad:

The blank tabs are coated in a slick plasticine substance that makes ink bead up. Each tab helpfully states, "Label the tabs with a permanent marker." But now I have to find a "permanent marker" with a tip small enough for legible tab-making.

It does not include the really useful URL/e-mail pages that came with my personal size planner. I keep (kept) all my passwords on them (using an inscrutable code no thief could figure out). I'll have to buy some, methinks.

The rings are the same size as the personal planner. In stock form, the planner bursts at the rings' seams. I would have liked to see another 1/4 inch or so of diameter. Edit: The rings are, in fact, slightly larger. Still wouldn't mind a little more slack though.

The Ugly:

My bank account statement, after paying for this oversized hunk of leather.

---

Anonymous (2006-03-22 10:35:00)

Hi,

Glad to see you're back posting.

I've also settled on the A5 format, after a couple of years bouncing through the B5 Deskfax and Personal sizes (the former a shoulder-straining briefcase-hog, and the latter ultimately too narrow for any sort of fluent note-taking).

The A5 column-format diary does not suit me - I'd rather have the full page width available for note-taking on those days when I don't have fixed appointments.

For some great A5 page inserts - you can never have too many! - I highly recommend [www.succes.com](http://www.succes.com)

They may not be able to spell succes (note last S missing, in the Dutch manner), but they make superb quality gear.

Hope to hear more from you soon.

G

Pam Boxall (2006-03-22 10:51:00)

I have the A5 City with a page-a-day diary section. If you feel yours will be overcrowded, try carrying less of the diary section - I have 6 months in mine at present but it would work with just three. I also have minimal addresses - 1 page for 'personal', 1 for work, 1 for friends/family, so I don't need to use the A-Z index tabs. For the tabs I use a CD marker pen - fine nib, permanent, doesn't blob.

Spiral Stairs (2006-03-22 12:28:00)

Thanks for the tips. I am already LOVING the new 'Fax. I'll post up some pictures soon.

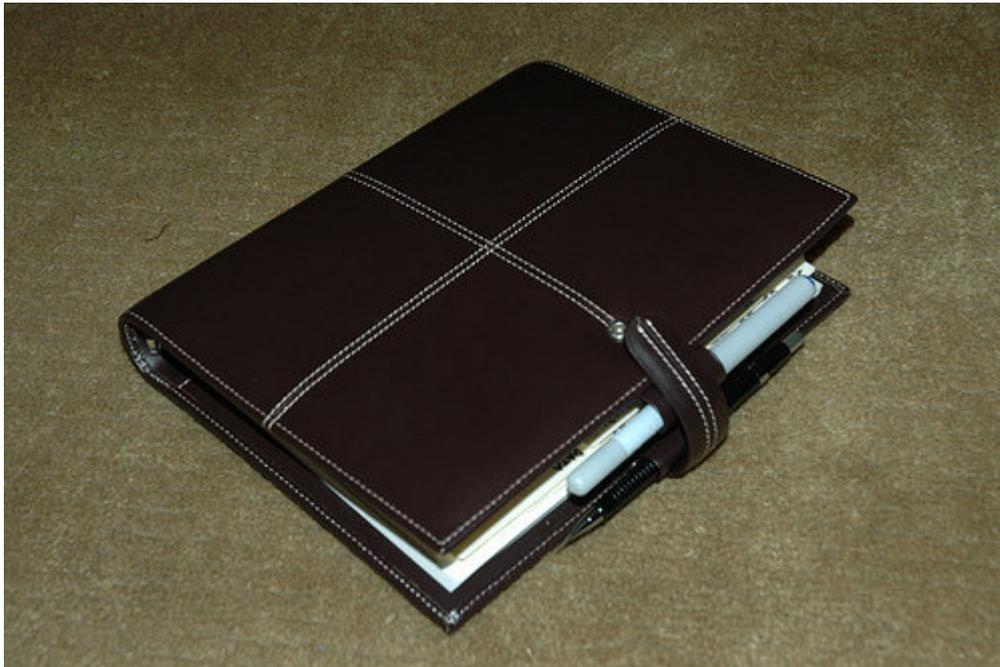
One great thing I've discovered is that, if you snip off the lower-left corner of personal-size pages, they fit nicely on the A5 rings. Makes the transition much easier!

## **Hello, Please Meet Philo (2006-03-25 19:11) - Spiral Stairs**

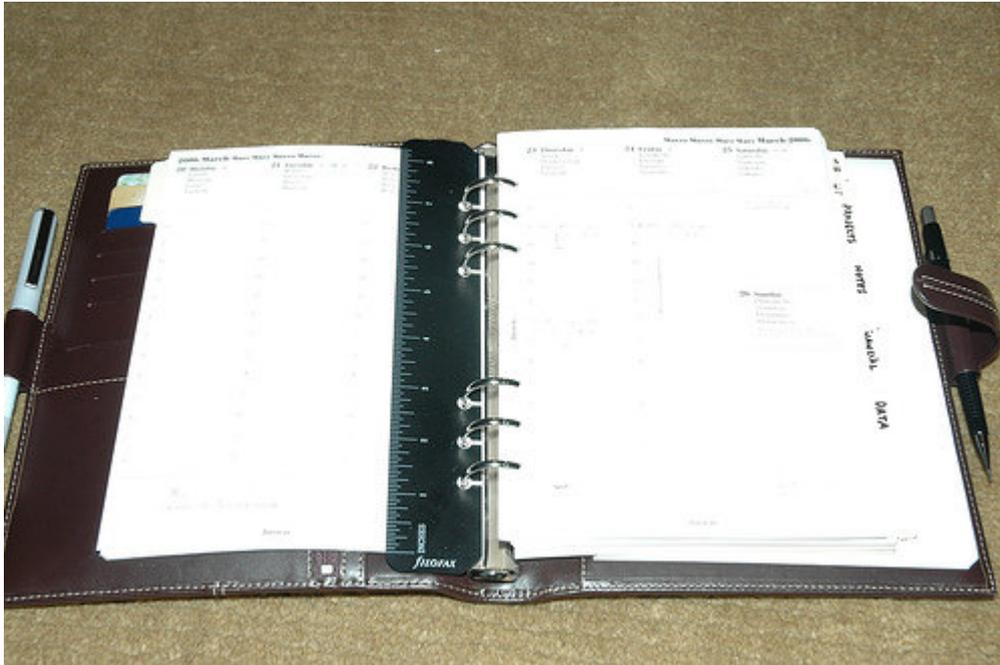
I've been getting to know my new Filofax, let's call him Philo, for the past few days. Let me tell you, I could not be happier. I was afraid that Philo would leave me deflated, feeling like I had really lost my mind when I decided to replace its older and smaller sibling (let's call him Fax) just for some extra square footage on the page.

Philo is so much more than size, though. Here, let me introduce him to you.

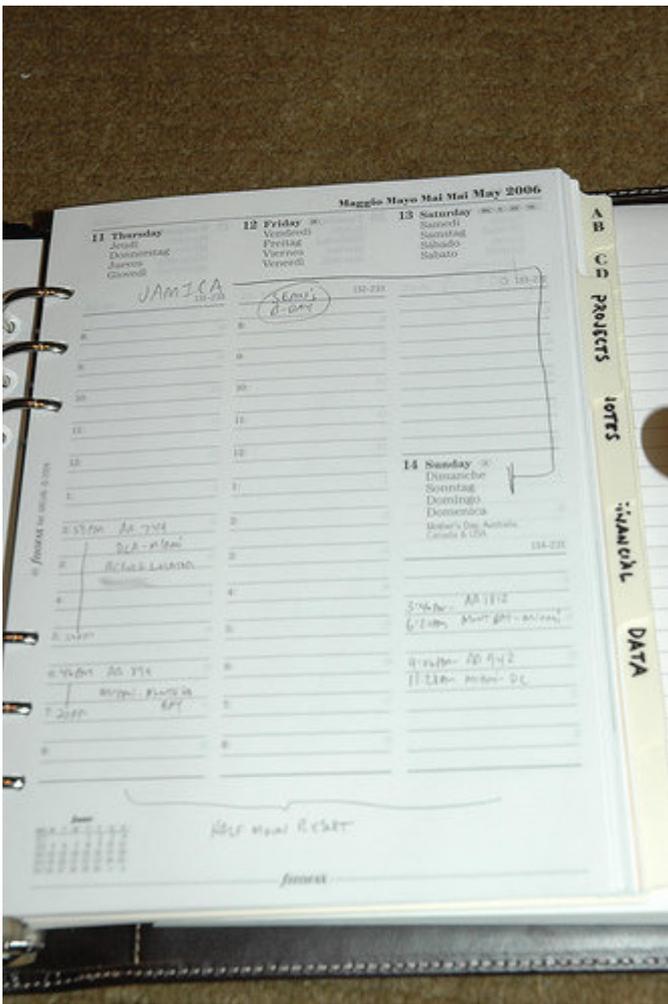
World, meet Philo.



Here is one trick Philo can do that Fax could not. Philo, lie flat!



Good planner! Good planner! (Oh, also, Philo: "Carry two writing implements!" Good boy! Good boy!)  
Poor Fax would just flop around and roll on his spine when he tried that trick.  
Philo has lovely vertical calendar columns too:



Good boy! (On the above photo, I have disclosed that I will be traveling to "Jamica" in May. Now you both know my vacation plans and are witness to one of the most egregious spelling errors I have ever made. Seriously, I usually don't even bother to spell-check because me and spelling, we are CLOSE. I prefer to think of "Jamica" as a brain-hiccup of sorts, rather than a spelling error. Because I know I am not going to "Jamica." Please.)

When you have a new child, clothing is a real hassle. Luckily, Philo makes it easy for me to use Fax's hand-me-downs. Look, Fax's clothes fit on Philo:

Bank Account  
Spese Cuenta Konta Compte

Date							
10/2/05	1041	10/2/05	CASH	✓	300.00		
11/1/05		11/1/05	CASH	✓	220.00		
11/1/05		11/1/05	CASH	✓	61.50		
3/24/06		11/4/05	CASH	✓	200.00		
3/24/06		11/4/05	CASH	✓	502.32		
		11/4/05	CASH	✓	152.70		
		11/5/05	CASH (ALMAGRE)	✓	500.00		
		11/5/05	CASH (ALMAGRE)	✓	101.95		
		11/7/05	CASH (ALMAGRE)	✓	59.52		
		11/7/05	CASH (ALMAGRE)	✓	30.70		
		11/7/05	CASH (ALMAGRE)	✓	91.55		
		11/7/05	CASH (ALMAGRE)	✓			

That trick is possible with just the slightest alterations to Fax's clothing – I can't even sew and I managed it!



(No, you don't get to see the details of my checking account.)

Thanks to his lie-flat trick, Philo spends each working day keeping me company at my desk. I've got a cleared out little area for him.

Fax, poor sap, is in a drawer. I don't even bring him home with me. He's in a cold, dark office this weekend, wondering how his little world so quickly fell apart. "Where's Papa? Where did he go? Where did my big brother Philo go? Gosh, I'm sure they're coming back soon, with ice cream or something else sweet and tasty!"

Not so, Fax. Get used to your cold, dark drawer. There's a new planner in town.

---

Nan (2006-05-22 11:43:00)

Thanks for the tip! I too recently upgraded from Personal to A5 Filo, and this saved me from copying over some pages.

Before that, I tried and failed to convert to Moleskines. They're such lovely little things! But I really couldn't deal with not being able to move pages around, and remove them when I'm done. I still use a large MS as my personal journal, and I still think the pocket weekly Moleskine planner is a thing of beauty...but I guess because a Filo was the first personal organizer I ever used (in my 20's, after I graduated from a 12-month wall calendar and a small notebook for assignments), I permanently think in a modular way that requires a loose-leaf system.

### **Thou Shalt Lay Flat (2006-03-27 13:00) - Spiral Stairs**

I commented recently that one of the best features of my new A5-size Filofax ("Philo") is that he lays flat. As I work with him further, I am increasingly realizing the significance of this feature.

I spend most of my workday at a desk. My desk is L-shaped. I face two computer screens (their backs are to my office door, thank you very much). To my right is the other arm of the L, where I keep my

phone and pads of paper and the like. It's a convenient parking spot for my Filofax, because I can see what I need to see by just turning my head away from the computer screen and to my right.

However, when I turned my head to see Philo's littler but older brother ("Fax"), all I saw was a brown piece of leather. Try as he might, Fax just could not lie down. I would try to help him stretch by gently pushing him down, or folding his spine backwards (ouch!). But he is just an inflexible fellow. So any planner activity at all required me to manipulate Fax with both hands. Once open, I had to use one hand to keep Fax in an open position, while the other wrote, or turned pages, or caressed him and said, "It's okay, boy, you'll get it!"

Philo lays like a frickin' show dog. I mean, he is flat as a pancake. I generally keep him open to the current week's spread. But with a couple finger-twiddles, I can get Philo to show me anything I want. Given my generally astounding laziness, keeping Philo open helps me use him more efficiently. A closed planner is a forgotten, or at least underused, planner. Who wants to go through all the effort of opening a closed planner? I only have so many minutes in the day. An open planner, however, invites attention. It says, "I'm here for you, do what you will with me, oh god, oh god, OH GOD!" You can use one of the pen loops for a cigarette.

And, thus, a rule is born: Thou Shalt Lay Flat. Once you go flat, you'll never go back.

---

Teri (2006-03-27 20:33:00)

Your blog makes me smile! :)

Anonymous (2006-05-05 19:43:00)

So wonderful to find someone else who loves Filofax!

Anonymous (2006-05-14 16:45:00)

THIS IS A GREAT BLOG! I am a filofax addict, a devotee, I am in LOVE with them. I have a few (well - 5 actually) because whichever one I use, sooner or later I start to hanker after a smaller / larger / more colourful / more professional looking/ leather one. I have searched in vain for anything on the web that will resonate with my devotion - and you're the closest I've found. Keep it up. (P.S. My current filofax is NEW, a pocket sized Finsbury in Teal - delicious.)

Nan (2006-05-21 18:32:00)

I have a teal Finsbury, too. I also own more than one. I wonder if every true Filo devotee ends up with multiple binders. One A5 stays on my desk at work, with one-day-per-pages that serve as my work record. Another A5 (a red Belgravia) is my personal life. This one only has the 1 week per 2 page calendar, since most of the action takes place behind the tabs: To Dos, Checklists, Projects, Lists, Ideas, and Notes. The pocket Finsbury is my PDA, and also serves as my wallet, because I can keep folding money and receipts in the big pocket in back. So have 3 that I use every day.

I also own a Personal size (Finsbury) that I'm not using currently. It used to do everything that the A5 and the Pocket are now doing. I used it so MUCH, however, that I just started to feel cramped being on that size page all day long, and went to the A5. I love the A5 paper, but since I can't take that everywhere I got the Pocket as a PDA.

I'm hanging onto the Personal, though. I have an idea for dividing and conquering things differently still next year, which would entail going back to the Personal size as my "my everything" book.

M Ng (2006-08-04 12:13:00)

Poor little Fax, relegated to the desk drawer! My personal Filofax shudders - but it has nothing to worry about because it started to lay flat after only about two months of hard use. I think I sped up the cover-softening/spine-breaking process by using a fat (multi-) pen as a page marker for a few weeks. And leaving it wedged under books, water bottles, plates - anything on hand - when it wouldn't lay flat. And shoving random (not necessarily flat) things into the front and back pockets.

You know, maybe my personal Filofax wouldn't mind a little desk-drawer vacation after all.

Nice to see you're still posting.

## 1.3 June

### Philofaxer's Reign of Autocratic Terror Ends; Coalition Government Appointed (2006-06-20 17:42) - Spiral Stairs

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one blogger to admit that he is a lazy and worthless lump of organic matter and dissolve his iron-fisted control over a once-promising blog that has fallen fallow, a decent respect to the opinions of bloggerkind requires that he should declare the causes which impel him to the dissolution.

One afternoon, as I sat around indulging my laziness and worthlessness, the idea for Philofaxy struck me. Filofax is sorely underrepresented in the world of bloggery. Moleskines, you can't escape. Temples to the cult of Franklin Covey litter the landscape. Pocket planners with gilt-edge pages sold near the checkout at Barnes and Noble may be more widely discussed.

(Plus, come on: Philofaxy is a really cool name for a blog. With a name that cool, its existence was inevitable.)

So I delivered Philofaxy unto the world. And a small but devoted crew of fellow Filofaxers took notice. And we cavorted in the fields of Philofaxy, and I pretended not to be a lazy and worthless lump.

But the truth has a way of revealing itself. It can no longer be disputed: I am lazy and worthless, and fully incapable of maintaining a blog devoted to a rich subject like the love of Filofax on my own.

Enter Nan.

One fine television-soaked day, an e-mail arrived in my in-box from a devoted but disappointed Filofaxer. She accused me of being lazy and worthless, and I said, HOW DARE YOU TALK TO ME LIKE THAT, and she said, WELL, YOU DESERVE IT, and I said: FINE. DO YOU WANT TO JOIN PHILOFAXY? And she said: FINE. YES.

At least that's how I remember it. But, in fact, I'm pretty sure it didn't go anything like that at all. Except for the parts about Nan contacting me, rousing my from my listless state, and raising the possibility of Philofaxy's resurrection. It quickly became apparent to me that Nan would be a huge boon to Philofaxy.

Nan's been chomping at the bit to Philofaxize, and I will leave it to her to offer her thoughts. As I discovered when I started this blog, Nan and I are not the only ones out there who love Filofax. There are others. Many of them found their way here. Many of them have surely left, thanks to my laziness and worthlessness. It is time to return. It is a new era.

There's no plan. There's no written constitution. There are no articles of confederation, incorporation, or faith. We're going to wing it, like the schizo-nutso-bizarro Filofax-users we are.

Now, I have some TV to watch and a sofa to imprint with the contours of my buttocks.

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Nan (2006-06-26 20:15:00)

Yes, Philofaxy is the coolest name for a blog. Why else do you think I didn't even try to start a new one?

### Reporting for Duty (2006-06-21 06:32) - Nan

It's true! I couldn't stand to see a good thing die! However, I remember the conversation completely differently. I thought it was more like:

Nan: MY SELF-WORTH IS SO PITIFULLY LOW I FEEL THE NEED TO DO OTHERS' WORK FOR THEM, FOR FREE. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, LET ME RESCUE YOUR MISERABLE LITTLE BLOG AND LET YOU TAKE ALL THE CREDIT.

Philofaxer: WHATEV.

What is this lumpish, slothful disease that strikes as soon as one is associated with Philofaxy? I've let over 12 hours elapse after that gracious introduction, and it's only my first day! Maybe I can redeem myself by posting a nice big picture. Yeah...that's the ticket! I call this one "Study in red."



[1]

P.S. Yes, that's a Lime iMac in the background. I use it as a paperweight.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/47/171909306\\_04f38ea387.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/47/171909306_04f38ea387.jpg?v=0)

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## Mama's Family (2006-06-21 10:35) - Nan

Here are the Filos that currently organize my life. In future posts, I'll delve deeper into how I use (and fail to use) them. At left is the black A5 Finsbury Filofax that I keep on my desk at work. It holds a full year's one-day-per-page diary and, currently, not much else. The red A5 Belgravia in the middle is my personal everything book. It has a weekly calendar (vertical, just like the one in Philofaxer's A5) and tabs for various kinds of lists and notes. The turquoise pocket Finsbury is what I carry with me everywhere and currently sees the most use. It's my only wallet as well as my analog PDA (I'm a reformed Palm Piloteer, but that's another post entirely). And it's become my failsafe tickler. If I want to make sure I see or do something, in here is where it goes. That's why, as you can see if you look really closely, this week's spread bears a post-it, a jot-pad note, and a peel-off B &N coupon stuck directly on the diary page. The coupon expires soon, and although I may never use it, I want it to be in my face.



[1]

1. [http://static.flickr.com/54/171977583\\_8cbeb772c3.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/54/171977583_8cbeb772c3.jpg?v=0)

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### The 99-cent solution (2006-06-21 15:50) - Nan

The problem with using a pocket-size Filo as your wallet (if you're a woman, as I am, and don't wear trousers with big honkin' pockets): there's no coin purse. Yeah, yeah, some models have a zippered pocket at the back, but I don't want to put change in there. It would make a big, ugly lump and distort the leather. I use the zippered pocket for a emergency piece of folding money and a couple of loose checks (so I don't have to carry a checkbook).

So I'm forced to carry a separate little change purse, as well as a card case for the cards that don't fit (and that I don't want) in my Filo's card slots (library cards, discount cards to stores I shop at maybe once a year, that type of thing). It's not as bad as it sounds. I keep those two tiny peripherals in a compartment of my handbag and only end up reaching into it about once a day. Everything I need to make a purchase is in my pocket Filo 99 percent of the time. If I want to travel light, I can take my pocket Filo and cell phone and leave the rest of the handbag at home.

Then I saw this: [1]Always have correct change in your wallet

If you don't feel like clicking the link, it shows you how to make a card with coin slots that hold the minimum number of coins you need to make any amount of change from 1-99 cents (3 quarters, one dime, 2 nickels, 4 pennies). How cool would it be to have one of those, in plastic, with holes for the Filofax rings? It would fit into the organizer just like that post-it thingy. Then I realized you don't even need that. If you really only have to carry no more than 10 coins, maybe keeping them in the zippered pocket, or one of those plastic zippered pouches that go on the rings, wouldn't be so bad after all.

1. <http://www.instructables.com/id/Always-have-Correct-Change-in-your-wallet/>

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Richard L. (2006-06-22 13:26:00)

This is great! A place to discuss filofax without bothering my spouse, my cat, or having to talk to myself.

I have tried all brands over the years in all sizes + PDA's. The pocket filofax, as you have selected, seems to be the best combination of form/function out there. I almost went for the mini but discovered it doesn't support a storage binder. What were they thinking? I am about to make a purchase finally, but still considering all options.

Retailers are not all that up to speed I am finding out + they usually keep the Filofax binders locked up in a case or on a shelf behind the counter, so you have to keep asking the clerk to see another one while they engage you in useless distracting chatter. Maybe ordering online from Filofax is best. Any thoughts on the buying process?

Jim Scolman (2006-06-22 16:13:00)

I am very happy to see someone is writing this blog again. Welcome and thanks. Do you have problems keeping your three Filos "synced"? I work hard to keep information in only one place and to look at it often, review and revise. Thanks, Jim  
www.photoday.blogspot.com

Nan (2006-06-22 17:21:00)

Welcome, Richard and Jim! Philofaxer and I aren't shouting into a void after all!

Richard, I'll address your question first. But I can't say that my experience has been any better than yours. In fact, when I purchased that red A5 a couple entries down, I showed up just as the shop was closing, and the very nice merchant unlocked the door and let me in. Talk about pressured browsing!

I make most of my Filofax purchases at the local Container Store, a couple good independent stationers, and an upscale luggage merchant called Leather World. I also find that none of them are great about keeping a big selection of either binders or refills in stock.

I ordered a catalog from [www.filofaxusa.com](http://www.filofaxusa.com). Their official catalog does a great job illustrating all that's available and the SRP. Then armed with that info you can call stores or search for what you want on the Web.

Philofaxer orders online from [www.goldspot.com](http://www.goldspot.com) and gets a good discount that way. (I'll add all this to our list of links.) But that guy who unlocked the door for me also had a 10 % off special on organizers that week, so you don't have to shop online to save \$ \$.

Nan (2006-06-22 17:48:00)

Jim, as for synching all 3 filos – I don't. First, I have separate binders for home and work, with no crossover. If I end up taking personal notes at work or work notes at home, I just make sure to use a clean page, so "synching" is just moving one piece of paper.

When I write in the pocket filo, I use the paper like index cards, one issue per page, so I can pop that into a big book if I want to. That book mostly holds my personal calendar, shopping lists, and most-used addys and numbers.

Since the pocket filo is always with me, and I have a pretty good memory, I find I haven't been keeping the calendars synched. My current challenge is to figure out how to handle this. There's no real reason to copy appointments into the red A5 personal filo, although that book contains everything else...to-do lists, project notes, ideas, lists, plans.

The big work A5 with the daily pages was supposed to be this wonderful work record where I record my accomplishments by the hour. But I haven't been doing that. Whether or not my work gets done is documented automatically in other ways, without my having to do any extra writing. I'm allergic to redundancy, so I resist the extra documentation. And frankly, I don't like to see my wasted time documented in black and white!

Furthermore, when I'm at the office, I mark all appointments in iCal and have that calendar open on my screen all day. Usually, I find out about deadlines and meetings via email, so it's hard to resist just keying them into the computer calendar.

Currently, I'm tinkering with combining my personal and work A5's. It would strain the rings on my beloved red Belgravia, but it would free up the black A5 to fill a current void – a kitchen counter book with me/hubby/household calendar with emergency numbers, appliance information, messages to each other, etc. Well, not exactly a void...there's a sloppy letter-size binder from Kinko's (sort of) doing that now, but I'd love to get that into the A5 paper size. I'm definitely NOT allergic to interchangeability!

Nan (2006-06-22 23:13:00)

Jim – I can't believe I forgot to follow up – WHAT is the one place you keep all your information? Some manifestation of often-enough review and revising is the key to any system. Give us the dirt!! What do you do?

Nan (2006-06-22 23:18:00)

Richard – I'm belatedly following up with you, too. The Pocket size rules!! Anything smaller is too small! And you must not be the only one who feels that way, because Filofax offers a huge array of refills in that size, and whenever they experiment with new styles or colors, they do it in the Pocket size first. The pocket Filo is easy to carry yet robust, and it can be a foil to any other non-portable system, whether electronic or analog.

Richard L (2006-06-23 12:20:00)

Nan,

Thanks for your input. Another question for you and all here: Since I will be keeping a journal, a weekly calendar, notes, a data file and addresses (5 tabs) + monthly calendars, will the thinner (approx. 1/2") binders in the pocket size get the job done? I'm willing to only carry a few pages of weekly calendar and minimum pgs. of everything else. I'm attempting to actually carry the "pocket" size in my pocket. Any experiences worth sharing?

Nan (2006-06-23 14:32:00)

Ah, now I understand the importance of the storage binder in your case! The mini would definitely be too small for what you're talking about anyway. It can definitely be done – you'll just have to spend some time every other day or so archiving old pages and adding new ones. And that can be tricky since many of the Pocket models don't lie completely flat when open, even when the rings are open. Makes it hard to move pages in and out.

The best way to save thickness is to leave out tab dividers. It sounds like you're going to eliminate the A-Z tabs, which is a very good idea for portability.

Richard L. (2006-06-23 17:54:00)

Nan,

You are right the importance of the book opening with pages lying flat. It's not only easier to move pages, it's much easier to work with when you don't have to use two hands to record or read something. I believe the "executive" pocket would work. I know the mini size opened flat. Nearly bought it. The pocket exec. is a bit wide at 4.5", but maybe not a deal breaker. Topaz "slim" is also a possibility. Problem is no retailer seems to have all of them, so I try to work my Filofax investigation into when I am near a store, in my case it's the SF Bay Area. I hadn't thought of deleting the A-Z tabs, but it really shouldn't be that much of a problem. Getting close. Thanks for helping think it through.

Nan (2006-06-23 20:40:00)

I don't think you have to get rid of the A-Z tabs if you don't want to, but I do think that the best way to stay within 1/2" rings is to eliminate EITHER the A-Z tabs or the set of 4-6 divider tabs.

For instance, if you frequently use addresses or data-file information, you might want to keep the A-Z tabs – and file everything else alphabetically, too. Keep your journal behind J, your list of books to read behind B, and so on. Or, you could use a few divider tabs instead, for journaling, lists, finances, etc., and just keep address pages in alphabetical order (but without the tabs) at the very back (or very front) of the book.

Just to share here, I really use my pocket as a PDA. I just write too much to use it for everything, especially journaling (but then I bet you've already figured that out from my blog entries). I use A-Z tabs for addresses and a little data (mostly source and travel info) and 2 page markers. One at the current week's calendar spread, another to mark the beginning of a bunch of blank paper between the calendar and the A-Z index. Behind the second page marker are my shopping lists (one page per venue), and it serves a quick way to get to a blank page for idea capture.

I think if I had to choose one, I'd go the A-Z route, because you can file ANYTHING alphabetically. It's also good to note that you can locate things using a natural break in the Filofax instead of a tab, like at the very front, very back, before the "A" tab, by a change in paper color, and so on.

Richard L (2006-06-26 11:41:00)

Nan, Jim,

Thanks Nan for your thoughts on keeping the book slim. I think for me, getting rid of the A-Z is the way to go. I won't have all that many contacts. Maybe two or three pgs.

Any idea of what pocket size binders open flat? I'm most interested in the open style. No zippers or snap tabs. I

doubt I would ever use the credit card slots for credit cards. Maybe a few bss. cards if they fit and the jot pad seems like a great idea.

Nan (2006-06-26 16:35:00)

The more expensive, real-leather binders like Finsbury are the least likely to lie flat. The pocket ones that have a full-length pocket along the back, like a wallet, really don't want to lie flat (but they do better when you have a lot of stuff inside that pocket).

The cheaper ones made of fabric or vinyl with an elastic closure are much easier to flatten out. Sadly, most of them look a little "girly."

Richard L. (2006-06-28 20:13:00)

At the risk of being blasphemous, I would like to hear about experiences with other planner systems, i.e. Franklin & Daytimer: how they compare with Filofax, advantages, disadvantages. I've used them all at one time or another, so let's compare notes.

PDA stories in another thread?

Spiral Stairs (2006-07-02 10:30:00)

Richard, the problem with Franklin Covey is that it is a cult.

A long time ago I used Day Runner. I mean a *long* time ago. (Like college.) Since then, I've floated mainly between Filofax and electronica.

I briefly used an Exacompta calendar, which was really well organized and cool. I ditched it, though, shortly before my most recent re-adoption of Filofax, because a standalone calendar doesn't offer the integration of functions I need.

Richard L. (2006-07-02 13:00:00)

Philo,

I was just about to write that I should have read the archived threads so I wouldn't have to ask stupid questions that have already been answered - like the one I asked. Oh well, at least you didn't change your answer. As you can see, I really need to get organized. Wish there was a really huge selection of FF somewhere in the Bay Area. Looks like Patricks is my best bet.

Nan (2006-07-11 22:42:00)

Richard, my second planner experience, after a brown leather Personal Filofax in college, was Day-Timer. I still think the Memo-ry pages are one of the most brilliant ideas ever, although they don't make them anymore.

For many years, before going electronic and before then returning to Filofax, I used a Franklin Planner. At the time, I was juggling 2-5 part-time jobs that added up to 2 or more full-time jobs, and I developed a system where I had everything I needed with me, everywhere I went.

But it was a Day-Timer seminar that I attended in the mid-90's that did more for me than any self-help session I've attended or book I've ever read. I've checked out their site, and Day-Timer now contracts with a different company rather than doing their own classes, but this class really inspired me to set goals and meet them. Much of where I am today came from attending this one-day seminar. And I didn't even use a Day-Timer at the time. I brought my own Franklin planner.

Estelle (2010-02-19 19:59:35)

This is a really old post but I was clicking the instructables link and it doesn't work. Do you by any chance remember and can describe?

Also if you don't explain elsewhere can you explain how you managed up to 5 part time jobs in a personal and what were the great lessons from that daytimer seminar?

Thank you!

Steve (2010-02-20 03:04:47)

Hi Estelle,

I've updated the link it should now take you to the correct page on the external site.

Regards  
Steve

### Links Added (2006-06-22 17:57) - Nan

I've added some links to the list at left:

- Filofax USA is the official Filofax Web site for the United States market. Sorry, international visitors (Canadians included). I think you can figure out how to go to [1]www.filofax.com and then select your own country.

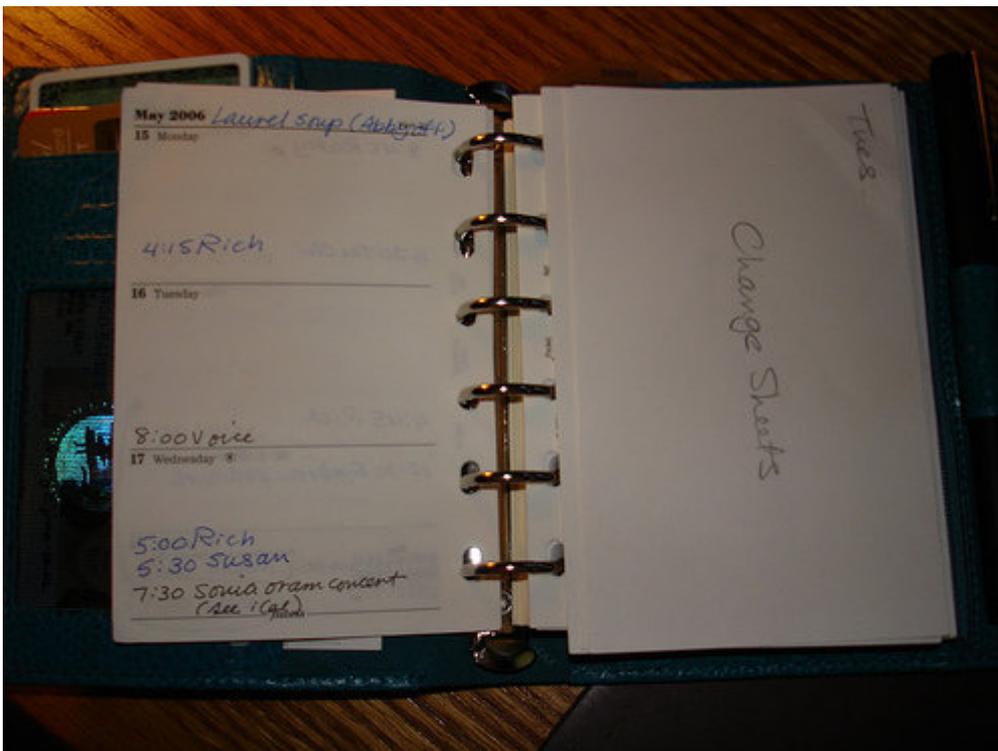
- Goldspot.com is an online fountain-pen retailer that also has Filofaxes, leather goods, and other items of interest. They sell at a discount from list price and offer frequent promotions.

