

Philofaxy *2007*

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Chapter 1

2007

1.1 January

Liability of Literacy (2007-01-01 16:36) - Nan



[1] Has anyone else, like me when I first started using a Filofax, ever worried that writing things down would cause one to forget, rather than remember things? Nowadays, gurus like David Allen and Steven Covey preach the importance of writing *everything* down, so that it won't get lost before you have a chance to do it.

An article in the November 20, 2006 issue of [2]The New Yorker suggests that the very fact of being able to read and write has a detrimental effect on memory. In India's Rajasthan region, a caste of bards called *bhopas* have been known to memorize epics of 100,000 stanzas (6 times the length of the Bible) and sing them straight through.

According to the article ("Homer in India," by William Dalrymple), "...illiteracy seems an essential condition for preserving the performance of an oral epic....This was certainly the conclusion of the Indian folklorist Komal Kothari. In the nineteen-fifties, Kothari came up with the idea of sending one of his principal sources, a singer from the Langa caste named Lakha, to adult-education classes. The idea was that he would learn to read and write, thus making it easier to collect the many songs he had preserved. Soon Kothari noticed that Lakha needed to consult his diary before he began to sing. Yet the rest of the Langa singers were able to remember hundreds of songs—an ability that Lakha had somehow begun to lose as he slowly learned to write."

As the *bhopa* tradition dies out, transcribing the epics is necessary to preserve them. Inevitably, some have been lost forever, dying along with the traveling bards who could sing volumes, but not write them down.

Photo of quill pen found in 15th century records from [3]www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

1. http://photos1.blogger.com/x/blogger/1314/393/1600/236742/quillpen_large.jpg

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

3. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Jeff Abbott (2007-01-02 09:50:00)

It's a good thing I'm not required to memorize epics.

The bane of my existence as a writer is not having something to write on when I've had an idea for a character, or for an improvement to the plot, or to untangle a mess I've written. Flashes of inspiration are often just that—a flash that comes in the early morning hours, or when i'm about to fall asleep or wake up, or when I'm in the middle of something else. I have to capture those, and the best ways I've found is writing them down. I don't trust my memory. Maybe I could if what I had to remember had the benefits of rhyme and meter to give my information structure and form, but my projects and to-do lists are not that melodious. :-)

Anonymous (2007-01-02 21:40:00)

LOL, Jeff, but thanks for sharing the serious experience of a writer's creative process. You make it vividly clear how important it is to capture those flashes of inspiration.

jeff abbott (2007-01-02 22:18:00)

Nan—the article (and your posting) make an excellent point—if your memory is all you have to rely on—then it's going to be a finely honed machine. I wish I had the memory capacity of the bards. But experience has proven that I don't.

Of course, though, we've all known people who had to-do lists as long as their arm and they still don't remember to get anything done. :-) There is a bad side to getting it out of your mind if writing it down is the mental equivalent of "dealing with it", and therefore encourages you to neglect the idea/action.

Anonymous (2007-01-03 00:41:00)

Yes, there is a downside to considering an issue dealt with if it's written down...when you miss doing it in real life and have to deal with the consequences. I've certainly learned lessons like that.

After spending a few months doing a practise of capturing all my wild ideas, I found that most of them weren't as usable as I had hoped. Or they were interesting ideas, but I just didn't act upon them.

On the other hand, they are ideas I may act upon someday, or when I'm not really looking. There's no harm in having them. I guess I should stop bemoaning these snatches I've captured and treasure them like bits in a scrapbook, waiting for the day that I want to take another look at them.

Pool Philofaxy (2007-01-03 15:05) - Nan



[1] No, I'm not suggesting you toss your precious Filofax into the drink. I'm talking about the [2]Philofaxy pool on Flickr.

Check it out (and if you haven't visited for a long time, check it out again)! Members have added some mouthwateringly gorgeous planner shots, like this picture of Morning Glory refills (a Korean stationery brand).

If you ever fear you're losing interest in using your Filo, these pictures will boost your enthusiasm, big time. I know they did mine!

Photo credit to [3]bettybl on [4]Flickr.

1. http://farm1.static.flickr.com/154/339834176_4b880c79a3.jpg?v=0

2. <http://www.flickr.com/groups/40748476@N00/pool/>

3. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bettybl/>

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

Anonymous (2007-01-03 19:36:00)

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 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!

p.s. sorry i posted twice. i realized i hadn't comment to the most recent post.

Anonymous (2007-01-03 20:51:00)

Hello Anon Y. Mous – My first suggestion is to The Daily Planner (800-635-4321) and make sure that they really have the teal in stock. Web sites can always make mistakes. And if you wait to return the black before you buy the teal, it could sell out. If you really want it, place the order for the teal and *then* return the black when it comes, if you can afford to do that.

Either way, don't settle for black if you don't like it! I think the Navy, Red, and Magenta Finsburys are nice and sophisticated looking, but not as boring as black.

Betty (2007-01-03 23:22:00)

I think the navy finsbury looks very nice...sophisticated but still colorized.

I ordered a black bloomsbury (yeah boring, but I just wanted something that I won't get tired of for years to come) several days ago. I can't wait until it comes! I currently own a compact belgravia from filofax, but the ring size is too small & I can hardly fit much in it.

Anonymous (2007-01-04 01:59:00)

I kind of do want the black one only because it's more practical and it's "safe". I notice you have a teal one, nan. I don't have a Flickr account so I am not able to comment on your lovely teal Finsbury but what size is it and how long have you gotten it? I can't believe they're out of the teal Pocket Finsbury! Does anyone know when they're going to be releasing new colors or organizers out? Or how often they have new designs? I hate to already have ordered my boring black one fearing that a new color or design might come out.

Anonymous (2007-01-04 12:03:00)

A bunch of obsessives (like me) I see... :) Well let me tell you the story of the silly girl (me) who bought one filofax after another, returned a bunch and was never satisfied with the right colour. I now have 4 filofaxes and bought 2 more for family members. 2 of the 6 are in use and the others are being wasted in their boxes (I am thinking of being brave and selling the rest on eBay). My advice is stick to black, years down the line you'll appreciate the understated yet quality look of the filofax you were not sure about initially. The other choice would be something like tan or Red. Stick to classic colors if you are not sure!

Anon.A.Mous.

Anonymous (2007-01-04 20:35:00)

My teal Finsbury is pocket-size. I bought it at a local stationery store about a year ago. It's a great model in the pocket size because it has a wallet pocket running along the back.

Now I have to confess that I don't know Filofax's schedule for introducing new designs and colors. I think it might be in the spring. If you sign up at [1]<http://www.filofax.co.uk/signup/>, you'll get a newsletter from Filofax that tell you about them a little in advance.

1. <http://www.filofax.co.uk/signup/>

Betty (2007-01-04 20:40:00)

I was also hoping that they would release some new planners because when I looked at their website, I couldn't really find what I liked (something in smooth leather w/o the grains). I had to resort to order a Bloomsbury, a discontinued model, but in a material that I liked.

I thought the belmont should be really good too since it's so expensive...I'm just not crazy about how the clip button thing looks (as trivial as that may seem).

Besides a personal size, I also wanted to get a really pretty pocket size, but I don't think I would use it too much at all, so I didn't get one.

Anonymous (2007-01-05 02:32:00)

Is The Daily Planner a trusty website? Do things arrive in a prompt manner?

Nan (2007-01-05 21:19:00)

I've only ordered from them once, but I was satisfied with their service.

Betty (2007-01-07 09:12:00)

I was just wondering, if you were to select one organizer, would you choose

http://www.goldspot.com/gallery/Filofax/FF-026402_big.jpg

or

http://www.goldspot.com/gallery/Filofax/FF-024004_big.jpg

The Stratford & the Finchley looks nice too.

Nan (2007-01-07 18:12:00)

Well, I have to say that the Classic (with the cross motif; http://www.goldspot.com/gallery/Filofax/FF-024004_big.jpg) is sexier. However, the plain black is more classic in the minimalist sense.

Today, if I were to select one, it would be the Classic.

Anonymous (2007-01-14 09:23:00)

I have been looking for a filofax and came across the Classic I like the black which I think will go with everything, but I quite like the Camel or the caramel in the classic. I have actually seen the tan in the classic but only in smaller size, so if anyone knows where I can get a personal Tan classic please can you let me know.

Thanks

Nan (2007-01-14 13:01:00)

Filofax USA seems to have the Personal Classic in Camel: <http://www.filofaxusa.com/ficlsicobeov.html>

Tab Tweaking (2007-01-07 18:23) - Nan

I know, I know, most of us who frequent this blog are aware of the need to do less tweaking and more doing. But I often feel like speaking out in praise of tweaking.

By tweaking I don't mean buying a new Treo, or switching to an all-Filofax system when you have Franklin Covey pages that already do the same thing. (Not that I'm not pretty much guilty on both counts.) I'm talking about smaller, internal tweaking.

I say, don't hesitate to tweak your tabs. Tabs are one of those things that you need to experience in order to make a decision about. In other words, if your Filofax isn't working for you, it may be time to rename your tabs and work with the new configuration for a while.

For example, a couple of weeks ago, I thought that my be-all, end-all tab set was:

Actions,

Projects,

Routines,

Lists,

Notes,

Agendas (with the address pages behind the Agendas tab, and no A-Z tabs)

A couple weeks before that, I was using A-Z tabs and no other tabs, but using a second pop-in ruler to point to my action lists.

Now, I've changed my configuration to:

Goals

Plans

Agendas

Ideas (someday/maybe, etc.)

Lists

Addresses (again, just address pages here, with no A-Z tabs)

What I want to put behind each of these tabs doesn't necessarily follow convention. More on that in my next post.

Jeff Abbott (2007-01-08 09:30:00)

I'll share my tab setup:

Projects—includes lists of projects, list of actions to do each project, and a Filofax Vertical Year Planner so I can map out the major writing projects for the year

To Dos—organized by context (@Errands, @Studio, @Home, etc.)

Ideas—place for mad scribbling, doodling, thinking

Lists—lists of movies to watch, books to read, people to annoy

Someday/Maybe—not using this much. Would probably help if I stuck notepaper in this section.

Reference—also not being used much, but I keep Expenses forms in there for when I'm travelling. Right now it also contains on a sticknote the address of a Filofax store in London I want to visit.

Then I use the A-Z tabs for addresses of people whose contact info I always want with me. If I buy a smartphone this year I'll probably take this section out and just keep all addresses/such on said gadget.

Anonymous (2007-01-08 19:36:00)

Nan, how long did your items arrive from The Daily Planner? I decided to go for the Teal Personal Finsbury (it happened to be the last one left or so it says on their website) and decide to return the Black Pocket Finsbury when it arrives tomorrow. I haven't received a confirmation saying that it has been shipped out or anything so I was just wondering how long it took for you. Their service is kind of horrible considering that I have tried to email them and called them numerous of times only to get to their answer machine. I am, however, ecstatic to received my Personal Finsbury in Teal since it is a discontinued color in that size.

Nan (2007-01-08 21:30:00)

Thanks, Jeff. Nice straightforward setup. (Keeping paper in a section helps, especially colored paper for an ideas section.)

Anonymous – I think my order took about a week. I'm sorry they weren't responsive to your calls and emails. Actually, I had that problem not with The Daily Planner but with Filofax USA.

Jeff Abbott (2007-01-10 14:38:00)

re The Daily Planner: I ordered some notepad Filofax refills from them, they sent me an email confirmation the next day, and today (less than a week) my refills arrived. They included a very nice catalog of Filofax, Excompta, etc. I have no complaints with The Daily Planner and will order from them again.

Tab Tweaking Two (2007-01-08 21:52) - Nan

I explained in my previous post that I've overhauled my tab arrangement. Here's what goes behind each one.

Goals - Not the lofty kind of goals you're probably thinking of. The mundane kind – swimming a certain number of laps, drinking water, taking fish oil, and so on. I'm much better at doing these things regularly when I keep track of them on little spreadsheets.

Plans - What most people call projects. I like to call them plans so I don't have to break them down into individual projects. A plan can be getting a certain set of work done on the house, or accomplishing something in my career. I like the word "plan" better than "project" because it reminds me about the benefits I'll reap at the end.

Agendas - Running lists of things I need to tell or ask certain people – one page per person. Borrowed from David Allen (of *Getting Things Done* fame). I've found this a great way to remember things I want to discuss with a doctor, with a family member I don't see very often, and so on.