- The Paper Shop is the Web site of a Florida gift shop/stationer. I've included them because they seem to have every refill Filofax has ever made, even stuff that's not on the official site! When I placed my one order with them, though, they had to call me and have me repeat the order verbally, since the full item names don't come through the CGI. Also, they were out of stock on a couple items. Still, it's the only place I've been able to find my all-time favorite form – the A5 Project Planner. Once we had my order items squared away, the rest of the purchase and shipment proceeded smoothly.

1. <http://www.filofax.com/int/>

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### Dirty Little Secret (2006-06-22 20:20) - Nan



[1] Filofax.

Index cards in my

See, in the summer of 2005, I had been using a Palm Pilot for all of my organizational and most of my notetaking needs for about 6 years. I was good at it, too. I took meeting notes into it using a portable keyboard. I always, always, had every single address, phone number, and password I ever needed in it. I knew how to run Word and Excel on it. I had just taken it on vacation INSTEAD of a laptop, and worked on the plane and kept up with email using it. I read newspapers and magazines on its screen. I could get online with it by connecting through my cellphone via infrared. I never missed birthdays or appointments (unless I really wanted to). And yet, in the middle of that year, an organizational crisis

hit me like a runaway [2]Acela.

Looking at the world through a 2.5" inch square window was changing me. My abilities to prioritize, to ponder, to see the big picture were suffering. I was spending half a day a week troubleshooting my electronic system, because the software that synched the device's information was getting slower and buggier, not better. (What's up with that?) Plus, I had a chronically sore left shoulder from gripping the thing as I stabbed away at Graffiti or Tetris with my right hand. I had to change.

Meanwhile, about 1/3 of the population of [3]North America had marched in lockstep to a bookstore, bought [4]David Allen's Getting Things Done and a [5]Moleskine, stopped off at [6]Staples for manila files and index cards, then went home and started a blog about it. The next few months were a blur. A torturously difficult, time pressured project at work was upon me, and I had NO SYSTEM.

I spent a week transferring my life into Circus Ponies Notebook, then Aquaminds Note Taker. Then back to iCal and StickyBrain. Or could I really do everything on index cards, maybe with a [7]Flylady 3-ring binder on the kitchen counter? But how would I keep work, home, and portability synched? Or was the need for synchronization just an illusion? 200 filled-up index cards later, I still hadn't found a solution. The beginning of my return to sanity was the [8]Levenger Circa system. I read the GTD book and implemented it on these movable pages. But I hated the way the stuff looked and felt. Simpler tools kept beckoning. I still have some of that stuff waiting to be sold on eBay.

Then my Dad gave me 2 Moleskines for Christmas 2005, so it was time to give them a try. I decided to go all-analog, all-the-time for 2006, and not reanalyze again until the end of the year. I bought a dated diary, Moleskines in various shapes and sizes, and a fresh supply of index cards. I set up a manila [9]12-month/31 day tickler file like a good GTD'er.

Problem was, I'm allergic to redundancy. Anything I captured on an index card, sooner or later needed to be recorded somewhere else. Anything I wrote in a Moleskine often had to be rewritten somewhere else in order to be usable, since you can't move pages around. If I write something stupid, I need to be able to tear the page out and start over. I need to take two pages that are related and place them behind the same tab.

And so I tiptoed down to the basement, dusted off an almost-forgotten shoebox and found what I hoped would still be there. A well-used, tattered, Personal-size Filofax (actually, it was made by Coach) in royal blue leather. Abandoned for a decade, but accompanied by archives of pages that showed I had actually met a lot of life goals (and was still failing at others!) from 10 years earlier. I bought some new [10]Filofax pages, and started using it, copying in the big file jacket of index cards, circa pages, and Moleskines I'd been carrying forward. I used it so well, in fact, that it was bursting at the already-worn seams in a week. Even the Personal size page was cramping my style.

So I made the leap to the A5 size for my "life book," with the Pocket size as my analog PDA. I dumped the contents of that old Coach organizer (and how I wish I'd taken a picture of it before trashing it) into the big, red file jacket, and started moving my life into Filofaxes. But a few remnants of my dailliance on the Dark Side remain...index cards slipped into my Pocket Filofax.

The next time I post a picture of this Filofax, those cards will be GONE.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/60/172934738\\_658bc4c413.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/60/172934738_658bc4c413.jpg?v=0)
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acela\\_Express](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acela_Express)
3. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North\\_america](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_america)
4. <http://www.davidco.com/>
5. <http://www.moleskineus.com/>
6. <http://www.staples.com/>
7. <http://www.flylady.net/>
8. <http://www.levenger.com/>
9. <http://www.43folders.com/>
10. <http://www.filofax.com/int/>

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Spiral Stairs (2006-06-23 08:55:00)

Nan, you have given validity to my urge to buy another Filofax. My wife already thinks I am insane for having bought two. (Having bumped up from Personal to A5.) I am going to visit my local Filofax merchane and lust over the Pocket or Mini sizes this weekend. I would need the pages to be transplantable into my A5, which I think

limits me to the Pocket size. I wonder if the Mini inserts would do that?

Jim Scolman (2006-06-23 12:02:00)

Good morning, again, I so glad to see this blog back up and running. One of the best things for me from the frenzy of GTD is 3x5 grid index card. I carry some of them with me always and when I note something, camera setting, good locations, good light, picture ideas I just put the card into the date page in my Filofax...this makes the information really sortable and moveable. Works for me, your mileage may differ. Thanks, Jim

[www.photoday.blogspot.com](http://www.photoday.blogspot.com)

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

Nan (2006-06-23 13:39:00)

Hey Jim! Yes, index cards are the absolute best for some things. They're clearly helping you in a big way.

I use them to "beam" information to other people. I keep a stack on my desk and some in a Filofax pocket. When I have a lot of stuff to do, what works best is to put each task on a card. Then I can figure out what order makes sense, stack 'em up, and then start doing what's on the top card.

My problem is, they're so handy, I have a tendency to write on them things that really belong somewhere else. Then I have to later copy what's on the card into my journal, add it to an existing list in my Filofax, or whatever. I also kind of feel I "should" use my Filofaxes for everyting, now that I've spent \$ \$ on them.\* But maybe I should stop being so much of a purist. Then again, it was no fun this morning when I was buying coffee and all these index cards fell out of my Filo and onto Starbucks' floor....

By the way, Philofaxer, I rationalize my expenditure by saying I don't spend as much on Filofaxes as most women spend on shoes! The models I buy don't cost more than a nice dinner for two in a major city, and you get to keep them a lot longer!

## Calamity Befalls Even the Righteous (2006-06-23 08:39) - Spiral Stairs

Nan's pseudo-pornographic photograph of her iPod case and Philofax, both sexed-up in red leather and oriented in a position described on page 126 of the Kama Sutra, reawakened my longstanding desire to increase the amount of Filo-porn on this site.

Then, my basement flooded. And the lives that my wife and I lead shot back 20 years in technological sophistication. We don't have internet access at home. We don't even have cable. If it weren't for my laptop's DVD-viewing capabilities, we might have been forced to open books. Luckily, I recently purchased the box set of the British Office, and my wife and I have been able to sit up in bed and watch it.

(We are largely confined to our bedroom, because the remediation efforts in our basement involved large, noisy machines that must be left on constantly for a period of three to five days. No joke. I thought we could mop up, vacuum the carpet, and get on with our lives. No such luck. We're a thunderstorm away from having to tear down our house and live in a tent.)

(Also, my wife can barely move because she is 7.5 months pregnant. That seems relevant, but I'm not sure why.)

So if I want to post up some Filo-porn, I am limited to what I have already Flickr-ized. Here, look at this. It's an irresistible combination of cute, furry puppy and cute, leathery Filofax:



[1]

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/moosecat/58273820/>

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Nan (2006-06-23 10:49:00)

DROOL.....

(the dog's, I mean)

Nan (2006-06-23 20:43:00)

Just to commiserate, our basement flooded (back on June 7, actually). We've decided to trash the rug and some of the furniture that's already been through a couple of "water events."

### **The Scientific Method, Applied (2006-06-24 10:47) - Spiral Stairs**

I have several hypotheses that I intend to explore in the coming weeks.

**HYPOTHESIS 1:** I would be able to carry a Mini-sized Filofax in my pocket.

**PLAN FOR TESTING:** Go to store. Stick Mini-sized Filofax in my pocket. Attempt to explain to store manager that I was testing Hypothesis 1. Call wife to be bailed out of jail after shoplifting arrest.

**HYPOTHESIS 2:** My life will improve if I purchase and use a Filofax that can fit into a pocket.

**PLAN FOR TESTING:** Depending on the results of my testing of Hypothesis 1, purchase Mini-sized Filofax. Fill it with blank pages, but no tabs. Perhaps use a variety of blank pages – notepaper, address pages, project sheets, etc. Stick Mini Filofax in pocket. Use it. Leave A5 Filofax in bag or on desk more often. Make notes and record data in Mini Filofax. Transplant Mini pages into A5 binder when convenient. (Nota bene: It is unlikely that this hypothesis will be supported by the evidence if I am unable to perform this transplant, as a result of an incompatible hole-punch pattern.)

**HYPOTHESIS 3:** I will be a happier person if I revamp my tab system in my A5 Filofax.

**PLAN FOR TESTING:** Junk current tab system, under which I use tabs labeled "CALENDAR", "PROJECTS", "NOTES", "FINANCIAL", and "DATA". Replace with subject-specific tabs, such as "HOME", "WORK", "FORTHCOMING BABY", "SHOPPING", and the like. After making this change, evaluate happiness.

**HYPOTHESIS 4:** Our basement will not flood if I cover the drain outside our door with a specialized mesh cover.

PLAN FOR TESTING: Determine if such a specialized cover exists. If it does, purchase it. Install it. Await rainstorm. Pray.

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Nan (2006-06-25 01:38:00)

Hey, Philofaxer – Great post!

I don't know about the Mini, but the Pocket size's pages do fit into the larger binders. You just have to fold back the lower-left corner so it won't bump into the last ring.

(By the way, as someone whose basement has been flooded three times, I can tell you any flood plan that relies heavily on prayer is probably doomed to failure. Just ask Noah's friends.)

pigpogm (2006-06-26 06:17:00)

I had similar thoughts, and it worked out well. I thought the mini was a bit \*too\* small, though - just about ok for short lists and the like, but no good for brainstorming or 'thinking' stuff, which is where paper works well.

I went for the Pocket - a bit bigger than the mini. I now have a Pocket Lyndhurst - soft leather, with a zipper. That means I can keep money and cards in it without fear of losing them.

The paper in the Pocket is almost 3x5, like index cards, so if a Hipster works, it should work too.

The pocket is actually a bit too \*big\* for pocketing, so I usually end up carrying it my hand, but it's small enough to shove into a pocket occasionally, when I need both hands free.

Christian (2006-06-26 06:27:00)

The pocket works great with index cards. I don't use anything else in my Filofax. Never ever again will I pay for original Filofax refills.

Nan (2006-06-26 19:53:00)

Lyndhurst – how sleek! It may not fit into a jeans pocket, but I bet it would fit into a coat or jacket pocket...

Nan (2006-06-26 20:06:00)

Christian – Welcome to Philofaxy!!

Tell us about your Danish/English blog (yes, I clicked). Do you really use only index cards? What do you use for a calendar?

Christian (2006-06-27 04:20:00)

Thanks - I've been around for a while. Even before laziness killed the blog, but I kept it in my feed in the hope of revival. It's great that you've taken on that assignment.

My blog is in danish and about web communication (which I'm teaching at Aarhus University). There's så many great english blogs about web communication in English så I'm targeting a danish audience - primarily the attendants to my courses. Besides my english is to rusty to maintain a blog.

I use iCal as calendar and share it online with my family so I can't go analog there. Instead I print it on plain A4 paper and cut it out so it'll fit into my Personal Filofax. Not the best solution but it works. The index cards I use for notes, todo-lists etc. I.e. stuff that's not permanent

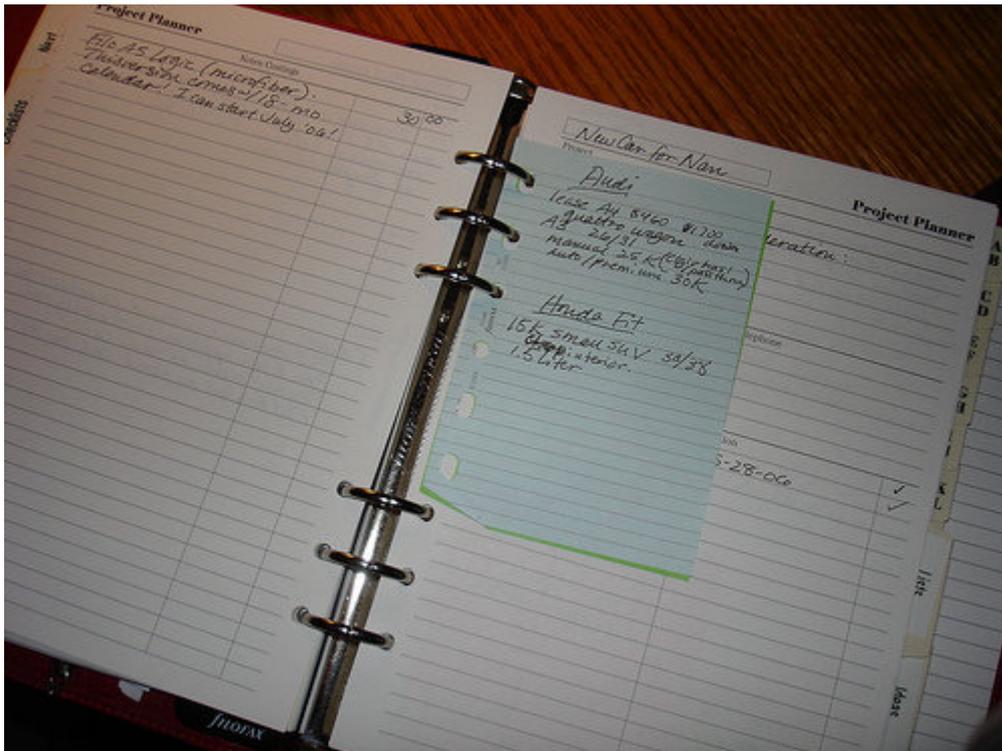
Nan (2006-06-28 11:35:00)

Christian, I maintain an iCal calendar, too. There's no better way to share a calendar among people! Google Calendar looks good, too.

It's cool that iCal lets you print in so many different formats – calendar view, list view, etc. I could never get it to look exactly the way I wanted. When I was using Moleskines, I tried printing my iCal calendar/to-do list (single day view) on a 4 x 6 post-it note so could carry it in my diary. It was fun, but more trouble than it was worth.

Christian (2006-06-30 05:51:00)

It is trouble and it looks horrible but it works.



[1] In the Comments section of the post "The 99-cent Solution," someone asked me how I keep 3 Filofaxes synched. The answer is, I don't. I'm copying my comment in response here, to bring it out to the front, in case anyone else had the same question (thank you, Blogger):

"I have separate A5 binders for personal (red) and work (black), with no crossover. If I end up taking personal notes at work or work notes at home, I just make sure to use a clean page, so "synching" is just moving one piece of paper.

When I write in the pocket filo, I use the paper like index cards, one issue per page, so I can pop that into a big book if I want to. That book mostly holds my personal calendar, shopping lists, and most-used addys and numbers.

Since the pocket filo is always with me, and I have a pretty good memory, I find I haven't been keeping the calendars synched. My current challenge is to figure out how to handle this. There's no real reason to copy appointments into the red A5 personal filo, although that book contains everything else...to-do lists, project notes, ideas, lists, plans.

The big work A5 with the daily pages was supposed to be this wonderful work record where I record my accomplishments by the hour. But I haven't been doing that. Whether or not my work gets done is documented automatically in other ways, without my having to do any extra writing. I'm allergic to redundancy, so I resist the extra documentation. And frankly, I don't like to see my wasted time documented in black and white!

Furthermore, when I'm at the office, I mark all appointments in iCal and have that calendar open on my screen all day. Usually, I find out about deadlines and meetings via email, so it's hard to resist just keying them into the computer calendar.

Currently, I'm tinkering with combining my personal and work A5's. It would strain the rings on my beloved red Belgravia, but it would free up the black A5 to fill a current void – a kitchen counter book with me/hubby/household calendar with emergency numbers, appliance information, messages to each other, etc. Well, not exactly a void...there's a sloppy letter-size binder from Kinko's (sort of) doing that now, but I'd love to get that into the A5 paper size. I'm definitely NOT allergic to interchangeability!

P.S. After writing this post, I started using the daily pages in the work A5 again. This blog is proving to be good motivation for me after all!

1. [http://static.flickr.com/75/174301321\\_e70bee1383.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/75/174301321_e70bee1383.jpg?v=0)

## It's Working... (2006-06-25 03:37) - Nan

In an earlier [1]post, I talked about how I transferred a backlog of information from other systems into my new A5 Filofax. For a long time, I had fretted about that big file envelope. It hung over my life like a cloud. And as I started processing it, I was surprised how few original ideas I really had. It all seemed like variations on 2-3 themes. I think I actually stopped coming up with new ideas since I had no place to put them.

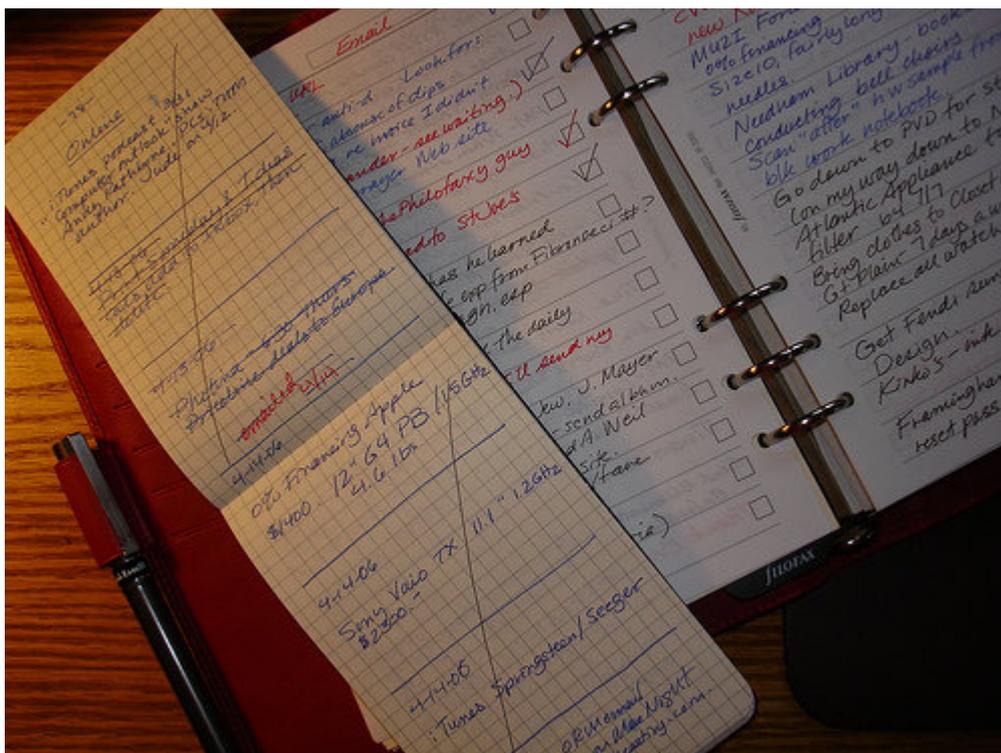
Well, I'm just about through the backlog. I say "just about" because there's just one little reporter-style Moleskine left that seems to still have usable stuff in it. I spend a little time every weekend going through it. And now something really cool is happening. New ideas. My brain is taking information it's had for a long time and finally putting 2 and 2 together, if that makes sense.

One of those new ideas was contacting Philofaxer and ultimately getting on this blog. I actually had a pretty good idea, it seems.

P.S. I've also processed those index cards I was talking about. Now I just have one Filofax To Do page in the middle of the weekly spread in my Pocket Filo. I have extensive To Do and Maybe Do lists in my A5, but one Pocket size page seems to be all I can actually do in a given week.

1. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/06/dirty-little-secret.html>

## Done!! (2006-06-26 18:39) - Nan



[1] I've finally finished rescuing the valuable information I captured in a reporter-style Moleskine earlier this year into my nice, roomy A5 Filofax.

As you can see in the picture, I didn't have any trouble writing in a 'skine, I just didn't like have having info, well, *captured* in there. Sure, I like the way 'skines look and feel and smell. And I can't honestly say I use my 'faxes any better than I used my 'skines. I'm still finding my way. I just decided that the best decision for the long haul would be to commit to a size (A5) and style (looseleaf) of paper that would give me maximum flexibility, interchangeability, legibility, and utility as the months and years went by. Ah, but I hear you asking, can you draw [2]nice pictures in your Filofax?

Well, in my case, that's a moot question. I couldn't draw for beans in my Moleskine!

But I've got some blank white paper for my pocket 'fax. One of these days I may surprise you with a

sketch. Just you wait.

Hmmm...come to think of it, a little birdie told me that the 'skine watercolor paper really isn't great for watercolors. Not everyone finds 'skines to be the best drawing medium. What's stopping artists from cutting and punching their favorite sketch paper for a Filofax? That's what I want to see more of out there!

1. [http://static.flickr.com/77/175793318\\_2bedd87e05.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/77/175793318_2bedd87e05.jpg?v=0)

2. [http://www.moleskinerie.com/the\\_wandering\\_moleskine\\_project/index.html](http://www.moleskinerie.com/the_wandering_moleskine_project/index.html)

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neowagnerite (2006-06-26 21:50:00)

WONDERFUL Blog!

Finally returned to my Filofax after many years..have an older prsonal siz with a large ring size.

Nan (2006-06-27 13:38:00)

Thanks for the compliment, neo. Hope you'll keep commenting and share some tips about what you're doing with that personal/large ring baby!

### The BS (2006-06-28 00:15) - Nan



[1] OK, I've eliminated the index cards. I've got everything I can think of on some neat list in some neat Filofax somewhere. So why did I just miss paying a bill on time? Why do I look at a To Do list, even on a little pocket size page, and feel overwhelmed? Who wrote that list, but me? How can I be overwhelmed by a list I wrote of things that I want to do?

So, should I write them all on index cards, because I find them less intimidating when I only have to look at one at a time? Well, I could do that...except that some of them started out on index cards in the first place.

Or, I could cut the BS.

If I have a phone call that's not getting done, is it because I feel awkward talking on the phone for other reasons? Or because I get overfocused sometimes and forget to pick up the phone? Or is it because a phone call isn't the best way for that particular communication, and I need to wait until I see that person in person next week, or see whether I have the person's email address so I can write my thoughts out

clearly?

In any case, the list isn't the problem. **Me** is the problem. My system is as perfect as it's ever going to get. Deal with it.

There, I've said it.

P. S. You can read my notes about the above photo, and view all the philophotos I've posted to this blog on my [2]flickr page.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/73/177012650\\_238a4214fb.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/73/177012650_238a4214fb.jpg?v=0)

2. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/>

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Spiral Stairs (2006-06-28 09:11:00)

I read a quote at 43 Folders that really rang true for me: It is more fun to shop for running shoes than it is to run. I find myself in that trap all the time. Not just in Filo-matters, but in everything. I obsess over the right vacuum cleaner, research it, buy it, then never use it. Similarly, I obsess over the right planner system, but then still leave tasks undone and goals unmet. Damn this whole "being human" thing.

Nan (2006-06-28 10:07:00)

Ah, a quote from the great Merlin! Gotta love it.

But when it comes to vacuuming, you're several steps ahead of me. I've rewritten "Buy Oreck vacuum; get free iron" in three different places now, and the brochure and order form are in one of the stacks of papers on the dining room table. (You know, that thing you're supposed to use for eating?)

But hey, I have a great excuse for not vacuuming the house: I don't have a decent vacuum at home.

muse924 (2006-07-16 10:56:00)

Hello from another former PDA user who has returned to paper & pen goodness. On the subject of drawing in a Filofax, this is an enjoyable link: <http://www.filofax.de/famous/>

Chet (2006-08-10 16:18:00)

I think there's a post over at PigPog about the GTD system (and by extension, any "ideal" planning system) - the user has to want to do the tasks, and GTD or any planning system cannot make us do a task if we don't want to do it.

I also think there's really no such thing as time management, only self management.

## **You Can Quote Me (2006-06-29 19:27) - Nan**

Seems a lot of folks I've met on this blog are using Pocket or Mini size 'faxes. It stands to good reason: The Pocket is the Moleskine of Filofaxes. What does that make the Mini...the Cahier?

Then there's the Volant, which *n'est plus*. \*Hmmm...has a Filofax size ever gone extinct? In fact, didn't Moleskines disappear entirely for a while there? Fads have come and gone, but the Filofax has never gone away.

Funny how, while 'skinners are more likely to affect black tees and black jeans, it's us 'faxers who are the iconoclastic bohemians these days, having our esoteric thrills here on our relatively undiscovered blog.

If you know what this means, it means you've actually bought a Moleskine and read the little history sheet, printed in four languages on that smooth, cream paper...droool... Ahem. Sorry. Seriously now, can Moleskines actually say they were [1]invaluable during the blitz?

1. <http://www.filofax.co.uk/aboutus/SEURLF/ASP/SFS/SFE/heritage.htm>

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neowagnerite (2006-06-29 19:56:00)

Well, I use a personal size Filofax with a large ring mechanism that Filofax currently doesn't make; does that make me a dirty neo-Classicist?

Nan (2006-06-29 21:55:00)

Neo – You're definitely welcome here! I notice this is your second time commenting! I only hesitate to reply because I have to show my ignorance. My most recent musical experience is singing Haydn's "Mermaid Song" in a student recital earlier this month, and that's just not neo-Classical or neo-Anything...it's just plain old Baroque! So tell us, what is this wonderful, unobtainable ring size you have? According to my USA catalog, the largest ring size on a Personal is 1" (254 mm). What ring size do you have? The idea of a Personal size with nice big rings is enchanting me!

pigpogm (2006-06-30 10:28:00)

Filofax sell paper and calendars in sizes called "Deskfax" and "M2", neither of which they sell at the moment - presumably these are both vanished sizes.

I \*think\* the M2 was a kind of wallet-fax thing - even smaller than the Mini, and the Deskfax, I think, was somewhere between A5 and A4 - probably better that they've moved towards standard paper sizes.

Nan (2006-06-30 10:55:00)

Well, shut my mouth!

(thanks for setting the record straight, ppm)

neowagnerite (2006-06-30 16:37:00)

My persona size- that I purchased about 7 years ago- has 1.25 inch rings.

Zedzian (2006-07-11 01:34:00)

Size Matters

As a man, my problem with the "Pocket" size was it didn't really fit in a pocket! Or if it did, it was rather obvious, not to mention, er, uncomfortable.

I had read somewhere that the Managing Director of Filofax himself uses a Mini- portability being the key. But in the same article he talked about having maps in it; and the single map available for the Mini is the world map- of rather limited utility unless you're an alien. So I question whether he really uses a Mini.

I also question the old story about the British soldier whose life was purportedly saved in 1943 by a bullet ricocheting off the Filofax in his chest pocket. Though it's true that the military was the original market for Filofax (along with the clergy), it's doubtful that the Personal (the only size available in '43) would have fit in a chest pocket- maybe a fatigue jacket pocket? This was probably dreamed up by the Public Relations folk, as the ultimate Filofax "time-saving" story.

That being said, the Personal size, for me, appears to be ideal. It's largely to do with the actual paper size. When I used a Pocket size, I found that I was tending to abbreviate everything, write tiny, and my elucidation suffered. In other words, although everything was in there, my thinking was suffering from having to write too small.

The Personal size seems to be the most well-thought-out size imaginable. Even though it bears no known relationship to any other paper size known to man - it's not a multiple of the standard ISO A sizes we're all used to, and it doesn't even seem to be related to the old historical 'inches/imperial' sizes of generations long gone. It's sui generis - seemingly developed and honed in total

isolation guided purely by function.

It seems the ideal size in relation to the hand and the pen, given what's left outside the ring binding area. It simply means that I have to take something slightly larger everywhere with me, but that's a relatively small price to pay for the increased utility and

usability. The Personal size was the original, long before the Deskfax, Pocket, Mini, the late M2, etc. came along, and still outsells all others by a considerable margin.

The Pocket enforces a continual restriction at the same time as it tries far too politely not to be obvious, whereas the Personal does no such thing- on the contrary, it is prone to become overstuffed. No sense in trying to hide it - you can't.

Certainly the Japanese seem to agree, as their Filofax knock-offs (Maruchan Data Plan, amongst others) use the exact size paper, which they have dubbed "Bible" sized. But even Japanese men carry a small "purse"-type carrier, which makes it easy for them to make it "vade mecum."

Of course, you can always just carry the Personal like a book. The downside is that people may mistake you for a missionary.

Nan (2006-07-11 22:53:00)

Hi Zedzian –

Thanks for the great post! As someone who once thought that the personal size was "nothing to nobody," at the same time I know it can be "all things to all people." Although I've given myself a moratorium on changing from my A5/Pocket system for the rest of 2006, I'm maintaining a list of reasons to switch to Personal.

I don't think the Personal's size is a problem. It can go into a coat pocket, small to medium woman's handbag, backpack, and certainly into a briefcase carried by either sex. Or you can hand-carry it instead of a wallet a la Dianne Keaton (or a clergyman).

## **Tyranny of the e-Majority (2006-06-30 08:42) - Spiral Stairs**

There once was a man with a Palm,

To whom, tech was a balm.

Then his hard drive was lost,

All his data was tossed.

Ah, paper: no storm, just calm.

I'm no luddite. I have an iPod; three digital still cameras; a digital camcorder; a cell phone; a personal laptop; a personal desktop; an office laptop; a Blackberry; a desperate, childish desire for a Nintendo DS Lite; a gnawing urge to drop my personal laptop "accidentally" onto a concrete slab in order to justify a new one; and a spouse who doesn't understand any of this.

But there is one area of my life in which I have rejected technology: My Filofax. I've already recorded my reasons for rejecting the Device, and embracing paper. But in the months since then, it has become increasingly clear that paper users are second-class citizens in the workplace. I work in an Outlook office. I used to be an Outlook devotee. And, as long as I spent all my time at my desktop, it worked fine. Handy reminders popped up. Group meetings were easy to schedule. But I found it cumbersome to extend those conveniences away from my desktop. Paper offered a perfect solution for me. I can carry my Filofax everywhere. No boot-up times. No battery exhaustion. Random access, perfectly implemented. Fewer worries about data loss. (I am not so naïve as to believe the Filofax is a "safe" repository. As a human who sometimes exhibits unusual levels of cluelessness, I can't discount the possibility that I will lose it, or drop it into a vat of boiling oil, or accidentally toss it from an airplane at 30,000 feet. However, I am comforted by my awareness of my weaknesses, my ability to compensate for them, and the fact that I no longer fear the vicissitudes of a hard drive platter that could turn one degree off-kilter at a moment's notice.)

Paper is my way. Why can't my office let me be?

Since I work in an Outlook office, I often receive invitations to meetings, which upon acceptance are automatically placed in my Outlook calendar. That doesn't both me too much. I can simply ignore the Outlook calendar and write the data in my Filofax. (Although the off-handedness of the widespread assumption that we all use Outlook reminds me of my fourth grade teacher, who offhandedly told us to gather in a circle in our public school classroom for prayer. "What's the big deal?" she probably thought.) What irks me is when people say, "Oh, yes, let's have a meeting. Philofaxer, why don't you send around an Outlook appointment?" Look, I don't use Outlook. I don't want to use Outlook. I really don't care if you do. You manage your appointments however you want. But don't force them on me. I am a paper man. I will write down my own damn appointments. You can inscribe yours on a tablet, or memorize them mnemonically, or hire a personal valet to keep track of them. Whatever. Just let me be.

But they don't. Nor do I object, since that would require a spine. And I have to create some stupid Outlook appointment and send it around, and then deal with automated responses as people "accept" it.

I can't believe the drafters of the Constitution forgot to include Freedom of Personal Planning. Time to start lobbying Congress.

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Nan (2006-07-01 21:52:00)

Freedom of Personal Planning! That's so true. Philofaxer, your posts are always so darned coherent. And you write poetry, too.

I'm too discouraged and intimidated to even comment on your posts. But I do it anyway.

Nan (2006-07-02 20:57:00)

I'm not forced to use electronic invitations in Outlook or any one program. If I did, I might be more irate about being forced to use that particular piece of software.