Ideas - Anything goes.

Lists - Shopping lists, restaurants to try, books to read, etc.

Addresses - Actually, I only carry telephone numbers on these A-Z pages. My main address list lives on my computer.

You've probably noticed there's no To-Do section. I try to have only one page going at a time, and I keep it in the middle of the current week spread in the calendar.

Anonymous (2007-01-09 17:10:00)

Hi Nan. I finally got through to The Daily Planner and was informed that the Teal is not available. My Pocket Finsbury arrived today and it seems a tad bit small for me as I am used to the Personal size. Here's another question, should I keep the Personal and save the trouble to go through all the shipping back and forth or exchange it for the Personal Finsbury?

Nan (2007-01-09 20:55:00)

I'm sorry to hear the teal isn't available for you. Now, as for what size to get, that's really up to you. But if the Pocket seems too small now, it will probably continue to be too small for you. Most people prefer the Personal to the Pocket, unless they're using the Pocket strictly as a "carry-around" and keep a Personal or A5 at their desk.

BiscuitsInTheHouse (2007-01-10 14:18:00)

I have to agree with Nan's advice; I've never been able to get on with any Filofax size below that of Personal - I think you end up in a situation where having such small pages in a loose-leaf format is simply not very useful. I think where size is a consideration you're better off with Slimline Personal size Filofax.

Filofax Sales up 20 Percent (2007-01-12 20:03) - Nan

According to an [1]article posted on December 11, 2006 on BusinessWeek.com (and now if this link expires you know how to find it), worldwide sales of Filofaxes have gone up 20 % since Letts acquired the company in 2001. Growth is currently at a clip of 5 % per year.

The article talks how Letts has endeavored to make Filofaxes more appealing to women customers (who now make up 60 % of Filofax purchasers, as opposed to 60 % men in the mid-90's), and in developing countries, where Filofaxes are desired as a status item.

Why else has the Filofax held up so well against Blackberries and PDAs? According to the article, people use electronic devices more for "wireless connectivity than as true organizers."

Another interesting statistic: 68 % of Filofax users are under the age of 45.

1. http://yahoo.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/dec2006/gb20061211_459349.htm

Betty (2007-01-13 12:53:00)

Yes, I truly feel that electronic organizers are for wireless connectivity rather than really organizing. It's so much easier for me to jot something down quickly rather than go through several menus before I can painstakingly punch in the info on those tiny tiny keyboard.

It's great that 60 % of the users are now women :) But I hope they continue making some unisex traditional kinds. I really don't want something that looks like the Rio model (bright neon colors with flower fabric prints inside = yuck!)

Anonymous (2007-01-13 14:53:00)

I think this is very good news for Filofax, but hope they don't forget the guys as customers. Lately I've been asked more about my Filofax by men than women (I have a Classic A5). A lot of guys still need a nice paper planner.

Rick, England (2007-01-14 11:06:00)

Well I've been a Filofax user since the 1990s when I first used the format as an Officer in the British Army. I believe that there will always be room for a paper-based organiser/notebook and I really do believe that the Filofax in it's many formats has a long future ahead. I was once an avid Personal size fan but have now become a convert to the A5 size as I find it more useful for making lecture notes (I'm now training to be a teacher).

Filofax: The Movie? (2007-01-14 12:24) - Nan



[1] The Moleskine-loving community had a collective swoon a couple years back when, in the opening scene of "The Da Vinci Code," Tom Hanks' character read lecture notes from a small, rather dull black notebook. The Filofax, on the other hand, has been the main subject of a movie: [2]"Taking Care of Business." That's the U.S. title; in other countries the movie was simply called "The Filofax." The movie's a comedy about an unfunny business: identity theft. I haven't seen it, but according to the synopsis, Jim Belushi is a likeable, small-time crook who escapes from prison in order to use his World Series tickets. On the way to the game, he happens upon the lost Filofax of a wealthy executive (Charles Grodin) containing cash, credit cards, and mansion key. A sort of "Trading Places" role-reversal ensues.

Has anyone seen the movie and can tell me how it ends? Better yet, can anyone take a screen capture of the Filofax in the movie?

Bonus question: Two cast members of "Taking Care of Business" were also regulars on a well-known TV show. Can you name that show?

Photo and link credit cinemafia on Flickr.

1. http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_H4Rx8LSaPk/So1Fj15uojI/AAAAAAAAAJI/xCozLjEUv-4/s1600-h/6a00e009806a86883300e55044c9768833-640wi.jpg

2. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0103035/>

Jeff Abbott (2007-01-14 13:56:00)

Also interesting is that the film was written by J. J. Abrams of ALIAS and LOST fame. Maybe he's a Filofax user?

Chet (2007-01-14 22:29:00)

The well-known TV show was *Hill Street Blues*. And one of the two cast members from the show who was in the movie was Veronica Hamel.

Right?

Nan (2007-01-14 22:53:00)

Chet – Good answer! Veronica Hamel and Hector Elizondo both appeared on Hill Street Blues in the 80's! However, Hector Elizondo only made a couple of guest appearances on the show.

That was my first thought, too. I at first confused Hector Elizondo with [1]Rene Enriquez, who played a Latino detective in a *regular* role on the show.

If you keep looking, there are two other actors on who were *regular* characters on another show. *Hill Street Blues* is one answer. Can anyone get the other?

1. <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0258089/>

Nan (2007-01-15 18:59:00)

Jeff, thanks for picking up on the J. J. Abrams connection. His career has certainly come a long way since "Taking Care of Business"!

I've also noticed, now that I've checked out his [1]Wikipedia page, that there's a connection between Abrams and the other TV show in my quiz question.

Another clue!

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._J._Abrams

Godwulfe (2007-02-05 09:28:00)

You're probably referring to Star Trek: TNG and the characters are Dr. Crusher and Q.

As for the movie - it's one of my all time favorites. It's pretty typical in it's depiction of the stereotypical obsessed Filofax user (his whole life is dictated by what's in the book) and the ending is that he he has to cast away the book to regain his 'life', but it's enjoyable nonetheless.

Huper Arnion (2007-05-17 15:59:00)

I just obtained a copy of the DVD and the Filofax appears to be a dark, coffee brown "one-off" equipped with a clear plastic window over the entire interior of the front cover. There appears to be at least two different props, although both have stitched on covers, and leather page lifters. In a scene at an airport payphone, the prop appears to show a complete second cover. Neither prop appears to display a Filofax logo on the exterior spine or on the chrome ring assembly, although the interior of the front cover has a Filofax "reward if found" certificate displayed in the plastic window.

Nan (2007-05-17 19:09:00)

Hi Huper – Welcome to Philofaxy! Thanks for filling us in on the details of the movie star Filo!

john (2010-09-03 05:23:18)

Where can you obtain a "REWARD IF FOUND" certificate? Is there a such thing?

Steve (2010-09-03 06:53:21)

John

In the front of most refills there is a registration form that you fill in from the Filofax Website. They offer a reward for organisers returned via them to their rightful owner.

Steve

john (2010-09-04 00:21:19)

Steve, thankyou very much! I love this site!

Quiz Answer (2007-01-16 23:45) - Nan

OK, I'll put you all out of your unbearable suspense.

The answer to the "Taking Care of Business" movie question I was looking for is "Star Trek: The Next Generation," and the actors were Gates McFadden (Dr. Beverly Crusher) and John DeLancie (the Q). And what's the connection to the movie's scriptwriter (which I mentioned in the [1]comments)? J. J. Abrams is on deck to write the [2]eleventh Star Trek movie.

1. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2007/01/filofax-movie.html>
 2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Trek_XI
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Off-Topic, Yet Somehow Apropos (2007-01-20 05:02) - Nan

Maybe it's because I've gone 4 days without writing here on Philofaxy, but somehow I found myself reading [1]a post on Wil Wheaton's blog about writer's block. Apparently, a professor named Piers Steel has come up with an [2]Einstein-like formula for calculating procrastination. As Wil himself says, the advice and comments people added are the best part.

So, since we have some writers in our midst, and Filofaxes are our favorite anti-procrastination tool, I thought Wil's post might be of some interest. Besides, weren't we just talking about Star Trek the other day?

Besides, isn't it just SO obvious that I'm just casting about for Filofax-related topics to write about?

1. http://wilwheaton.typepad.com/wwdnbackup/2007/01/utility_e_x_v_g.html
 2. http://news.com.com/A%20formula%20for%20procrastination/2100-1008_3-6149636.html?tag=nefd.1ede
-

Jeff Abbott (2007-01-20 14:47:00)

To me writer's block and procrastination are two different things.

I once heard writer's block described as a "failure of confidence". I think that's a pretty accurate description. I just wrestled with ideas for a week for a new book proposal—every idea seemed unworthy of a book. I have learned just to give myself time, get away from the desk now and then, go for walks, let mind shift into idle and stop worrying about it. The ideas do come, especially if you give them a silence to fill. (I got the idea for my next book and the proposal is well underway.)

Procrastination is, to me, not often wanting to do tedious jobs or jobs where we have fears of failure. The Filofax helps me in this regard especially, since I use the ToDo sheets by context, a la GTD (although I keep the contexts to just a few). One glance at the sheets lets me see where I'm getting behind (on things at home) or where I've caught up (at my writing studio). Also, as I get close to completing an entire sheet, that often gives me a momentum to get the rest of the to-dos in that context completed, even the to-dos that I have the most resistance to doing. So I think my Filofax is helping to minimize my procrastination.

Nan, I understand your grappling with Filo-related topics. This doesn't seem to be a problem in the Palm universe, where people can talk ad infinitum about the next latest and greatest—often, I suspect, without getting much done. (I don't have Palms but I used to spend my time in that alternate universe, and I didn't get as much done then as I do know.) I find that the Filofax works for me without me having to think much about it or spend any major time in tweaking the system. If it works, maybe that means we simply have less to say.

Jeff Abbott (2007-01-20 15:22:00)

Oops, meant to say above "I don't hate Palms. . ." Think Palms can be useful, but my work style meshes better with a Filofax.

Nan (2007-01-20 20:09:00)

Hi Jeff –

Congratulations on your proposal!!

And thank you for the words of wisdom about giving ideas "a silence to fill." You're talking about true silence,

not background noise and fretting.

I find the same thing with my To Do sheets, which I also keep by context. Sometimes all the motivation I need is to finish off the sheet! Having undone things staring me in the face helps me see where I need to focus my attention – or where I'm just creating needless to-dos.

Thanks for your support on finding topics. While I haven't yet reached my ultimate goal for this blog, I think you've hit upon a kernel of truth about having "less to say." This year, I have found myself doing more things like bookkeeping, merchandise returns, and housework, simply because I have nothing left to write down. These activities don't make me "feel" productive in the way that tweaking my system or reprioritizing things on my Pam did, but they are true productivity.

dewanna (2007-01-23 14:32:00)

When it comes to procrastination, I sometimes view the Filofax as my enabler. I can spend a couple of hours developing a comprehensive, prioritized task list only to be so exhausted by the process that I give myself permission to 'take a break' and forget about it for a while. The immortal words of Scarlett O'Hara play over and over again in my mind – "I won't think about that today, I'll think about that tomorrow."

There is something about writing down a task or reminder that sort of gives me permission to put it aside (procrastinate) knowing that it is safely recorded for future reference. It's on my list, so I can forget about it for now thinking that it will get done eventually. Several days down the road, the list I have worked so hard to compile is outdated and must be rewritten. I understand that this is not an issue with the tool; it's an issue with my use of the tool. It is very easy to become overwhelmed. Rewriting the list may feel productive, but it is a mere smokescreen to a larger problem – things aren't getting done. The lack of results makes me wonder if I wouldn't be more productive if I had a different planning device. Before I know it, I have spent a week trying to decide on the best method of planning and the best device to use. Big surprise – nothing got done again.

I eventually snap out of this rut when I realize how silly I've been, but it isn't always easy. Then I'm reminded .

..

"One cannot kill time, without injuring eternity." Paul Williams, Das Energi

dewanna (2007-01-23 14:37:00)

H D Thoreau, but I like the book.

Anonymous (2007-01-23 17:53:00)

Hi Nan,

I sent you an email, but you might not have received it. Here's a Filofax topic: How do you use multiple sizes of Filofaxes? I noticed while browsing your flickr photos that you have both the personal size and the A5. In my quest for the perfect planner/ perfect system, I've changed sizes more times than I want to admit - but hmmm... could there be to use more than one size at once?

Nan (2007-01-24 10:08:00)

Hi Dewanna – Oh, I so can relate to the rewriting thing! In recent months, I realized I was just rewriting the same things over and over again, and put a moratorium on creating any new lists or tweaking my system any more. I had spent almost 2 years doing nothing but that, interspersed with bursts of actually getting things done.

These days, I'm getting things done very slowly, because my days are filled with so many "have to dos" that my "want to dos" are like precious gems. I think maybe I was just underestimating how long my "have to dos" and already-committed "want to dos" take, and I really don't have time to add anything new.

I think because the Filofax is simpler to use and less intricate than, say, a Franklin Covey planner or a Palm, these patterns of mine have become easier for me to see.

I love the Paul Williams quote!

By the way, it IS important to take breaks! Life can be overwhelming, and it's important to get some downtime! Making lists can be part of dealing with it.

Nan (2007-01-24 10:09:00)

Hi Anonymous – I answered your email!

Managing Multiple Filos (2007-01-24 17:21) - Nan

Last June, I wrote about the [1]three Filofaxes I was using at the time and how I used them. Since then, a new reader emailed asking me to go into more detail, and reminded me that there may be other new readers who haven't seen this information before. Also, I've switched from carrying a Pocket to a Personal size Filo since then.

So, with the indulgence of anyone who already knows some of this, I'll quote from my email response here:

Mind you, this is subject to change without notice! I've tried to make a deal with myself to stick with this current system for the rest of 2007, but I'm already wavering, as I'll explain below.

Anyway, here's my current system:

1) A personal-size Filofax that comes with me everywhere. It's my wallet, week-per-2-pages calendar, and has tabs for to-dos, projects (current), ideas, lists, agendas, and telephone numbers. (As you can see, this is already different from the tab arrangement I posted on the blog a while ago.)

I do the projects as one-page-per-project, on yellow lined paper. It's fun to take the page out when I complete the project. My most recent one was making hotel reservations for next New Year's Eve!

2) An A5 Filofax on my desk at work. In this one, I have a day-per-page calendar that acts as a schedule, work record, and tickler file. Actually, I don't use this as well as I like, and it's the first thing I might change. In the past, I've used iCal at work with lots of success. This one has tabs for meeting notes, editing notes, contacts, reference, etc. (Can't remember them all since I don't have it in front of me.)

3) An A5 Filo that stays on my kitchen counter. This one is a work in progress, but it's the repository for my FLYlady system. She calls it a Control Journal. It's basically a tickler file for all your routines and house tasks, plus household-related contacts, family calendar (actually, a couples calendar since we don't have kids), emergency and evacuation info, and so on.

Anyway, if I make a change in this, it would be to use the A5 work Filo for both work and personal matters, and instead of the Personal-size Filo, use a Pocket-size as my wallet, with just a portable calendar, phone numbers, and some blank paper for notes on the fly. That's what I did last year. The reason I ended up getting a Personal-size was that I was trying to cram too much into the Pocket.

Hope this makes sense.

1. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/06/mamas-family.html>

Anonymous (2007-01-25 11:51:00)

That's fascinating. I find I can't make do with less than four organisers - one for work, one for home, one for sports and one for family! I sometimes think I keep the whole company going! By the way, there's no such word as 'filofaxes'!! That's how much of a geek I am! Still, whatever works eh? Great site - keep it up!

Anonymous (2007-01-25 12:01:00)

I agree, quite fascinating! I find myself lost in another world when I'm organising my life within my Filofax. I couldn't do without it. I think it's a marvellous idea to have multiple organisers. You truly are a Filofax aficionado! Bravo!

Nan (2007-01-25 18:02:00)

Thanks for your support, A1 & A2! I feel a renewed sense of confidence in my multi-Filo system. But I must ask; I'm intrigued. What's the plural, then, of Filofax? Filesifax, maybe...? LOL!

Anonymous (2007-01-25 23:08:00)

Tax, taxes; fax, faxes. Look it up in any dictionary. I think you're correct, Nan.

Anonymous (2007-01-26 06:18:00)

No - Filofax is the company name not the product name. So you use three 'organisers' not three 'filofaxes'. I win!
:)

Anonymous (2007-01-26 09:44:00)

The company name is Letts Filofax Group, Ltd.

Anonymous 1, you should probably strap on a police siren and rush over to a Moleskine site, where people are calling them Moleskines instead of Moleskine notebooks, Moleskine sketchbooks, Moleskine calendars—all without adult supervision. :-)

Nan (2007-01-26 13:15:00)

"Letts" it never be said that there's any adult supervision at Philofaxy!

There are no winners or losers, either, unless you're talking about people who use Mol-a-skeen-as. :)

Anonymous (2007-01-27 13:27:00)

Which personal size filofax do you use? Thanks.

HP Fuchs (2007-01-27 17:03:00)

Hello Filofaxer

I am currently using a Palm for appointments, contacts and todo's and in office I have to use Outlook. I am also using a Filofax for notes, scetches and because the palm accepts only latin characters. There is also a camera-phone/mp3 player in my pocket.

I would like to use only the filofax instead of the palm, mainly because entering text is not so convenient.

How can I keep appointments in outlook and filofax up to date?

Anonymous (2007-01-30 05:47:00)

I have a slimline classic (cross) in black that I carry with me at all times, a Personal size classic (cross) again in black for home/personal life organisation and at work I have an A5 Bloomsbury in Black. I find that you definately do need more than one to organise a full life. I am considering one for the kitchen for the whole family so that we can all remind, manage and book appointments...

Anon. E. Mous

Nan (2007-02-02 22:42:00)

Hi Anon E. – Your organizers sound so sleek and sophisticated! Definitely consider the kitchen organizer. It can be a way for family members to pass notes back and forth, a repository for numbers that anyone might need in an emergency (repairmen, etc.), menus and recipes so whoever gets home first can start dinner, and so on.

H. P. – There are only two ways to sync Outlook with a paper organizer: Either by hand or by printing. You can buy printer paper from Filofax in your organizer's size and print your Outlook calendar and contacts on it. You may not have to do the contacts very often, but for the calendar you may want to reprint once a week (just the upcoming weeks or months), and then write on the printed pages in the meantime.

Anonymous (2007-02-03 11:01:00)

Question for Nan: Which Filo models do you use? Thanks

Nan (2007-02-03 16:28:00)

A5 Work - Finsbury, Black

A5 Kitchen - Belgravia, Red

Personal - Finsbury, Red

Anonymous (2007-02-12 23:14:00)

Did you find that the pocket was more portable than the personal? I'm trying to decide whether to purchase a personal or pocket to use as a wallet.

Nan (2007-02-13 23:50:00)

Yes, the Pocket really is more compatible for a wallet than the Personal. Although I've gotten used to having the Personal with me everywhere, the Pocket is really easier to carry.

Calendar Girls (2007-01-25 09:24) - Nan

A very nice reader just notified me that the February, 2007 issue of Better Homes and Gardens features a 4-page spread about how three women manage their work and family lives with the help of organizers. Filofax is one of them!

Check your local newsstands.

Thanks, for the tip, Gloria!

Aunt Gloria (2007-01-25 18:12:00)

I need to make a correction to my note. It's actually a 2 page spread on pages 130 and 134. Sorry about that folks.

PK (2008-10-12 05:23:00)

Hi guys,

being a first time writer, I just have one question - is this article available online?

Best,

PK

A Golden Oldie (Me) (2007-01-30 13:25) - Spiral Stairs

Hello. My name is Philofaxer. You may remember me from such blogs as this blog. But you also may not remember me, because I have been absent for months. Please insert excuse number one here. Excuse number two goes here. You may find this to be a convenient spot for excuse number three, and I think excuse number four should go right Here.

Nan has done such an amazing job maintaining the substance and quality of Philofaxy that she has, inadvertently, encouraged me to indulge my innate laziness. That's right. Nan is an enabler. Why go through the trouble of posting, when Nan will do such a lovely job in my absence? Why go through the trouble of trying to improve Philofaxy, when Nan is improving it at a pace I could never rival? Why not, instead, watch five straight seasons of 24 on DVD, because somehow you only recently realized it's a really good show? Why not, instead, decide that you also like The L Word, and you have to watch all the old seasons of it, too? Why not, instead, spend four weeks writing a novel, so that you can say you participated in and successfully completed [1]National Novel Writing Month? Why not, instead, spend your time playing with this silly little thing:



Why not, indeed.

My Filo-life is humming along just fine. I haven't bought any new Filofaxes. I soldier on with my A5 Chocolate Cross as my primary data repository, and my Personal Chocolate Cross as my repository of financial data.

You may recall The Great Red Domino Experiment, in which I tested the following hypothesis: A tiny, pocketable Filofax will improve my productivity and overall happiness level. The early evidence, unhappily, did not [2]bear out the hypothesis. But, lo, I have found a new use for the Red Domino. (The following might sound a little hoity-toity, and for that I apologize. I'm not hoity-toity at all. I eat frozen burritos for dinner more often than I like to admit. I buy store brands. I never pay retail (Unless I really want the retail-priced thing (really, really want).)) *I record wine tasting notes in the Red Domino*. Now, before you say, "Philofaxer, between your spendy leather planners and expensive bottles of wine, you're nothing but an elitist with whom I share no affinity! I condemn thee!", let me just say that I am new to the world of wine and still struggling to find words for my wine tasting notes other than "good," "really good," and "um, red." I usually taste a wine and then right down some of those words. Then I look it up on the internet and find that I should have written, "Slightly oaky, with notes of apple, fennel, and beef brisket, and a finish that recalls the black truffles in the woods on the left bank of the Rhone, near that cute little bistro south of Arles."

The other thing is that I am against paying more than ten dollars for a bottle of wine.

Anyway, the Red Domino is getting a little use now.

I also engaged in a bit of Filo-personalization. My son, who will be six months old on Thursday (holy crimoly), recently had "professional" photos taken at his daycare. Being the duty-bound parents we are, we bought some. The place threw in some small stickers of our monkey, for free. I stuck one on the inside, lower left corner of my main Filofax. Now, he faces me whenever I have the Filofax on my desk. (That corner is visible even when the pages are splayed open.) It's really cute, too. I had planned to take a picture of it and include it in this post. Then I forgot my camera. So I planned to use the camera on my cell phone. Then I forgot my cell phone. So I'll post it later.

Maybe. It depends on what's on TV.

1. <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>

2. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/09/pencil-news.html>

Chet (2007-01-30 22:26:00)

Oooo ... I just melted into those big-big eyes of "this silly little thing". Wot's his name?

Anonymous (2007-01-31 05:37:00)

I just want to say what an amazing job Nan has been doing, it took Philofax to come back for me to realise that... Everytime I've gone to <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/> Nan has indulged us with morsels of her Filo obsessed musings. I'm proud to say that I am just as much an obsessive as Nan... perhaps more so... Keep up the good work Nan!

Oh and Philofax... when you do write it's great... keep popping in to see us...

Miss Anon E. Mous.

Spiral Stairs (2007-01-31 07:32:00)

Chet: That little morsel is named Charlie. He has an assortment of nicknames, though, the continual use of which will probably delay his awareness of his name by a year or so.

Anon E. Mous: It's obvious that, without Nan, this blog would be rotting in the digital dustbin. With her, it's not only active, it's better than it used to be.

Signed, Philofaxer Emeritus

Anonymous (2007-01-31 13:33:00)

As a new reader of this blog - I have so enjoyed both your entries as well as Nan's. In fact I was inspired to add an A5 (RED) to my personal size Filofax, and am revamping my systems - I'm a GTD-er :)

Keep writing - I've read all your archived blogs - you are entirely too entertaining to not continue!

Claudia

Anonymous (2007-01-31 13:35:00)

One more thing! Would love to see the wine list! Sounds like we have similar tastes (as in red!) or at least similar price constraints.

Claudia

Nan (2007-02-02 22:46:00)

I second Claudia - I'd love to see a shot of the wine book, too!

Thanks for the warm words, everybody! As Sylvester would say, "Aw schsthuckkthhs!"

Nan (2007-02-03 16:51:00)

One more thing: Those cheeks! Those Charlie cheeks!