As it is, I am forced to do a number of things electronically that are completely removed from my Filofax life. For example, when I ask for time off, I not only have to make all the arrangements with my boss by phone or email (we're not at the same location), I have to put in for the time off in a clumsy online HR app, post my absence in a department calendar on a different Web site, and go back to my email program to deal with a vacation message and/or forwarding. And those are just the things I can remember right now. There are probably more. I'm philosophical about it. I use my Filofax to remind me of all the electronic stuff I need to do. And I allow time to do it, the same way I make a mental note to keep quarters in my purse for parking meters and the like, because not only do they not take bills or ATM, they don't take dimes or nickels. And heaven forbid we have a 1.00 coin like every other civilized nation... Oh well. The more I can mentally and physically automate things like that, using as little psychic bandwidth as possible, the better. While being alert for learned helplessness (my personal bugaboo), that's the best I can do.

Here's another way I look at it. When I first bought a 2-story home (3 if you count the finished basement) after several years of living in one-level apartments, I had trouble keeping shoes on! When you kick off your shoes in a flat, you don't have to go far to find them. When you kick off your shoes in a multi-storey building, all of a sudden when you need to put them back on, they're two floors away. For a few months, I had several pair of unoccupied shoes on every floor of my house, and never seemed to have the right ones on my feet when I needed them – if any. For a few months, one of my main goals in life was developing a system for keeping track of my shoes.

Now, years later, it's become automatic. All of the shoes I own are in my closet, except for maybe a seasonal pair by the back door and the ones on my feet. More important, I always know where all my shoes are at any given moment, and I'm never more than a few steps away from being shod. I no longer have to devote any mental bandwidth to knowing where my shoes are.

I guess what I'm saying is, I hope you find a way to treat Outlook invitations that way. Find a way to deal with the necessary evil so that it goes from being a pain in the patutti to something you can do almost without thinking.

AndyC (2006-08-01 08:23:00)

Actually, for me it's the other way around: so much comes at me via Outlook, that I live with the inconvenience of extending it to non-work parts of my life, rather than the other way around.

Of course, the fact that I have NO chance of getting to the meeting without a reminder might have something to do with that.

Nan (2006-08-11 23:03:00)

Hi Andy! How do you extend it? Do you use Outlook for all your calendars?

I'm a Mac person, so I don't use Outlook, and I've never had to use it for work. If I were on Windows, I think I'd be sorely tempted to use Outlook.

Have you tried printing from Outlook? I wonder if you can make relatively attractive calendar pages for a Filo with it.

## 1.4 July

### And then there were two (2006-07-01 22:07) - Nan

Yes, I've stopped using one of my three Filofaxes. The handsome, professional looking Black A5 Finsbury. In some ways I like it better than my personal A5 Belgravia...the Finsbury has larger rings and less puffy covers. I'm not a puffy kind of gal.

Anyway, I'll tell you what didn't work. I didn't like writing on the day-per-page pages at work. I was writing things that were already tracked in email or Excel (and where I would have no trouble finding them). A few other things were good to write down, but they'd work better in a notebook or a to do list than on a calendar page. And I don't really need a paper calendar at work at all, because I have iCal.

On a larger level, I realized the reason I don't need a Filofax at work is because I've come such a long way since the place I was at this time last year. Back then, I was a rock bottom. I had to start from "what information do I need to see and when do I need to see it?" and not being able to answer either question. My work and home lives were both suffering because I had limited myself to whatever fits into a Palm Pilot. The files on my computer were a jumbled mess, all of my email was in one big Inbox where I found what I wanted by searching and never deleted anything because that made me feel I was saving time. Coming up with new ideas, prioritizing a list, or tracking a goal were all beyond the capacity of my buggy software and stressed-out brain.

Now, my email and documents are in organized folders with a clear file naming system. My project folder icons are color-coded with iCal calendars. I can do tasks and ticklers either on index cards or in iCal, and both work equally well. When I switched to paper, I just wanted to be using the same format at work or at home, but right now, trying to contort my work matter into a Filo would be fixing what ain't broke. Rather, it might even break something that's working. iCal, Apple Mail, index cards, two letter-size binders for reference materials, a filing cabinet, and a notebook or two have it covered.

My work life is also in a steady state, and I'm working mostly on consecutive projects rather than juggling things. I can see how, if I were doing a job search, or if my job description changed drastically, I may well need to use a Filo for it again.

So, now you know I don't use a Filofax at work. What's in my A5 personal book?

- Vertical weekly calendar

- Tabs:

- - Next (for Next Actions), a vestige of GTD. To Do lists by context: Waiting, Calls, Email, Online, Errands, Home, Paperwork, Shopping, and Travel. The order of the pages roughly represents the order of urgency. If, say, online orders became temporarily more urgent than calls, I'd move that page forward to keep it in my face.

- - Checklists: 2006 Resolutions, Prototype Weekly and Daily routines. - - Projects: My favorite section. One page per project, and I love Filofax's preprinted Project Planner pages. Just enough guidance without being obtrusive. I need my own handwriting to be the most prominent text on a page.

- - Lists: Alphabetical pages listing books to buy, clothes and where to get them, Filofax wish list, movies to see, someday/maybe do list, and so on.

- - Ideas: Another favorite section. I use blue paper in this one. Blog ideas, car ideas, computer ideas, charity ideas, financial/investment ideas, home remodel ideas, businesses and careers to pursue someday ideas, gift ideas, family/party ideas and so on, each subject on its own page, ordered alphabetically. These pages have consolidated and categorized all the stuff captured on index cards and other various and sundry places over the past year.

- - Notes: Alphabetically arranged pages of longer notes. Filofax notes and Journal pages are mostly what this section holds now, on white lined paper. If I were to start taking notes on, say, books as I read them, it would go in here. Any information I generate myself that doesn't fit into the category of list or idea. (NB: One of the weaknesses in my system is archiving these pages, along with agenda pages. I generate a lot of them. I'm not wild about the Filofax storage binder, and haven't been able to find an A5 binder in the states or even on eBay Canada. Furthermore, I sometimes take notes in an A5 Miquelruis notebook, which has 2 prepunched holes in the sheets. Currently, I have no way to keep those pages together with relevant pages generated in my Filo. Right now I'm just taping them into the

notebook.)

- A - Z tabs: In addition to address pages, I keep source lists (all places to buy Filos on a page behind "EF"), and agendas (lists of things to discuss with people, on salmon paper, filed by the person's initial). Oh, and in the back I have a credit card holder that I use to hold jot pads and Post-its, and a pad of plain white paper in the rear of the book.

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Spiral Stairs (2006-07-02 10:26:00)

It would be difficult for me to divide my Filofax usage across a work planner and a personal planner. The primary use to which I put my calendar is formulating an answer to the question, "What the hell am I doing that day?" Having to consult two calendars (or three, since the bastards at work compel me to use Outlook) would cramp my style. In any event, neither my personal nor professional life is scheduled densely enough for a separate calendar. I really want to revamp my tab system, perhaps along the lines you use. My tabs are currently uber-traditional. My problem is that I am currently in the midst of a two-month period of 60-70 hour work weeks. I haven't even had time to browse online or in-store for the raw materials I will need for my ambitious plans. See, writing everything down doesn't make it go away. Damn.

Pam (2006-07-05 02:58:00)

philofaxer - I sympathise. I did a month of 65-hour weeks last autumn. The only consolation is it's bliss when it's over!

I'm currently experimenting with the layout of my A5 City Filofax. I'm replacing a page-a-day system that I've never really used regularly by printing out monthly calendars from iCal (at home) for tracking my time, combined with DIY Planner To Do sheets for daily tasks. I'm still trying to decide how the rest of it should go. There's a bit of crossover between home and work, but mainly I use whatever system my current employer wants for my work stuff.

At the weekend I designed a divider/tab in Apple's Pages software so I can print my own dividers. Printing them onto glossy photo paper - I wait to see how it will stand up to general use. My one bit of advice is that you don't have to do the whole 'redesign' in one go - you feel you're getting somewhere even if you only do one small thing.

## **Summer Doldrums (2006-07-06 23:32) - Nan**

Been a little...quiet around here. It's the time of year when everybody's on vacation. For a couple bizzarro weeks in the environs of where I dwell, you can find parking spaces, go to popular restaurants and get seated in 2 minutes instead of 2 hours. On July 4, I toyed with the idea of photographing my red Filofax with sheets of blue and white paper in some sort of origami arrangement...but I decided to grill some hot dogs and go to bed early instead.

I haven't been on vacation, though. My quietude on this blog has had to do with the relative tranquility of my Filofax life. Yes, there are still some rough spots and tangled knots, but the most important things that need to work are working. I actually cancelled a repair appointment (I'm going to be away tomorrow) w/in 5 minutes of the deadline. Last month, I canceled an online service 5 days before the trial period ended. Not perfect, but not broken either.

Somehow, going down from 3 'faxes to 2 removed a whole layer of fidgety static from my life. That's good for my psyche, not so good for my prolificacy as a blogger. Actually, maybe this is a really good sign. With my system finally under some semblance of control, I'm spending a little more time implementing some of the ideas I've been writing down for the past year. I find myself having taken on a new project - restarting a handbell choir at the church I go to. I'm able to be more present for the people in my life. I'm taking more pictures and actually having time to print and mail them to people. Now that I've abandoned my Palm Pilot, I've introduced myself to my iPod.

My next challenge will be sifting. In frantic-capture mode, you frantically capture everything, just as it should be. It's taken a while, but the things I really will do are finally starting to pop up and the nice idea/never happen ones starting to recede. I'm getting the image of certain letters and numbers lighting up, as in "The Da Vinci Code" and "A Beautiful Mind" (a really cheesy cinematic trick, I have to say...but

I like it).

So, I'm going to be offline for the next 4 days on a little family holiday, making this blog even quieter. But I'll be back, with substantive news instead of static.

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## A Tumbleweed Rolls Through (2006-07-10 22:36) - Spiral Stairs

I must join Nan in expressing my regret that, due to an unhappy confluence of circumstances, Philofaxy is gathering some dust. Fear not: It has nothing to do with my laziness. In fact, I am the opposite of lazy right now. I am away for work for about three weeks, and working 12 to 15 hours a day, every day. (Lawyer. Trial.)

I have barely used my Filofax in the past week. It's not for lack of work: Tasks and projects are coming at me fast and heavy. I am sure that a better Filofaxer than Philofaxer would be deploying all Filofax features with stunning effectiveness right now. But I, as a fool befuddled by the chaos surrounding me, have regressed to the planning equivalent of the fetal position: A running tally on a legal pad.

I am using a consecutive numbering system on the legal pad, so I have an absolute tally of all the tasks that I have assigned myself. I'm up to about 45, of which probably 38 are complete. I figure that by the end of the whole thing I will have a few hundred items listed, and they will all be crossed off and I will laminate the lists and frame them as a memento of this craziness.

Probably not. I am more likely to burn them. Or lose them in the drunken stupor that will envelop me after trial ends.

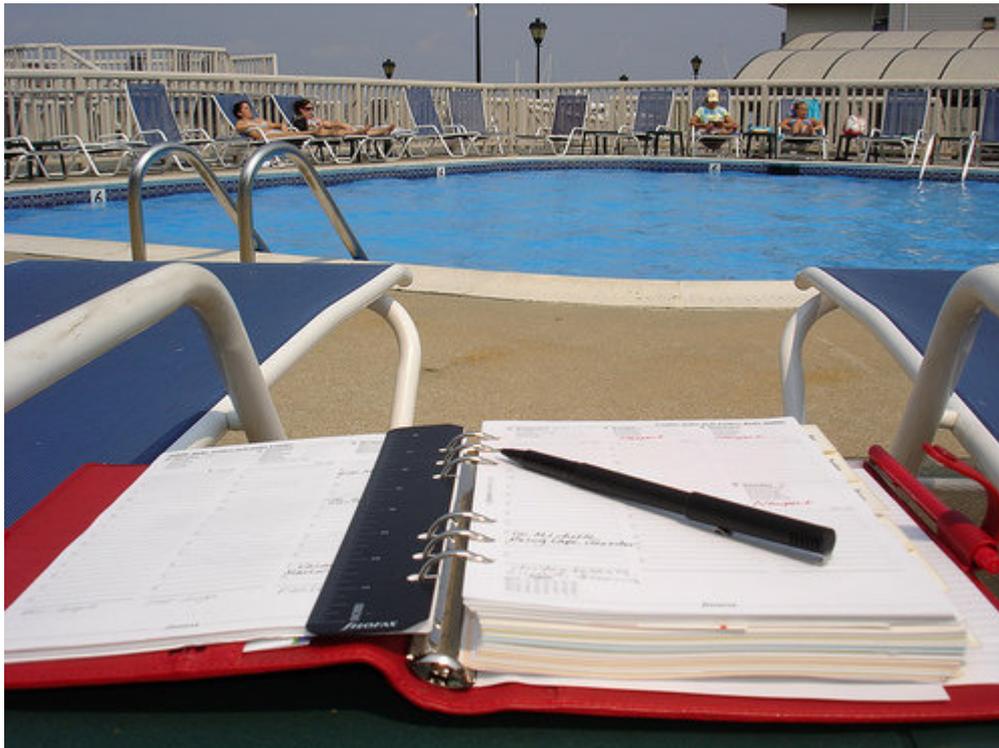
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Nan (2006-07-11 07:43:00)

Oh, no, you must laminate and frame that list! I wish I could see it! It truly does tell the story of the trial.

I think no matter what system we usually use, sometimes a project just pops up with it's own natural way to organize. I've been known to resort to crayons when trying to bring chaos under control (especially when it's coming from the greatest chaos generator of all – my brain).

I think of the yellow pad list as an interesting and necessary detour, like a scenic train trip in the midst of a freeway existence.



[1]

I had a hidden agenda in becoming a Philofaxy blogger...hidden from even myself. Accountability. Like many people who've made a transition from digital to analog, from one career or workstyle or lifestyle to another, or taken on any kind of shift that involves a change in organizational system, I'm guilty of endless tinkering and tweaking. As soon as I get all my information, notes, projects, schedules, and plans into one system, said system's flaws become immediately apparent – and unbearable. So I tinker. I buy more Moleskines, index cards, or Circa refills, thinking I've finally found *the answer to it all*.

I must confess, no sooner had I posted [2]this entry announcing that I had finally transcribed everything into my newly acquired 'faxes, that the itch returned. Once my desire to have everything in one place, on one (OK, two) interchangeable paper sizes was satisfied, all of a sudden it was all wrong. Now that I could carry everything I needed with me all the time, all of a sudden I didn't need or want to. It was cumbersome, burdening. And the perfect configuration – personal A5, work A5, Pocket as PDA – was suddenly all wrong. How well was my system working if I was I leaving the house with three – count 'em, three – 'faxes in my bag every day?

Could I abandon this blog and start over? Those new 18-month 'skine diaries look pretty darn cool. Or what about the minimalist route – index cards, plain letter-size paper, and manila folders? But no. Accountability. I've finally and fully accomplished a solution that I thought I wanted. Give it time. Figure out what's working and not working. Maybe all I need to change is what's not working. Behind the Notes tab, I started keeping Filofax notes. A few pages later, it became clear that I was overpopulated by one [3]Filofax. So I made the adjustment and kept going.

Now I'm noticing something cool. Instead of recopying information, I'm adding to it. For example, behind my Ideas tab, I have a page labeled Blog Ideas, containing some notes on blogs I admire, things I'd like to put on my own blog page, hosting ideas, and today, when I found out about something called [4]Pro Blogger (a blog about making money with a blog), I simply added it to the existing page. An idea that might have gotten lost without being written down at all, or ended up many pages away from related information, is now right where I'll see it when I use it. And I can see my ideas develop over time. Because I have a running book list for more than a year, I can clearly see which ones are going to be worth reading (Warlord, by Ilario Pantano) and which were just a fleeting notion (The Healing Diet, by Gerald Lemole, M.D.). In other words, my Filofaxes are helping develop my thought processes. Or at least, they're not distracting from them. Now that I'm detaching from tinkering, there's more time for the thoughts themselves.

Now for what's not working: That Filofax storage binder. The post spine doesn't let me easily read my archived notes. Does anyone know where I can get an A5 ring binder in the States or at least in North America? Anyone in the U.K. willing to ship me a few fairly inexpensive ones? (I'll include a few pounds over so you can have a pint or two on me.)

1. [http://static.flickr.com/65/187687702\\_51e75492f5.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/65/187687702_51e75492f5.jpg?v=0)
2. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/06/done.html>
3. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/07/and-then-there-were-two.html>
4. <http://www.probloggger.net/>

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peninah (2006-07-12 09:14:00)

For a5 you might try [1]kinokuniya or in NYC there are a few japanese "99c type" shops.. (samuri is one, they used to have a location near port authority, grand street and in flushing, but i think it's shutting down)  
I purchased 99cent personal sized binders there.  
now i'm a moleskine girl, but i still love my 15 year old filofax and am trying to figure out what to do now..

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

Nan (2006-07-13 23:35:00)

Hi peninah -

Thanks for the great idea. I'll have to check it out the next time I'm in NYC or a Japantown in some major city. How did your Filofax survive 15 years? How does the leather look? How are your moleskines working out? If I ever stopped carrying a Filo, I think I'd still keep one at home, with A-Z tabs and some other tabs, because it's so good for sorting information.

- Nan

Zedzian (2006-07-15 00:55:00)

Kinokuniya stores are also a great place to buy lined and blank Filofax Personal paper (they call the exact same size "Bible" [95mm x 171mm]). They also carry 76mm x 126mm 6-hole punched paper in lined and unlined that fit the rings of the Pocket (81mm x 120mm paper). They stock two brands, Maruman Data Plan and one other, the name escapes me. They are both a lot cheaper than Filofax too, even coming from Japan! In Northern California, there's a Kinokuniya with a stationery store in San Jose. Another shop that stocks this paper is Mai Do, with locations in SF (next to Kinokuniya), in San Jose and in Palo Alto. I like and use the Filofax Diary and their various forms, but they charge way too much for plain paper. I bought 100 sheets of Maruman lined Kraft in Personal size for \$3.30. I bought 200 sheets of Maruman plain white for \$4.95. Filofax charges \$9.00 for 100 sheets of either lined or unlined Personal. Do the math...

Nan (2006-07-15 06:24:00)

zedzian - Thanks for all those "fax" about Japanese paper! You people are the best! I'm just howling over here because I live in Boston, with no real Japantown. There's an enclave of Japanese stores in Porter Square, Cambridge, but the last time I was there, none of them carried stationery.

But armed with this new information, I'm going to go and dig deeper. If they don't have these kinds of paper, the employees themselves might know where to get them. And I do have friends in the No Cal area...

joanne (2007-08-28 00:19:00)

just wanted to share with you that i am the new proud owner of a brown leather deskfax for home use...

it was formerly owned by someone on the Simpsons cast or crew, the simpsons logo is stamped on the far right cover corner.

read with interest your tips on cheaper refills...does anyone know if the japanese paper stores would have sizes to fit the deskfax? it's big...9 3/4 by 6 7/8

i would love for tips on how to organzie my 'fax'... not an organized person but dearly want to be!

Nan (2007-08-28 21:38:00)

Thanks for your comment, Joanne! I think only Filofax makes the Deskfax-sized paper. (You can get international A5 paper, but that's smaller than Deskfax.)

But what could be cooler than a Simpsons Deskfax! Ow!

Keep checking the front page for more tips coming in September!

## What do you write with? (2006-07-15 06:31) - Nan



[1] I haven't been giving much thought to writing instruments lately. But surfing around one sleepless night, I visited Pencil Revolution ([link at left](#)) and started drooling. Wow. Who knew people were so passionate about pencils? I love writing with a pencil, and hated it when I reached 4th grade and slippery ball point ink became a requirement. I went through a fountain pen phase a few years back. At one point, I had four going at a time, with different color ink in each one. Then, when I realized I desired better, more expensive fountain pens but didn't want to spend the \$ \$ on them, I switched to gel pens. The gel runs out quickly, but they're refillable. Recently, I abandoned gel because it does clot and skip sometimes, and I also wanted a finer point.

Now I write in my 'faxes with Sanford uni-ball pens, with a "micro" point. They come in a "deluxe" model, with a bronzish body, and another model ("regular" I guess) with a matte black body. You can buy them by the dozen at Staples, and I keep them all over the house. Sometimes I pencil events into my 'fax, if I'm uncertain of their likelihood. Maybe I'll take a note from Pencil Revolution and start rebelling against the tyranny of ink more often!

UPDATE: After first writing this entry, I bought some new pencils and a case. You can see more [2] [here](#).

1. [http://static.flickr.com/24/192695177\\_918029d894.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/24/192695177_918029d894.jpg?v=0)

2. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/sets/72157594177080225/>

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pigpogm (2006-07-15 12:14:00)

I mainly use my Lamy Safari with Noodler's Eternal Black ink, with occasional use of my Pentel Kerry when I prefer a pencil.

The Safari is about as good a writer as you can get, and fairly cheap too (£13 over here, probably under \$20 in the US). Add a converter to use it with bottled ink, and it becomes much cheaper to use, and Noodler's makes it

\*very\* black, and waterproof. If you want the same nib and reliability in a nicer looking body, look for the Lamy Studio - still Lamy's classic minimal design, but it looks much more expensive than the Safari, whilst only actually being about twice the price - and it comes with the converter.

I love the Kerry because it's small and neat, and when not posted, it's quite short and light. It also looks much nicer than most mechanical pencils. It's loaded with Pentel lead at the moment, which I think is about the best, but I'm not too fussy about the lead.

Nan (2006-07-17 02:47:00)

Thanks, PPM! I've read good things about the Lamy Safari on other sites, notably [1]The Fountain Pen Network. So many fountain pen lovers use it as their everyday pen! My favorite pen was an Omas, an inexpensive model that they no longer make. It had a clear barrel so you could see the ink supply. I loved it because the Fine nib was really fine, and it was small and light. I had two of them, kept in the loops of my Franklin planner. I used them until they were really worn out and leakage became a problem. I had one of them repaired because the nib got off-center, but the results were only temporary.

BTW, your estimate on the U.S. price is correct. They retail for about \$20 here.

1. <http://www.fountainpennetwork.com/forum/>

pigpogm (2006-07-17 04:43:00)

The Safari has ink windows so you can see how much is left, but if you prefer it all clear, the Lamy Vista is the same pen with clear casing.

Neither the Safari, or even my little Pentel Kerry fit in the loop in my Lyndhurst, but I've found a workaround - the pocket clip clips to the loop just fine, and the pen or pencil fit quite neatly in the space next to it.

I usually keep the Kerry inside there, and keep the Safari clipped to me.

Arkady Renko (2006-07-19 03:04:00)

If you like pencils (which I do), see if you can find Pentel Graphgear 1000 series (0.3mm, 0.5mm, 0.7mm, 0.9mm) mechanical pencils. Retractable tip to protect it from damage, aluminum body with rubber grip.

Nan (2006-07-19 08:15:00)

arkady - Thanks for the pencil tip (pun not intended). And thanks for linking to your Flickr page. Your photos are so lovely I actually don't regret the time I procrastinated looking at them. ;)

mincostflow (2009-01-20 16:57:00)

I'm very surprised that the commenters here have chosen the same pens and pencils as I have. I guess great minds think alike.

Lamy Safari was my first fountain pen, and no pen has been able to replace it in quite the same way. I can never use ball points again because I can't stand the two seconds of scratches I have to endure to get the ink flowing.

As for my pencil, I use [1]Pentel Graph 1000 over the Graphgear because it's lighter and less top-heavy. I prefer a pen over pencil any day because I hate the smudge effect of paper on paper.

1. <http://mincostflow.wordpress.com/2008/11/11/pentel-graph-1000/>

## **Famous Filofaxers (2006-07-17 14:20) - Nan**

A while ago I lamented the lack of Filofax art on the Web, versus the vast proliferation of sites where people display art created in their Moleskines. A very nice reader named muse924 responded in a comment with this link [1]<http://www.filofax.de/famous/> to the German Filofax site showing the sketched-up 'faxes of Katerina Witt, Paco Rabanne, and other celebrities. So cool I had to pull it to the front so no one would miss it. (Well, at least no one who visits this blog religiously—and I know there are millions of you out there.) Check it out!

Thank you muse924!

1. <http://www.filofax.de/famous/>

muse924 (2006-07-18 20:05:00)

Thank you for the wonderful site. It's nice to see a place where people can share their ideas and enjoyment of the 'fax :)

Nan (2006-07-19 18:26:00)

Thanks! Keep sharing your comments, because when Philofaxer and I get lonely, we start talking to Silly Putty, you know, that's never good.

### Back in Black (2006-07-19 18:27) - Nan



[1] No, I'm not talking about AC/DC. I've had to bring back the black A5 Finsbury that I used to use for work. My other A5, a red Belgravia, just didn't have the ring capacity for the rate at which I generate new pages. The photo shows my current stuff (everything personal, and now a little work) inside the black Finsbury, with the empty Belgravia for comparison. Sort of makes me wonder how I ever fit it all in there...

As a chick who lives the colorful life, I resisted migrating to the manly-man black leather as long as possible. But, if I ever decide to bite the bullet and shell out for a new Finsbury, they now come in an array of colors, including...drum roll...[2] *Tangerine!!*

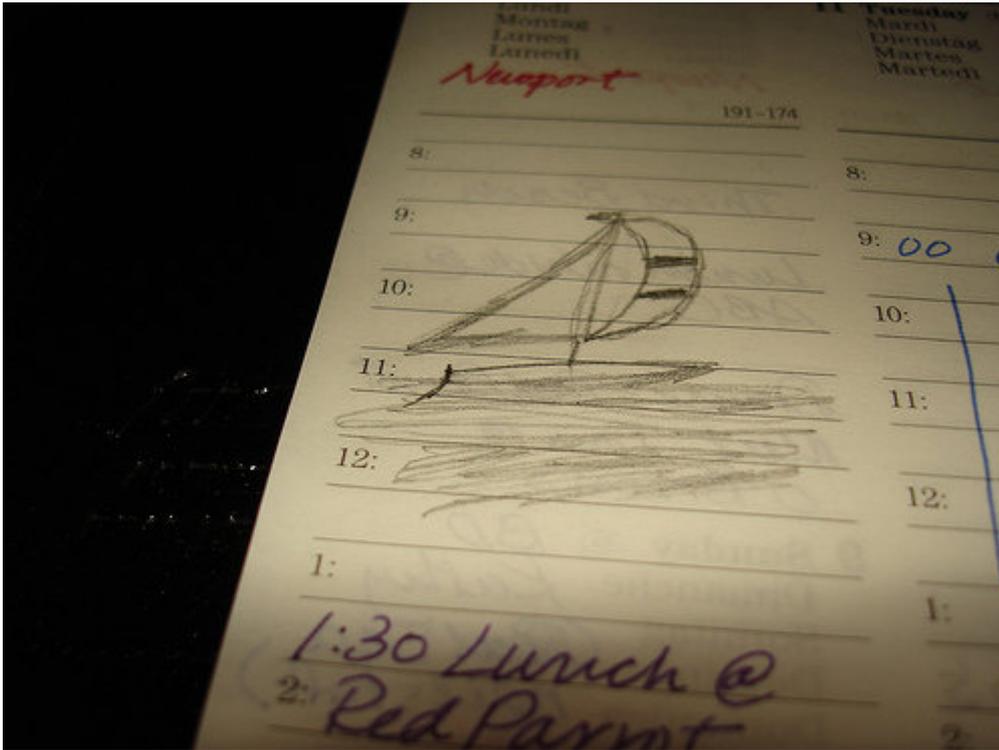
BTW, if you're visiting this blog Wednesday night (U.S. Eastern Daylight Time) or early Thursday morning (GMT), you may notice the Flickr-hosted photos (which includes most of the photos on this blog) are offline. Apparently, Flickr is "having a massage."\* Well, at least they had enough class to come up with a cleverly creative error message.

Now they're having a contest to fill in some clogged tubes with artwork and win a year of free Flickr Pro. I've leave that to those of you who are more creative than I.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/1314/393/1600/DSC00551.jpg>

2. <http://filofaxusa.com/ficoju8tco4.html>

## First Sketch (2006-07-22 04:23) - Nan



[1] OK, I've been warning you! I'm so inspired by Filofax art, I had to create some myself. And now you know I have no idea how to draw a sailboat. In fact, I have no idea how to draw anything. My favorite quote of all time is from [2]Goethe: "Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." Well, at least I've got the boldness aspect of it.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/74/195235977\\_fe0475a416.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/74/195235977_fe0475a416.jpg?v=0)
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Wolfgang\\_von\\_Goethe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe)

## Writing vs. Doing (2006-07-24 18:47) - Nan

The good news: I write all my ideas and things I want to do (sooner or later) in my Filofax. I've virtually eliminated lost information. The bad news: Writing and doing are two different things. Some things go months or years without getting done. They just sit there on the page. For example, because I don't have much opportunity in the day to just sit and make phone calls, I have pages and pages of unmade calls to people who would be really cool to talk to. But only the urgent calls get made.

The "eh" news: Some of the things I've written down are never going to get done. They just sit there on the page until, one day, I realize they weren't a very good idea in the first place. So it makes me wonder about the value of writing them down in the first place. But maybe procrastination isn't all bad. It gives me a chance NOT to make unwise moves. Gives me time to see the better of them. Kind of like counting to 10 before speaking when you're angry. I guess "eh" isn't so bad after all.

In a recent (July 6, 2006) podcast on [1]43folders, Merlin Mann outlined two ways to tell whether your system is working. With all credit where credit is due, I'll paraphrase them here, as I wrote them in my own notes (in my Filofax, of course):

- 1) Your system must support you and your work, not the other way around.
- 2) Changing your attitudes and habits is what makes any system work or not.

What I like about the Filofax is that it's pretty neutral on both counts. Whether or not your system works depends on how well you set it up based on your self-understanding, as you choose your calendar format, tabs, and what to keep inside them. And your attitudes and habits are up to you...but keeping records and journals in your 'fax sure can help you see where you are and where you want to get to.

P.S. In fun news, not everyone decided to politely ignore my attempt at drawing. Piggpog mentioned it on his creativity blog: [2]<http://piggpog.com/node/2185>. Even drew something in his Filo in response. I'll have to keep this going! (The pigpog blog also has advice for people [3]learning to draw.)

1. <http://www.43folders.com/podcast/>
2. <http://piggpog.com/node/2185>
3. <http://piggpog.com/art/list>

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## Forthcoming Emissions (2006-07-25 14:48) - Spiral Stairs

I've returned from two-and-a-half weeks away from home, during which time I became so consumed with being productive that I lost track of my productivity tools. I basically stopped using Philo. I switched to a simple legal pad with a long list of tasks. Then even that fell into disuse, and I (dis)organized my time by reference to scattered post-it notes and scrawls in the margins of notebooks. Had I been there any longer, I would probably have hired someone to skywrite my to-do lists in the skies above Manhattan, because I could not possibly be bothered with any physical incarnations of such lists.

Now I back at my old desk, butt cheeks settled into their old imprints, and my Filofax at its old post to my right. I feel guilty about ignoring poor Philo. Then again, while I was ignoring Philo, I was also ignoring my poor pregnant wife, who will emit a child in the next 2 weeks or so. (Okay, I wasn't ignoring her. But when you're ridden with guilt and anxiety, like I am, anything short of constant, dotting attention feels the same as ignoring.) And, of course, I've been ignoring Philofaxy. (Stop me if you think that you've heard this one before.) I begin each day stocked to the gills with guilt. Now I'm overflowing. So I must make amends in all areas of my life. I'm slowly reintegrating my Filofax into my life after its temporary banishment. I updated my "Financial" section to reflect recent inflows and outflows. I made a fresh to-do list. I updated my project page on shopping for a new lightweight stroller.

(Also, I'm not ignoring my wife any more.)

Perhaps this weekend, I will live the dream that has preoccupied me for months: *I will buy new A-to-Z tabs and totally reorganize the whole damn thing.* Once I do that, I will actually have something new and arguably useful to tell you all about.

That presumes, of course, that I don't have a fricking baby on my lap this weekend.

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Nan (2006-07-25 16:41:00)  
My money's on the baby.

## Russian Nesting Dolls (2006-07-26 09:40) - Spiral Stairs

The only way I would be able to store my A5 Filofax in a pocket would be carrying a kangaroo with me. It turns out that carrying a messenger bag is substantially easier than carrying a kangaroo.

I've been a devotee of the messenger bag since college. I could never quite get into backpacks. I had a few brief love affairs with one, but the dealbreaker was always ease of access while on my feet. With a backpack, I had to do a funny twist-and-unzip thing. If I was using both shoulder straps, I'd have to partially disengage with the pack first. Then, in the process of unzipping, I would have to be careful not to unzip too far, thereby spilling its precious contents onto asphalt. With a messenger bag, though, the storage compartments sit at just the right height for easy access. And, although a twist-and-unzip is sometimes necessary, it's not nearly as chiropractic.

So, for years, I have turned my obsessive research instincts toward messenger bags.

I think the first one I had was an Eddie Bauer. How quaint. It's the non-threatening starter bag. How could anything made and sold by Eddie Bauer be *bad*? Unstylish? Possibly. But truly bad? No way. It was green, like most things at Eddie Bauer.

Then I lived in New York. New York is mecca for messenger bags. Everyone has one. You carry your

personal items, your groceries, sometimes your children, in one. I went through a few, but the one that really sticks in my head was the [1]Manhattan Portage bag. It was roughly this:



Oh, yes, it looked cool. But hold on a sec. There is no handle for grabbing it. There are no external pockets at all. Inside, there was one large zippered pocket. No pen loops. No handy cell phone pocket. Just space. (*Lapsed Geek Alert: Like a Bag of Holding!*)

Really impractical. Like most things associated with New York.