1.2 February

Public Service Announcement (Pee-ess-ay) (2007-02-02 13:30) - Spiral Stairs

It has come to my attention that there may be some confusion about the pronunciation of this blog's title. Namely, my wife told me that her internal voice pronounces it, "fuh-LAH-fuh-xee." She said she had assumed that its pronunciation would track the syllabic emphases of "philosophy" (i.e., fuh-LAH-suh-fee). That sounds totally weird to me.

Most of you have probably never said Philofaxy out loud, but you must have adopted an internal pronunciation of it. Let me go on record as endorsing the following pronunciation: FYE-loh-FAX-ee. Or, expressed another way: Filofax-ee. Does this contradict any of your internal voices? At heart, I believe that the will of the masses should, within broad boundaries, govern. So if you disagree with me, then I will have to decide whether this is an issue that falls within the broad boundaries of majority rule, or an issue as to which I will enforce my will by invading your dreams and repeating my pronunciation over and over and over until you surrender.

(Please don't tell me that Filofax is really pronounced "fuh-LAH-fuhx.")

neowagnerite (2007-02-02 22:21:00)

Let me agree, O Great One, with your opinion: it shall be FYE-loh-FAX-ee.

Nan (2007-02-02 22:52:00)

I say "FYE-loh-FAX-ee," but then I say "CON-tro-ver-sey" instead of "con-TROV-er-sey."

Anonymous (2007-02-05 08:20:00)

Yerrp Filofax-ee is how i pronounce it - and I do say it out loud because I promote this website unashamedly...
Filo obsessive that I am...

Miss Anon. E. Mous

Anonymous (2007-02-05 16:10:00)

I pronounce it exactly the way you have intended it.

Anonymous (2007-02-07 22:59:00)

Does anybody know what the "correct" way is to use those Filofax internet filler sheets? I'm not sure as to what goes on the @ and info line.

Anonymous (2007-02-08 15:26:00)

potato po tah to , tomato, to mah to just don't call the whole thing off!

Anonymous (2007-02-14 06:50:00)

Hmmmm not sure about those (Filofax internet filler sheets?) sorry...

But what about some more articles...? Nan where are you?

NAN & PHILOFAX - How does one submit a guest blog?

HP Fuchs (2007-02-14 13:23:00)

It's a pity you don't blog anymore...

Now both of you.

Nan (2007-02-14 19:34:00)

I'd love to get some submissions from potential guest bloggers. If you're interested, just email your article to me:
nanbarber at gmail.

HP Fuchs (2007-02-15 02:40:00)

Guest blogger? Me? On Philofaxy?

Cheap excuse: English isn't my motherstongue.

:))

We ♥ Our Readers (2007-02-14 18:37) - Nan

As many...uh...a few...uh...okay, TWO of our millions of readers have complained, I'm now just as bad as Philofaxer. It's true. For one week, I honestly was on vacation without Internet access. Since then, I've just plain been a negligent blogger.

But I have the perfect excuse – I've been focusing on *doing* the things inside my Filofax. Over the past couple of weeks, I've finalized my kitchen-counter Filofax, cleaned the house, taken down a pile of undone paperwork, started planning our next trip (including tickets to a TV show taping), got my husband a nice Valentine's Day present (tickets to a series of wine tastings), got my winter coat out of storage, had my car detailed, bought new sheets, and the like. (Well, that just about does it for my Christmas money.) I also prepared to sing in a recital, but didn't (it got canceled).

And, to be honest, I've been wobbling, as I know all Filofaxers do. A few more responsibilities have been

added to my job description, including a new team member to delegate things to, and all of a sudden my A5 Filo work setup seemed wrong. Where do I track the delegated items? How do I remind myself to extract tasks from meeting notes without losing them? Are my project pages still working now that I have a lot more projects? Wouldn't a plain notebook be easier?

You get the idea.

However, I've pulled through. My work Filo sits at my right hand, a single receptacle for notes, work records, and schedule. Any failure to sort out my work is my own, not the Filo's. I think.

The next step for me is to start posting again, while trying to maintain my new level of offline activity, too. I understand that our faithful Philofaxy readers have missed the articles, and I appreciate the support. I'll try to give you more of what you come here for.

Meanwhile, it must be said that Philofaxy isn't the *only* place to read about Filofaxes on the Net. There aren't many oases for us lovers of the rings, but today I've one to submit for your perusal: [1]Pig Pog's Moleskine vs. Filofax cost comparison.

1. <http://piggog.com/node/1490>

HP Fuchs (2007-02-15 02:35:00)

Well, Philofaxy is not the only place to read about filofaxes on the net - but it's the best place. So keep it up :-)

piggogm (2007-02-15 15:48:00)

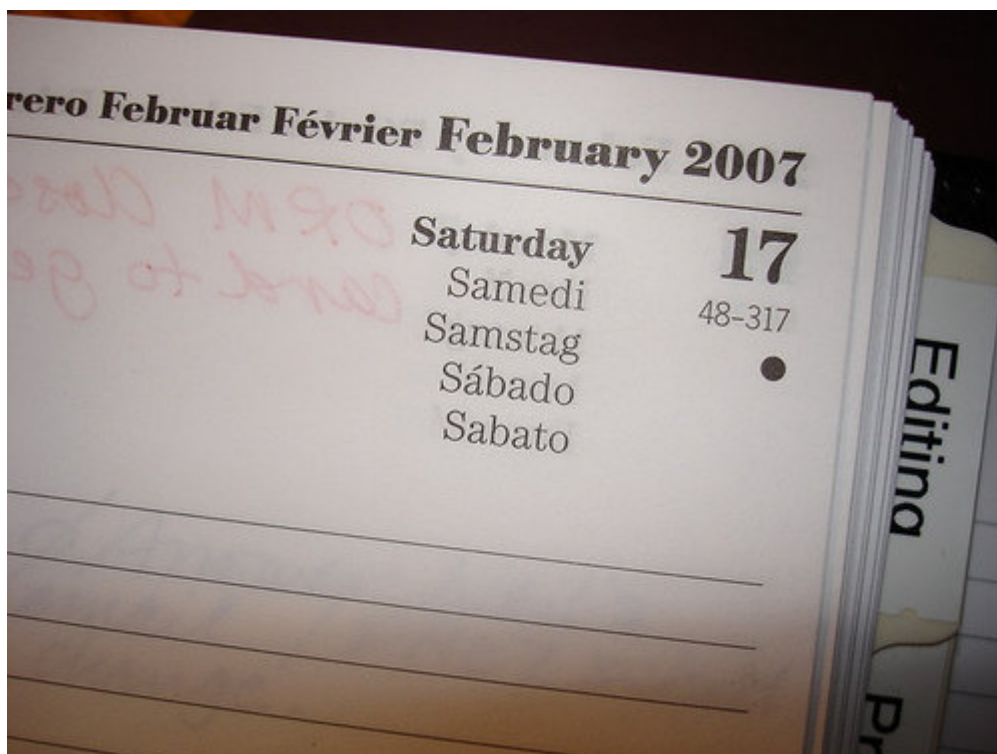
Thanks for the linkage, Nan. I've just had a wobble myself - a week or so with an A4 Clairefontaine notebook, seeing how A4 would stack up against my A5 Filofax.

Like you, though, I'm back to the Filofax now, and loving it again.

Treet (2007-08-10 20:48:00)

I agree, Philofaxy is the best!:) Thanks for the Piggog site, needing a filo fix!

Year of the Pig (2007-02-17 21:31) - Nan



[1] Lunar New Year (celebrated in [2]China and some other Asian countries) begins at the first new moon of the first lunar month. Filofaxes recognize the Lunar New Year – but stealthily.

First, as shown here, moon phases are represented on diary pages by empty (full moon) or blacked-in (new moon) circles. This photo shows a day-per-page format, but the weekly diaries have the moon phases, too.

On the International Information page (the one that lists national currencies, time zones, and holidays), you can see which countries celebrate the holiday by looking for the new moon dates (in 2007, February 17 and 18). Looks like Hong Kong (HK), China (CN), Taiwan (ROC), and South Korea (ROK).

Brazil (BR) also lists February 17-21 as national holidays, but I suspect that has more to do with [3]Carnaval than Lunar New Year.

My favorite part of Lunar New Year as it's celebrated in China? Many people get days or even weeks off from work in order to travel back to their old hometowns and celebrate the new year with relatives.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/397176406/>

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_New_Year

3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnaval_brasileiro

Chet (2007-02-27 00:34:00)

Is Malaysia also listed? Cuz we also celebrate Chinese New Year in Malaysia, altho we only get two days off (and just one in some states).

The Chinese community is the second largest in Malaysia, which is why we get to have two days off for our new year.

Nan (2007-02-27 20:11:00)

Hi Chet! Thanks for asking. I forgot to check for Malaysia, and that's because I only looked on Feb 17 and 18. There are actually 4 days listed for Lunar New Year, and here's the breakdown by country:

Feb 17: Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea

Feb 18: Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and China

Feb 19 & 20: same as above, plus Malaysia

A good friend of mine is Chinese Indonesian, and I understand there's a Chinese community in Indonesia, too, but Indonesia is not listed. But as we saw with the Halloween example earlier, Filofax is pretty accurate when it comes to listing official holidays, but not what people REALLY celebrate.

Shrive, Shrove, Shriven (2007-02-20 22:08) - Nan

(Insert your favorite pluperfect-subjunctive joke here.)

Check your Filofaxes. Although it's not a national holiday in many countries, our diaries label [1]Shrove Tuesday on February 20 of this year (the day before Ash Wednesday).

Does anybody except me know what this means? I grew up calling it Pancake Tuesday, because that's what my Italian grandmother made us. Big stacks of them for an early, after-school supper.

"Shrive" is an English verb meaning "to confess and obtain absolution for sin." Going to confession was an English tradition on the day (Tuesday) before the start of Lent.

The other common name for this day (Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday) goes back to the pancakes. Ash Wednesday used to be a day of fasting, so in the days before refrigeration, people had to use up perishable items (eggs, butter, milk) before the fast began. Part of the idea is also to stuff yourself to help offset the upcoming deprivation.

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrove>

Guest Blog: The Curse of the Cross – Rectified (2007-02-22 21:54) - Nan

We're proud to introduce a new feature here at Philofaxy...the Special Guest Blog. Our readers are a thoughtful, articulate bunch, and we knew it was only a matter of time before one of them would ask for

a piece of the prime time. It's the first time we've published a reader essay on the front page, but we hope it won't be the last.

So without further ado, here's today's reader story, from Miss Anon E. Mous:

Two years ago, I found myself at a point of having visited the Filofax Web site numerous enough times to warrant my little brother having to comment that "this obsession is getting out of hand." This 'madness' was enough of a worry that he committed to buying me the item I was lusting for; a black personal size cross Filofax.

When it landed on the floor of the hallway with a loud but not quite ominous thud one sunny February morning, I knew my beloved Filofax had arrived. Excitedly, heart palpitating, mouth salivating, and eyes ceasing to move in their sockets, my whole being waited till the final shiny cardboard box was tilted to reveal the dark, luscious, and classy organiser.

Fast forward 24 months... I have taken care of this baby and delighted in its simple design and wondrous beauty, but one thing has eluded me and driven me to distraction enough to prompt me to peruse the Filofax Web pages with manic obsessive regularity again: The silly thing would not lay flat!

Now dear reader, laying flat is one of the most important things an organiser can do for me... Laying flat means that I can glance upon my days plans and plan for my week ahead. Because the little darling did not open flat, and would instead balance precariously on its erect little spine flapping from side to side like a devious little vulture, I had little time or inclination to glance upon or fill in the languishing pages. This ultimately led to me being disorganised again. This was bad news.

The situation was thus that I conspired to dump this little lovely and as mentioned above began coasting the pages of Filofax looking for an alternative that would lay flat... I even began looking to A5s in the hope that my favourite Belmont's inherent lay-flat-ability would resolve my problems, but then this solution was space consuming and unfeasible, and, frankly, my budget would not permit such spending...

Today after much soul searching and gaining permission from brother (after all he bought it for me and should have a say - plus I needed the go-ahead and hand-holding) I took it upon myself to commit the ultimate act of infliction upon my Filofax... namely physically manipulating my beloved organiser by bending back both the covers (I hear your gasp; don't worry, I supported the spine) and holding them back until my beloved Filofax developed creases where the stress was placed... This took a few goes, and now my perfect, albeit slightly creased, Filofax is laying flat. Hurrah...! The sacrifice has been worth it, now I will use my faithful Filo more often... Yes, I will... I promise. And you know what? It's still gorgeous!

I would love to find out if anyone else has manipulated/customised their Filos for the sake of manageability and organisation...? This would in part make me feel better. It would also be interesting to know what exactly you have had to resort to to make your Filofax more user-friendly...

I feel a little guilty for the violence acted upon my beloved Filo, but the results should be worth the sacrifice.

Sincerely,

Miss Anon E. Mous. (a.k.a. AK)

Nan (2007-02-23 09:32:00)

I've done the same thing with my Personal size Filo, and it lies fairly flat now. I've had to do it more than once, since it starts to close up again after a while.

They're resilient, these little beauties!

bethkh (2007-02-23 17:52:00)

I had the same problem with my pocket cross, but could never get it to lay flat. I only liked it for the ring size. I went back to my old standby—a bright yellow Picadilly.

Anonymous (2007-02-23 19:00:00)

I fixed my old filofax something called a metropole, it would not lie flat eider, i bend it and now it's working fine. Shame is that they should build this into design. My wife bought Belgravia because of this. SOft Leather you see. I know someone who has made laser printing on his filofax to make it stand out in the company and i must admit when you change something like leather it can have a totally different look. Looks very profesionale Also, he put small cutts in it for it to lay flat. thank you for the blog.

Marcus B.

Anonymous (2007-02-23 19:02:00)

More guest blogs please! Does anyone use a specific organization method with their filofaxes? I use GTD but haven't tried it out on the old Filo.

HP Fuchs (2007-02-24 13:29:00)

Good morning Nan

Would you like me to write a smll post on how to fold those papers? -> see philofaxy flickr group

Nan (2007-02-24 20:59:00)

Hello HP - Yes, I would like you to write a post about how you fold A4 sheets into a Personal Filofax, including the tools you use, like the Portable Punch and Swiss Army Knife.

Nan (2007-02-25 19:34:00)

By the way, the address for guest blogs is nanbarber at gmail.

Chet (2007-02-27 02:03:00)

Any pictures of your flat Filofax? Should it be renamed filofax?
skips away to avoid being hit*

Nan (2007-02-27 20:17:00)

There are a number of pictures of Filofaxes (Flatofaxes?) in the Flicker Philofaxy pool. Here's a link:
<http://www.flickr.com/groups/40748476@N00/pool/>

Anonymous (2007-02-28 12:42:00)

Thank you Nan for posting my guest blog!

I will try and get a pic of the creased filofax, have to say the little darling is very stubborn and tried to revert back a few times, I've done a fair few creasing sessions and it's begun to see the light...

What about FiloFlat?

:) I'll post a picture in Flickr and post a link here... :)

Regards,

Miss Anon E. Mous

Anonymous (2007-03-22 22:59:00)

I had a lovely chocolate Cross in slimline and found it was too small to take much more than the diary, wouldn't lay flat etc. I sold it and went back to older beloved Windsor personal size. Happy again...

Yang (2010-01-30 17:24:54)

Are you using finsbury? It does have the problem of not laying flat. If you are willing to pay a little more bucks, go for finchley, it's my favorite, and it will lay flat like a beauty. I also have a Lyndhurst, when zip is open, i can also lay flat.

Miss Confidentiality? (2007-02-27 23:02) - Nan



[1] Would you ever hand someone your Filofax and let them open it? Would you trust them to just ogle the well-burnished leather and not peek at potentially embarrassing sections like your phone numbers, to do list, or weight chart?

Well, I did it today. My vocal coach caught me taking notes for an upcoming singers' party in my red Finsbury with a red Waterman pen, and demanded to examine the pen. (She loves cool pens, but then who doesn't?) "In fact, let me see that whole thing," she said. So I handed her my Filo and held my breath as she flipped it open. To her credit, she didn't leaf through the pages, but I'm sure she got a gander at my tabs (To Do, Projects, Ideas, Lists, Fitness, and Tel).

Why did I give it to her? Well, again this is my vocal coach. I can't possibly humiliate myself in front of her even more than I already have. The entire first lesson, I couldn't even sing and keep my eyes open at the same time.

I think I do things like let people look in my Filofax because I know it's probably going to happen anyway, and I want to stay prepared for it. In my career of using planners and handhelds, I've had plenty of embarrassing moments. I left my DayRunner in a nightclub, and my brother, who was performing, found it and returned it to me by slipping it in my car window while I slept in my apartment above. My mother once checked out my Palm and found a packing list for a trip. She found it hilarious that I needed to write down a count for the number of slacks, sweaters, and dresses I was packing. One time I left a Palm at work, and called a co-worker to see whether it was there. When she found it, she started reading my To Do list to me: "Call Ford dealership. Pay your bills." These days, I figure anyone who has nothing better to do than read other people's organizers is no threat to me.

In other news, I'm going to pick up an idea from Philofaxer. I attended a wine tasting the other night and found myself taking notes on wines I wanted to purchase later. I think I'm going to resurrect my old Pocket Filo for a wine journal...and for other travel stuff, too, like hotel and restaurant reviews.

1. http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_H4Rx8LSaPk/ReUEkxg56cI/AAAAAAAAAB8/PJTDmha2Ph0/s1600-h/DSC00936.JPG

Anonymous (2007-02-28 18:31:00)

I dread the thought of anyone looking through my filofax, I find it so personal... Not that there's anything majorly private or secret in there, I just find it intrusive if someone even looks at it inquisitively... At work, I have a desk which everyone leans over and touches some item or another, this irks me no end. I dread the day someone touches my filofax as I may just cease to be polite and tell them to leave the "ahem" thing alone..."

Nan, your voice coach sounds like she's OK otherwise you would have been very unhappy... I'd be okay with my brother, Significant Other or best friend looking through my organiser.

Regards,

Miss Anon E. Mous

Nan (2007-03-01 23:21:00)

I think it's part of human nature to be morbidly curious about anything that resembles a diary or journal. I'm a little creeped out by people looking over my shoulder, too. (And yes, my coach is very cool. I can think of very

few people I'd simply hand my Filofax to.)

Chet (2007-03-02 01:53:00)

"She found it hilarious that I needed to write down a count for the number of slacks, sweaters, and dresses I was packing."

Oh good, I'm not the only one to do this (altho probably not as organised as you are).

I don't know about you, but I just don't want to find myself without sufficient sets of relatively clean clothes halfway through the trip.

Nan (2007-03-03 21:30:00)

Yes, I try to plan my clothes for a trip really carefully, too. And if the trip is a week or less, my goal is to bring one small suitcase, or maybe even just a carry on. One of the things I loved about my Palm T3 is that I could attach a keyboard and do email, Word, and Excel on it instead of bringing a laptop.

One time my system fell apart – I didn't account for the fact that one outfit would get totally dirtied by horseback riding, so I had to send it to the hotel laundry so I wouldn't run out of clothes.

1.3 March

One Book, Single Pursuit (2007-03-01 23:22) - Nan

In my last post, I talked about devoting a single (Pocket) Filofax to wine and travel notes. The illustrious Philofaxer does the same thing – he has a Pocket Filo for wine notes, and a Personal devoted solely to financial matters.

I've noticed a trend among Filofax aficionados to accumulate more than one organizer before settling on a favorite. Has anyone else ended up finding a use (even a limited one) for an orphaned organizer?

For example, do you have a large Filo on your desk and a smaller one to carry? Do you have a separate family organizer and a personal one? Do you use one for organizing and a different one for notes and ideas? Let's hear it in the comments!

Anonymous (2007-03-04 19:04:00)

I haven't yet found a novel way to utilise my 2 un-used filofaxes... I have one to organise my life (personal), one that I carry around with me (Slimline) and one for work (A5)... I am thinking of using the spare one (A5) for organising the family...

Beorn (2007-03-07 18:46:00)

I've dedicated a great deal of time to finde the way to reduce the notebooks, including Filfax organizers, that I use at one time. Otherwise I end up with an unreasonable amount of Filofaxes and notebooks active at once.

I'd rather organize the use of the few I'm using - a Filofax Cosmic, a reoprtr's Moleskine, and for business related jotting (when on phone, in training etc.) a Moleskine cahier. I do it in a way that travel and culinary and beer info (me not being a wine guy) finding it's place in the Filofax for a while before being relegated to the archive Filofax.

Andrzej (2007-03-09 04:04:00)

Hi all. Still single pursuit, still chocolate filo does me proud. I even found my google log in after all these months. Take care.

Nan (2007-03-09 19:53:00)

Good to see you again, Andrzej!

Nan (2007-03-11 16:43:00)

Beorn – I love the reporters' Moleskines, too. I think they're the next most effective tool, next to Filofaxes. What's the Filofax Cosmic? I'd be delighted if you uploaded a picture of it to the Philofaxy pool on Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/40748476@N00/pool/>).

Tangerine (2007-03-26 13:36:00)

I ordered an A5, expected in a week. Most of my work is at home, office 2 days/week. I plan to use the A5 at home for everything and keep it with me. I'll carry my old made-in-England Personal Filo when I go out, always, or so I hope. Personal will hold shopping lists, needed info, a small calendar.

I anticipate trouble if I make notes and lists in the A5 and need them when I go out - how to get them into the Personal? It will take awhile to figure out how to coordinate two Filos, so I welcome any advice. I am looking forward to a bigger book. The Personal is too small for everything, but the A5 will be too heavy to carry always. My Filofax nirvana fantasy is I'll figure this out and have everything in one of two places. That's the plan. We'll see. I love Philofaxy.

Shubha (2007-08-16 13:14:00)

I use the Slimline to carry around and the Personal on my desk or home - even carry it .. This works as the pages are the same size and can move back and forth. I use an older one ..also personal for storage.. with a classified set of tabs.

;))

Right Turns Only (2007-03-03 21:36) - Nan

If I had to pick one way that my Filo paid for itself more often than any other, it would be as a keeper of directions and other place-related details. When I get directions to, say, a friend's house, I write them on a single page. I can move the page around, edit it, and move it from one organizer to another without rewriting it. And no matter how much time elapses, years even, I'm always able to return to that same address (assuming that my friend hasn't moved). Need a code to get into my doctor's office door? It's right there on the same page.

Similarly, whenever I call a phone number, I write it in the Filo, even if I don't know if I'll ever need it again. I did the same thing on my Palm. If I ever wanted to order a pizza from the same place again, I could do so without looking up the same number more than once. For some reason, that efficiency really appeals to me. Look a number up once, write it down once, use it forever with no further effort.

But then, I'm weird.

neowagnerite (2007-03-05 19:43:00)

I remember that Filofax used to use the phrase "everything in one place" as its motto— and I strive to follow that. I must admit, that with my job, my finances, my personal life, and my (ongoing) doctoral dissertation, my personal size Eton is nearly bursting at the seams. But, then again, it's made from lambskin, and smells and feels WONDERFUL!

Nan (2007-03-06 22:28:00)

Yes, that brings up another challenge – where to archive pages that you don't need to carry in your great-smelling everyday lambskin Filo. I'm not wild about the "storage" binders that Filofax sells. You can't open them fully to read the contents. I think they're only useful for unused pages.

And it's almost impossible to find regular ring binders that fit the Filofax pages, at least not without some re-punching.

Tangerine (2007-03-25 19:05:00)

Years ago I found a plastic binder the size of the Personal Filofax, to store pages I don't need but want to keep. I use a Filofax storage binder for old diaries with post-it tabs for each year. Since I don't refer to them often it

works fine. I just ordered an A5! After obsessively reading Philofaxy I had to have one.

Nan (2007-03-26 19:20:00)

Congratulations, Tangerine! Let us know when your A5 arrives! What model did you get?

Tangerine (2007-03-27 11:43:00)

The Finsbury, for its larger ring size and softer feel. I'm tracking my A5's journey on-line - it departed Pennsylvania at 7:19 this morning!

Nan (2007-03-27 11:52:00)

I use an A5 Finsbury, too, for work. The large rings are very nice and operate nice and smoothly. It's a great binder.

My Finsbury is black, not my first color choice, but I was so desperate to start using it for work that I ducked into an office-supply store just a few minutes before closing, and that was all they had in A5, in leather.