I've left out some other bag flings I've had. Some were one-night stands. Others were torrid but star-crossed love affairs. Then, the fates conspired me to deliver salvation to me: [2]Tom Bihn. My first exposure to Tom Bihn was a review on [3]The Gadgeteer of the [4]ID Bag. I loved the look. I loved the idea. (Commitment to fair labor conditions; friendly service (including message boards on their site); generally crunchy vibe. Here is another reason to like Bihn: [5]Click.) I bought the ID on the strength of that review. And I loved it.



That was about three years ago. I have become something of a Tom Bihn devotee. Last year, I made my wife give me the [6]Super Ego for my birthday. (At least I let her pick the color of the stripe on the front of the bag.)



I still alternate back and forth between the ID and the Super Ego. I like the capaciousness of the Super Ego. But I like the compactness of the ID. (Damn logic!) I also prefer the pocket layout of the ID, which fits my usage patterns a little better.

If anyone cares, I would be happy to describe in excruciating detail the differences between the two bags, and why I prefer the pocket layout of the ID. Both, however, make excellent portable, non-marsupial pockets for an A5 Filofax.

Now, I have to carry the Bihn bag in something, of course. Namely, a car. I shall save my thoughts on that for another day.

1. <http://www.manhattanportage.com/>
2. <http://www.tombihn.com/>
3. <http://www.the-gadgeteer.com/>
4. [http://www.the-gadgeteer.com/review/tom\\_bihn\\_id\\_bag\\_review\\_updated](http://www.the-gadgeteer.com/review/tom_bihn_id_bag_review_updated)
5. <http://www.snopes.com/business/hidden/tombihn.asp>
6. <http://www.tombihn.com/page/001/PROD/TBP/TB0825>

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RichardL (2006-07-27 13:26:00)

I once "lost" a messenger bag in Union Station (Chicago) after getting out of a cab. I was cursing, twisting and shouting while drawing a crowd. The bag was hanging from my shoulder all the time. Very cathartic.

I left two cameras in restaurants, never to be seen again. In other words, I can't trust myself to carry anything that won't fit in a pocket. The "pocket" size FiloFax isn't really pocket size either, so I am going for the Exec. mini, which also opens flat. The downside, besides being a little small, is that no storage binder is available — until I contacted FiloFax cust. service today who informed me that the pocket size storage binder WILL WORK. "There are two posts in the binder that the first and fourth holes in the mini size paper fit over". So there.

My life is now complete as I shall be ordering my mini kit straight away.

Spiral Stairs (2006-07-27 18:15:00)

The draw of the pocket is, indeed, strong. Losing my Filofax is a great fear in my life, though I am generally pretty good about not losing things. [Furiously knocking on wood.]

Joseph K (2006-07-28 23:24:00)

Dude. I know you. You are definitely more of a Super Ego guy than an Id guy. Sorry. What were we talking about?

Nan (2006-07-29 02:51:00)

Ooh, great bags! I clicked all of the links and visited the Web site. This is my first time hearing of Tom Bihn. Both the ID and the SuperEgo seem like great "everything" bags.

I've been using a [1]Levenger Majorca Briefbag for the past few years.

Mine is a light lavender.

It appears the Tom Bihn bags are available only through the Web site and a couple of stores on the West Coast, which is a shame because I'd like to examine one in person before I buy. They'd make great gifts, especially for someone who travels a lot.

1. <http://www.levenger.com/PAGETEMPLATES/PRODUCT/Product.asp?Params=Category=11-74|PageID=2266|Level=2-3>

Petter (2008-10-24 17:25:00)

Filling in on this one, for those of you who are in the Nordic (and no, I don't mean Alaska...)region, the Finnish company Marimekko makes wonderful messenger bags. Don't know if they're available in the US, though...

## A Rock, a Hard Place, and Some Complaints About Each (2006-07-29 09:31) - Spiral Stairs

I finally had a chance yesterday to visit my local Filofax emporium. I hadn't been in a long time, and in the interim I had developed all sorts of fantasies about revamping my system. Foremost among these fantasies was the introduction of a mini-size Filofax, to function like a Star Trek shuttle: Leave the mothership in the bag or on the desk; deploy the shuttle for information-gathering and discrete missions; upon completion of mission, dock with the mothership and offload the new data.

Fantasies are so much more fantastic than reality.

The store had a huge selection of Mini Filofaxes, and for a brief moment, I was very excited. I flipped one open. The pages are so cute I would pinch their cheeks if they had them. But it quickly became apparent to me that I would not be sticking one in my pocket. Puffy, thick leather is luxurious, but not compact. Neither are binder rings pocket-friendly.

And the Minis were \$70 each. Yikes. So I soured on the Mini idea quickly.

Plan B: Come up with an alternative pocket-friendly system that is compatible with Filofax. The problem here is that, as far as I can find, there is no pocket-friendly paper system pre-drilled for Filofax compatibility. I could buy the A5 hole punch sold by Filofax, but it is priced for millionaires. \$50 for a tiny little hole punch. Puh-leeze.

Enter the Moleskine, tantalizingly close to a solution, but not quite there. Portable: Check. Cool: Check. Drilled for Filofax: Uncheck. Perforated pages for transfer to a Filofax: Check/uncheck. (Some Moleskines have some perforated pages, but none have all perforated pages, as far as I can tell.)

Tear down this wall, Mr. Moleskine: Drill your notebooks for Filofax!

Maybe I am destined to buy the hole punch, but I can't drop that kind of coin on a hole punch unless I am quite certain it will be heavily used. Perhaps I should first experiment with carrying around an awl, or getting a job teaching high school shop so I would have access to a drill press.

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pigpogm (2006-07-29 17:18:00)

Only the watercolor Moleskine has all perforated pages, and it wouldn't be much good for notes.

The hole-punch is expensive. It wouldn't be so bad if it was really good quality, but although it \*looks\* good, it doesn't actually work very well. It'll only do a few sheets at a time (ten is challenging to it), the plastic end-bits have a tendency to fall off, and emptying it is annoyingly difficult. Oh, and it \*needs\* emptying often, because it's not designed so that there's enough space for the punchings to fall into, so they just jam the thing up after a few shots.

Having said all that, it's still a lot easier than any alternative. The \*closest\* alternative I've found is a single-hole punch we picked up from Staples for under £2 (less than \$4). You have to use a 'real' punched sheet to help judge where the holes go, and the results aren't perfect, but it's fairly easy, it'll go through lots of sheets at once, and it's cheap. The biggest problem with the results is that the holes are a bit too big, so the paper can 'rattle' about on the rings a bit too much.

neowagnerite (2006-07-29 20:28:00)

I'm so glad I kept my 1.25 inch personal size Filofax— a size that Filofax unfortunately doesn't make any more.

Nan (2006-07-30 15:46:00)

I plan to buy a Filofax A5 hole punch someday, despite all the bad press it's getting here! Currently, I'm using the single-hole punch solution. I happen to have a couple of all-in-one office kits, given to me for Christmas over the years. These kits contain miniature staplers, tape measures, hole punches, box cutters, and so on. The hole punches in these kits are small and oddly-shaped, but they make smaller holes than the standard, scissor-shaped single hole punches, so the resulting holes are nicely Filofax-compatible.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-07-30 17:41:00)

The problem is Filofax subverted their own idea with way too many sizes - they should have stuck to just the Personal and Deskfax sizes.

Moleskine's are just this year's fad and are qualitively no different from any notepad other than the price.

For your interest I maintain a [1]Filofax chronology as I'm a collector of them

1. <http://ukcoldwar.simplenet.com/documents/filofax/chronology/>

Nan (2006-07-30 18:36:00)

This is such a great post. I've read it at least 3 times now. And I'm very envious that you actually have a Filofax "emporium" in your area. I think the closest one to me is in NYC, as far as I can tell from searching the Web.

Between Filo pr0n, a good haircut, and a couple of shows I want to see, I think a 5-hour each way trip is in the offing.

Nan (2006-07-30 18:49:00)

Hi Kevin - Welcome to our little corner of the Internet. This is your first post, no?

I read your Filofax chronology with great interest. I forgot that Day Runner owned Filofax for a time. I'm also old enough to remember the stiffer leather when 'faxes were all made in the UK. (Let's just say I've been fascinated with paper from the cradle!)

I agree that that there are a few too many sizes right now, but I think the A5 and A4 sizes are a smart idea on the company's part. These are standard international paper sizes (the Personal organizer size is, too), and compatibility with them is crucial to Filofax's survival. Vive Filo!

Spiral Stairs (2006-07-30 20:09:00)

pigpogm, that's disappointing news about the hole punch. I had suspected that the little plastic in-planner hole punch would operate like that, but I assumed the nice metal one would be solid. Oh well. I'll probably try the handheld single hole punch method.

Kevin, that chronology is awesome. I have expressed strong feelings about the moleskine frenzy in other posts. Most of those feelings are negative. However, I am nothing if not a hypocrite, and I still want to be one of the cool kids.

Nan, "emporium" is a pretty strong word for my local Filo-source. But in a desert, a puddle is like a lake.

Nan (2006-07-30 20:26:00)

Philofaxer: FYI - The NYC souce I'm talking about, which pledges to have the full range of available refills, is Madison Signatures, 743 Madison Ave., NYC 10021, (212) 717-1386 or (800) 783-9590.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-07-31 05:11:00)

Hello, that was my first post :) I have to confess that most of my Filofaxes are at least 15 years old, as I collect any and all from 1980-1992 from what I consider Filofaxes "golden era" when the binders were handmade in England; as a Brit myself I take a lot of pride in the quality of their older binders before Robin Field took control of the company from David Collischon and had nearly everything made overseas. I found it astonishing that the essential "Britishness" of Filofax was a major quality they felt it didn't need.

I still think Filofax need to take a look at their own heritage and see what great ideas they had - it's an irony that a few days ago I emailed the company about bring back some older designs (like the Duplex) and, I quote, "I have asked our Marketing Department about your 'Duplex' organiser and they are not familiar with the name." Amazing!

Nan (2006-08-02 01:00:00)

Kevin, the loss of British craftsmanship is very sad. As one of our American presidents used to say, "I feel your pain." Just try to get a pair of blue jeans made in the USA!

Chet (2006-08-05 07:03:00)

Hiya

I bought a Circa punch when it was way too expensive (cuz the price dropped after I bought one - story of my life), but now, everytime I punch up pages for my home-made Circa planner, I thank myself for making that expensive investment at the time.

Go ahead, get yourself the Filofax punch.

Nan (2006-08-05 17:11:00)

Hi and welcome Chet!

I don't have a Filo punch yet, but I did buy the Circa punch when I was using Circa. It really is necessary when you're using that system. And talk about a sturdy, well-made piece of equipment! That thing is solid!! I guess because it's not popular enough yet for mass-production.

When I was a Circaphile, I used the punch every day. I really loved the fact that any email, PDF, iCal, or Word document on my computer could become part of a book. I was really big on printing out PDFs and binding them. I printed out my iCal calendar every morning and punched it for my daily notebook. I really liked the fact that, unlike a ring binder, the resulting book was only as thick as the pages and cover, without wasted space.

Levenger used to quote emails from enthusiastic Circa users on its site...and I was one of them!

In the end, I stopped using Circa because I felt I was spending more time printing, punching, and tweaking than it was worth, and after a while, the pages wore out and popped out of the book. I could never get pages to print out the way I wanted. I still have the punch though...haven't gotten around to selling it on eBay. Maybe I won't. Anyway, there was another way I used my Circa punch...check it out on my [1]Flickr page.

1. <http://flickr.com/photos/gonanb/>

Alan Schenk (2006-08-08 11:10:00)

What a wonderful Blog site. This is my first posting so hello to everyone. I myself have been a Filofaxer for probably 15 years, beginning with a personal size and quickly moving to an A5 size. I converted some years ago to a PDA, trying a number of iterations but went back to my trusty Durham when I found it wasn't adding anything to my work life, but only to my personal.

Maybe this is the key, use what works for you for the part of your life that it is needed for. I have a password application on my PDA and some other applications that I find useful occasionally. However my Filofax allows me to go into meetings, take notes, check my schedule and plan so much more easily and efficiently than having to poke around on a small PDA screen.

I have the aluminium A5 punch, having purchased it a number of years ago. What seems to work for me is a combination of electronic and manual in that I have A5 copy paper in my office and print out my week per page diary directly from Outlook, where I receive and manage most of my appointments. I use the punch for this and keep this page on the left hand side, with an "Action Items" list on the right hand side, which moves from week to week if I can't get to all my action items. The "Action Items" list is manual, as I receive and manage most of my tasks manually rather than over email.

I keep Filofax ruled notepaper and spare "Action" lists in the back and generally am happy with how everything comes together...except!

The size of the rings are becoming an impediment to the way I want to work rather than the way I have to work. I have the maximum 1.25" ring size, but due to my setup above am not able to keep contact information in the binder, nor am I able to provide additional tabs for projects, an extra 3/4" would be nice, say a 2" ring. Filofax, despite a number of requests over the years have steadfastly refused to provide a size similar to say Covey or Day Timer, much to my annoyance.

Now you may well say why not move to the other systems, but I really do enjoy the refills of Filofax. They are simple and effective without too much decoration or unnecessary affectation. A sublime solution for me would be to utilize Filofax refills in a larger binder, but alas to date I have not found a compatible A5 binder with the correct six ring mechanism...my search continues.

Keep up the great blog, thoroughly enjoying it.

Nan (2006-08-10 00:59:00)

Welcome Alan –

I've found the same thing at various times...using a Palm Pilot for most of my life, but a simple notebook when I'm at the office. Or finding that different page sizes work for different contexts.

I agree about the hole size dilemma. Franklin Covey has some great leaves (some of which are discontinued) that I can't use in my Filo because the holes are not lined up. Now when I see different leaves, I let them inspire my own ideas, rather than thinking I need to have that exact page.

The size limit in Filofax rings is kind of like living in a small apartment. It forces you to be neat and organized. Anyway, I'm so glad you've joined us!

Chet (2006-08-10 16:10:00)

Nan

I'm glad I don't live in the States and use the Letter / Junior paper sizes. Otherwise, I would be a regular Levenger customer! I bought the Circa punch mainly because of the paper size differences. Here in Malaysia, we use the A paper size (with the A4 being the equivalent of the Letter and the A5 the Junior).

As it is, I recently saw that the Circa Junior uses the same number of rings as an A5, so I pestered Levenger Customer Service about whether it would take A5 paper. Unfortunately (or should it be fortunately?), it doesn't. I so want a leather Circa cover. It would complete my home-made Circa notebook.

Chet (2006-08-10 16:16:00)

If I'm not mistaken, Franklin Covey planners have 7 rings, rather than the universal 6 rings.

Chet (2006-08-11 10:10:00)

Nan

Did you know there's a Filofax portable punch?

Go to this accessories page, and scroll down, it's the last product on the page:

<http://www.filofaxusa.com/a5accessories.html>

Nan (2006-08-11 22:39:00)

Chet, thanks for the tip about the A5 Portable Punch I didn't know they made a portable version in the A5 size! By the way, I think the Levenger customer service person you talked to was confused. Levenger's Junior paper is 210mm x 143mm. I think it's closer to A5 than to the American 8.5 x 5.25! In other words, I think the Circa Junior leather notebook is perfect for A5 paper.

P.S. You're right about Franklin Covey. They do have 7 rings instead of 6.

Anonymous (2007-11-30 13:14:00)

Hi I have a Filofax E199 1/2bought in Chisholm's Ltd., 103 Kingwasy, London about thirty years ago which was the main supplier in those days...I was told that there was a lady who punched the holes for the stationary by hand above the shop!Sadly the stationers no longer exists. It is slimline but with rings in between the two present sizes which works well. Anybody any clues about a replacement as it is getting a bit tired.

Anonymous (2008-06-17 23:04:00)

Does anyone know if there is a refill that you can print on with a laser printer for the Filofax with the 3.75 inch by 6.75 inch pages

Anonymous (2008-09-22 17:07:00)

If you have a Kinko's or other copy service in your area, they will often drill pages for a minimal fee.

SP (2008-12-22 14:44:00)

I SO enjoyed reading these comments. I worked at the Filofax Head Office in Ilford (north east London)from 1985-1991. We were immensely proud of our product and had very good relationships with our manufacturers. The leather binder manufacturers were mostly in Walsall, near Birmingham and the paper printer was about 20

minutes drive away.

Towards the end of my time there products were being sourced from abroad and the quality was nowhere near as good.

The company started as Norman & Hill in (if my memory serves me right) 1926. During the 2nd World War the office was bombed but the secretary rescued the Filofax with the addresses of all the customers & suppliers. That secretary was Grace Scurr who went on to buy the company. David and Lesley Collischon bought it from Grace. Grace was a regular visitor to the office (as was the Queen's cousin, Lord Linley).

The company name changed to Filofax, to match the product, in 1986.

David and Lesley very much treated us as family. We would get a hamper from them at Christmas as well as a bonus. I think this is very much down to their Christian beliefs.

It did change when Robin Field and his company took over. You either liked or hated Robin. Personally, I got on well with him but can understand why others didn't.

I was made redundant when the manufacturing was put out to an outside contractor. I feel that the workers at this warehouse won't have had the personal attachment to the company and product as us 'old handers' did.

I don't recognise the products labelled as Filofax in the shops anymore. There is nothing about them that makes them stand out. The quality is not a patch on what it was.

Sorry for the ramble.

Anonymous (2008-12-25 00:23:00)

Dear Sir/Madam.

Thank you for your email requesting additional information for the Filofax.

I can confirm that this product is produced in China.

Hope this information is useful to you.

Kind regards

Filofax Mail Order

Arnold (2009-01-06 08:55:00)

For a good hole punch look at the Time/Design (USA or Europe). These work for the A5 size (6 hole).

Hope this helps.

Anonymous (2009-07-23 15:29:06)

Personally, I tried to dual-Filofax approach and it didn't work for me. I now stick to an A5 model.

I can vouch for the Time/Design A5 punch since I've had one for at least 15 years! Still works great after all this time despite being heavily used. Remember that a good punch isn't cheap; I've worn out several letter-size punches and found that you have to spend about \$50 on a heavy-duty punch to get something that will last.

Here are two alternatives to a punch and/or a second Filofax. 1) Buy prepunched A5 paper (I got some in London while visting, wasn't too expensive although Filofax and Time/Design A5 computer paper sure is!) or use the Filofax jotter pads. About 2 by 3 inches, these pads have three holes to insert into most Filofaxes and easily fit your shirt pocket. You get three pads in a package. Of course, Post-Its work great for jotting down notes too, and you just stick them in your Filofax at the appropriate place. Good luck!

### **R.I.P. (2006-07-31 20:51) - Nan**

It's true. My favorite Filofax form – the Project Planner – is discontinued. I exchanged email with a really nice man at [1]Madison Signatures, who contacted Filofax in England and confirmed that they have none left in their warehouse. He has one packet left (A5) and is holding it for me. I obtained a packet from a place in Florida earlier this year. They, too, sent me the last one they had.

The Project Planner form is so stone-cold dead that I can't even find a picture of it online to post here. Since I haven't found any project forms in the DIY Planner that I like as well, I'm going to try to print my own on plain A5 paper, probably from Word or Excel. (Now that's DIY!) Luckily, it's a very simple form, which is exactly why I like it.

I also think I've found out the reason for the discontinuance. Filofax has developed some new [2]forms,

and a time-management training program to go with them. The replacement form appears to be called Project/Mind. I actually like the looks of this new set of forms, called Professional System, but I don't think these forms are available in the States yet.

Another alternative is this project form developed by a company called [3]DeVilliers. Again, they seem to be available only from U.K. Web sites, so if you're not in the U.K., shipping charges can be a drawback.

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

2. [http://www.filofax.co.uk/timemanagement/refill\\_stationary.asp](http://www.filofax.co.uk/timemanagement/refill_stationary.asp)

3. [http://www.cityorg-pdq.co.uk/acatalog/Online\\_Catalogue\\_Filofax\\_A5\\_Inserts\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_Miscellaneous\\_97.html](http://www.cityorg-pdq.co.uk/acatalog/Online_Catalogue_Filofax_A5_Inserts_____Miscellaneous_97.html)

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BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-01 03:58:00)

Filofax have messed about with Project Planning for years going back at least as far as "Free Form" in 1986. The problem is I'd be inclined to think most paper-based Project Planning is dying out because of the popularity of software like Microsoft Project. I think they're trying to push water uphill because paper-based Project Planning aids really aren't very good in a large team setting or with very complex projects. Filofax would be better off in making their products much more useful at the individual level - just look at how few different leaves there are compared to the 1980s...

Nan (2006-08-02 00:52:00)

Interesting point, Kevin. I found the recently deceased Project Planner perfect for my own home and personal projects. Simple and flexible enough to adapt to different kinds of projects. If I were in charge of team projects, I'd definitely turn to software for communicating project-related information - probably something Web-based like Basecamp or Intuit's new QuickBase.

Day Runner, and I think even Franklin Covey have stopped making Project forms as well, and I think you're exactly right about the reason why.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-02 04:28:00)

Now that's the funny thing: Filofax keep forgetting the "personal" side of their products and that for personal projects, paper-based documentation is more than sufficient. I do worry that the more Filofax reduce their range of papers the less useful it becomes, for many years now Filofax haven't produced much more than diary, note and address papers. I'm surprised some enterprising soul hasn't took advantage in the gap in Filofax's range...

neowagnerite (2006-08-02 11:19:00)

I use my Filofax for both personal and business use, and I was quite saddened to learn at the beginning of this year that Filofax has stopped making their receipt envelopes.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-02 16:32:00)

Exactly my point - Filofax are printing too few different leaves thereby undermining the whole point of a loose leaf system. It's a rough guess but today Filofax probably print less than 10 % of the total range they've produced over the last 20 years. Why Filofax think hopeless gimmicks like printing pink-coloured diaries is a good idea is beyond me. They need to make Filofax the indispensable professional and social aid it always was.

Nan (2006-08-02 22:29:00)

Well, I think the DeVilliers company that I mentioned in my last post is starting to step in to fill the gap...make Project forms that Filofax no longer makes. In fact, the Meeting Planner on [www.filofaxusa.com](http://www.filofaxusa.com) appears to be made of the DeVilliers ivory-colored paper. The DeVilliers forms are 10-hole punched to fit on a variety of rings.

I can't, however, say I'm against colorful binders. Studies show that women are, well, stepping into the gap and making the majority of household buying decisions. They do a lot of research before they open their purse strings, and design is just as important as quality. For example, women are the ones buying the household washing machines, and they don't just want one that does a good job cleaning clothes and saving water. They want one that does all that AND looks beautiful. And if your machine doesn't do that, they'll keep looking.

That said, I do wish Filofax would return to making an assortment of leaves, on high-quality paper, AND binders that meet a variety of design tastes. And I wish with all my heart that British people were making them if they

want to.

Nan (2006-08-03 22:27:00)

Kevin – Where do you get your collectible Filofaxes? Do you find them at auctions?

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-04 08:48:00)

You have to look all over for old Filofaxes, auctions, house clearances, bankrupt stock. A chap I know who deals in bankrupt stock got a case of 10 brand new pigskin Filofaxes that are from 1987. I bought two from him. And when I say new I mean new, they were still in the paper wrappers Filofax used to pack them in!

Teri (2006-08-12 10:28:00)

I'm with Kevin. A lot of the new planner designs are just plain tacky. I started using Filofax in 1985, when the binders were elegant and classic, and there was a large variety of inserts to choose from. I, too, use mine for business and personal purposes, and wish there was a way to bring back all those discontinued items, including receipt envelopes, project planning forms, and pigskin binders from the 80s.

Nan (2006-08-12 21:13:00)

Hi Teri, and welcome!

Well, I can see I'm outnumbered. But I loved my pigskin Filo in the '80s. I really did!

Maybe that's why I buy up all the different leaves I can find. If they're selling, maybe Filofax will start making more of them again.

Huper Arnion (2007-05-17 16:08:00)

I just bought a package of Project Planning leaves on Ebay. If you'd like a blank to play around with, let me know.

Nan (2007-05-17 19:11:00)

Huper – thanks for the offer, but I was able to get some Project Planner leaves for myself! Good to hear that they're still popping up on eBay, though!

## 1.5 August

### Regrets, I've had a few... (2006-08-03 20:04) - Nan

It was hard separating from my Palm handheld. When I went back to paper, I had to give up a pocket-sized way to get online and send email, the ability to enter an address once and synch it up on every computer I'll ever own, reading newspaper articles and playing games in the palm of my hand.... But give it up I did. And it's been over half a year since I've thought of the darn thing.

Until today. I friend emailed me directions to a place we're meeting this weekend, and as I printed them, cut them up, and slipped the resulting strip of paper into my Pocket Filo, I had a flashback of cutting and pasting the directions into iCal, attached right to the relevant event. When I synched up at the end of the day, they'd be on my Palm forever. Just a few more clicks, and I could make an Address Book entry with the directions attached as well. If we meet at the same place again, a quick Find on my Palm will turn up the directions again, in the same mint condition as when I first pasted them in.

But then, the fact that Finds on my Palm kept turning up fatal errors was the last straw in the first place. There was the time it took 2 days to get Palm Desktop working again when my company upgraded to Tiger. (Palm no longer supports the Mac platform.) I lost another week of my life trying to set up my documents in StickyBrain when I decided to use iCal and Address Book – iCal has no way to synch with Palm memos.

...Anybody wanna buy a Palm Tungsten T3?

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-04 08:57:00)

I find the two can live side-by-side. The main mistakes people make is that a Palm (or any PDA) is only any good for data that was digital in the first place and that any form of serious data entry or human input is still far too sophisticated. I bought a Palm Zire simply for having my Outlook Calendar and Contacts with me so I'm not duplicating effort by writing them down. For making detailed notes or plans PDAs are just no good.

I think this, and the administration/technical failures of them has made sure they have not seen the end of Filofax, nor will they for many years to come. It is an irony that 5 or 6 years people were predicting the end of personal organisers yet year-on-year sales of PDAs have fallen with some companies, like Sharp and Sony, have abandoned the market completely.

pigpogm (2006-08-04 10:15:00)

>...Anybody wanna buy a Palm Tungsten T3?

Nope - I've already got one gathering dust here. And a Tungsten T.

The Handspring Visor Edge is gathering dust at my parents' house. There's a couple of Palm M105s somewhere around here too, a Psion Series 5, a Series 3a, and I think somewhere an old Organiser II Model CM. No idea what ended up happening with the \*other\* Series 3a, or the two original Series 3 machines. The Sharp organizer probably went in the bin.

My wife is still happily using the iPaq hx4700, though - alongside her Filofax.

Anonymous (2006-08-04 19:24:00)

I've basically quit using my Tungsten T3, too, except for contacts and the voice recorder (now and then). I had used Palm for years but the little screen does not give a big picture for one's life. I'm using the Moleskine 18-month calendar, and it's working for me pretty well, but if I need something more elaborate, I'm definitely going Filofax A5. . .

Nan (2006-08-05 17:57:00)

Hey, "Anon" -

Ain't it the truth about that small screen? I tried to use just the Palm with a desktop and/or laptop computer for a while, but there's no substitute for being able to think on paper. I found I just couldn't get the big picture from a Palm either. Desktop organizer software is good for calendars, and there really is nothing better than a Palm for contacts and similar portable database information, but the Filofax is the only thing that can do it all!

## **Warning: Off-Topic Beauty Ahead (2006-08-05 14:17) - Spiral Stairs**

If your sole reason for being here is your undying love for Filofax, such that you are unable to reflect upon other instances of beauty in the world, you can stop here. However, for those of you who appreciate perfection manifested in forms other than leather-bound binders and calendar pages, I give you Charlie, my son:



He was born Tuesday night, two and a half weeks early. (We HAVE to get this boy a calendar.) In this picture, he is swaddled for the trip home, on Thursday. Now he's luxuriating in the glow of familial attention, alternately pooping, sleeping, and eating. And I'm luxuriating in his glow. Does Filofax make a baby carrier insert?

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Anonymous (2006-08-05 15:55:00)

Congratulations!! Welcome Charlie! And best wishes to your family.

Larry (2006-08-05 15:59:00)

I just came across your blog this morning and have been reading it from the beginning. OK, so I have no life. What a surprise to return to the point where I started and find this post of your son. Congratulations! I can promise you there will be lots to write in your Filofax, from now on. Finding the time to do it will be the challenge. BTW, I started with an 8 X 10 Daytimer...not the best thing for a young, first time salesman on the road. I then went to the 4 X 5 size and stuck with that for many years until I moved to New York and starting using a Filofax (it was all the rage back then). I actually purchased my Filofax at Harrod's in London and it has a Harrod's stamp on it's inside cover. Very cool.

Those days passed and I needed something larger...back to the daytimer and then to the Covey planning system in one of my many daytimer binders and then on to a Franklin Covey Binder. I'm not finished yet!

Next it was a palm, then it was a cheap pocket calendar, then a Moleskine pocket calendar and in the same year the larger Moleskine calendar and in the same year back to the pocket calendar.

Think that's where we stop? You could but you would be wrong. I bought a Plam Lifedrive in that same year and have been using it for appointments and telephone numbers to this point. In the last year I have been carrying 3 X 5 notecards in my pocket, Moleskine volante and cahiers and a do it yourself planner that you print and fold up. Last weekend I found a small stapled pocket notebook that will fit in my shirt pocket and has replaced pieces of paper and index cards.

Who knows what will be next?

Thirty years and I haven't found the perfect tool for me yet.

Nan (2006-08-05 16:09:00)

Ah, I had a feeling Philofaxer's recent absense had something to do with the "frickin' baby"!

He's frickin' beautiful. Such symmetry!

Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

Larry (2006-08-05 16:15:00)

BTW, you may have to resurrect your T3 again. It is a perfect album for pictures of your son!

Nan (2006-08-05 16:20:00)

Hey Larry, and welcome! Thanks for telling your fascinating story! A Harrod's Filofax? Droooooooooool....

My first came from a store called Ann Taylor, and I believe it was also stamped with the store name. It was the mid-80's, also during the time Filos were enjoying a heyday in the States. It was made of sturdy brown leather with cotton cream paper. (But as I refilled it for the next couple of years, I didn't always get cotton cream.)

Now, I can't believe I tossed the thing out, because they're no longer made in Britain like that one was. Part of my decision not to keep it, in addition to the size (it was Personal and I wanted to move up to a 5 x 8 DayRunner), is that I spilled some cosmetics on it that created a permanent stain on the leather. (Hey, I was young.)

Yeah, it's an ongoing process, isn't it? I was interested in the LifeDrive for a while. I heard that its hard drive would spin down and take a long time to come back up. That was a deal breaker for me. If I were to go back to the Palm, it would be something like the Treo, so I wouldn't have to carry both it and a phone.

Larry (2006-08-05 17:51:00)

Nan, thanks for the shout back. The spin-down of the drive on the lifedrive isn't an issue really. It doesn't take that much time for it to spin up and be accessible. In most situations the data you are accessing regularly is stored in ram anyway so there is no lag. The large hard drive (for this kind of device anyway) is most welcome for pictures of the new grandson and tunes by Shaggy. :-)

I also carry a blackberry and sync up with my palm so that I have a complete duplicate of appointments and phone numbers on that. Kinda like a belt AND suspenders. No, I don't wear both.

I think you would be wise to follow up on your idea and carry a Treo. That would definitely be the way to go. Why didn't I do that? Simple, the blackberry cost me \$49.00 and the Treo would have had to cost \$599.00. Decision was simple. Prices of Treos have really come down since then, though.

Just remember that there is a lesson to be gathered from your story. Never, ever throw anything away. That's why you buy a larger house!

sarah harden (2006-08-06 02:10:00)

he's beautiful. congratulations!!!!

mng (2006-08-07 10:19:00)

Huzzahs!

Henry Baum (2006-08-07 13:18:00)

Oh My God, congratulations. Beautiful. Charlie's a great name.

Nan (2006-08-07 17:00:00)

Larry - LOL on the larger house idea! Truly, the moral is never throw a FILOFAX or other cool leather good away.

### **Ch-ch-ch-changes... (2006-08-08 14:18) - Spiral Stairs**

When I bought my first Filofax, I dutifully sorted the preprinted tabs, in the order predetermined by their alignment on the staggered scale of their right sides. When I bumped up to the A5 size, I was happy to find that it included blank tabs, which could be configured as the user sees fit. So what did I do? I essentially created duplicates of the preprinted tabs I was abandoning. I made a couple tentative gestures toward originality: I created a "Financial" tab where there was none before; I created a "Data" tab for things like passwords, confirmation numbers, and the like. But the overall scheme was essentially unchanged.

The beauty of Filofax is its mutability. I want to change my system now, and I can. But I'm struggling with two possibilities.

The first is the less radical one: Instead of generic tabs that designate the "type" of data contained under them, use tabs that designate the subject of the pages contained thereunder. For instance, the most actively used tab at this point would be a "Baby" tab. I would keep the "Financial Tab." I might introduce a "Writing" tab, or a "Shopping" tab. I would tie up the loose ends with a "Miscellaneous" tab, or a "Notes" tab.

Nice.

But the second option would be far more radical. Ditch the whole idea of descriptive tabs and go to a straight, balls-to-the-wall, look-at-me-I'm-so-crazy-the-world-can-eat-my-poo (again, babies are weighing on my mind) A-to-Z system. Aside from the calendar, *everything* else would fall somewhere in the A-to-Z system. Address for Fred Flintstone? That will be behind "F", thank you very much. Research on "F"ormula for babies? Also behind "F."

I'm attracted to option two for the same reason I once wanted to get a tattoo. It's assertive, individual, pleasantly chaotic. Then again, I never got a tattoo. So maybe I'm not an A-to-Z person.

I will probably try option one first, see how it works, and determine whether option two sounds like a good idea. I may have to try option two just to get it out of my system. I don't want to wonder how my life could have been different if I had really thrown caution to the wind and gone A-to-Z.

In order to help deal with all of this confusion, here is a picture of Charlie mulling over the possibilities:



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Anonymous (2006-08-08 20:23:00)

I have just discovered this website. I am a filofax "newbie" and have found all of the comments on the site so helpful. Thanks so much for your words of wisdom mixed with the steady relief of a little humor. I have just purchased my first real organizer, a chocolate classic cross stitch a5. I am 36 years old and have just finally found a wonderful, stylish way to keep my life organized! I am wrestling with my new personal gift, however. I have been struggling with the issue of labeling my tabs. The ultra fine black sharpie has been sitting next to my new "leather bound brain" for a few days. To sum it up, I look like a monkey looking at a Rubiks Cube!! So far, I believe I am going to go with: To Do, Projects, Finance, Notes, and maybe In and Someday/Maybe. Any suggestions?

Again, kudos to all of you!

Darren

P.S. Congratulations on the little one...he is beautiful!

Nan (2006-08-08 21:52:00)

Hi Darren and welcome! What a nice surprise! A new interesting Filofaxer joining us, and a new picture of The Charlie!

I have found that the intellectual, rational approach to labeling your tabs just doesn't work. No matter how I

label them, I end up changing them. I now recommend starting with the A-Z system and keep the blank tabs in the back. When you find yourself putting a lot of things behind one letter, make that a tab.

For example, suppose you find you have a lot of home renovations going on. You keep all your project notes behind "H". But you find you're flipping to "H" so many times each day, that you really want just one handy place to flip to. So you create a Home tab. Once the house is under control, that tab becomes obsolete, and you can create a tab called Grandchildren. :)

On the other hand, Darren, your tabs sound generic enough that they just may work no matter what.

My tabs are To Do, Checklists, Projects, Lists, Ideas, and Notes. I know, it makes no sense, and it sounds like at least 3 of these categories can go behind one tab. At the moment, I always know where to find exactly what I'm looking for, but my system needs revising. The Checklists tab is pretty meaningless at this point. I guess I'll be joining the Tab Team pretty soon, too.

Susanne (2006-08-11 14:34:00)

Hi, congratulations on the cute family addition.

My planner and pen obsession has brought me to many blogs that I read with interest, one of them is Philofaxy. I just thought I'd send you a note on a website I found where you can download templates for your filofax [www.diyplanner.com](http://www.diyplanner.com). Fun to browse.

Take care, Susanne

Nan (2006-08-11 22:19:00)

Hi Susanne! What a cute avatar!

Some folks around here use the DIY Planner pages with their Filos. I used to use some of them when I made my own planner in a Circa notebook. The Calendar pages are great!

Which DIY pages do you use?

Nan (2006-08-11 22:20:00)

By the way, Charlie is Philofaxer's baby, not mine. And there's no relation between Philofaxer and me (Nan). I'm just a contributor to the blog!

## Tab Time (2006-08-09 23:42) - Nan



[1]

I can't contribute

any cute baby pictures, but I wanted to at least add another Filofax picture. (My very cute then-6-month old nephew was holding my very cute Pocket Filo last Christmas and banging it on the floor, but so far I haven't located a picture of it.)

All this talk of tabs has got me thinking. I have to weed out and reprioritize my Filofax. I need room for more notes and new ideas. I would make better use of my ideas if I had them in a separate volume and actually review them once a week rather than carry them around and never look at them because the book is too intimidatingly big to open. What I've been doing in my A5 Filo is developing a [2]Commonplace Book. I remember reading that article about a year ago and feeling totally intimidated by it, but unwittingly I ended up duplicating it (on paper, not electronically).

My current tabs are: To Do, Checklists, Projects, Lists, Ideas, and Notes, plus A-Z tabs that aren't seeing much action.

My idea for a new set is (not in any particular order): To Do, Notes, Meetings, Projects, Lists (including ideas), and Address (including agendas). I'm going to eliminate the A-Z tabs, but still put the address pages in alphabetical order.

Mutability, as Philofaxer says, is what it's all about. Maybe Filofaxes are like sharks. If they stop moving forward, they die.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/84/211468484\\_2f043f2673.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/84/211468484_2f043f2673.jpg?v=0)

2. <http://www.diyplanner.com/docs/commonplace1>

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Nan (2006-08-11 22:55:00)

By the way, when I label my tabs, I don't write on them. I use a P-Touch labelmaker. The labels stick on really well, but it's also possible to peel them off without damage when you want to change the tabs.

Spiral Stairs (2006-08-14 13:44:00)

For my new tab reorganization, I've used laser labels scissored-to-size and a blue pen. That's only because I am at work and I am limited to the primitive materials surrounding me. I may fire up the label maker in the future.

## **Super Tabs! (2006-08-12 21:21) - Nan**

After my last entry, in which I mentioned removing A-Z tabs from my Filofax, a very nice reader emailed me personally about the virtues of A-Z tabs – the tab inserts themselves, not what goes inbetween them. He brought up the point that you can write on the tab pages themselves. They're perfect for glossaries, lists of books to read or movies to see, and so on. So instead of a thickness liability, tabs can be an asset. Ever since then, my tabs have remained securely bound into my Filofax.

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## **More on Tabs. (And I mean that the way it sounds.) (2006-08-14 13:37) - Spiral Stairs**

This has been my life over the past few months:

- June 18 to July 3: Work all day, every day, and prepare for the arrival of a baby in my scads of spare time.
- July 4: Take day off. Fall into 24-hour coma.
- July 5: Leave home to go to New York for work.
- July 6 to July 20: In New York, work all day, every day, late into the night. Obsess over looming due date and associated absent-spouse guilt.
- July 21: Return home.

- July 24 to July 31: One week of “regular” life. Regular work schedule. Regular home life. (Except for whole looming baby thing.)
- August 1: BABY.
- August 2 to August 13: Haze; recollections unclear. Something about a screaming, naked midget in our house. Scenes from Alien replaying in my head. Sleep a distant memory.
- August 14: Return to work. Sit at desk. Wonder if this is what post-traumatic stress disorder feels like. Try to accomplish something. Succeed in accomplishing one thing: Reorganizing Filofax.

I have turned my words into action; thoughts into matter; time into wasted time. My Filofax is now organized thusly:

- Upfront: The calendar (not designated by any tab). I toyed with the idea of moving this to the back, but it seemed too subversive. I’m not ready to rock the boat like that. At heart, my Filofax is still my calendar, and if I could preserve only one of its functions, that would be it.
- A “Data” section (tabbed as such). A pure carryover from the old scheme, containing my passwords, logins, confirmation codes. (As I stated earlier, the passwords are recorded according to a code known only to me, so please don’t track me down and steal my Filofax for the purpose of transferring money between my checking and saving accounts, or changing my Fantasy Football lineup.)
- A “Financial” section (tabbed as such). This is also carryover material.

Then I get crazy.

- A “House” section (tabbed as such). That’s right: *a section designated by subject matter, not type of data*. This a major step for me. I feel tingly thinking about it.
- A “Baby” section (tabbed as such). Hold me back. *Another* subject matter-specific section. Keep your distance: I could fly out of control at any moment.
- A “Writing” section (tabbed as such). Good God, man! I haven’t even decided what to put back here, but I figure it can only encourage me to do more of what the tab says.
- An “Other” section (tabbed as such). Right now, a necessary evil. I plan to tabify more subject matters in the future.

After all that craziness, you get to my addresses (using A-to-Z tabs but no prefatory “Address Book” tab). And then my clear plastic sleeves for cards and the like. Then a sleeve for my checkbook. Then, finally, a world map. (Which always seems so cool and useful. I haven’t consulted it once for anything at all.)

Phew. I’ll take some pictures soon of the new setup, and update you all on its continuing development.

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Nan (2006-08-14 19:12:00)

Amazing how you always know to post just as I’m running out of things to blog and start doing the ol’ soft shoe.

Nan (2006-08-14 19:15:00)

Isn’t it great when the puzzle pieces finally fall into place? I can tell this tab arrangement feels really good to you! There’s a tangible sense of relief emanating from this post.

## A Quick Query (2006-08-14 13:47) - Spiral Stairs

[1]Succes finds itself among our links thanks to an anonymous comment left long ago, the poster of which attested to the quality of the A5 inserts offered by Succes. Can anyone give any more specific comments? Some of the forms look really cool.

Here's the more specific feedback I'm looking for: Are the fricking holes in Succes inserts drilled in a Filofax-compatible fricking manner? For reasons that elude me, I can't find any indication on their website concerning Filo-compatibility. For other reasons that elude me, they have declined to respond to my e-mail requesting confirmation of compatibility.

(Aside: Why do so many companies ignore e-mails like this? When I was in Europe once, I bought a watch made by the "Rotary" company. They don't sell watches in the U.S. A couple years later, the band – a weirdly shaped, custom-sized job – broke. No one in the U.S. had ever heard of Rotary. So I began an e-mailing odyssey that took months. It finally, happily, culminated in my receipt of two new bands shipped from England. [Two bands, because I did not want to go through that again upon the next band breakage.] The reason for the delay – and subsequent damage to the goodwill they otherwise could have built in a globe-trotting, product-recommending person like me – was primarily their failure to respond to my e-mails. I think that "local" distributors of international products not commonly available in the U.S. are the worst. Anyhoo...)

Any fricking feedback?

1. <http://www.succes.com/index.cfm>

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Nan (2006-08-15 21:45:00)

In the interest of stopping you all trampling one another to answer all at once, I have some information from our very nice (but mysterious) reader in Egypt: Succes and Filofax refills ARE compatible.

Succes's A5 size fits over the Filofax A5 rings, and the Succes Standard page is the same as Filofax Personal. If you click the "Product info" link (or equivalent link in another language) and then "Organizer sizes," you can see the size comparisons.

Chet (2006-08-18 23:09:00)

I think as long as it has 6 holes, it should fit. Here in Malaysia, we have a brand called "Arrive" (the "e" is accented but I can't do it on my keyboard) and their inserts fit the Filofax.

I see Nan has replied your query, but I'll go ahead and post my comment.

## Cliff Diving (2006-08-15 09:05) - Spiral Stairs

Being the crazy risk-taker I am, I decided this morning that I may, possibly, conceivably, contingent upon further consideration and analysis, pull the trigger on purchasing a [1]Mini Domino. In red, because I am not afraid of my flaming femininity:

✖

This potential purchase entails several kinds of insanity: (1) abandoning leather snobbery and purchasing a *vinyl* product in the interest of frugality; (2) telling my wife that I have purchased a *third* Filofax; (3) committing to its use without a totally clear idea of how best to deploy it; and (4) subjecting myself to further accusations of being a purse-carrying pantywaist.

I like the fact that the Domino doesn't have a bulky snap closure. The snap closure is fine for a product that stays in my bag. But if I hope to carry something around in my pocket, the rubber band is perfect. (Dare I say, Moleskine-esque.)

I like the fact that I will be able to transplant pages from the Domino to my A5 binder. I'll probably fill it primarily with blank paper, and maybe some project/task pages too.

I like the fact that it has ½-inch rings. Slim. Svelte. Just like I wish I was. (See, Filofax can be a role model too.)

I like the fact that it costs only \$20.

I like the fact that it will remove one item from the very long list of excuses I give myself for not doing more writing – Unavailability of paper.

Will it gather dust like so many other purchases in my life that have, at one time or other, seemed to promise me deep happiness and salvation? Who knows? But I'll still try it. That's how crazy I am.

1. <http://www.filofaxusa.com/dococo.html>

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Susanne (2006-08-15 13:17:00)

How I love to look at new binders for my Filo. I already have a few collecting dust and they did make me feel happy for the longest time. That's why I keep them, maybe I want to reuse them again when it hits me that I need to restructure my whole planner. Nothing crazy about that. (I also have an obsession for Moleskines, pens, pencils and knitting patterns).

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-15 16:30:00)

As both a collector and user of Filofaxes I don't really count them (if pushed I've got about 50) but in terms of being a user I decided some time ago to standardise only on the classic (Personal) size. My thinking is as follows: once you have different sized leaves you'll inevitably start duplicating information which defeats the whole point. Second, there is a chance you'll be stuck with a dud leaf size like the version 2 Deskfax which had 3 sets of rings, or the ill-fated M2, or the original Pocket size. Although Filofax still makes a small range of leaves for them, they'll eventually vanish as they did for the original Deskfax (1985-1988).

As another point I wouldn't be overly concerned about whether the binder is leather or not; my 1990-vintage "Zeppo" is better quality than anything in Filofax's current range as it was made by expert English craftsmen rather than being knocked-out on some anonymous production line wherever Filofax can source them cheapest.

**PS:**A few posts ago I commented on what I thought was the rather gimmicky nature of Filofax's pink coloured diaries. I was browsing through some of my collection of old leaves and to my surprise this is an old idea; I have in my hands a quantity of Filofax paper in marbled pink and grey dated 1985 with the refs 880 and 881 respectively.

Nan (2006-08-15 21:51:00)

Oh, Kevin, there are go making us all envious again. 50 handcrafted Filofaxes?? My heart's melting!

I remember the marbled paper, too! I think I had some brown marbled (or did they call it "clouded"?) paper that looked really great in my brown pigskin binder.

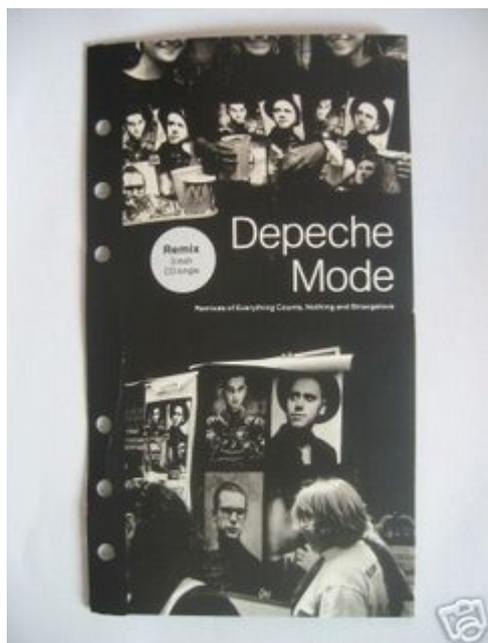
The less-expensive, synthetic binders may be attracting new Filofax users who would have been put off by the price, but in an ideal world we'd still have craftsmen (maybe even craftswomen) making them, too.

Nan (2006-08-15 21:54:00)

Susanne – I'm a knitter, too. Well, a sometime knitter. I've posted some pictures of a project I was working on earlier this year on my [1]flickr page. The set is called Prayer Shawls.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/>

## For the Filofax User Who Has Everything Except This One Thing (2006-08-17 08:40) - Spiral Stairs



[1] This Depeche Mode single, *in a pre-punched Filofax insert*, recently [2]sold on eBay for US \$76. If you feel as though you have missed something by not winning it, please contact winning eBay user [3]konzult, who might be persuaded to flip it for a profit.

(I hate Depeche Mode, so I do not feel as though I have missed anything. Now, if anyone runs across a Filo-compatible CD containing music from Wilco, Luna, Fountains of Wayne, Pixies, Pavement, or a band of similar bearing, then please let me know forthwith.)

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/7152/1811/1600/Depeche%20Filo.jpg>
2. [http://cgi.ebay.com/Depeche-Mode-Everything-counts-3-filofax-CD-Single\\_W0QQitemZ110019512631QQihZ001QQcategoryZ43634QQssPageNameZWDVWQQrdZ1QQcmdZViewItem](http://cgi.ebay.com/Depeche-Mode-Everything-counts-3-filofax-CD-Single_W0QQitemZ110019512631QQihZ001QQcategoryZ43634QQssPageNameZWDVWQQrdZ1QQcmdZViewItem)
3. <http://feedback.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewFeedback&userid=konzult&iid=110019512631>

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Nan (2006-08-17 20:44:00)

I like Depeche Mode. I mean, I like it for treadmill music. I had no idea such a thing existed.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-18 06:15:00)

Over the years I've collected all kinds of odd inserts for Filofax (though I don't collect anything that isn't Filofax branded) - I have a 1987 "Time Out Guide to London" somewhere! There were even Filofax sized novels where you could keep a few dozen pages in your binder for the journey to work or to read at lunch.

My best recent find is a leather insert for credit cards and cash that Filofax used to make up until about 1990. It's a bit thick for the current binders but used to fit the old 1 and a 1/4 inch ring size.

## The Motherlode (2006-08-18 14:40) - Spiral Stairs

I saw an intriguing listing on eBay yesterday. For the last day, it's been percolating in my head. My rule about eBay is that if I see something interesting, I let a day go by. If, after a day, drool is still gathering at the corners of my mouth and the product is still available, then I go for it.

So I went for it.

Check [1]this out.

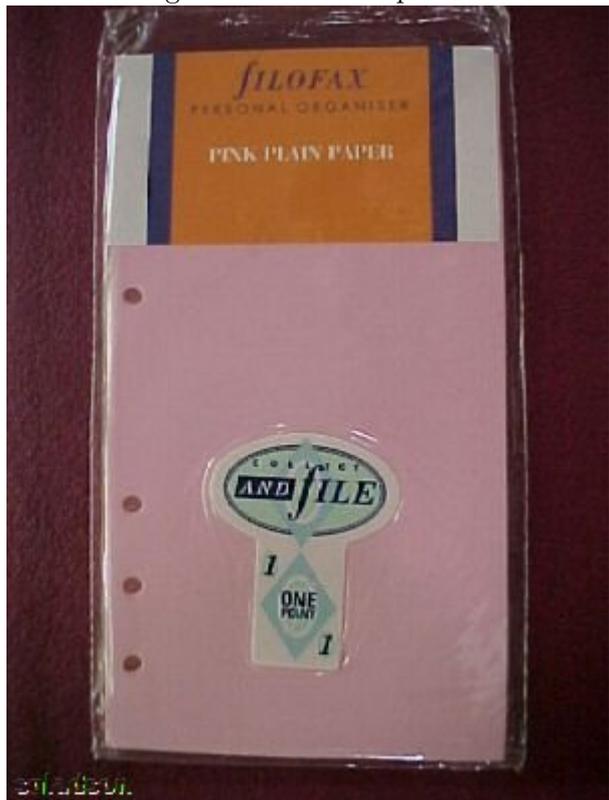


That's right. A lot of no fewer than 67 personal-size Filofax inserts of myriad forms. Although I've switched to A5, and I just ordered a Domino Mini, I still have a forlorn-looking personal-size binder sitting around. Indeed, it was that binder that got this whole Philofaxy mess started. If I can't find a useful purpose for it after receiving this veritable cornucopia of Filofax goodness, then I don't deserve the name I've given myself.

Thanks to some of the odder inserts, this purchase might open some new doors for me:

- There are five "Phrasefiles Guides: Spanish to English." So I should be able to learn Spanish five times better than if I just had one.
- There's a fold-out map of Miami and Atlanta. I've never been to Atlanta! And I have only been to Miami twice! And one of those times, I just stayed in the airport hotel! And it was, hands down, the worst hotel I've ever stayed in! There were cockroaches in the bathroom!
- Don't forget, three "London For Visitors Guides." I've never been to London. Now I and two of my closest friends can go and not get lost, even if we get separated.
- And I will have a "pack of Selected USA Area Codes." Wonder which ones they selected?
- I'll have tabs and dividers spilling from the rafters. And you all know about my current tab fetish.

Let's not forget the last consequence:



My masculinity will be a distant memory.

1. [http://cgi.ebay.com/Huge-Lot-NEW-Filofax-Organizer-Refills-Retail-370\\_W0QQitemZ170020100910QQihZ007QQcategoryZ117005QQrdZ1QQcmdZViewItem](http://cgi.ebay.com/Huge-Lot-NEW-Filofax-Organizer-Refills-Retail-370_W0QQitemZ170020100910QQihZ007QQcategoryZ117005QQrdZ1QQcmdZViewItem)

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Nan (2006-08-18 21:13:00)

OW!!!!!!!!!! Refill powerrrrrrrrrr.

I agree about Miami. While I've never stayed in the hotel, I've experienced extended layovers in the airport, and I can say it's my least favorite American airport. Give me Atlanta, give me Pittsburg, but don't leave me for 6 hours in Miami, with 12 snack bars, each of which serve the same hot dog and the same cheez whiz nachos, and is too far away to risk going into the city to spend your layover.

Chet (2006-08-18 22:00:00)

I take it you bought the whole lot? I went to the page but couldn't see anything, just a note that the sale had ended through the "Buy Now" feature.

Spiral Stairs (2006-08-19 09:52:00)

Chet, you should be able to see the whole lot if you scroll down from the "Someone bought it" notice. If, for some reason, you can't, suffice it to say it is a true cornucopia and I've listed only a sampling. Obviously, I'll post more details later.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-08-19 16:16:00)

What a great find! That Time Out Guide to London is a more recent version of the one I have!

Those "Filofax Points" are an interesting item - as far as I know Filofax never did do anything with them. They started issuing them around 94-95 and I think the idea was with so many points you got free items. However Filofax saw a big downturn in demand in 1996 when WH Smith in the UK massively reduced its Filofax stock going to a "Just in Time" ordering system. For the benefit of those in the UK this was the reason so much Filofax stock was tatty and/or old at WH Smith as they'd only order what they could sell.

## The Eaglet Has Landed (2006-08-22 10:49) - Spiral Stairs

I have to squeeze this post off in the brief period between demands imposed on me by my son, three weeks old today. My wife has a doctor's appointment this morning, and it's the first time I've been alone in the house with the little devil. He's sleeping, so I'm posting.

Yesterday, I received my shipment from [1]The Daily Planner. It arrived promptly, which I was happy about, given the somewhat sketchy ordering process. For some reason, their website insists at all times that I have placed 271 Moleskine 18-month planners in my cart, amounting to about \$4,500. Be very careful when checking out there.

Anyway, here's the spread. (Apologies for the atrocious focus. I'm in a hurry here.)



[Postus interruptus. Baby flipped out, hungry. Had to wait for mommy to come home. She has arrived. All is well.]

This shows how micro-small the Mini Domino is:



Now I have to decide how to use it. I am considering two options:

1. A front-pocket portable note and data tool.
2. A wallet.

That's right. I am considering the possibility of simply making the Mini Domino my wallet. Why not? It isn't much bigger than my current wallet. Of course, it has a rigid ring binding system which could affect the comfort of my ass. (I am a back-pocket wallet guy.) I also haven't yet stuffed it with cards to see how it reacts.

Further laboratory work will be required.

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

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Jon (2006-08-22 19:28:00)

Congrats on the new Filofax – and baby, of course! I'm thrilled to have found your blog, as I thought I was the only one crazy enough to keep accumulating planners. Insanity loves company, I guess.

So far I own two Personal size Filofaxes and have a third – an A5 Finsbury – on the way. As if this weren't bad enough, I also own, and sometimes use, planners by Franklin Covey, Time/Design, Exacompta, and (last but not least) Quo Vadis. Oh, and I also have a Handspring Visor that's languishing on a shelf.

I'm currently using a black Belgravia Filofax, but the personal size was feeling a little cramped, hence the "need" for an A5. Rationalizations aside, I guess I just wanted a new "toy." Now, how to break the news to the wife.

mng (2006-08-23 10:46:00)

I've always been a monofilofaxist but this entry has inspired, literally, daydreams about polyfilofaxism. I just imagined how happy I would be to receive a new Filofax in the mail.

A pocket Sport in chocolate? A bright red Metropolis? There are entirely too many options, and my personal Topaz (purple) is definitely well-worn and over-burdened.

[BTW, you ought not sit on a wallet of any size: it's very bad for your back, which needs to stay healthy for

picking up the baby.]

Jim Scolman (2006-08-28 19:09:00)

Hi, I checked on the Filofax web site and this thing is a bit bigger than a 3x5 card....true? Can it fit in a shirt pocket without looking to dorky? Do the leaves fit anyother binder? Thanks, Jim.  
photoday.blogspot.com

Spiral Stairs (2006-08-29 13:56:00)

Jim, I don't have a shirt pocket handy. However, I think it would fit in a shirt pocket but would likely create a noticeable bulge. If you are a jacket-wearing man, I think it would be no issue at all to carry it in an inside-jacket pocket.

Nan (2006-09-08 18:55:00)

Jon, MNG, how about an update? Jon - how do you like your A5 Finsbury? MNG - have you acquired a supplement to your purple Topaz?

### Notebookism (2006-08-29 20:53) - Nan

A beautiful new blog, [1]Notebookism, recently used a Philophoto of mine to illustrate an [2]article by someone else. Hey, I'll take it any way I can get it! What's cool is that the article was about writing, and the benefits of using paper for same.

I suggest reading the full text of the story, [3]here, which goes into more detail about the author's rediscovery of pen and paper.

1. <http://www.notebookism.com/>
2. [http://www.notebookism.com/2006/08/going\\_solo.html](http://www.notebookism.com/2006/08/going_solo.html)
3. <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2006/08/24/wink>

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### Mini-Lode (2006-08-31 20:16) - Nan



[1]

I need to unburden

my soul; come clean. I've never bought a motherlode of eBay refills for a Filofax size I don't even currently use. No, much worse: I buy them at full price. Hey, you never know when a page style may go out of stock or even get discontinued. So I'm laying it on the line. Here are the unused Personal refills I have tucked away in a drawer.

Coming tomorrow: New beginnings.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/64/230480795\\_70feda9fcc.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/64/230480795_70feda9fcc.jpg?v=0)

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A.K. (2006-09-08 10:59:00)

You truly are a slave to Filo :)

Nan (2006-09-08 18:02:00)

Gee, Esteemed One, I do believe you've given me a compliment!

## Everything New is Old Again (2006-08-31 22:23) - Nan

I'm feeling familial guilt about my return to analog. I recently visited my father during a brief hospital stay, and while we were in the room, a nurse practitioner came in and asked my Dad what medications/dosages he had taken thus far that day. He pulled out a small, colorful Palm device and showed her his medication list on the screen.

Later, I asked my mother for her hotel room number, and guess what I wrote it down in – a Filofax. Shouldn't my "greatest generation" Dad be using paper and I, a cusp-of-baby-boomer-gen-x'er, be using the Palm?

A question for the ages.

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## 1.6 September

### New Beginnings (2006-09-01 18:23) - Nan

I've been pondering the idea for this post for a few days. I've been thinking that September is a good time for new beginnings, as we're surrounded by the beginning of a new school year, the onset of fall, the kickoff of football and other sports seasons, the ramp-up to the holidays. It can be a good time to think about other kinds of new beginnings, a time to regroup, to pick up the pieces of resolutions made at the start of the year and start over. Then a very sweet, enthusiastic reader read my mind (sorry - I *will* answer your email soon!). She was talking about how she often spends time checking out new calendars in September as well as January, since many manufacturers release a 16-month version that starts at the beginning of the academic year.

When I switched from Moleskines to Filofaxes earlier this year, I vowed to stick with my decision through the end of December, so that kind of new beginning is out for me. Actually, the good thing about 'faxes is their loose-leaf format, so that reinvention and evolution are an organic part of the system.

My new beginnings include a new eating and fitness program (but that's another blog – if I decide to start one), a new car (a red Toyota Matrix), the beginning of a new choir season, and, in a way, school – starting to work with a writing coach.

My 'faxes, on the other hand, are in a bit of state of disarray. I started using a separate A5 'fax for work again, and really using it this time. Now both my A5 'faxes are bursting at the seams, with no good way to store or use the extra pages. (There are the Filofax storage binders, but they don't open fully for reading. They really are only good for storage.) The worst part: When I'm having problems with my system, I grow reluctant to use it. I still keep track of appointments and important reminders, but I stop capturing ideas, stop journaling, both of which are necessary to work my way through the problem. It's the same old problem – now that I have my life on A5 Filofax pages, what do I do with them all?

On the bright side, I am still doing some good thinking, still leafing through my Filos waiting for inspiration to hit, and my pocket 'fax is carrying me through. My projects are not moving any faster than before I wrote them in my Filofax, but they're not moving any slower, either. I guess things are moving at the speed at which things move.

Here's something weird, though: The riskiest, most radical, and potentially most significant long-term move I've made recently is contacting the writing coach, and that's something I never wrote down in a Filofax before doing it. Why? And what does that say about the potential plans, ideas, and dreams I've recorded – that they're unimportant? Or was it necessary to do all that thinking on paper first, for the right action to emerge from the chaos?

What new beginnings are YOU making this fall?

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BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-09-02 06:28:00)

It's an interesting observation you make and a problem I've seen before. The problem often strikes me is that people suffer from an excess of documentation – the paper exists so it must be written on. A few minutes on Flickr will reveal – especially with the Moleskine people – just how pervasive this is. People feel inclined to journal all their stray thoughts, all their plans and lists and so on, ad infinitum.

As this information is essentially totally unstructured its usefulness as a reference tool is diminished. They drown in a sea of self-made data, the value of a greater proportion is probably marginal at best.

I think you have to be merciless with the amount of data you are recording and to constantly review it to ascertain its usefulness; I used to own a Filofax in the old 1 and a quarter inch ring size (much bigger than the current ring size) and it was bulging with so much "randomness" it eventually became so irrelevant I stopped using. I really didn't need lists of places I used to go fishing at 15 years ago. I didn't need records of photos I had taken in 1989. The central weakness if that over time you accrue so much data without purpose it undermines what's current.

I think it's also important to pick and choose formats carefully; I use a Palm and a Filofax to avoid media atrophy I make sure they don't duplicate each other's jobs. I think the Filofax is in decline as a diary or appointments keeper, combining Outlook and a Palm they keep appointments better than I ever did; it also matches where data comes from. Most of my diary entries are meeting or task requests from other people that all come through Outlook so there is no point in re-entering all this data again. On the other hand though, nothing beats paper for writing notes on but this does present another interesting condition: I find that every year I hand write less than the year before and I find this not a deliberate act on my part but the fact the way we work dictates most things to be in electronic format and handwriting is relegated to scribbled notes on Post-Its and jotter pads.

But to come back to where I began: I think any problem with format is really problems with the management of information rather than what it's originated on – I find myself doing as much searching for electronic documents just as ever did on paper.

Anonymous (2006-09-03 19:13:00)

Kevin: I'd be interested to know how your Palm and Filofax coexist—what you use each for. I'm struggling with that same balance (between analog and digital).

I'm thinking about moving to Filofax (from Moleskine, which is wonderful, but not structured enough) and would be curious to know which of Philofaxer's Filos is his favorite (sorely tempted by the A5). I don't need to cart around much—it would mostly live on my desk—and I think I'd like the bigger size.

Chet (2006-09-05 09:12:00)

There will be a delay to my reintroduction to Filofax. The portable A5 punch I ordered from Filofax UK went missing somewhere between the UK and Malaysia. I wrote to Filofax UK and they're replacing the missing punch.

## Mercilessness (2006-09-04 21:00) - Nan



[1] In a comment to the previous post, a faithful and thoughtful reader advised being "merciless" in culling outdated pages, as well as those of marginal or dubious usefulness, from one's Filofax. I've been complaining about the bulk and stagnation of my 'faxes recently, so I decided to rise to the challenge. This photograph illustrates, at bottom, the amount of extraneous material I've extracted, and, at top, the lean result. If I can do it, you can do it. Just doing my part for Philofaxers everywhere.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/83/234431551\\_2b169194d7.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/83/234431551_2b169194d7.jpg?v=0)

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A.K. (2006-09-08 10:56:00)

Nan, I have come to the conclusion that my Filo (Belgravia Red A5) will at some point have to do without the notepad to make way for additional papers that need to occupy the rings. So wish that it was 30mm.

Nan (2006-09-08 17:52:00)

Welcome, O Esteemed One! (love the name)

Thanks for reminding me about the thickness of the rear notepad. If you look closely at this picture, you'll see that I have a pad in the back with just a few sheets left. I've recently refilled it with a new pad, and you're right, it does take space away from the rings.

Mine's a Red A5 Belgravia, too. Beautiful binder (alas, I know, not made in Britain, Kevin), but a bit limited in capacity.

## Rhetoric (2006-09-06 08:57) - Spiral Stairs

Allow me to pose a few rhetorical questions:

(1) How does a single parent do it? I am one-half of a two-parent household. I just had four days "off" work. Guess what? Work, of the office variety, is substantially easier than being *even one-half* of a functioning parental unit. I feel like dropping a little plastic umbrella in my morning coffee now that I'm back at my desk.

(2) How do two parents, or three parents, or eight parents, handle twins? One child is plenty for us. I really can't even fathom having to deal with two fussy little poop machines all the time.

(3) How does a parent find time to drive out to his local Filofax emporium and purchase some personal size checkbook register pages, a task absolutely essential to his goal of converting his personal-size Filofax into his compendium of all things financial?

(4) Further to question (3), how does such a parent tell the other half of the parenting unit that he is about to disappear for a couple hours *so that he can purchase some overpriced pieces of paper and further indulge a fetish that challenges accepted notions of rationality?*

(5) How does a parent fit these items into the usual array of pockets found on usual pants: (1) a mini-Filofax; (2) a cell phone; (3) a wallet; (4) keys; (5) on occasion, an iPod; (6) on occasion, a pack of gum or box of Tic Tacs; (7) on occasion, change; (8) on occasion, receipts or other small scraps of paper; (9) on occasion, a burp cloth; and (10) on occasion, a 20 %-off coupon for Buy Buy Baby that is forgotten and then disappears into the washing machine, emerging as a papier mache lump?