We're an obsessed bunch, we are.

Andrzej (2007-04-12 03:41:00)

tangerine, are you saying you left your A5 on the train? I did that with a wallet once; fortunately this was found by an honest person and it was returned to me from Paddington. I hope you were just as fortunate.

Tangerine (2007-04-13 23:01:00)

hello andrzej, nope- not on a train. Thanks for asking! I was so eager for a new A-5 to arrive I tracked its shipment status online. After it arrived I found I was attached to the Personal, but slowly I'm setting up the A-5. The plan is to carry the Personal for portable calendar/collection, but put everything in the A-5 (I needed more space), leaving it at home where I mostly work. (I've been having trouble posting a comment so I hope this is the only one that shows up.)

Andrzej (2007-04-14 16:29:00)

Hello Tangerine, you have been very polite for I realised, some time after posting, what was happening with your A5 (by reading the previous posts). That will teach me! Embarrassment prevented correction.

Aside I hope all goes well with your plan. I do a similar thing though my "red/black" A4 spiral bound hard cover notebook stays in the office. That's where I write meeting notes. "Chocolate Filo" (personal size) rides with me everywhere in my starboard cycle pannier. I agree that space on the Personal page is limited. Your comment has appeared perfectly in Inky's blog, no worries there.

Anonymous (2007-04-15 12:18:00)

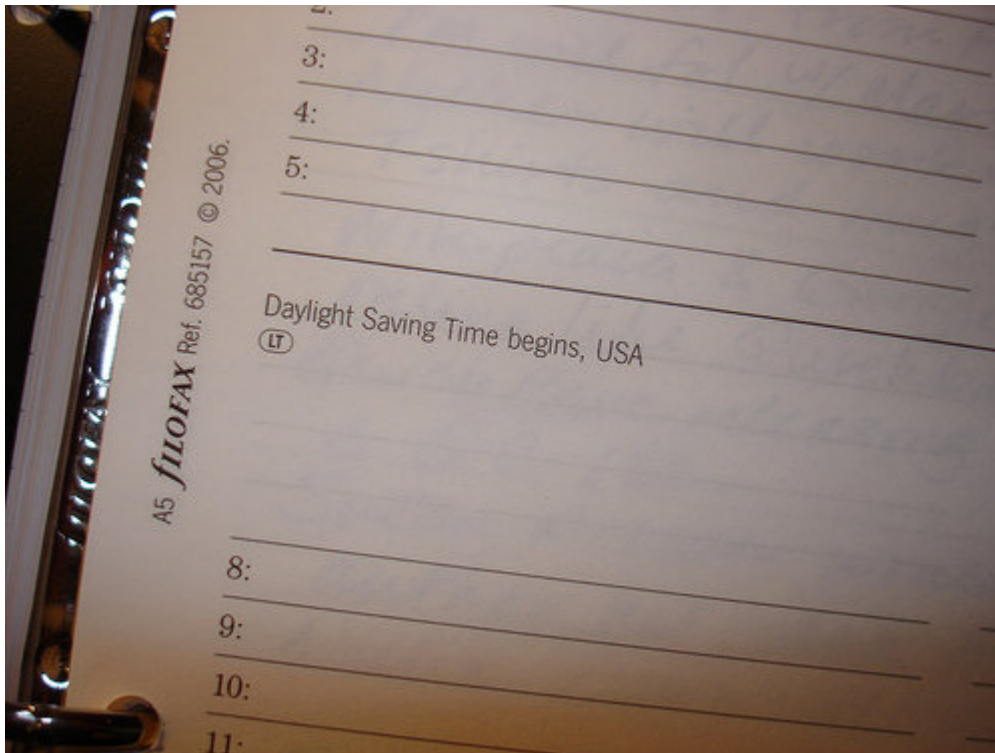
Archiving pages: Years ago I found small memo ring binders that fit my Personal pages perfectly, and they were only about 4 bucks each. I bought 6 of them and use them to archive things annually, as well as one for purged addresses and business cards. Now I'm on my last one and am desperately searching for more. I got them at a drugstore last time. Does anyone know where I can find these now? Online searches are fruitless because any search for a binder brings up full size ones. Any ideas?

Shubha (2007-08-22 14:14:00)

The only thing that reduces my guilt at splurging on new organisers is that the older ones can get used for storage, with flags or dividers to organise the pages, notes,whatever..

Nan (2007-08-22 14:41:00)

Hi Shuba - You're right...old, used binders do a fine job for archiving pages. Stick-on tabs are a great, inexpensive way to organize the archived pages by type.



[1] In the U.S. and Canada, [2]Daylight Savings Time stands to be more treacherous than usual.

First of all, if it seems like it's too early for all of this nonsense, you're right. The "spring forward" time change will be three weeks earlier (the second Sunday in March instead of the first Sunday in April). The "fall back" will also happen later (the second Sunday in November instead of the last Sunday in October). Supposedly, the lengthening of the time shift is to help conserve energy, like one that was also temporarily enacted in the U.S. in the 1970's.

My A5 day-per-page Filo shows the new start date, March 11, as shown here. My week-per-2-pages Personal size still shows the former, first-Sunday-in-April start date. I guess it was printed earlier, before the enactment. The European version – Summer Time – remains March 25th, shown correctly in both Filos, free from the mood swings we're so prone to in the Western Hemisphere.

But the trouble continues. This shift in daylight time is going to affect one heck of a lot more computers than there were during the Carter administration. Computers built before 2005 are unequipped to deal with this change. Some folks are even calling the situation [3]Y2K7.

If you rely on a computerized calendar instead of a Filofax, and if you need to know exactly when your email was sent, you have a couple of options. You can change your computer's clock manually. Or, if you use one of the popular Mac or Windows operating systems, use your computer's Software Update feature to make sure you've installed the very latest updates. Both Microsoft and Apple have created updates that compensate for the daylight time change.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have a Filofax to debug ... anybody got a pen?

1. <http://flickr.com/photos/gonanb/415990308/>
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daylight_savings_time
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Y2K7>

Andrzej (2007-03-15 05:15:00)

Whilst based in SE Wales my office clock is set to PST (Head Office). So I now leave work an hour later but at the same time! Chocolate Filo says all will be put right on 25 March when Europe and America will once again be in sync. Personally I'd like to remain on good old fashioned GMT all year round. I've lost count of the number of clocks and watches that need resetting in the bi annual DST chore.

Andrzej (2007-03-24 10:32:00)

Tonight the clocks go forward by an hour in the UK and we loose an hour of our weekend. If the clocks have to be messed about with, is there a case for doing this mid week? Apple have a 72MB update for their OS to include "Time zone and daylight saving for 2006 and 2007" (as mentioned by Nan). Who said paper was inefficient?

Anonymous (2007-03-26 16:33:00)

Unfortunately, the majority of calendars were printed prior to the law taking effect. So the listing for 2007 DST change is incorrect in many brands (my wall calendar has the same problem).

Andrzej (2007-03-27 03:44:00)

My wall calendar doesn't even show Easter. That's really hedging the bets.

April Fool! (2007-03-26 19:00) - Nan



[1] Three weeks after the 2007 revised Daylight Saving Time date (also a week after after Europe went to Summer Time), I found this entry in my Personal Filofax diary. Sure, I know the reason for the problem is that this diary refill was printed before Congress decreed the date change, but it's an amusing April Fool's gift nonetheless.

The ever-proper Filofax does not mention April Fool's Day, since it's not an official holiday anywhere. And the [2]wikipedia article on April Fool's Day is flagged with more than the usual number of tags warning of its inaccuracy...a portent in itself?

Yet, this humble Philofaxy blogger, whose birthday happens to be April 1st, has found that mentions of this date are recognized with knowing smiles throughout the world. Oddly, I seem to have been the victim of fewer than average April Fool's jokes. Sure, there were the unextinguishable birthday candles and the elaborately gift-wrapped dirty sock, but nothing truly creative. Perhaps that's the ultimate April Fool's Day joke.

So, I'll leave you with my favorite April Fool's quote, from Mark Twain: **"April 1st is the day upon which we are reminded of what we are on the other three-hundred and sixty-four."**

1. http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_H4Rx8LSaPk/RghUfaXyANI/AAAAAAAAACg/riwNKjs3w-A/s1600-h/DSC01042.JPG

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_fool%27s_day

Andrzej (2007-03-27 03:49:00)

Brilliant quote! My brother hung on till April 2, no fool him.

Spring Cleaning (2007-03-31 22:58) - Nan

My return to Filofax was precipitated by a desire to rid myself of attachment to various rigid systems – Getting Things Done, Franklin Covey, and so on. Filofax organizers are unobtrusive, customizable. And when I'm really busy or focused on things other than my process itself, I can disregard all systematology. I can write to-dos on diary pages, ideas on list pages, projects on to-do pages, anything wherever. In the heat of the moment, the point is to do what works; just capture the information, right?

Well, after several weeks of this, I find myself at odds. I'm missing things because I'm avoiding opening

my Filo because it's just a little too chaotic inside. I've been remedying this condition gradually, trying not to let it grow until my life is in an equal state of disrepair. That's a good thing. What's the solution? If things in my Filo aren't the way I like, change 'em. I wish I could say I'm OK, even prospering with a little bit of chaos, but I can't.

Chet (2007-04-01 09:01:00)

I'm feeling the same way about my Circa daily planner, too.

On the one hand, I love that I can move pages around. On the other, the very fact that the pages can be moved around so easily makes them less permanent and somewhat frivolous.

Andrzej (2007-04-01 14:00:00)

I have to admit to being rather rigid in my approach. The downside is Chocolate Filo is acquiring data sporadically which therefore limits utility. Still it's early days, only the first quarter.

I like the Inky tag. Like my trusty Parker whose barrel seems taylor made for the Personal Filofax.

Nan (2007-04-01 21:16:00)

Yes, it's me, Nan! I decided the Inky nickname is more appropriate for this blog.

Chet – The last time I used Circa was in 2005. I found that I blew through tasks more quickly than I do now and came up with more creative ideas. The problem was that I'd end up with a lot of pages with just one undone task or idea left. Also, at that time Levenger didn't have the assortment that they do now, and I found the DIY forms weren't good for my handwriting. Still, I've found that Circa seemed to draw out the most creativity in me, with the A5 size coming in second. Using the Personal size Filo, I don't seem to come up with as many new ideas, since I have nowhere to put them.

Hi Andrzej – You're right to recognize that one quarter of a year is too soon to decide anything. That's why I'm committed to sticking with what I'm doing for the rest of 2007. From now on, I will only allow myself to change approaches once a year.

Tangerine (2007-04-02 20:20:00)

I just got an A5 and was surprised to see it doesn't have the usual Filofax tabs–Diary, Notes, Projects, etc. just blank tabs. When entering new info I get confused about what section to put it in, so I'm looking forward to custom tabs. Now I have to decide on tab labels – I won't be able to blame Filofax for my confusion anymore! I hope to decide soon - by the weekend, so I can start migrating from Personal to A5.

Nan (2007-04-02 20:57:00)

Tangerine, what you use the tabs for may evolve over time. I label mine with a Brother labelmaker, so I can just peel off the label when I want to make a change.

neowagnerite (2007-04-11 20:28:00)

I've started using the A-Z tabs exclusively– notes for my dissertation are under "D", and church stuff is under "C", and so on... of course, names and addresses are filed under the same rubric. So far, it's been working well for me

Nan (2007-04-11 22:53:00)

Hi Cyril! Glad to hear that the A-Z tabs are working well for you. I've been tempted to try that system myself.

penny (2007-04-15 22:24:00)

i'm debating going to a5 for more space but am currently using a personal filo (i've been using one for almost 15 years [no, not the *same* binder]) and a medium sized moleskine. i am not avoiding my planners for the chaos inside but because i am not doing well at keeping them updated. i was once given a palm pilot because it beeped at me (until I disabled that feature 3 seconds later) ... the best planner in the world doesn't work if it isn't used. stuff just goes on index cards and postits and other random scraps. *sigh*

i'm also a bit frustrated because the system i designed nine months ago has fallen away (mostly because my work load tripled) but perhaps four pen colours (and i won't use that 4-colour pen from grade school) are a bit difficult

to keep up. Hmm...

one thing I have done to try force me to open them is that all my timekeeping goes inside. result? my timekeeping records have gone helter skelter. *sigh*

anyway, i'm going to price A5s and think about going up a size. we'll see.