The answer to all of these questions, rhetorical though they may be, is: "I have no idea."

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neowagnerite (2006-09-06 14:38:00)

I have no idea either...

I haven't been able to finish my dissertation in 7 years.

But the new site attached to the Filofax UK site is sorta fun...

[www.itsawayoflife.info](http://www.itsawayoflife.info)

Cin (2006-09-06 16:14:00)

No idea is a good answer.

Followed by a gentle suggestion: perhaps you could consider a half-or full-sized messenger bag that would leave your hands free to fend for you and yours, while still carrying all the bits?

They're a little more studly and masculine than a murse...

Love the blog!

Nan (2006-09-08 17:58:00)

Welcome, Cin! You may have already done this, but if you look back to the July archives, there are some posts about messenger and other cool bags.

Nan (2006-09-08 18:00:00)

Good to see you again, Neo! Thanks for the link! I've checked it out, and will give a little review in a future blog post.

Tracy (2006-09-11 22:15:00)

Hi, philofaxers. This Q is slightly off-topic, but filofax related.

I'm a planner junkie—always looking for the perfect fix. And while I like the clean lines of the Filofax pages (I'm currently testing the Personal-sized, Week on Two Pages), the thinness of the paper drives me crazy. The scheduling bleeds through, which is a pet peeve.

Have you guys solved this problem? Specific pens, better refills, etc.? Or am I really just waaaay too anal?

Thanks!

Spiral Stairs (2006-09-12 11:40:00)

Tracy, the paper is thin. No doubt. My usual rollerballs (Uniballs) do tend to show through a bit. Two possible solutions:

1. Use a pencil, as I usually do.
2. Revel in the visual chaos created by the bleeding through. Think of it as art.

Nan (2006-09-12 14:43:00)

Hi Tracy - I use Uniballs, too. They're not perfect, but they're less likely to show through than any I've tried. The ones that are a bronze color and say "Deluxe Micro" on the cap are the least likely to show through. They come in Black, Blue, and Red, and I keep all 3 on hand.

I think you have to look for very fine point pens that, on thicker paper would feel scratchy, as if they're not putting out enough ink. On Filofax paper, that's just the right amount of ink!

I also use pencil occasionally. I hate the way pencil smears, but I have found that well-made pencils smear much less than others. Check out Pencil Revolution (under Links) for tons of product reviews.

Tracy (2006-09-12 16:11:00)

Thanks for the suggestions. I actually pulled a UniBall Deluxe out of my cache last night to test. It did seem to bleed the least of the group I tried. I like the idea of pencil, but I don't think the "contrast" is high enough—I need my items to jump out.

I also purchased my own Personal binder today, and I'll test for a few days with the paper I already own and see if this is a system that will work for me...or if it's time to make the Blackberry jump. \*shudders\*

Thanks for the input!

Anonymous (2006-09-13 15:21:00)

One suggestion for the ink bleed thru – try the cotton cream diary. Other inserts are also available in cotton cream. The paper is higher in quality than the usual leaves and just a bit thicker to prevent this problem. I ordered the personal Eton a few months ago (love it by the way) that came complete with the cotton cream refill. The paper was a bit too thick for me, so I returned to the thinner white sheets.

Nan (2006-09-13 19:24:00)

Hi, Anon – Yeah, that cotton cream paper is the good stuff. Kind of like '76 Burgundy – too thick for some blood, but greatly appreciated by those who've developed the taste.

Tracy – Here's the way I look at Blackberries and other electronica: The technology is constantly evolving, so the longer you wait, the greater your chances of getting a better device at a lower price. Blackberries will always be there. Or, if they go extinct, you'll avoid having wasted the money.

Full disclosure: I've owned three Palm handhelds, and at one point used one for email and word processing in place of a laptop. Instead of doing everything, I found it did nothing very well.

## 9/11 Neediest (2006-09-11 21:52) - Nan

Those of you who watch this blog closely may have noticed that earlier this evening I posted, and immediately took down, a post about a program to donate to the New York Times' 9/11 Neediest Fund on Papershop.com. Sadly, I was looking at a cached page, and the program, which donated 1/2 the price of a personalized die (that Crane's uses to print stationery for you) has long since ended.

Anyway, in remembrance of this 5th anniversary of the attacks, I'd like to provide a link to the [1]9/11 Neediest Fund in case anyone's interested in making a donation to this ongoing cause.

And, the [2]stationery is still pretty cool.

1. <http://www.nytc.com/company/foundation/neediest/index.html>

2. <http://www.papershop.com/stationery/>

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## Writing Down the Vote (2006-09-13 10:09) - Nan



[1] Another hallmark of fall: The politicians are back from vacation. Good citizens are

standing at Main Street intersections holding a gaggle of campaign placards, trying to get passing drivers to honk their horns. Glad-handling candidates swarm radio and TV studios and local diners like locusts. I'll admit, I've been a political junkie since high school, and as early as 9th grade volunteered to work the phones for a state Attorney General hopeful. But this year, I'm doing something a little different – with my Filofax, that is. A couple weeks ago, a casual remark from my mother-in-law made me realize that I had no idea who I was going to vote for in this year's gubernatorial primary, nor even what date it was! It was time to extend and dust off my political antenna.

One morning, my antenna was piqued by the clock radio, stirring me from NPR Dreamland. One of the gubernatorial candidates was being interviewed, and I liked what I heard. THIS was my guy! I grabbed the pocket Filo on my nightstand to mark down who I wanted to vote for – but when? Darn you, NPR Interviewer, say the primary date!

No luck. Repeating the candidate's name like a 10-digit phone number, I shuffled into my slippers and scampered down to the computer. Googled until I found the civic-minded .gov site listing primary dates. Aha! I wrote my favored candidate's name in my Filofax calendar ON the primary date. (Killing 2 birds with one stone gives me *such* an endorphin rush!)

Update: Since then, a lawn sign notified me which way I wanted to vote (or rather, which way I *didn't* want to vote) on a state referendum. Another entry on my calendar. By the time Primary Day rolls around, I may have the full ticket filled out in my Filo. I hope they let me bring it into the voting booth with me...

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/1314/393/1600/Politician.0.gif>

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Spiral Stairs (2006-09-13 16:33:00)

This is so civic-minded and noble.

In the past few months, I have met both of the DC mayoral candidates who squared off in the Democratic primary yesterday. (In DC, the Democratic primary is effectively the general election, because Republicans are rare and only come out at night.) One of the two candidates literally knocked on our door to ask for our support. The other, also literally, flagged me down on the street to curry my support. She was accompanied by the current mayor and a former deputy attorney general, whom I also met. I was carrying a case of Tropicana Fruit Punch, a two-liter bottle of diet ginger ale, and some Babybel cheeses. (On the way back from Safeway, natch.)

Having received all of this attention, what did I do yesterday?

I failed to vote. That's what I did. They wasted their time on me. Losers.

Nan (2006-09-13 19:49:00)

Well, don't let this post make it look as if I've managed to vote in every election available to me. I've certainly missed elections due to work, illness, and that old favorite – life.

< pious hope>

Maybe someday we Americans will realize that how we vote is essential to our way of life.

< /pious hope>

## **Project: Reorganize (2006-09-14 09:28) - Spiral Stairs**

A few days ago, I pondered how a busy new father could possibly find time to go buy certain pages for a certain Filofax, despite certain commitments that make life certainly difficult.

So I ordered them from Filofax. It took a while to build up to that, because I am a really miserly fellow, and I hate paying shipping charges. If I can get something on Amazon, that's great, because I can always find \$25 worth of stuff to buy and thereby get free shipping. (Although even Amazon comes with its hassles: I accumulate cardboard Amazon boxes like some people collect stamps. Our trash people will take them away only if I break them down flat and tie them up. Ergo, they sit in the house for weeks.) Filofax, paleolithic corporate entity that it is, charges old-fashioned shipping fees.

But I bit the bullet. Yesterday, I received: (i) a bunch of personal-size financial/checkbook register pages; (ii) a 2007 calendar (for the A5); and (iii) a 2008 vertical planning insert.

All I can say is: Woo hoo!

Now the migration of all my financial matters out of the A5 and into the Personal can proceed forthwith. Now I can schedule things in 2007. *Now I can notate events, vacations, and other especially important matters as far ahead as 2008.*

The A5 is really bursting at the seams, because the packrat side of my brain thinks things like these: "Let's shove the whole 2007 calendar in there. Also, I really need to know the 2007 vacation schedules for all members of the European Union, so better keep that in there too. And what the scientific community has subtly altered the formulas for converting between various measurements? I can't leave out those pages from the new calendar."

This brings me to one of my main criticisms of each Filofax I have used. When the binder is full, or nearly so, I have a great deal of trouble opening and closing the rings. Sometimes I have to remove a big section of the planner in order to get an adequate grip on the rings. I don't find the little chrome nubs on the top and bottom of the ring mechanism very useful at all. It would be wonderful if Filofax could convert these nubs into a smooth, easy system for opening and closing the binder. The current set-up is generally inconvenient, but it's particularly inconvenient for me, because I use a Jot Pad page as a "floating" to-do list from week to week. So every Monday, I have to move the page to the next week. Dammit! I cannot be troubled on a Monday morning to fiddle with difficult mechanical contraptions. This is why my son will learn to curse before he learns to say Mama and Dada.

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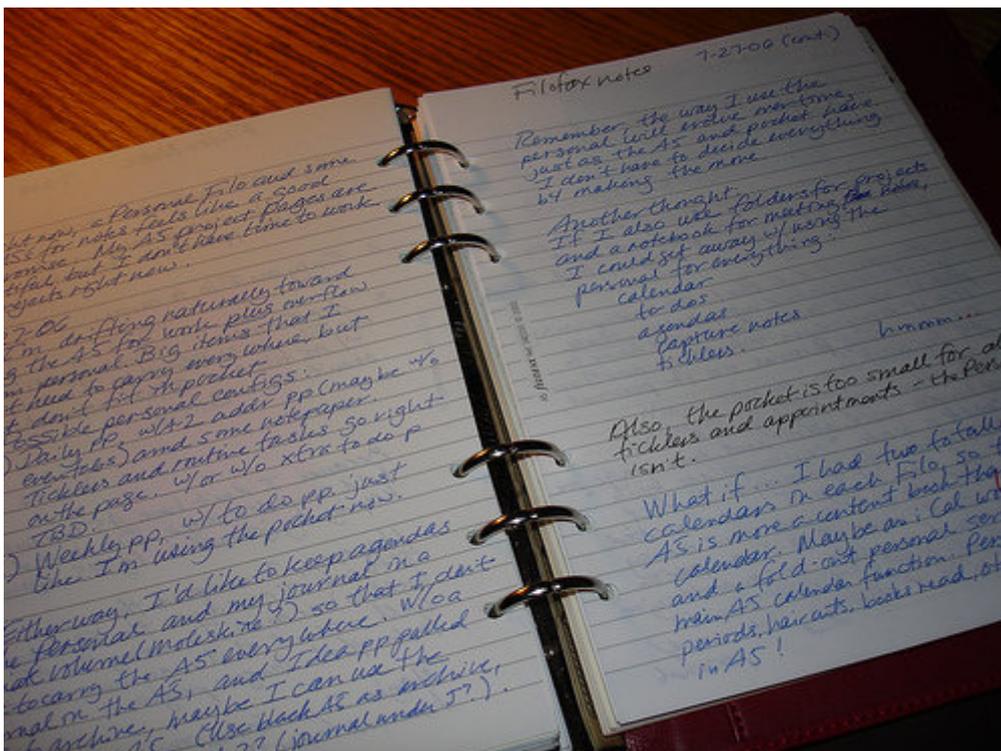
Nan (2006-09-14 18:41:00)

LOL about those info pages. I usually leave them in, too. Partly, it's because I used to carry info like that in my Palm device (although in that case, I had the chance to personalize it). And I have this superstitious feeling that a Filofax just isn't a Filofax without those pages. I wonder how many people never use those pages, but leave them in for that very reason?

Anonymous (2006-10-20 15:39:00)

I think the US Filofax website has free shipping when it is over \$55.

## Putting Off Procrastination (2006-09-17 18:27) - Nan



[1] out as some notes in my A5 Filo two days ago, and I've been procrastinating about posting it ever since.

It just doesn't seem *formulated* yet. However, because of this post, I've been procrastinating about *other* things until I get it done, so I may as well plunge ahead. What is it about trying to find a solution to procrastination that seems to generate *more* of same? (Here's my favorite morality tale about the perils of that paradox, as expressed in a [2]podcast by 43 Folders' [3]Merlin Mann.)

Today's post is about the struggle between subscribing to an organizational system packaged up by someone else, and doing what you know works for you. Thematically, I think of it as the third in a series of posts that started with [4]"Dirty Little Secret" and continued with [5]"The BS". Reading those two posts will help you understand how I've arrived at where I am now.

In my case, the three systems I've made earnest attempts to implement in recent years are: [6]Franklin Covey, [7]FLYlady, and [8]David Allen's "Getting Things Done". I've now concluded that the net effect of each of these systems on my life and psyche, with the possible exception of FLYlady, was of more harm than good.

How can I say that? Well, there was some good. In any case, each system provided a break in the monotony and provided new ideas. But the harm was in the form of *limitation*. Fitting a round peg (me) into a square hole (the system) ultimately prevented me from taking the most expedient form of action available to me. Trying to codify my life's goals and "roles" a la Franklin Covey actually made me less, not more, certain of them. What I really wanted to do evolved organically, and it was right there in front of my nose the whole time. Categorizing my tasks into "contexts" a la GTD and writing them down before actually doing thing didn't free my mind from worry as advertized; it just gave me pages and pages of contextualized task lists to worry about.

FLYlady actually wasn't bad – not too different from the way I organized my housework before, and with the help of this system I actually got my Christmas shopping done earlier than every before. But because I've spent more time trying to implement the system than just doing the actual housework, that I'd have to say that my house is messier and dirtier than before FLYlady. (But my sink is very, very shiny.) Because of trying to implement David Allen's filing system, I now have more of a backlog of unfiled papers than I did before.

There have been some good takeaways. David Allen's filing system is better than the one I was using, and with its help I do find it easier to access things I've filed away. Franklin Covey reminds me to set aside time to do what's important, not just what's urgent.

These days, I'm trying to remember what worked for me, and start doing it again. Ultimately, I may end up writing my own organization book. Not for publication – it won't help anyone except me. But I will keep sharing what works and doesn't work for me, in case it provides inspiration for Philofaxy readers. This post is still rather unformulated, I think. At least, however, it's done.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/94/245904827\\_246549a707.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/94/245904827_246549a707.jpg?v=0)
2. <http://www.43folders.com/2006/06/11/perfect-apostrophe/>
3. <http://www.merlinmann.com/>
4. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/06/dirty-little-secret.html>
5. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/06/bs.html>
6. <http://www.franklincovey.com/fc/index.jsp?>
7. <http://flylady.net/>
8. <http://www.davidco.com/>

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Neil Ford (2006-09-19 18:14:00)

I have recently been reading [1]Time Management for System Administrators by Thomas A. Limoncelli, which to anyone who's read GTD, seems like a cut down version. It's very focused on IT professionals and system administrators in particular, but it's definitely the first book that's struck a chord with me. There's a good review over at [2]43 Folders.

THanks to TMfSA I am now the proud owner of a Filofax Logic Zip A5 binder and a whole host of [3]DIY Planner inserts.

I think in the end we all evolve our trusted system to suit us. The trick is not to forget the guiding principles of which ever book or course set you on the road to organisational enlightenment.

As always, thanks for all you do here.

- Neil.

1. <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/timemgmt/>
2. <http://www.43folders.com/2006/08/28/speirs-review/>
3. <http://www.diyplanner.com/>

Nan (2006-09-20 00:02:00)

Hi Neil – Thank you for your good words about our humble blog and the book recommendation. I've added it to my "must read" list.

Did you find some DIY pages that jibed with what you learned from TMfSA?

### Leather Tickler (2006-09-20 00:08) - Nan



[1] Curiosity got the better of me, and I checked out the site statistics for this blog; namely, the Google search terms that brought people to this address. And I found that someone arrived at Filofaxy by searching for "leather tickler." Now, Filofaxes are certainly made of leather, and they make great tickler files, but somehow I think that searcher had something else in mind. Now that I've finally stopped laughing, I just thought I'd mention it, in case it turns it out to...er...whip up more site traffic.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/1314/393/1600/leather.7.jpg>

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Anonymous (2006-10-20 13:26:00)

hahaaha

being a nerd i thought it was about the 43 folder leather tickler files  
good fun.

### Road Trip (2006-09-23 02:44) - Nan

I'm off, a little later today, to New York City for a couple of days. Going to see friends, lunch with a colleague, take in a couple of shows, and (here's where this post actually becomes relevant to the blog) pick up some discontinued A5 Filofax forms at [1]Madison Signatures. Maybe they'll have the hole punch I've been needing, too. I'll see what they've got; maybe buy my 2007 refills while I'm there. I'll report on my experience at the store, maybe post a few pictures. If time allows, maybe head over to Japantown to see if they have A5 binders that I can store my archived pages in.

What else does this trip possibly have to do with Filofax? Well, the whole journey started out as a list in my Filo. One of those "Next Time in [Placename]" lists. I started planning the trip once I realized I actually had enough things on the list to justify the journey. It was the timing of the shows I wanted to see that clinched the timeframe.

Sure, my Filofax didn't help me book a hotel room, or figure out how to afford it. As far as driving there, I'm on my own. But the Filo helped me germinate the idea, helped remind me who I had to call and email to set up my engagements, helped me see which parts of the planning it made sense to delegate to my husband. When I'm there, it will remind me where I need to be and when, and to do the things I went there to do in the first place.

Since my return to the Filofax fold earlier this year, I believe this trip is the first project that I've taken all the way from idea to realization relying solely on Filofax support.  
Let this be just the beginning.

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

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Spiral Stairs (2006-09-25 09:12:00)

Can't wait for the report. I'm up in NY enough for this matter to me.

### **Pencil News (2006-09-25 09:13) - Spiral Stairs**

My life is now divided across three Filofaxes. (To be honest, it's really two: My A5, for general purposes, and my Personal, for financial items. The red Mini Domino I purchased is largely unused. I may have to relegate it to a mental junkyard that has grown to huge dimensions in my life: The Land of Failed Experiments.)

My A5, God bless it, has two loops for writing implements. I have been keeping a Uniball in one, and a Pentel 0.5mm pencil in the other. This combination has worked magnificently. This weekend, I bought a couple more Pentel pencils, in order to stock the Personal Filofax.

Ho hum. No news.

This is the news: *I bought some darker pencil leads.* Oh yes. Hold me back. If I have simply become too crazy and unpredictable for you, feel free to take a break in order to gather your senses.

I've alluded in the past to the fact that I am a cheapskate. So it was a big deal for me to say, "I shall abandon these faint-hued HB leads that came with my pencils, and instead spend several dollars on a bunch of 2B leads that will show up more clearly on the page." But I did it, damn it. I had to take a shower afterward.

The 2B lead really makes a lovely line, contrasty and dark. It isn't as precise as the HB lead, because it grinds down faster and more quickly becomes a broad line. However, I'm not sketching critical safety mechanisms for nuclear reactors here. I am writing things like, "Dog - Vet." Or, "Make reservation for anniversary." Or, "Purchase gift to atone for failure to make reservation for anniversary." Or, "Purchase gift to atone for failure to purchase gift to atone for failure to make reservation for anniversary." Optical precision is not necessary. (Moral precision is more important.)

Anyway, I'll be enjoying these leads for years to come, because they came in a package of 144 leads. Maybe my old HB leads would make a good anniversary present...

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Chet (2006-10-03 10:43:00)

How about some pictures showing 2B impressions on your Filofax pages?



[1] I'm back. There's no place like New York City, and [2]Madison Signatures is a quintessentially New York shop, nestled just east of Central Park in a cozy 2nd floor walkup. I almost missed it because I was expecting a storefront. The proprietor, Phil, is a dapper gentleman who sports a feathered hat. His shop specializes in beautiful personalized stationery as well as Filofaxes.

If you're visiting New York, you'll be impressed by Madison Signatures' selection of Personal and Pocket sized leaves. In Personal, there are some harder-to-find papers like Cotton Cream and Clouded. There's an impressive selection of Mini leaves as well. The selection of A5s is a little more limited, and there's even a small section for the discontinued Deskfax. If you use Personal, Pocket, or Mini, you'll probably find what you're looking for. With the larger sizes, I'd recommend calling or emailing first.

Where Madison Signatures truly excels is in *service*. Phil held his last packet of A5 Project Planner leaves for me for 2 months, sight unseen, even though he could probably have sold it to someone off the street during that time. He even offered to open early for me, since I went in to pick it up on the morning of my travel day. (It turned out not to be necessary.) As I was leaving, a woman was coming in about some custom-engraved stationery or invitations, and she was clearly a repeat customer, for she was greeted warmly, like a friend.

While I was in NYC, I also scored some A5 binders at a Japanese bookstore, which I'll use for archiving. I'll report on that in a later post.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/97/253709894\\_4363cdee3e.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/97/253709894_4363cdee3e.jpg?v=0)

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

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Tracy (2006-09-29 09:38:00)

Hi, folks. Despite the thin paper, I made the move to a Personal, and absolutely love it. I realized, in my eternal search for the perfect calendar, that it wasn't the perfect \*calendar\* I needed, but a pretty little organiser I can

use to keep notes, lists, To Do's, projects, etc. I pretty much ignore the calendar pages (something that will become acute Monday when my Moto Q arrives for desktop syncing), but use my tabbed pages daily. I'm feeling optimistic about this one.

That excitement aside, I wanted to draw your attention to a site they linked, I think, from Moleskinerie yesterday. In the search for pens-that-don't bleed through, some of the tiny-tipped Japanese models available at <http://www.jetpens.com> might do the trick. I used a spread of these (usually in the needlepoint, .3 and .5 mm models) when we had a retailer in town, but my supply dried up when the store disappeared. Today's payday, and I'll be refueling later on.

Happy philofaxing...

Tracy

Tracy (2006-09-29 09:58:00)

Oh, and Pilot P-500 needlepoint gels (Extra Fine) aren't bad in terms of bleed. Sharp point, wonderfully thin line, but not scratchy.

Nan (2006-09-29 18:54:00)

Hi, Tracy! Good to hear from you again, and that the Personal is working out for you.

Thanks SO much for the pen advice. I'm going to try the ones you mentioned.

### Tranquility (2006-09-29 19:44) - Nan



[1] During my recent trip to New York City, I stopped in at the New York Public Library. The main reading room is an island of peace and quiet above the taxi horns and jackhammers of the streets below, even though it's only on the 3rd floor. (You get to it by walking up marble stairs.) Apparently, the thick stone walls are very insulating. The walls are

lined with books, but the heavy wooden tables are equipped with computer screens. Maybe a hundred of them. Internet access is free, but on a Sunday afternoon, most of the stations were not in use. There was a sign prohibiting flash photography. I guess they have a problem with that. But I couldn't resist snapping a picture of my personal, portable information companion with one of the historic copper lamps. I thought about how many people had been in that room before me. Writing with quills or fountain pens, pencilling notes on index cards, and now, interacting with an electronic screen. But maybe one thing has stood the test of time: a personal, leather-bound book, worn from use and seasoned by skin oils. A private reference volume, a distillation of the volumes of information out there in billions of books and Web pages. A tranquil island refuge in a swelling sea of facts. A Filofax.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/90/253701170\\_be74fa84bd.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/90/253701170_be74fa84bd.jpg?v=0)

## 1.7 October

Where do I put it? (2006-10-06 22:18) - Nan



[1] Since transferring to the A5 Filofax, my main dilemma has been storing the archived pages. Stuff that I will need to refer to someday, but that I don't need to carry around all the time. I thought it would be a fairly simple matter to buy A5 binders to hold the pages. I could even write in A5 notebooks, when I wanted to, and combine them with pages generated in my A5 Filo.

The only problem was, I couldn't get A5 binders in the U.S. Sure, there were the Filofax storage binders, but they had posts, not rings, so they weren't convenient for reading and leafing through. I thought if I could just get my hands on some A5 binders and a punch, all my information-storage problems would be solved, and I could devote myself to cleanly and seamlessly generating ideas for the rest of my life.

Wrong.

I found some A5 binders at Kinokuniya in New York for 4 bucks each, and a hole puncher for 8 bucks. And I bought them. I also found that they sell some pre-punched paper. Japanese stationers have a fascinating system, sort of a combination of spiral notebooks, loose-leaf binders, and rollabind rings. It's a 20-hole, A5 configuration with plastic rings. You can buy A5 notebooks in this configuration, then remove the pages and store them in 20-hole binders or other notebooks. Two out of the 20 holes fit in a standard 2-hole A5 binder, so they're interchangeable. I bought a pack of that 20-hole/2-hole paper while

I was at Kinokuniya.

This picture shows a Japanese A5 binder, with an A5 page from a pre-punched Miquelrius notebook. You can also see the pack of loose-leaf paper, the 2-hole punch, and a closed A5 binder behind the open binder.

I've learned that I can't find the perfect storage binders. These Japanese binders only hold a few pages at once since the rings are so small. To add pages from my Filofax, I have to punch extra holes in them. I'm really no better off than using the Filofax storage binders, even though they don't lie flat.

Barring perfection, it's incumbent upon me to come up with an alternative. And I'll do that in a later post.

1. [http://static.flickr.com/101/262658046\\_1a90806b59.jpg?v=0](http://static.flickr.com/101/262658046_1a90806b59.jpg?v=0)

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Anonymous (2006-10-08 14:09:00)

Hiya Nan

I find the easiest solution here is to buy some cheap A5 binders off of ebay. I'm spoilt for choice being in the UK, but here is a seller who will ship to the US:-

[http://cgi.ebay.co.uk/A5-D-RING-BINDERS-X-6-Office-Hotel-Catering-Sc\\_W0QQitemZ130034553535QQihZ003QQcategoryZ11834QQssPageNameZWVWVWQQrd\\_Z1QQcmdZViewItem](http://cgi.ebay.co.uk/A5-D-RING-BINDERS-X-6-Office-Hotel-Catering-Sc_W0QQitemZ130034553535QQihZ003QQcategoryZ11834QQssPageNameZWVWVWQQrd_Z1QQcmdZViewItem) hool

Nan (2006-10-09 18:19:00)

Thanks, Anon Y. Mous! I've search eBay in vain many times before, but never searched the UK site. I only searched Canada, thinking I'd be able to get international formats there.

I'm not sure if I'm going to order more binders just now, but it's good to know where to look. I bet other sellers could also be persuaded to ship to the U.S. if I ask nicely.

nlocco (2006-11-17 19:50:00)

Nice post. See the 'team' at patnox.com

Anonymous (2006-11-20 17:45:00)

Nan, do you know if the 20 hole/2 hole Japanese A5 paper you talk about by any chance fits the 6 hole A5 Filofax? Having a hard time finding lined 6-hole A5 paper(Filofax is too dear).

Any suggestions?

DJ Rzacca

Alexis (2010-04-25 00:28:10)

I'm late to this post but it really is near impossible to get anything but 8.5" x 11" stationery/binders in the US, it's a disaster! Anyway you can get European style A5 binders only in white from A.C. Moore, the handicrafts store. There's also dividers and plastic zipper storage pockets in the A5 size there as well. Kinokuniya carries lots of A5 loose leaf and some A5 binders but they hold very little paper. The Kaiser Crafts binder at AC Moore holds a lot. Also Japanistic.com carries a different sort of binder on their website for A5. America is in dire need of A5 loose leaf, binders and French ruled paper!

Laurie (2010-04-25 05:13:11)

lexis, thank you very much for this information!! The paper size is such an issue for US users.



[1] I've transferred my "carry around" Pocket Filofax into a Personal size. It wasn't easy, either. That cute little turquoise Finsbury was an extension of my hand. But the truth was, it was little more than a wallet. It was supposedly a satellite for the A5 Filofax that contained my personal life, and yet both the home planet and the satellite were seeing less use. The Pocket didn't show me enough information at once, and the A5, too much. In fact, the A5 wasn't really showing me anything I needed to see more often than, say, once a week. It had become an expensive, leather bound idea book. Things I may do someday, but that I don't need to have with me everywhere I go. And I wasn't using the calendar diary at all, except to copy things from my Pocket calendar just for the sake of syncing them.

I loved that Pocket Filo. It had that soft, worn in, Velveteen Rabbit quality. It smelled good. But I had to put sentimentality aside and admit that it was missing a few things: enough room for each day's worth of commitments and reminders; enough room for more than a few sentences per page; enough capacity to free me from carrying an A5 along with the Pocket any time I left the house for more than a few minutes.

And so I bit the Personal bullet. Credit cards, cash, phone numbers, week per 2-page calendar, blank paper, all went from Pocket to Personal. Also, the Personal comes with a Projects tab, which has an important function: reminding me when I wake up bleary-eyed each morning, what my current, most important projects are. What I need and want to work on. Things that are important but not necessarily urgent. I've populated that tab with yellow leaves (and I don't use yellow anywhere else).

The Personal fits into the crook of my hand, much like the Pocket did, whenever I leave the house without a bag for a trip to the drugstore or dropping off my husband to pick up his car at the shop. It fits into my gym bag. It holds a few paragraphs of notes per page as well as shopping lists. In time, it will get worn and comfortable...or I'll find a Personal size that does.

So, if I'm going to use the Personal Filo as my personal philo, I need a 2007 calendar. And I've bought one. Filofax is now producing its week-per-2-page calendar with lines to write on. I've always felt at-sea in the plain week-per-2-page without guidelines. Be careful what you wish for: I may ultimately find the lines constricting, but for a year, I'll give them a go.

Does anyone out there know whether this is the first time Filofax has offered a lined version of the week-per-2-page diary? I don't think I've ever seen it before. I bought the refill at my local Container Store, but it was printed in the U.K.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/268888168>

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Anonymous (2006-10-14 22:02:00)

They offered it last year as well, cause I bought one. Not sure when they started offering the lined "week on 2 pages." Bought the 2007 version as well, it works for me.

Zedzian

Canonical40 (2006-10-15 11:41:00)

I have been a filofax user since 1988. I have a Filofax brochure from 1989 which does not list the lined version of the diary as an option. I did purchase one for 1999 and that has a 1997 copyright notice. My guess would therefore be that it was introduced in 1997. The brochure lists all sorts of long dead Filofax inserts which bring back nostalgic memories of the yuppie high watermark of the Filofax.

My favorite diary was the day on two pages. This was available for a couple of years in the early noughties but I now see it is listed again on the filofax web site.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-10-16 15:32:00)

In my 1990 catalogue, Filofax lists three Week on Two Pages diaries; the "Week on Two Pages with appointment times" (Ref 381690; its pre-1989 code was 919) which is what I assume you mean by "lined." There was also Week on Two Pages, Sun-Sat and Mon-Sat. They still do much the same products today: <http://www.filofax.co.uk/store/SEURLF/AS P/SFS/SIZEID.3/SFE/diaryrefills.htm>

I am quite heartened by the fact that the "Personal" sized Filofax has found a place in your affections as it is just naturally such a good and practical sized; smaller sizes are not much more than bulky notepads and the bigger sizes are just too inconvenient. I've never really identified with any of the other sizes, Filofax is the "personal" size and doesn't need the "personal" monicker in the first place.

Filofax have been masters at diluting their own value; they've battled with various other sizes with varying degrees of success (I think at least two Deskfax and three smaller sizes have all died the death) and none of them have eclipsed the original. I don't know any company that's peddled as many pointless and derivative products as Filofax and still survived. But that's another rant altogether :)

Nan (2006-10-16 22:36:00)

Thanks, everybody for your answers, and Hi Kevin! I was afraid you'd given up on me completely. :)

I do feel good about my return to the tried and true Filofax size. And the company's survival is truly something to be grateful for.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-10-19 16:53:00)

Don't worry, I'm still here but things have been quiet on the Filofax collecting front lately. I've been trying to get a hold of any of the Filofax "Duplex" models without success :(

Anonymous (2006-10-19 20:14:00)

"I don't know any company that's peddled as many pointless and derivative products as Filofax and still survived.

" I have a strong contender:

Birkenstock.

The vast majority of what they sell are the "Arizona" sandals, yet they persist in pointless "brand extension" forays into shoes, clogs, plastic clogs and other such detritus—if I'm not mistaken Arizona outsells all other Birk products COMBINED. So keep that in mind (or note it in your Filo) as you wait for the introduction of the waterproof, high boot Birk mukluk—the "Minsk" model.

Zedzian

Nan (2006-10-19 20:58:00)

Hi Zed! I think we're into the other rant already. :) I'm a Frye boots / Dr Martens gal myself. I think the good doctor is doing a similar thing to Birkenstock, and now making some of these new models in China!

The current business climate makes companies so dependent upon this month's numbers, that they have to make decisions to make the short-term projections look good, never mind whether they're doing things that will keep them in business a year (or 5 years) from now.

Anonymous (2006-10-20 16:15:00)

I believe they have been carrying that style for at least the last 5 years. Glad to hear that you are enjoying your Personal size Filofax!

Susanne (2006-10-20 18:34:00)

Hi Nan, I have been using the personal filofax since '94 starting in Germany and I have always bought the 'week on 2 pages diary, horizontal' and I love it. I am glad that I have found them here in the US too.

Susanne

Nan (2006-10-20 19:33:00)

Oh, I've seen pictures of that format, Suzie. It looks neat. I should try it someday.

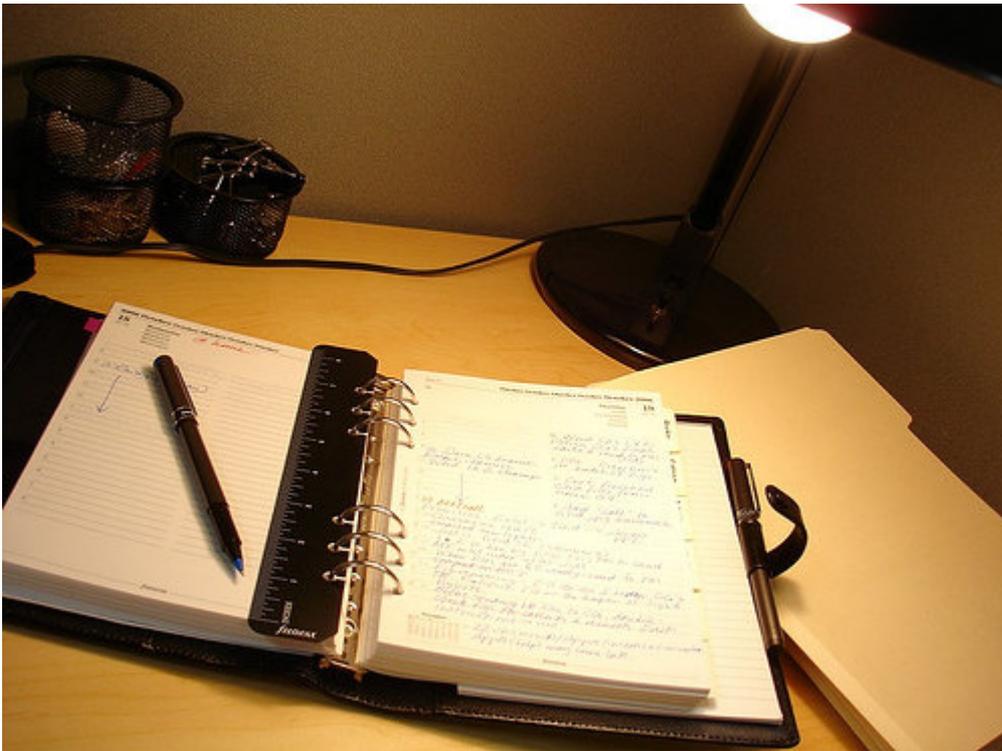
## **New Linkage (2006-10-14 18:30) - Nan**

I've added a couple new links to our list. Both are departures from our usual Filofax topic, but worth mentioning nonetheless.

First, for familial reasons, I'd like to direct your attention to my brother's Web site, [1]EdSpargo.com. I know he's my brother, but he's so talented, I can't believe he and I share the same DNA. Ed is a bassist who plays a fusion of jazz, funk, and blues, and he's currently recording CDs of his own compositions in his interpretation of that fusion. Translation: This is music you can listen to all day long. If you don't believe me, there are some sound clips on his site. Another link I'm proud to add is [2]Kristina Pinto's, The Marathon Mama. Kristina is running the Boston Marathon to raise money for cancer research. Having several cancer victims and survivors in my life, I'm sponsoring Kristina in her effort. If cancer has touched your life at all, I encourage you to do the same.

1. <http://edspargo.com/>

2. <http://themarathonmama.blogspot.com/>



[1] Funny how, a few months ago, I never wrote in this A5 Filofax with One-Page-Per-Day diary. I even packed it away for a while because I found it impossible to use. What changed? I don't know. I just took some notes in it, created some labels for the tabs, and after a couple of days I found I needed my A5 Filo for my job. I'm still need to revise the tabs; some of them make no sense. I'm not taking especially great notes. But none of that is stopping me from using the system as a whole. Why? Here's the best answer I can come up with: Last year, I decided that the most important element of any organizational system is one thing – that it show me what I need to see, when I need to see it. For now, this A5 Filofax is doing that for me while I'm doing my daily work.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/274232955/>

## I had a dream (2006-10-25 09:17) - Nan



[1]

I dreamed about Filofaxes last night. I dreamed I was attending a Filofax seminar, similar to a Day-Timer one I attended several years ago. (I actually found it one of the best self-help teachings I've ever had.) In the dream, I brought my little red Filofax with me, then I found out when I got there that a free Personal Filofax was included, with all these new leaves. It was black with a zipper. My least favorite kind of binder, but in the dream I was thrilled to get a whole 2007 diary and all these beautiful new leaves. The leaves were 4-color; at least some of them were. Before we started the instructional part, we (the group and instructor were all women) all did something fun like go out to lunch together. The dream ended before we got back to the seminar room, so I didn't learn anything productive in the dream, as I sometimes do. Oh, well.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/253702383/>

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pigpogm (2006-10-27 06:06:00)

If you really must dream about Filofaxes, the Lyndhurst was a good choice ;)

Nan (2006-10-27 20:12:00)

Yes, it is funny how, of all Filofaxes, a black zippered Lyndhurst was the one that called out to me in my dream. A hidden desire, maybe?

## Sharing the Love (2006-10-27 20:14) - Nan



[1] I got a nice surprise in my email box the other day – a photo from Philofaxy reader Kevin Hall of his gorgeous 1986 vintage pigskin, made-in-England Filofax. With Kevin’s kind permission, I’m sharing it with you here.

Going through the process of asking Kevin’s permission and then uploading the picture to this blog also helped me make up my mind about something I’ve been thinking about for a few days – starting a Philofaxy Flickr group. We Philofaxers need a straightforward, informal way to share pictures like this with each other. Flickr is the obvious choice.

So let’s see those pics! To use Flickr, you must do the following:

- Take a digital picture (or take a regular picture and scan it to make a digital image).
- Go to [2]<http://www.flickr.com> and sign up for a free Flickr account. (I know, none of us needs yet another user name and password to remember, but if you have a Yahoo ID, you can also use that on Flickr.)
- Upload your pictures to your Flickr account.
- Join the Philofaxy Flickr group (click the Groups menu), and add the pictures to the group pool (click the Add to Group button above the picture).

Here’s a direct link to the [3]Philofaxy Flickr group.

Questions? Email me at the address in my Blogger profile.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/280942648/>

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

3. <http://www.flickr.com/groups/40748476@N00/>

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Nan (2006-10-28 12:21:00)

Ha ha! Made ya look! LOL!

I just wanted to add that I just started the [1]Flickr group last night, and someone’s already added a beautiful picture of an Ascot Filofax. Go check it out!

1. <http://www.flickr.com/groups/40748476@N00/>

Jim Scolman (2006-10-30 13:05:00)

I too, have a vintage Filofax. Mine is black leather marked ”The British Filofax System” Made in England. It must be from the early ’80s as I recall. I use it all the time. I enjoy your site. Thanks Jim.

www.photoday.blogspot.com  
www.scolman.com  
jscolman@scolman.com

Nan (2006-11-03 09:34:00)

It's wonderful how those vintage ones last! Have you had to make any repairs to it?  
Please share a photo with us on Flickr, if you feel so inclined!

## Wikipedia Coolness (2006-10-29 21:56) - Nan

Lately, I've noticed some folks arriving here by clicking a link on the [1]Wikipedia page for Filofax. It's true! Our humble blog is listed as an external link on that page.

I don't know how long the link has been there, or who put it there, but I'm sure glad to see it there. Anybody can edit Wikipedia pages. I could have put our link there myself a long time ago, but I didn't. Note to self: Stop missing opportunities like that.

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filofax>

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pigpogm (2006-10-30 14:06:00)

Cool! Definitely an honor.

I think you were right \*not\* to add your own links - I've always resisted adding PigPog to any Wikipedia stuff, with the result that we're not mentioned anywhere in it :(

At least that way, though, we can't be accused of using it for self-promotion.

macthemaths (2006-10-30 14:34:00)

Hi,

It was **me**. I have been enjoying your blog for a while and thought that you should be included on the entry.

I hoped that you wouldn't mind.

I'm also a member of the Flickr group and will share some 'fax pictures with you soon.

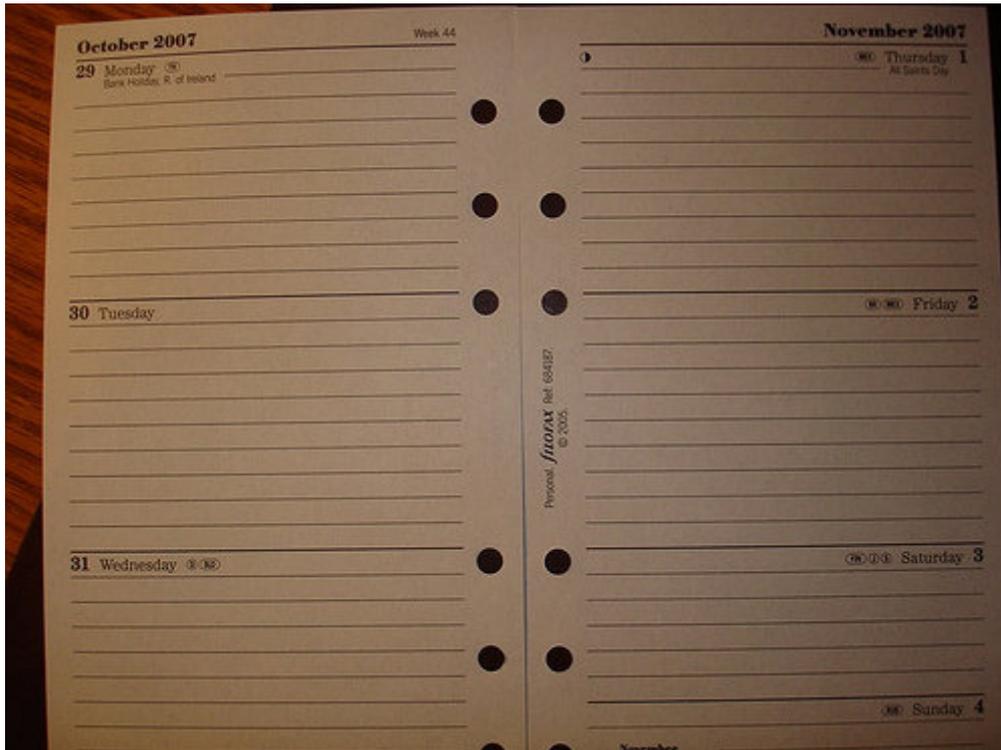
Chris

Nan (2006-10-30 20:03:00)

Chris, thanks for much for adding the link for the blog. That was very thoughtful. I look forward to seeing your pics on Flickr!

Michael, I guess you have a point about using Wikipedia for self-promotion. I guess self-promotion really isn't what an encyclopedia is all about, although Wikipedia certainly seems like a free-for-all at times.

## All Hallows' Eve (2006-10-31 18:34) - Nan



[1] Halloween (AKA All Souls' Day, Samhain, Allentide, and other names) is not recognized by Filofax, as evidenced by this picture taken from the 2007 Personal diary (it's not in 2006 either). I'm trying to deduce why. Most holidays listed in the Filofax diaries and Information pages are either religious holidays or public holidays (that is, days off from school and work) in one or more large countries. (The following day, Nov. 1, All Saints Day, does appear in the Filofax diary. It's an official holiday in the Catholic and other Christian churches.)

At first, I thought it was because Filofax's British creators considered Halloween an American, commercial holiday, unworthy of recognition. But a little research proved that to be false. Ireland and Mexico get a public holiday for Halloween, although it doesn't always fall on October 31. All Souls' Day is a religious holiday in many traditions, although since it's an "eve" holiday, people can go to school or work that day. An increasing number of countries are joining the Halloween tradition, yet Filofax doesn't mention it even in passing.

I've always been fascinated by the wiccan and pagan Halloween traditions. In my favorite legend, it was the wicca who originated the tradition of dressing in costume for the holiday. But it didn't start out as a way to create a fearful or humorous image. Halloween was the wiccan New Year's Eve, and celebrants would dress as the person they wanted to become in the coming year.

I think that's a great idea.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/285078367/>

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Anonymous (2006-10-31 19:29:00)

Whether it's wiccan or pagan or modern day Halloween they are all paths the devil enjoys using to distract and take one's focus off the one true God. All power to Filofax for not recognizing a day that in this day and age has become a day of much evil.

macthemaths (2006-11-01 01:49:00)

Hi Nan,

All Soul's day is not a *major* Christian festival. All Saint's day is. That explains the perceived discrepancy. Halloween is not a religious festival at all neither is it a Bank Holiday or similar in the UK, so it doesn't get a mention.

Chris

Anonymous (2006-11-01 07:25:00)

Good question Nan! I have often wondered why Halloween was excluded in the Filofax layout too, especially considering its European roots.

One ancient view of Halloween is that it is the night of the year when the veil between the worlds is the thinnest, allowing the possibility of the dead to mingle with the living. Costumes were used by the living in order to blend in and not be recognized for fear some would return with ill intentions.

It's funny how such a simple holiday can stir so many personal feelings. The public schools here in my town won't call it a Halloween party - it's a Harvest Party and the kids are not allowed to wear their costumes. The funny part is that several private Catholic schools allow their students to wear their costumes to school and remain in them all day. Hmmm?

I too have long been fascinated with ancient Pagan festivals, especially since so many of our modern day holidays were spawned from them.

Nan (2006-11-01 08:18:00)

Thanks for your thoughtful comments, everybody, and sorry if I pushed anybody's buttons. Wasn't my intention. To Commenter #3: I wish you had not posted anonymously. I would LOVE to continue this conversation offline with you! Feel free to email me so I can tell you about my own school experience. (nanbarber a gmail)

## 1.8 November

### It's a Way of Life (2006-11-02 19:35) - Nan

A couple months ago, a faithful Philofaxy reader told me about a new feature on the [1]Filofax UK Web site. It's a lighthearted (and, frankly, a little airheaded), Flash-animated little Web site called It's a Way of Life ([2]www.itsawayoflife.info).

Personally, I'm not big on Flash animations. Sure, my computer can display them, but I don't have the patience for them. I always feel that they're concealing information from my eager, curious eyes rather than revealing it.

But I promised to review the site for this blog, so I'll get on with it. Once you get past the annoying part of the animation (a hand-sketched picture of a Filofax opening to reveal its table of contents), the Flash is not excessive. The contents include a "What's it all about" page, which actually gives the It's a Way of Life mission statement (more on that shortly), Games, an Agony (that is, advice) column, The Big Question (a user poll), suggested Things To Do list, a Lifestyle Test, and the obligatory Registration (please give me spam) page.

I'm not sure who It's a Way of Life's intended audience is, although it's clearly an attempt to appeal to a feminine consumer. It can't be young women - they create Web sites like this, not visit them. Middle-aged women? Maybe. But I'm pretty close to being a middle-aged woman, and neither I nor most of my pretty-close-to-middle-aged friends have either the time or the inclination to sit through Flash animations and play simplistic computer games. Older women? Well, that's a possibility. Older women who feel younger when they click their way through colorful, artsy, trendy Web sites that conceal the technical side of the Internet.

Now for what I like about It's a Way of Life (for those of you who are still reading and haven't yet come to the obvious conclusion that I have no ability as a reviewer): As for the mission statement I mentioned earlier, I have to agree with its underlying principle - the importance of balancing work with rest and play.

Here's what the "What's it all about" page says:

- **However busy your day, always make time for some ME TIME**
- **It's not all WORK WORK WORK - the times they are a changing, and achieving a proper work/life balance is the key to a happier life**
- **With a bit of organisation, you can make time for yourself TO DO MORE THINGS - don't just veg-out on the sofa**

- **Being busy and organised is a GOOD thing – being busy and stressed is a BAD thing**
- **A Filofax personal organiser is YOUR personal space that YOU control when YOU want to**

(I especially agree with that last statement!)

The Things To Do page is also pretty interesting. It offers alternative activities with Web links (for UK residents) that most of us don't currently have on our task list: rafting, bungee jumping, snowboarding, and so on.

And the Lifestyle Test is worth a moment of your time (well, while you're waiting for your email to download, maybe). "Answer 11 scientific questions and we'll tell you how well you're organising your life (or how badly)." Sample question:

**After a night of passion, do you find your clothes...**

- **Neatly folded where they belong**
- **All over the place - but you'll tidy up later**
- **Missing without a trace**
- **On your partner**

For the record, I came out a Sorted Simon (or Stephanie): Lots On, Always Doing Something. It says I'm "living the dream, perfectly balancing interests and commitments."

Well, that's not quite true. I do use my Filofax a lot, but it's more like, "I don't do it all, or always do it well, but I at least know exactly what I'm NOT doing and WHEN I'm not doing it."

I'll end with my biggest qualm about It's a Way of Life: Since I first visited in September, the site has not been updated. The Agony question, poll, quiz, and all those things that should change regularly are exactly the same. If Filofax holds any hope for this site, they've got to keep it fresh.

1. <http://www.filofax.co.uk/>
2. <http://www.itsawayoflife.info/>

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macthemaths (2006-11-03 01:47:00)

Hi Nan,

I don't find myself able to gush about the "Way of life" site either. I clicked and thought that it would be really good, but left soon after.

It's, to me, somehow everything our 'faxes aren't.

Thanks for the review,

Chris

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-11-03 16:49:00)

I have to agree with Nan, I visited it when I got an email from Filofax and find it an utterly pointless web site. It neither represents the Filofax brand well or is particularly interesting. The web is already deluged with a million "lifestyle" web sites and there is really nothing to distinguish this one.

Instead of messing about with web sites I'd prescribe Filofax focus on their poor product range and boring binders, all hangovers from the Robin Field days at Filofax - a management style distinguished by the fact by understanding nothing about the quality and style of the brand. In its 85 year history no one has done the company more harm than Field - rubbish like "It's a Way of Life" absolutely typifies missed-it-by-a-mile thinking of his days. Can we have a superb range of British made binders and wide range of papers, like the old days, please? The market that Moleskine is now hoovering up is one Filofax made in the first place!

Nan (2006-11-03 21:10:00)

Kevin, you're really after my own heart with that Moleskine observation! It feels so unfair to see anyone else Hoovering up the true quality market!

—

Chris - Hi and thanks for your feedback!

Andrew Louis Mackenna (2007-10-04 07:45:00)

I am a book collector and a casual collector/enthusiast of Filofax, filo-type compendiums, notebooks, stationary,

so on, I'd like to add a note of appreciation to Kevin Hall and those who maintain associate web-sites. I think Filofax and the art of paper-based organisation and expression should have a more permanent form; the history of Filofax would be a fascinating subject for, perhaps, a 'coffee-table' book. Details of the formative years, the extra-ordinary work of Grace Scurr, the controversial Collischoon period and perhaps going on to explore the sociological/psychological aspects of the organiser.

Over three decades Grace and Co. developed a high quality, much admired local product. Until the 'cowboy' capitalism of the 1980s leached forth - Filofax, in my opinion, was a salient, deeply ironic, fatality of the boom. By 1985 Filofax was iconic; its noble past reduced to anglo parody - summed-up in a brief Time magazine piece as 'a dusty, Dickensian concern selling 100 books a year in the US'(23/9/85). Under the more expansionist, US market inclined David and Lesley Collischoon Filofax was driven to collapse within the decade.

Thank you Kevin for the back-ground, I don't know if you (or anyone) is in a position to write and compile such a (hopefully) pictorial, fascinating and comprehensive history.

Andrew Mackenna, 15 Nairn St, Spreydon, Christchurch, NZ

### **There You Have It (2006-11-06 21:19) - Nan**

After my Halloween entry a new posts ago, one of our readers did the obvious thing (well, obvious to someone more intelligent than me, I guess) and posed the question directly to Filofax: Why not include Halloween in your diaries?

And here's the answer:

*Dear [Customer],*

*I honestly don't know why Holloween is not printed on October 31st. It is a possibility that the calendar is printed in England or someplace in Europe that doesn't recognize Holloween. It could be that it is considered a pagan/wiccan holiday and it doesn't count. I guess you could look at it all different angles. I do know when you get a diary that there is a page that lists Religious Festivals that include Christian, Christian Orthodox/Greek Orthodox, Islamic,Hindu, Buddhist,Sikh,Jewish, and Chinese. Wiccan/Pagan is not recognized.*

*So, I guess, there you have it.*

*Sincerely,*

*Donna Castro*

*Customer Service Representative*

*Filofax, Inc.*

*www.filofaxusa.com*

*www.lettsusa.com*

*www.lamyusa.com*

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Anonymous (2006-11-07 02:06:00)

For the sake of balance, Filofax isn't discriminating against pagans - it doesn't specify Christmas Eve either!! Perhaps, in that delicious way we English have, they assume most people can work out that the 'Eve' comes immediately before the 'day' so if they mark 'All Saints Day' and 'Christmas Day' the vast majority of us will be able to work out when Halloween and Christmas Eve are?

Anonymous (2006-11-07 14:49:00)

which is smart. If they did list wiccan "holidays" They'd most likely lose many customers.

Nan (2006-11-07 20:48:00)

Oy! I'm afraid everybody's missing the point as badly as our friendly young Filofax Customer Service Representative!

Although I do like Anonymous #1's thinking. It's so elegant and clear-minded to think of Halloween and Christ-

mas Eve as being covered by the holidays that follow the next day.

So I guess all of us North Americans will have to use our Filofaxes to remind ourselves to buy candy for by the door, jack o'lanterns to carve, and costumes for the kids for "the night before All Saints Day."

Anonymous (2006-11-08 08:43:00)

Well said, Nan! Some are missing the point. No one is saying that Filofax should include Wiccan/Pagan holidays in the diary. I took your original post as innocent curiosity.

One of my favorite things to do this time of year is unwrap a brand new diary refill (monthly & week per view) and get them 'outfitted' for the coming year. I have set up a template to include events important to me and run the diary sheets through my printer to keep things neat. I know, it sounds as though I have more time than sense, but it's something to do. I am an avid gardener and a bit superstitious, so I also add tidbits from the Old Farmer's Almanac. For example – did anyone know that Armadillo mating season began on July 13? Holidays not common in mainstream society could be added in similar fashion.

It is also interesting to note that, while most calendar companies try to keep things simple and not offend, the majority include moon phases to remind us of the new, full and quarter cycles. Many earth-based religions rely on this critical information when planning certain events and staying in tune with the natural rhythm of the universe. It's all a matter of perception.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-11-08 15:43:00)

At the risk of sounding like a Filofax "historian" (of sorts!) I can't find any reference of Halloween in any of many week-per-page diaries going back to 1988. It's likely it's never been noted in a Filofax diary because of its pagan origins and that Christian events used to feature in detail in Filofax diaries.

However the Filofax rep's comment that "calendar is printed in England or someplace [sic] in Europe that doesn't recognize Halloween" is incorrect that Halloween was an event that originated in the UK and Ireland; so it hasn't been left out for those reasons.

Although am a strict Atheist I did rather enjoy seeing all the events of the Christian calendar in detail in the Filofax diaries and it's a shame they don't do it as well any more.

Nan (2006-11-10 00:25:00)

Hi Keven – I'm glad you weighed in on this. You're definitely our best Filofax historian. Thanks for checking all those years back for us!

For those who haven't seen it yet, here's the Filofax history that Kevin wrote up:  
[1]<http://ukcoldwar.simplenet.com/documents/filofax/chronology/>.

1. <http://ukcoldwar.simplenet.com/documents/filofax/chronology/>

## Holiday Harbingers (2006-11-15 17:16) - Nan



[1] Apologies for my recent scarcity. I've been busy with work. I'm in the publishing business, and this week marks the deadline for getting new books into people's Christmas stockings.

Which brings me to today's topic. An inspiring [2]comment from a fellow philofaxer got me thinking about using the Filo to mark the changing seasons.

So, when does the Christmas season start? There's the old cliche about the commercial holiday season starting earlier every year, but this year I'm able to say that it's gotten ridiculous. Starbucks had their gift

displays, holiday coffees, and red paper cups out in force barely a week after Halloween. There's a radio station in town that always plays "all holiday music, all the time" starting the day after Thanksgiving (the fourth Thursday in November). But this year, they've started already! Six weeks of all-Christmas, all-the-time? That's just insane.

Two days ago, I started seeing Christmas-present-themed commercials – from Garmin, the company that makes GPS devices. Ah, just what every woman wants to unwrap on Christmas morning! (I can hear the divorce papers rustling now.)

Don't get me wrong. I love Christmas. The Christmases of my childhood were magically wonderful – no matter how crummy and impoverished the rest of the year had been. I even make my own Christmas cards. But there's just something dispiriting about starting the holiday season on November 1st. And so unfair to November as a month. It's like they're trying to create a double December. November has every right to be annoyed.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/1314/393/1600/DSC00811.jpg>

2. <http://www.blogger.com/comment.g?blogID=18497333&postID=116286657925221738>

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Shannon Paugh (2006-11-18 02:46:00)

I'm the odd bird who would love a Garmin GPSr under the tree or in my stocking! I already have a Legend C, but a Legend CX would make me want to marry my husband all over again!

Nan (2006-11-18 14:39:00)

Shannon – I suppose I'd better fess up as well. My past requests have included an external hard drive and a photo printer.

Anyway, I sure hope you get your wish! :)

## Mark Your Meteors (2006-11-17 20:31) - Nan



[1] NPR brought music to my ears this morning – news of an exciting natural event that some of our gentle readers will want to mark in their Filofaxes. The Leonid Meteor Shower is on! In North America, where this writer is, the visible dates of the shower are Friday, November 17 and Saturday, November 18. And, according to the radio, this year's show will be a spectacular. Instead of the usual 20-30 shooting stars per hour, we'll be able to see 200-300! Apparently, this boon is due to the earth's passing through a particularly heavy band of debris from an ancient comet.

I found [2]this page from StarDate.org, which has all the information you need to mark your Filofax for meteor viewing for the year. (This link is to the 2006 meteor calendar, which is almost over. Presumably, StarDate will produce a similar page for the 2007 meteors in due time.) This page also has some handy tips on meteor viewing (Pack comfortable chairs, bug spray, food and drinks, blankets, plus a red-filtered flashlight for reading maps and charts without ruining your night vision. If you can see each star of the Little Dipper, your eyes have "dark adapted," and your chosen site is probably dark enough. Under these conditions, you will see plenty of meteors).

[3]Space.com offers thorough and technical information, but I find the site hard to navigate. So no guarantees, but here's a currently working link to the site's [4]Leonid page.

1. [http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/1314/393/1600/1966\\_med.gif](http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/1314/393/1600/1966_med.gif)

2. <http://stardate.org/nightsky/meteors/>

3. <http://www.space.com/>

4. [http://www.space.com/spacewatch/061114\\_leonid\\_news.html](http://www.space.com/spacewatch/061114_leonid_news.html)

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## Happy Turkey Day! (2006-11-23 20:03) - Nan



[1] If I were any kind of a blogger, I'd be supplementing this post with a photo of one of the many [2]wild turkeys that bop around suburban (and even almost urban) streets where I live. But I have captured no such pictures; so I found a piece of clip art that looks very similar. Due to recent deadlines, the energy I have to devote to this holiday has been minimal. Since this blog's readership isn't exclusively, or maybe even primarily, American, I suppose I don't have to do a Thanksgiving entry at all.

But since I'm American, it's relevant for me to share how Thanksgiving appeared in my Filofax:

- 2 days before: purchase champagne, wine (beaujolais nouveau?), 3 kinds of cheese, 2 boxes of crackers (we were bringing the wine and hors d'oeuvres to my mother-in-law's house)
- 2 days before: send TG e-cards to parents, brother's family
- 1 day before: put champagne in fridge, charge digital camera batteries
- Thanksgiving morning: find a (silver?) tray in dining room or basement.
- Thanksgiving morning: remember that I forgot to put doilies on the shopping list
- Thanksgiving morning: arrange cheese and crackers (directly) on tray; cover with plastic and store in fridge
- 1/2 hour before leaving for mother-in-law's house: take cheese tray out of fridge
- just before leaving: put batteries in camera, put pics of nephew to show people in Filofax, figure out a way to carry wine and cheese tray

My parents didn't do Thanksgiving this year, but they always made an astoundingly delicious meal. They drew up a backwards-timeline, so that they knew when to start each item in order to have the meal ready to serve. A big item was putting the bird out to brine in a bucket on the deck, in a cooler if necessary. If I were doing dinner at my house, I'd do a backwards-timeline, too.

They use letter-size paper, the same size they keep all their recipes on. I have a letter-size recipe book, too, but in order to integrate the shopping and related tasks, I may want to use an A5 Filo.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/271218/WildTurkey.jpg>

2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild\\_turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_turkey)

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## Erratum (2006-11-26 17:54) - Nan

The trendy Filofax UK site, [1]<http://www.itsawayoflife.info>, has not been abandoned, contrary to my report on Nov. 2, 2006. It has been updated since I last wrote, and appears that the webmasters are updating it about once a month. So while it's not what you can call an active Web site, and no longer has a link on the [2]Filofax U.K. main page, it's still being updated and maintained.

1. <http://www.itsawayoflife.info/>

2. <http://www.filofax.co.uk/>

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Anonymous (2006-11-28 15:51:00)

After reading your latest post I visited the 'way of life' site again. I just can't get into it because it seems filled with a lot of fluff and useless information. Then something donned on me . . . maybe it's just me.

I enjoy browsing interesting sights that are updated regularly, and then I look at my own filo and realize it has been abandoned for at least a couple of weeks. No notes, appointments or thoughts have been captured for posterity. No doodles, scribbles or annotations of any kind for two entire weekly spreads. What does that say about me?

A relationship with one's Filofax is not so different from relationships with one's friends and family. The very attributes that drew me to this neat little book in the first place quickly become the source of my waning interest. It's a commitment. Every once in a while I recommit to daily planning and nightly recap of my day. Those periods of dedication are filled with little successes each day and leave me feeling as though I have really accomplished something, not to mention the fact that these days are fun to review several months and years later. I find that I am more connected to my former self because I did such a good job of documenting my life. Every available spot on those weekly views is accounted for.

Then it happens . . .

I spend more time planning than doing. I begin feeling tied down. I find myself writing things on my 'to do' lists that have already been done just for the sheer joy of being able to check them off. Worse yet, I begin thinking of returning to a palm pilot. Indecision and procrastination get the better of me because I feel disconnected and out of sorts after a few days of this behavior. Fortunately, I have a very short attention span and these moods eventually pass. Nothing snaps me out of this mood quicker than a package from Filofax. With each new refill my interest is renewed. Yes, that's right, a brand new diary has just arrived for the coming year – oh, the possibilities! How temperamental – I'm surprised my Filofax puts up with me at all.

Anonymous (2006-11-28 18:55:00)

That's an interesting take on your relationship with your Filofax—I am moving to Filofax for the main reason that I think it will be much easier to engage/have a relationship with the paper (that sort of sounds dirty, but you know what I mean) than it is with an electronic solution. I'm mostly on paper now anyway, with a Moleskine planner, but the format's too small for all I need to put into my trusted system—I've overwhelmed the Moleskine planner; I don't think I can overwhelm a Filofax.

In choosing to make the move (I haven't bought my Filofax yet, but I am this week) I want to thank Philofaxer and Nan for all they've done; this has been a terrific resource and I'm grateful they've taken the time to share their insights. (I've opted for the A5 Chocolate Classic planner based on Philofaxer's experience with it.)

Nan (2006-11-28 22:08:00)

Hi "Anonymous A"! You know, what I think it says about you is that you're normal. After doing this for years, I'm trying to learn not to obsess so much about my usage of the Filofax, and think instead about how it's working for me. Sometimes, especially when I'm really busy, I can hold my priorities in my head. The lack of a need for daily updates may mean that not much is changing every day. Something to be aware of, but not necessarily bad. These things come and go in cycles.

Nan (2006-11-28 22:14:00)

"Anonymous B": Thanks so much for your good words!!! It's easy for me to feel that I'm not contributing much, and if I am, almost no one's reading it. With the help of this carrot, I'll pick up the pace again! I like your phrasing "overwhelming the planner." There are so many diary options with a Filo: Day on a page, week on a page, week on 2 pages. And if you pair the week on one page with a facing To Do page or blank page, you've got a Moleskine-like scheme but with the flexibility of loose-leaf.

So, are you loving the chocolate classic? Droool.

Jeff Abbott (2006-11-29 00:26:00)

The former anonymous B back again: The moleskine planners are nice, and actually got me back into using paper for my daily organization—but the flexibility of Filofax is what has sold me. I did finally go to a store and look at several models to see what would work for me. But yes, Nan, it was helpful to me to hear you and Philofaxer and the commentators in various postings describe how you'd used your planners as well as the pro and cons of the

various formats. I don't think I would have considered Filofax without this blog, frankly, so thanks again. I hope to have the A5 in my hands in the next few days so I haven't started drooling yet (well, more than usual). I won't be able to engage heavily with it right away, I'm finishing a large project this month (my tenth novel) but the new Filofax will help me keep my head above water until the book is done and will be a good start as a trusted system for the new year.

Anonymous (2006-11-29 08:11:00)

Anonymous A again –

The Philofaxy blogspot is one of my favorites and I return often because the posts are timely and fresh. I always come away with helpful tidbits and insight. To Anonymous B, congratulations on your move to Filofax from Moleskine! The flexibility of the Filofax system is my favorite part. I think that's why I abandoned the Franklin system. The fact that it came with a user guide with complete instructions on how to plan, prioritize, set goals and develop a mission statement overwhelmed me.