Anonymous (2007-04-16 13:35:00)

I experience the same things. For the last two weeks I have switched from a fully loaded personal size Filofax to a wallet and monthly calendar. In my effort to streamline and carry less, I ended up with more. My wallet held all the basics, the monthly calendar captured a snapshot of what was going on with little room for planning. Planning required a small notepad and I dusted off my PalmPilot to house my contact information. My landscaping plans and house projects for the summer were floating around my purse with no permanent home. It was then necessary to consult the Palm for suppliers, the calendar for delivery dates the loose copies of the layout and my wallet to make purchases. You'd think I'd learn. Prior to this bout with insanity I was tired of lugging my book around. After this experience, I have decided that my little book does it all with minimal effort.

It never fails. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, I take it out on my Filofax – it's too packed, it's heavy, I don't need this much info every day. The list goes on when, in reality, it's not the tool it's me. I finally put an end to this confusion when I visited the Franklin Covey store over the weekend and the clerk was about to ring up a mountain of products I was convinced would help – a classic binder, filler, forms and accessories. It was only when he told me the total of \$189 that something snapped inside and I put everything back. I was embarrassed, thanked him for his time and walked out. It was a small step that really paid off. I have spoiled myself to the point that if one system isn't working, it's time to trade up. How silly and expensive that can be. I went home, emptied the contents of my Filofax and reassembled it with fresh forms and the original divider tabs. I reverted to the original tabs because every time I try to customize my setup, it's never enough. I start thinking 'this system would be perfect if . . .' and I never implement what I have so far.

It's time for some tough love. Everything is now backing in its place where it will stay. The next time I feel like my system isn't working, all I need to do is look in the mirror.

Anonymous (2007-04-16 23:46:00)

Anonymous? How can you plan in that little personal filofax? and do you use the two day to a view pages or the whole week at a view pages? I am in the same boat with alls you alls here on this post. I used a little personal for years and now switch daily from treo w ical to big filo to circa to even a Mulberry, etc. Nuts. And I am miserable right now.

Will Not Sign My Name

p.s. Lugging the miserable things around is a pain. I want to be streamlined and efficient and on top of my game, wheee. ah, right.

Anonymous (2007-04-16 23:48:00)

And Inky, What are you going to do about the creative idea thing? I mean that is sooooo important.

Too Embarrassed To Leave A Name again

Anonymous (2007-04-17 07:23:00)

Actually, I can plan very well in the personal size. It's like carrying a larger purse – the bigger the bag, the more unnecessary junk I lug around. The personal size is the best fit because it doubles as a wallet. The operative word here is 'personal' because that's about all I can plan and monitor here – personal stuff. The biggest issue I have is that it is not suitable for work related planning and meeting notes because of its smaller size. The best thing about the Franklin classic size is that it was perfect for combining my personal and work life. That combination worked well for a while until I got tired of carrying my work stuff around in my off time and vice versa.

Seems like a silly thing to struggle with, but it's nice to know I'm not the only one. Misery loves company!

penny (2007-04-18 00:50:00)

ok, an a5 came home with me (logic, \$30) .. i can write what i need and not have to rely on my small handwriting. will i regret this? time shall tell, which is why i bought the logic. if i end up not using it, i didn't loose too much money. it is big. it's a bit clunky (i've been spoiled with smooth leather). Tonight, via some insomnia, I just

discovered a new-to-me website with a company that is compatible with filo a5 (an ISO standard). they have many of the forms i've been creating by hand. They are semi GTD-ish, but in a logical way (at least to me). i won't deny that the slimline personal my husband bought as a hope i'd carry less wasn't nice. but i think now i won't carry (and leave behind) 3 different planning books. now to get myself to look *IN* this one. c'est ma challenge extrordinaire! (along with remembering french)
now if i could only find a cheap (i.e. \$5 or so) hole punch.

1.4 April

More Spring Cleaning (2007-04-20 09:10) - Nan

Thanks for the great comments on the "Spring Cleaning" post. I thought I'd answer up front here to make sure everyone sees it. Please keep the conversation going:

Anonymous - Please email me personally (nanbarber a gmail) about your "tough love" post.

Penny - congrats on the A5! Now are you going to give us the name of that Web site, or keep it all to yourself?

To "Will Not Sign" - We all share your struggle! We feel your pain. Many busy people use a combination of a Filo and electronic device and an online calendar. You might keep contacts on the handheld; there's really nothing better, and it will take some bulk out of the Filo. An online calendar like iCal is great for a monthly view and sharing with co-workers. Nothing wrong with using that at your computer and a more detailed daily or weekly schedule in your Filo.

My advice is not to worry about synching everything up. It's usually not necessary. Don't make the mistake I made. If you can easily print iCal pages that fit in your Filo, fine, but don't go crazy tinkering with the formatting. I wasted an entire week of my life that way! Now instead of trying to keep everything in iCal and print to my Filo, I keep work appointments and deadlines in iCal (actually, we're switching to a shared calendar system at work called Zimbra); I'm always at a computer for work, anyway. I keep a bare minimum in the online calendar, and write everything else down. That works for me.

Speaking of deadlines, I've got to run. But I'm still grappling with the loss of an outlet for my creative engines. Keeping my journal and ideas in an A5 Filo that I always had with me just made the ideas flow. It also meant I could use cool A5 notebooks with detachable pages and group related pages later. Sounds perfect, right? Not necessarily. More on that next time.

Tangerine (2007-04-20 20:24:00)

Spring Cleaning one's Filofax - now I get it. There is no perfect set up and what works changes over time. FYI, it took less than 5 (late night) hours to move into the A5. Having 2 Filos is fun but still confusing, so I may retire the Personal and tote the A5 around. FYI, the color is (ta da): Tangerine! Fortunately, not too orange. Does anyone know an inexpensive source of A5 paper? Thanks!

Nan (2007-04-21 18:56:00)

Hi Tangerine - I've been admiring that tangerine color for a while! A tangerine A5 is a thing of beauty indeed. Unfortunately, I don't have a great answer about the A5 paper. I've shared the results of my research over the past year in a new blog post.

Penny (2007-04-24 12:59:00)

sorry!! it's the site you linked for the a5 paper (post just after this one) [1]time/design system forms
I'm a bit slow reading my rss feeds...
and thank you. i like my a5. it's a bit big but i like having extra space to write in.

1. http://www.timesystem.us/A5_Day_Planner_Forms_s/9.htm

A5 Paper (2007-04-21 18:56) - Nan

Recently, a commenter to this blog asked me about an inexpensive source of A5 paper. If you're in the United States, as I am, A5 paper and accessories are surprisingly hard to come by, considering our nation's melting-pot reputation.

As an A5 Filo user myself, I've found a few sources of A5 paper that may or may not be less expensive than buying the 20-page packets from Filofax. None of the following prices include shipping.

- Staples.com has plain A4 paper from Hammermill by the ream (500 sheets), and can cut it in half for an additional fee. If you want lined paper, you have to print your own lines. (And the paper needs to be punched for Filofax.)

- graytex.com has A5 paper at \$16.40 for 200 sheets (inkjet quality) or \$29.75 for 500 sheets (copier quality). Also needs to be punched.

- timedesign.com has blank A5 paper, punched for Filofax, at \$3.99 for 50 plain sheets; \$4.99 for 50 lined sheets, either loose or padded.

- succes.com has lined white A5 paper, punched for Filofax, at \$10.92 for 100 sheets.

Another option, and one I've used most myself, is buying A5, perforated notebooks from Miquelrius or a similar company, and punching pages that I wish to carry in my Filo. There are also notebooks from an Italian company, available at some specialty stationery stores, that have enough holes to fit the A5 Filo or 2-ring A5 binders (but these are pretty expensive).

Anonymous (2007-04-22 11:44:00)

I buy a rhodia #19 gridded pad, cut it in half and then punch. I can get the pads in Canada for about \$8. The paper is really great for fountain pens.

Nan (2007-04-22 21:26:00)

Oh. My. God. That's brilliant. It works because the gridlines run the same way no matter which way the paper is turned.

Penny (2007-04-24 11:21:00)

as a new a5 owner, I recently discovered a5 punched to fit filo (with a few extra holes) .. it's by oxford, is wirebound but perforated, and is called the "easybook". the stationary/office supply stores near my uni carry them. but.. i'm in NYC! (thus your milage may vary)

they have both lined and grid, however, i haven't found the grid yet. they are about \$8 include 80 sheets of paper. it also has a index tab that can be moved around the wirebound book, a la circa system.

if anyone can follow my coffee deprived convoluted english above.. congrats, and thanks.

next up? finding an affordable punch.

Nan (2007-04-25 21:32:00)

Yes, Penny, those are the exact notebooks I was thinking of! They are also available in stationery stores near the universities in Boston. I wish they were less expensive.

Probably the most affordable punch you'll find is the plastic portable punch. It's \$20 at Filofax USA: <http://filofaxusa.com/a5accessories.html>.

At \$8 a notebook, though, a punch might pay for itself pretty soon!

Anonymous (2008-06-10 14:37:00)

Hi There!

Just happened across this site while looking for A5—if anyone's interested, the following link has A5 inkjet paper at a great price:

<http://empireimports.stores.yahoo.net/newa5sizepaper.html>

A ream of 24-lb (250 sheets) goes for 8.50 USD—the price goes down with quantities of 3+ reams.

Denise

Nan (2008-06-11 22:04:00)

Thanks, Denise. I haven't ordered from Empire Imports yet, but I know they're increasing their A5 offerings. When I order something from them, I'll write about it on this blog!

Still More Spring Cleaning (2007-04-21 20:34) - Nan

Barry Izsak, president of the National Association of Professional Organizers, says, "**The main reason there is so much clutter is that it represents all the decisions people aren't making. Delaying decisions about what to do with things is what leads to the clutter in people's lives,**" he says. *Credit: I found this quote on [1]<http://www.angryfatgirlz.blogspot.com>.*

1. <http://angryfatgirlz.blogspot.com/2007/04/more-more-more.html>

Andrzej (2007-04-23 03:15:00)

How true. Chocolate Filo has been worked overtime on a project these past days. By writing in a tightly spaced Personal Filofax in royal blue ink, decisions are almost forced!

Penny (2007-04-24 13:03:00)

omein! by having the limited files i need all in one place i can now make decisions wherever i'm working instead hoping i had both of the hybrid two systems i was attempting to make work before. though i agree being forced to make those hard work-life-changing decisions.. i need all the help i can get. it's getting better.

Andrzej (2007-05-04 03:00:00)

Project closed out early this week. All was contained in the diary and part of one leaf of note paper. Though not life-changing; all was very compact. All can be recycled (hopefully long in the future). I'm good at feeding in data (medical stuff, bike stuff) though rarely plan – too chicken?

Nan (2007-05-04 20:31:00)

Congratulations on your project, Andrzej! Why do you think you're afraid of planning? Maybe you trust your intuition better than the plan – and I think that's good. Do you want to tell us more about this?

Andrzej (2007-05-05 04:19:00)

Inky wrote, "Why do you think you're afraid of planning?" I used to be a planner in real life! There is an old saying along the lines of "a bad plan is better than no plan at all". Intuition also mentioned; did I ride that last corner extra slow because something intangible told me a car was going to appear in the middle of it? This sort of thing can't be pre written into the diary section of a Filofax, even a spacious A5. I'd have to take my hands off the bars!

Before Filofax I relied on a Psion 3 (wonderful until drowned in the washing machine) and then a Pocket PC (touch screen and battery wore out). One day I was having my eyes looked at and the Doctor saw me committing his instructions to the Pocket PC, he said "that machine is your brain". I think he meant that I was relying on the RAM like a drunk needs a lamppost.

So my aversion to planning may be related to a job I once did and the words of a surgeon. Maybe I don't want to fill Chocolate Filo with half-baked ideas and crossings out? That's crazy, the pages can be moved and even discarded with ease.

I hope you weren't expecting a coherent, concise or complete answer? In a complicated project with a fixed timeframe, leather bound paper can be a huge help. No batteries required.

Nan (2007-05-05 15:43:00)

Thanks, Andrzej! I agree with you about a "bad plan" versus "no plan"! I just wanted to give you a chance to talk more about your experience. Sounds like the Personal Filofax was a very helpful tool!