I've practically forgotten all about those new Treo phones in copper and red. Darn those Palm folks for coming out with pretty colors near the Holidays. I told you I have a short attention span and I'm also easily distracted. Shiny objects get me every time.

I have been thinking about graduating to the A5 size myself. I remember a previous post where Nan mentioned a style in tangerine. I'll have to check that out. Anyway, no matter how much I look around, it's paper for me. One more thing before I go – does anyone use the personal slimline format anymore? I just reduced my collection of personal size binders and the only two that were not snapped up are slimline zip arounds. I thought this was kind of odd given that the ring size is not nearly as large as the regular personal, but significantly larger than the ring size in the current slimline models. Just curious.

Jeff Abbott (2006-11-29 08:38:00)

Anonymous A, I looked at the slimlines simply as a possible diary/capture device—I thought they would be too small for my everyday planning work—and I thought it wisest to start with just one Filofax and see how it went. But I use index cards for capture, or my Palm's voice recorder.

## The Unbearable Thinness of a Year (2006-11-30 22:02) - Nan



[1] I need to reread *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera. It's been too long. It's one of the first books I read out of college. One of the first books I *chose* to read as an adult, not *had* to read. No matter how many years I use a Filofax, I'm amazed on a daily basis how little paper a year fits onto. Not a year's worth of thinking or feeling, but certainly a year's worth of doing. A year seems like so much more to us little humans.

This picture shows the entire thickness of a year in week-per-2-pages in a Personal-size Filofax. And yet, it is so much more. A single word written in a diary can capture 1 or 6 or 60 hours of emotion, of thought, of revelation.

How much more does one need?

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/95389/DSC00863.jpg>

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Jeff Abbott (2006-12-02 11:32:00)

Well said, Nan. This is part of the reason I'm moving to Filofax—simplicity. Tired of wrestling with different Palm programs, tired of wrestling with the synching. What I loved about the Moleskine planner was it's simple (not

adaptable, but simple.) Even the busiest among us shouldn't require complicated tools to put our time and lives in order. Yes, a year can fit into a moderate number of pages. That's a good thing.

My A5 chocolate classic is due to arrive on Monday (ordered from [pencity.com](http://pencity.com), it shipped the same day). I'm looking forward to getting it.

## 1.9 December

WOW (2006-12-03 15:40) - Nan



[1] An entire year's worth of catalogs, right? Wrong. A season's worth? Nope.

These are the holiday catalogs that I've received since the week before Thanksgiving, starting the day I got the first mailbox-bursting bundle. In other words, it's about 2 weeks worth of catalogs...the first half of the holiday season. From here on out, I assume I'll get a roughly equal number of "Last Chance to Order" editions.

Last Friday, the mailman didn't even attempt to cram my mail into the box. He just left it on the stoop in a crisscross of big rubber bands. Bad sign.

A few more comments:

- This pile represents catalogs only. I didn't cheat and bulk it up with magazines.

- This isn't actually all catalogs I've received. I've recycled the ones I know I'm not going to use (Victoria's Secret, Harry & David, and another one that apparently consists of nothing but various kinds of English muffins and jams). And I've removed from the pile ones I wanted to read or use right away. I'd say these cullings have reduced the pile by about 1.5".

- These catalogs are in my name only. My husband is the only other person in the household, and he doesn't order from catalogs. Presumably, if he were also a catalog user, this stack could be twice as high. Now the big question: Why am I keeping all these?

Because I use them. I really do most of my holiday shopping via catalog, and my family has received better gifts because of it. Sure, when I go to the mall, I find some surprisingly good stuff, and I've done some fairly successful holiday shopping at malls. But I don't like going to the mall. When it comes to small, special gifts and cards, I prefer to give the business to local shops and do the shopping on foot. And when it comes to finding gifts that really fit the recipient's needs and wants, I just can't beat the catalogs for specificity, variety, speed, and service. Specific opera DVDs for my parents, an illustrated book of fairies for my sister-in-law who loves fantasy, shoe cleats for my brother who just bought a house in the snowy suburbs...I really don't think I could have gotten those gifts so quickly and easily if I had to drive from store to store. I also find catalogs a great way to shop for clothes and shoes in my exact sizes. Going to a department store, while visually stimulating, is more of a crapshoot. And if something does need to be returned, sending it back by USPS, UPS, or FedEx is actually easier than toting it back to the store.

These catalogs are sitting here in a pile, waiting for me to place them in a file cabinet where I really do

have a manila folder for each catalog company to hold the latest catalog edition, along with receipts for orders placed. That's my project for the rest of the night.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/27547/DSC00867.jpg>

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Jeff Abbott (2006-12-04 19:23:00)

I'm not much of a catalog shopper during the year, but they're a saving grace during the holidays.

My new A5 Filofax—my first—arrived and it's the best-looking planner I've ever seen. I haven't had a moment to start moving my life to it. . .but will, hopefully very soon. (although it doesn't have any 2006 calendar pages, so I'm going to have to make my own if I want to start using it this month). And I better, as I have NO shopping plan in place yet. :-)

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-12-06 13:13:00)

It seems though that so many catalogues is very unfriendly to the environment. All my shopping for Xmas is 90 % online , nearly everything has come from Amazon or Muji that I can do from any PC I'm sat at. I swapped Amazon Wishlists with my partner, how sad is that?!

Nan (2006-12-07 11:20:00)

You're right about the environmental issue, Keven. The problem is, except for Amazon and similar places, the more you order online, the more catalogs they send you!

I've got some tree-hugging planned for my next post, so stay tuned!

P.S. Congratulations on your purchase, Jeff. Ah – nothing like the smell of new leather! Have fun pouring your life into it. I recommend a glass of chilled chardonnay and an assortment of ink colors. (Er, in pens, that is, not in the wine!)

## Hugging Big...uh...Trees (2006-12-12 21:21) - Nan



[1]  Just after posting a picture of my [2]Christmas catalogs, I heard a radio news story of people protesting [3]Victoria's Secret for printing its catalogs on virgin paper.

Please, give me a moment to savor the glory of using "Victoria's Secret" and "virgin" in the same sentence. Okay, I'm done.

Tree preservation is a serious concern for some of us back-to-paper types, myself included. I open my junk mail just so I can strip out the window envelopes, fake credit cards, etc., and recycle the paper parts. I reuse manila envelopes and folders, and print on both sides of the paper, even though it means taking the paper out and turning it around to do the even pages. And I've often thought about writing "refused" on the junk mail and putting it in a mailbox, on the theory that if the Postal Service is forced to deal with returned paper, it will rethink its paper-wasting bulk mailing policies. (You can learn more about such campaigns at places like [4][www.ecofuture.org](http://www.ecofuture.org). And if the above [5][www.victoriasdirtysecret.net](http://www.victoriasdirtysecret.net) link expires, just do a Web search for "victorias secret paper protest.")

As I mentioned in my earlier post, I'm too grateful for the convenience of catalog shopping to banish them from my life completely. So I recycle them when I'm done. And if it makes a difference, recycling in my town doesn't mean taking them out to the curb. We have to sort all our trash, yard waste, and various reusables and recyclables and deliver them to the town waste station ourselves, placing them in the proper color-coded receptacles.

Conclusion? Well, I guess there isn't one...except that Victoria's Secret has pledged to use 10 % post-

consumer recycled paper for its catalogs from now on.  
And I'm still really tickled about that "virgin" thing.

1. [http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/522361/w1\\_100.jpg](http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/522361/w1_100.jpg)
2. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/12/wow.html>
3. <http://www.victoriasdirtysecret.net/article.php?id=299>
4. <http://www.ecofuture.org/jmusps.html>
5. <http://www.victoriasdirtysecret.net/article.php?id=299>

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Anonymous (2006-12-13 09:13:00)

Interesting point. I recycle on a regular basis because it's good for the environment and is the right thing to do, but I honestly couldn't tell you what most of my magazines and catalogs are printed on. I can say one thing though - I like junk mail. It's a refreshing change and it keeps the postman employed. Each trip to the mailbox is like opening a grab bag. Granted, this sounds silly but the older I get, the more I appreciate the little things. One of the things I receive more than catalogs this time of year are requests for donations from charities and causes that I have never heard of. Most requests come stuffed with preprinted address labels that are always misspelled or wrong in some way. Some include calendars for the coming year or a stack of all occasion cards that I will never use in an effort to play on my conscience and motivate me to send them something for their trouble. There are select charities that I always remember around the holidays and I draw the line. There must be a considerable amount of waste involved when these little 'token' gifts are printed in bulk and sent out to thousands of people that never asked for them in the first place. With this much wasted paper floating around, does it really matter what it's printed on? I don't know.

Nan (2006-12-13 18:00:00)

Yes, I agree with the total amount of paper wasted by companies like Victoria's Secret, 10 % recycled content is a mere gesture. Some will say it's a drop in the bucket. I'm a "step in the right direction" person, myself. It strikes me that Victoria's Secret didn't \*have\* to do anything - the company's not about to go out of business over this - but they decided to at least acknowledge the environmental concerns of some of their customers.

You know, I went to a seminar once when I was working for a non-profit organization, about how to do those direct mailing. What to include in the envelope, what to say in your letters, how to track the results you get from each mailing. It was given by a speaker who was absolutely \*crazy\* about junk mail. I was skeptical when I went in, but I found her enthusiasm infectious and couldn't wait to start doing some mailings!

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2006-12-14 18:50:00)

With junk mail I'd say what they're printed on (recycled or not, etc) makes up only a small part of their environmental footprint. The total carbon emissions getting junk mail item "A" to your mailbox must be staggering. The only environmentally sensible way forward is to stop it at source and eliminate junk mail entirely - trying to clean up after the fact is futile.

Nan (2006-12-14 21:48:00)

Yes, well, that's the dilemma. How do we balance a person's (or company's) legitimate desire to make a living and spread the word, with the environmental principle that almost anything anyone wants to mail out is less important than preventing global warming from growing worse than it already is? Whose decision is that to make?

Anonymous (2006-12-22 08:32:00)

Perhaps we should allow people who like junk mail to opt in by registering on a central database.

Otherwise TV, radio, newspapers, the internet and billboards etc. give plenty of opportunity for enterprise to flourish.

There is no point in sending out junk mail if all it does is make the recipient hostile.

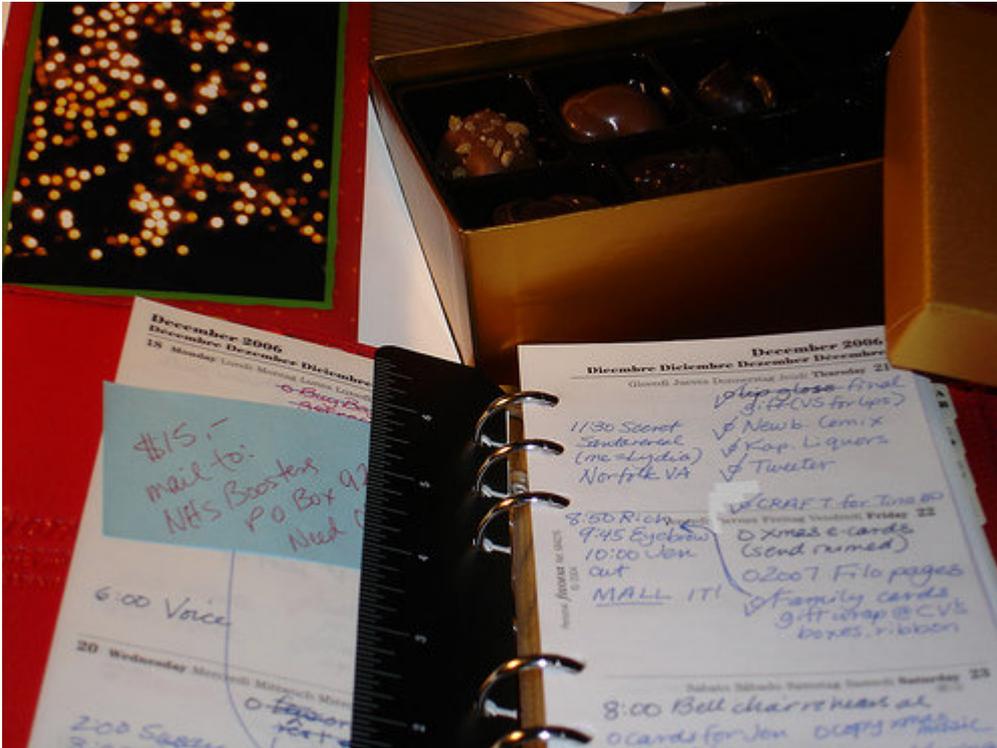
Nan (2006-12-22 21:34:00)

Good idea, Andrzej - People have to opt-in to get e-mailings (legitimate e-mail, not spam). When you think about it, it's even more important to do the same for paper mailings, which are something physical arriving at

your home and much more of an environmental burden than e-mail.

Of course, it's because the postal system is operating on antiquated laws when it comes to bulk mailing. (What they do for a mere \$0.39 with personal mail is still WAY cool!)

## Flagging (2006-12-22 21:35) - Nan



[1] "Flag" has a large number of senses. Did you know that wild iris flowers are called flags? Today I'm talking about the intransitive verb: to become unsteady, feeble, or spiritless. I feel flaggy lately. I haven't been posting to this blog as often, or taking as many pictures, or writing as many things down, as I was at the beginning of this past summer, for example.

A very wise woman once told me that people's energy and extraversion comes and goes in cycles. We expend maximal effort, then we rest. I'm in a resting phase now. Perhaps if I were more aware of these cycles in myself, I'd be able to work with them better. Maybe there was a way I could have avoided placing my catalog orders at the last minute, paying exorbitant fees for overnight delivery. Maybe I could have come up with a better holiday card, and sent it to a longer list instead of cutting back to save time.

Flagging, in the sense of unsteady, implies a mixture of good and bad, strong and weak, spirited and spiritless. So there's some good stuff going on, too. For instance, I did actually finish my shopping today, with two days to spare. Everyone in my family is healthy again. I get to play handbells as well as sing at church this year – a project I helped arrange with the help of my Filo. I didn't have to take work home over the holiday break. I'll at some point have the chance to spend some time exactly the way I want to. And there are some advantages to being overworked, exhausted, and disorganized. I didn't have to string up Christmas lights this year. My lights from last year were still in place.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/393255123/>

Chet (2006-12-23 00:11:00)

Isn't this also known as "biorhythm"? Very popular in the late 70s and early 80s, I think.

Nan (2006-12-23 00:32:00)

Hi Chet – Good point! From what I heard about biorhythms in the 70s and 80s, I thought they only applied to the rhythms of a single day.

Thanks to your comment, I've done some research and realized they go way beyond that. For example, here's the [1]wikipedia page.

I'm fascinated by the thought that we can't be 100 % all the time, which gives us the freedom to make the most of the times when we're less than 100 %. I think I might be more susceptible to biorhythms than most people.

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biorhythm>

Anonymous (2006-12-23 09:38:00)

There is something real in the concept of flagging. If I push myself too hard on the rowing machine, at the wrong time, my back hurts for days. Sometimes I have 'negative work' days when stupid mistakes rule. There appears to be no rhyme or reason for this. Biorhythms are one possible explanation. (I confess I used to have a computer program to plot sine curves back in the eighties).

Must and Want are two different things. The low points tell us what we must do; we fight our way through a headache and do what must be done. Sometimes the things we want to do must wait.

Chet (2006-12-25 09:16:00)

Another way of looking at it is "bad hair days"!

We can't always be 100 % all the time cuz we're only human. We think we can, but our bodies know otherwise. Listen to our bodies, I say (especially during that time of month for us women).

## Winter Solstice (2006-12-23 17:37) - Nan



[1] I was unaware yesterday when I wrote my [2]Droopy Dog post that my subdued mood may have been influenced by the winter solstice. Just a little research reminded me that the shortest day, and longest night, of the year has a tremendous influence on the human psyche. I even found an entire Web site, called [3]Candlegrove.com devoted to the world's many winter holidays centered around the Northern Hemisphere's darkest days of the year. To quote Candlegrove.com, at the root of these celebrations is "an ancient fear that the failing light would never return unless humans intervened with anxious vigil or antic celebration."

As far as antic celebration goes, I couldn't help noticing the similarity between Christmas, as it's celebrated in the U.S., anyway, and the ancient Roman celebration of [4]Saturnalia. Every single year, I ask myself why we do it. What makes otherwise sensible people spend themselves into debt, deface their homes with gaudy multicolored lights, cut down trees and bring them indoors (with more lights), send

hundreds of greeting cards to people they barely know or like, and throw dietary caution to the wind? (Yes, you observed correctly; that's a box of Godiva chocolates that's joined my Filofax on the left-hand corner of my desk in yesterday's entry. Hey, the store in which I finished my Christmas shopping was having a sale. It was meant to be.) During Saturnalia, too, the Romans attempted to turn night into day by turning societal norms on their ear. They shuttered their businesses, freed their slaves (temporarily), feasted and feted, and exchanged their togas for costumes (or for nothing at all).

I guess there's no point fighting it. Once a year we have license to deal with life's stress by eating, drinking, taking, giving, and partying too much, and we've been doing it long before Macy's told Gimbel's. Me, I'm going to bed early tonight so I'll have the energy to wrap gifts, celebrate Christmas in two states, and sing and play handbells at three services in the space of 24 hours.

Your Filofax defines the winter solstice on one of the information pages at the beginning of the diary – the page called "The World and Time." However, it won't give you the date and time of the solstice in your area. For that, you have to consult a site like [5]this one. For the record, in North America, the sun reached its solstice on the evening of December 21, 2006.

Photo credit to [6]www.knowth.com, a site devoted to Ireland's prehistoric Newgrange megalith, whose chamber precisely admits the beam of the winter solstice sun.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/935225/winter-solstice-2003.jpg>
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Droopy>
3. <http://www.candlegrove.com/solstice.html>
4. <http://www.candlegrove.com/sacaea.html>
5. <http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/astrometry/WinterSolstice.html>
6. <file://localhost/mnt/ext/blogbooker/tmp/7hk3qsnz/www.knowth.com>

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Anonymous (2006-12-24 03:37:00)

Hi Nan! Good luck with the handbells! Winter is not all doom and gloom. There's nothing like having a fire to tend on a cold dark night.

Chet (2006-12-24 22:21:00)

Nan

Winter Solstice is actually my favourite day. Altho it is the shortest day / longest night of the year, I am heartened by the fact that after this day, the days get longer and the nights shorter.

The Chinese celebrate Winter Solstice and call it "gor tong", which means passing of winter.

We have a dessert that day called "tong yuen" which mean soup balls. I wrote about it on my weblog last year: [1]Winter Solstice Food

1. <http://www.chetscorner.com/chatter/index.php?p=613>

Nan (2006-12-25 20:10:00)

Hi Chet – Thanks for sharing your Gor Tong story with us. I read your blog entry several times! What happy family memories.

dewanna (2006-12-26 07:41:00)

Hi Nan!

There is something very comforting about the Winter Solstice to me. There was a time when I dreaded the falling leaves and the swift journey into to winter that quickly follows here in SW Ohio. Depression at this slow time of year was sometimes a bit more than I could bear; however, all living things must die out for a time and rest beneath the earth's cozy bed. I'm not the most patient person in the world, so this is a work in progress. I now try to look at winter as a time of rest and renewal. The icy cool air cleanses the senses as well as the spirit and prepares me for the first signs of spring right around the corner.

This fluffy representation of how I view this time of year is difficult for me to maintain over several months, but I am reminded of the farmer who was so anxious to see progress that he ran out to his garden and tugged on the first new shoots of the season to hurry things along. In his efforts to assist his crop, his seedlings were damaged and there was no crop after all.

I have resolved to work on my need to tug this year. Wish me luck!

Nan (2006-12-27 23:02:00)

Hi Dewanna! Thank you for your lovely (and true) description of the purpose of this time of year for people and other living things. And good luck on that resolution!

### **In the Midst of It All (2006-12-24 23:51) - Nan**

At a certain point, the planning stops, and events simply unfold. I haven't consulted my Filo at all today. I knew where I was supposed to be and what needed to be done before tomorrow. I've performed at two services and seen half of my relatives, with the rest coming tomorrow. Then there are the unplanned things. When an online distributor only shipped one of the two gifts I had ordered, I had to make a last-minute toy store dash. Giving only one of my two nieces a present simply wouldn't have done. But I had time to get the gifts bought and make it to a rehearsal on time. Perhaps because I had cleared the decks of the things I could control, when something happened out of my control, it didn't throw everything into chaos. At least, not quite.

Enjoy your long winter's naps, everyone.

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Anonymous (2006-12-25 03:09:00)

Nan, Chet et al. As you might gather I'm a newbie in the land of the web log. Also today from 0400 a classic personal chocolate filo user. Many thanks to you all for contributing to this super site.

Nan (2006-12-25 19:52:00)

Hi Andrezej – Thanks for joining us! I wanted to thank you, too, for your good wishes the other night. I did have a chance to sit by a fire for a while at a relative's house. This winter is warmer than usual in the northeastern U.S., so it was a little too warm for a fire, but it was nice nonetheless.

CONGRATULATIONS on your new Chocolate Filo. Hope you're loving it!

Chet (2006-12-26 08:30:00)

andrzej - how does your chocolate Filo taste?

please don't hit me\*

Anonymous (2006-12-27 05:02:00)

Chet

I would never dream of hitting you! (Nor anyone else).

In answer to your question there is no specific taste, but then again the first thing I did was to wipe in leather cream (a trick a cousin from Munich taught me) for longevity.

Actually I nearly went for black though chocolate and cream (stitching) has an old fashioned resonance for me.

### **Christmas night (2006-12-25 23:29) - Nan**

Gifts are distributed, ailing husband is tucked in. I'm having the last few sips of champagne, and, yes, working in my Filo. How will I spend the next week away from work? I don't want to fritter it away mindlessly. I want to be rested, renewed, and with better routines in place.

Breaking down my daily schedule into sleeping, eating, exercise, music practice, and daily home maintenance routines shows me that there's no way to do everything I want to do. If I want to add 30 minutes for calls, correspondance, or projects, that means 30 minutes less of sleep.

Now I've got the plan. How will this look in real life?

I'll let you know.

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Anonymous (2006-12-26 03:56:00)

SE Wales is certainly cold enough for a fire today. Chocolate filo (it looks like a million dollars) is being slowly and methodically being populated so as to keep clutter to a minimum and utility to a maximum. I'm taking my family to the big city today. I look forward to hearing how the NE US plan works out?

Nan (2006-12-26 22:54:00)

Hi Andrzej – Glad you're enjoying your Chocolate Filo. Sounds like you're doing some really good work! I'm still working on my scheduling (should I get my exercise by using my bicycle more for commuting, or drive to the gym for a full-body swim?), but I'll keep you posted!

Anonymous (2006-12-27 04:32:00)

Hi Nan. My commute is from one extreme of the county to the other. Chocolate filo has come to work with me for the first time today by pannier. We nearly didn't make it. It took a full half hour to start the engine. I wholeheartedly agree with you that exercise has to be part of the schedule. This morning proved the need, how else would I have had the energy to free the clutch? Now to add my external 'log in' to the 'www.' page (no more head scratching in internet cafés). Enjoy your holiday.

### PSA - Free Shipping (2006-12-27 20:30) - Nan



[1] If you still need to get your 2007 Filofax pages (what, I'm the only obsessive who buys them when they first roll off the presses?), [2]The Daily Planner is offering free shipping on orders over \$50. You must order through the Web site, and the offer expires on Dec 31, 2006. The Daily Planner also has some Filofaxes in their [3]Winter Sale, like the black A5 Bloomsbury pictured at right.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/864429/Bloomsburyblk.jpg>
2. <http://www.thedailyplanner.com/>
3. [http://www.thedailyplanner.com/gifts-winter-sale-c-117\\_1278.html](http://www.thedailyplanner.com/gifts-winter-sale-c-117_1278.html)

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Anonymous (2006-12-28 04:21:00)

The web is the way to go. Some real shops were on the *manky* side on Boxing Day.

dewanna (2006-12-28 07:37:00)

That's a good deal - shipping can sometimes cost more than the item itself. By the way, check out the home page of Filofax USA if you haven't yet. I am in love! The red ostrich personal size binder graces the home page and it is absolutely incredible. Something tells me I would be much more dedicated to my planning if I had it, but at \$700 a pop, I'll pass. Besides, I promised to select one binder from my collection and stick to it this year. Every time my commitment to planning begins to wane, I think switching binders or size for a change will help. It never does. You'd think I'd learn.

Nan (2006-12-28 21:39:00)

Dewanna, oh, how I can relate to the notion that a new binder, new system, new label maker, or new whatever will somehow improve my planning abilities. And the prettier, the better. How else do you think I ended up acquiring 2 A5 Filofaxes, a Personal, and a Pocket during 2006?

The good news is, I did manage to stick to my commitment to stick to Filofaxes for the 2nd half of 2006...and I'm continuing right into 2007. And if I may ever-so-cautiously give a recommendation in praise of tweaking one's system, I've found that revamping my Personal Filo's tab arrangement has helped me feel more in control of my projects and make more headway on them.

P.S. As an ignorant colonial, I had to look up the term "manky." I found shaky, rotten, decrepit, useless, worthless. A pretty good way to describe a shop crammed full of goods picked over by holiday vultures and people trying to exchange manky items for cash.

### Pen Review: Monteverde Mega Inkball (2006-12-28 12:51) - Nan



[1] A rollerball that takes fountain pen ink – too good to be true? Not in the case of the Mega Inkball. After the very first fill, it wrote smoothly and, after the first sentence, skip-free. The set comes with one barrel and cap, four nib sections, a small jar of black ink, one ink converter, and two standard, international ink cartridges. The resin barrel is handmade, and luxuriously thick and curvaceous (maybe too thick for some hands). The metal trim and clip are chrome-plated ("jewelry-grade," according to Monteverde). A high-quality touch is the spring-loaded clip. Overall, the pen feels tight and solid.

The tungsten carbide rollerball appears to be foolproof. Ink flows smoothly and consistently even as I changed writing pressure and speed suddenly. The line weight remains virtually consistent as well. The only hitch came when switching from very heavy to very light pressure. For the next few strokes, I got some breaks in the line. The inkflow is conservative, too, producing a fine line and less bleed-through

compared to either standard-nib fountain pens or inexpensive rollerballs.



[2] Since the Mega Inkball is, at heart, a fountain pen, you must take all the usual precautions of working with fluid ink: Don't carry it less than 100 % full on airplanes; watch your fingers when filling it from an ink jar. The four included nibs are identical. Each has a lifespan of about 1 km of writing (which translates to roughly 200 handwritten pages). If you change colors a lot, you can use each nib for a different color, by using cartridges or buying extra converters.

The Mega Inkball comes in burgundy (pictured here, \$175) and black (the black model is larger, at \$195).

1. [http://farm1.static.flickr.com/124/336432936\\_2a95dd19b2.jpg?v=1167331240](http://farm1.static.flickr.com/124/336432936_2a95dd19b2.jpg?v=1167331240)

2. [http://farm1.static.flickr.com/147/336432940\\_2369b91100.jpg?v=0](http://farm1.static.flickr.com/147/336432940_2369b91100.jpg?v=0)

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Anonymous (2006-12-29 04:25:00)

Wow, did you check out [1]the Monteverde home page? Image in spades! My Parker Vector is humbled.

PS Whilst my system is in a state of flux, I have found myself combining Notes and Projects (To Do) under the latter tab. The archived notes of Philofaxer are also of interest.

PPS I borrowed *manky* from my family. I checked the definition before posting so I'm the ignorant colonial?

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

Jeff Abbott (2006-12-30 18:58:00)

Nan:

Thanks for the thoughtful review. Do these pens fit easily into the loop for your A5s? I've found some of my fountain pens are too big.

Speedmaster (2006-12-30 19:54:00)

Very nice post and review. I have a bunch of pen-related posts on my blog that might interest you as well.

Have a great New Year!

<http://amateureconblog.blogspot.com/>

Anonymous (2006-12-30 20:25:00)

Thanks for the votes of confidence, everyone. I'd like to include more reviews of pens and related obsessions. I'm not a connoisseur of pens; I'm a user of them, so my critical reviewing skills need a little honing.

For instance, **Jeff** found a glaring omission in this review – the Mega Inkball does *not* fit into A5 or Personal

Filofax pen loops. Even the smaller burgundy model, which I have, is too wide. I would venture to say that it does not fit into any typical checkbook, wallet, or pocketbook loops. The wider loops in a high-end pen case or briefcase might accommodate it.

**Speedmaster**, thanks for speaking up. I love watches, and I'd venture to say that many of our readers do, too, so I've added your site to our Links list. (And Happy New Year to you, too!)

Anonymous (2007-10-17 18:55:00)

Hmmm, my experience is not nearly so carefree. Mine shows such an annoying tendency to skip that I have relegated it to the shelf and gone back to my Parker.

The customer service from Yafa Pen who does the support for Monteverde is fantastic – my converter developed major leaks and they replaced it immediately. I thought my problem was solved but alas, no.

So, for what my experience is worth, the Mega Inkball is a charming idea and a beautiful pen unless you want to actually write with it.

Yves (2008-12-11 15:07:00)

I have to say the exact same thing as in the above comment.

The idea of the Mega is brilliant, especially for me being very fond of both RBs and FPs. The pen itself is very attractive (I have the White & Gold version), but this one skips more often than a 50 cents Bic ballpoint.

I was although extremely impressed by the customer service from BOTH Yafa and the seller of the pen. I had trouble with the cartridges not holding on tight to the feed part, the included converter had an air leak. Yafa sent me another converter but it had the same problem. They even agreed to send me a brand new package in return of this one I already had. The included converter was already filled by Yafa when it arrived and this time it work flawlessly... until I ran out of ink and refilled it. It went back to square zero.

Also, as the above comment mentions, if you intend to actually WRITE with a pen, don't go for this one. It's mechanism just doesn't suit the 200 \$ I threw in the garbage.

Term Papers (2010-03-11 05:18:15)

It takes some reading to find all the really interesting stuff, but it's pretty good

[1]Term papers

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

## Ripped from the comments: Filofabs (2006-12-30 16:11) - Nan



[1] Philofaxy fan Lee wrote recently:  
*"As an avid filoaax 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 [2]www.filofabs.com and let me know what you think."*

Well, as you can see by the picture, "funky and fabulous" is an apt description for this dream diary. Other inserts include golf scorecards, a puzzle set, to do lists, and a couple truly unique designs called "Meeting Boredom Resuce Pack" and "The Lovepad."

Sounds like a welcome dose of Filofax *joie de vivre*! Since my Christmas vacation is due to end in very few days, I'm going to try that Meeting Boredom pack. Anyone else who tries Filofabs, please let us know what you think.

1. <http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/938349/dreamcatcher.gif>
2. <http://www.filofabs.com/>

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Anonymous (2006-12-31 12:31:00)

Dear all, [www.filofabs.com](http://www.filofabs.com) is a well-presented site full of inspiration, just like [philofaxy](http://philofaxy.com)! I stumbled upon [philofaxy](http://philofaxy.com) some weeks ago having decided to invest in a filofax. It was spooky to find that I had already ordered the very same organiser that [Philofaxer](http://philofaxy.com) started with. Because I didn't know what I wanted I had chosen on the basis of the most popular paper size (to secure the best chance of replacement supplies – as found on [www.filofabs.com](http://www.filofabs.com)). The classic design (because I'm old fashioned) in a sober colour (UK spelling) not black (to say it wasn't a corporate freebie).

The foundations of a system are in place and I have already entrusted my chocolate filo with my most valuable carry possessions (friend's business cards, ID). I have written in passwords (in code) and am utilising all the tabs (though not necessarily according to description). The Andrzej system is up and running. Thank you [filofaxy](http://philofaxy.com) contributors all for gently helping me back into the world of paper. Its odd that my new paper organiser has led me into dipping my toe into the strange world of the web log. Long may you all prosper. Adios amigos!

### Countdown to 2007 (2006-12-31 20:25) - Nan

As I write this in the eastern United States, it's already 2007 in some parts of the world. Here's a really neat Web page that shows you exactly [1]when 2007 starts around the world. (If you explore the site, you'll find lots of other countdown features.)

If you really want to get a jump on things, and those blank 2007 diary pages are staring you down, check out [2]Wikipedia's page devoted to the year 2007. The page contains almanac info (Astrological Year: Pisces; Chinese Year: Pig), plus a listing of major events already scheduled. Need to jot down the dates for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland? Why January 24-28, of course.

My next appointment? Dinner at a Japanese hibachi restaurant, followed by the Stooges marathon and Times Square ball-dropping on TV.

1. <http://www.timeanddate.com/counters/firstnewyear.html>
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007>

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Anonymous (2007-01-03 19:31:00)

I purchased the Personal Eden a few months back in the summer. However, I want something more "sophisticated" but I'm young, in my very early 20s, and I don't want to have to resort to "black". I did order a Pocket Finsbury in black a few days ago because I didn't like the other color choices so much(it's taking forever btw) and I was just browsing through [Philofaxy](http://philofaxy.com) and I came across to "The Daily Planner" site and I saw the Pocket Finsbury is available in teal which I very much so wanted in the first place but had learned that they discontinued it. Should I stick with the black one I had originally ordered or return it when it comes so I can buy the teal one? I can't wait any longer!

Anonymous (2007-01-09 06:05:00)

Get the one you really want, you'll be glad you did!



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