Andrzej (2007-05-06 03:57:00)

Thanks inky! A useful tool is one that never sees the inside of the toolbox. With that in mind I have a new project in development. Royal blue ink will flow onto cotton cream leaf.

Guest Blog: Amen to Tough Love (2007-04-23 19:07) - Nan

Spring...A time to cast off winter bulk, to refresh, renew...simplify. It leads some of us Philofaxers to declutter our systems, to change what's not working. Sometimes, the only way to find out what *doesn't* work is to try it.

How many of us have been in the situation described by today's special guest blogger, DeWanna Walser? (I have...except I didn't have the wisdom to walk away from the cash register.) DeWanna wrote this exceptional essay in a recent comment, and I've brought it out of hiding, with her permission. More people need to read this:

For the last two weeks I have switched from a fully loaded personal size Filofax to a wallet and monthly calendar. In my effort to streamline and carry less, I ended up with more. My wallet held all the basics, the monthly calendar captured a snapshot of what was going on with little room for planning. Planning required a small notepad and I dusted off my PalmPilot to house my contact information. My landscaping plans and house projects for the summer were floating around my purse with no permanent home. It was then necessary to consult the Palm for suppliers, the calendar for delivery dates the loose copies of the layout and my wallet to make purchases. You'd think I'd learn. Prior to this bout with insanity I was tired of lugging my book around. After this experience, I have decided that my little book does it all with minimal effort.

It never fails. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, I take it out on my Filofax – it's too packed, it's heavy, I don't need this much info every day. The list goes on when, in reality, it's not the tool it's me. I finally put an end to this confusion when I visited the Franklin Covey store over the weekend and the clerk was about to ring up a mountain of products I was convinced would help – a classic binder, filler, forms and accessories. It was only when he told me the total of \$189 that something snapped inside and I put everything back. I was embarrassed, thanked him for his time and walked out. It was a small step that really paid off. I have spoiled myself to the point that if one system isn't working, it's time to trade up. How silly and expensive that can be. I went home, emptied the contents of my Filofax and reassembled it with fresh forms and the original divider tabs. I reverted to the original tabs because every time I try to customize my setup, it's never enough. I start thinking 'this system would be perfect if . . .' and I never implement what I have so far.

It's time for some tough love. Everything is now backing in its place where it will stay. The next time I feel like my system isn't working, all I need to do is look in the mirror.

1.5 May

Potpourri (2007-05-04 20:46) - Nan

Isn't that a Jeopardy category meaning "a little of this, a little of that"? That's what today's entry is about.

Lightening up. Last week, I changed by A5 work-dedicated Filo from a day-per-page to week-per-2 pages. Boy, did that lighten my load, and made me more likely to use the book. It was just so much easier to find things! It meant I had room to put the A-Z tabs back in, and I also renamed the 6 blank tabs, giving each major project its own tab, plus a tab each for meeting notes and miscellaneous notes.

Creativity. Went back and looked at all the A5 pages I filled with ideas last year. I found I've actually

done a lot of those things in the meantime. Others were truly valuable ideas and reminders that I've since forgotten – which defeats the purpose of writing them down in the first place. There was a lot of great thinking I could use here. Considered going back to an A5 (instead of a Personal size) for these personal matters, too.

Impulse purchase. Based on the above item, I'd need another new A5 for the kitchen counter. Something inexpensive and easily cleaned with a sponge, right? Wrong. On impulse I purchased a fancy, red, alligator-look leather organizer, which I now have to return to the store (but I'll take a picture of it before I do). As I said, total impulse.

Rethinking. After using my new, lightened up work Filo for a week, I see that it's helped me get better at getting individual tasks done on time, and keeping all the notes for one project consolidated. But I still have lots of material for each project (timelines, documents, printed emails) on 8.5 x 11 paper, and I see that I should be looking at that information, now in file folders, more often, too. Plus I have our company's electronic shared calendar to update. See where I'm going with this? Why not just use a letter-size 3-ring binder for the stuff I have loose in a file now, PLUS the handwritten notes that I have in the A5 Filo now? I can't make the change now, since I'm in the middle of a hectic project...but I created a to-do item in my Filo to switch the future projects to letter-size.

Ouch. The poor thing must be crying now. Containing the declaration of its own demise.

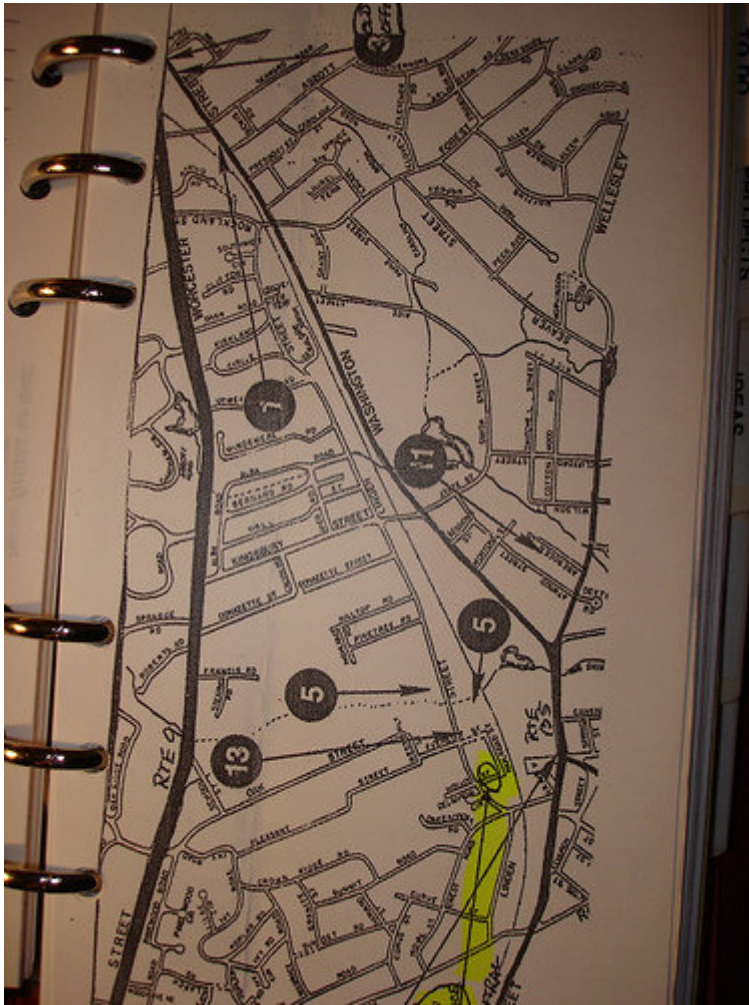
Andrzej (2007-05-08 03:10:00)

Thinking of your impulse purchase I'm going to have to make a purchase of my own. Filofax sell a large range of replacement paper and accessories for their binders. Alas this is not so with the manufacturer of my lid. I have managed to scratch two visors in two weeks and so the days of my silver top are numbered. It's crazy that a \$400 helmet has to be cast aside for the sake of not being able to buy a \$60 visor. Sorry to moan, filo consumables may be expensive, at least they're available.

Nan (2007-05-10 22:26:00)

Sorry to hear about your helmet problems. :(





With a Filofax punch, you can punch holes in almost anything and stick it in your organizer. I tend to take that advice literally. Here are a couple of the more unusual things I've punched holes in lately:

- Map to my dentist's new office. He sent a letter with the change of address, and I placed a sheet from my Filo over the map, traced around it, cut it out, and punched it.
- A postcard from my mother of a creche she visited in NYC in December, 2006. It was set up at MoMA. I put it in my organizer to remind myself to try to see the 2007 version of the MoMA creche.

What have you punched?

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/493177801/in/photostream/>

2. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/493177805/in/photostream/>

Andrzej (2007-05-11 15:46:00)

My wife and children.
(a photograph!)

Nan (2007-05-11 19:25:00)

Phew! Thank you for that clarification!
;)

Cooling-off period (2007-05-11 19:29) - Nan

In 2004 and 2005, my lifelong habit of tweaking my organizational system reached toxic levels. At one point, I changed at least twice a month, and I don't mean just changing my calendar or to-do list. I mean changing all of my information from Palm Pilot to Circa to HPDA to Moleskine and back again.

And now...I've been using Filofax exclusively for over a year. I recently tweaked the arrangement of my work A5 Filofax, and considered abandoning it for letter-size, but in the meantime, I've been using what I've got and am in no hurry to make the next change. I made this recent change not because I felt impatient for a change but because I found I wasn't getting a good enough handle on my projects' milestones (those mini, internal deadlines). Otherwise, the system was working well enough, so I left it alone.

How did I reach this point? I roughly went through the following stages:

- **Tweaking overload.** I think there was a certain amount of tweaking that I needed to get out of my system, and for a while, I allowed it. I bought columns of index cards, hundreds of dollars worth of software, and reams of Circa paper. I let myself go as far as I could in every possible direction, until I was just worn out. I think my eventual landing on the Filofax airstrip stemmed from a desire for a fairly simple system with built-in limits. But I had to go through the mad, crazed tweaking to get to this desire for sanity.

- **Doing what works.** I stopped reading *Getting Things Done* and *The Seven Habits*; stopped visiting 43folders.com. I took a look at what I needed. I do need a calendar that I can mark up with reminders *before* things are due. I don't need to write down major life goals; I know what they are. I do need a list of things that must be done. A "maybe do" list proved to be of questionable value. I need to be able to move pages around. But that's just me. (And that's the point.)

- **Imposing time limits.** When I decided a Filofax would do everything I needed, I still couldn't commit for the rest of my life. I was way too scattered for that. So I made a limited time commitment. I decided to stick to Filo for a year (2006), at the end of which year I could switch again to anything I wanted. I even bought a variety of 2007 Moleskine diaries (they sell out quickly), to prove to myself that my options were still open. The Moleskines are still sitting in my drawer. (I do use a large ruled Moleskine for my journal, though.)

- **One change at a time.** I'd say this practice is the one most people can and should implement, and it's actually the easiest. It's make one change at a time. In other words, say you're using a day-per-page Filofax calendar and find that you're not filling up the page each day, and your book seems too thick. So switch to a week-per-two pages format, but don't change anything else. Don't buy a new binder, don't change all your tabs, don't change where you're keeping contact info. Live with the one change long enough to evaluate it. If you need to change something else next, it will become clear soon enough.

The whole process reminds me of something I read in a Natalie Goldberg book, in which she was quoting her own Zen master. The master was giving advice to a young, budding musician who was planning to move to Los Angeles to "see what happens." The master said (and I'm paraphrasing here), "Don't go to see what happens. Go to make it. It's only when you give something everything you've got that it will become clear when it's not right anymore."

So don't change your Filofax system to see if it works. Make one change, and give it a chance to work by actually using it, wholeheartedly, for some amount of time longer than a day. Like a month, a year, or a season.

Laurie (2007-05-12 07:47:00)

I feel your pain. I have gone through 3 years now of tweakage, flitting from my Filofax (that I had been a loyal user of for several years) to a daily diary book, weekly Moleskine, and various other incarnations of organizers, and back again. I was thrown into turmoil when I had my first child and moved overseas, within two months of each other. My whole life was suddenly different, and I was searching for a planner that would...what? Help me organize my new life? More than that, I needed one that would reflect my new identity. Moleskine, for my minimalist wanna-be self (lasted a week. My life is not minimalist). Go Mom, which was really great but had too much stuff I didn't need and not enough of what I did need. A daily diary didn't let me plan ahead the way I need to. Recently my family and I were back in the U.S., traveling around visiting people. I was using a spiral-bound planner that did not contain an accumulation of years of information. Normally when I travel I have my Filofax with all of my addresses, phone numbers, passwords, data, maps, etc. etc. Often on the 7 week trip, I or my husband would need a bit of information that used to be at my fingertips in my Filo, but that was lost in space without it. I started making plans for a major overhaul of my Filo as soon as I got home. Now that I have its lovely leather self back in my hands, I have completely redone the tabs (adding, subtracting, re-structuring). I

made a minor switch with a big payoff: I put the monthly calendar in front of my weekly agenda, and now my Filo lays open. Not flat, but open to my weekly page. This is glorious. I now have all of my information in one place again, and I will back up all of my info into a big binder at home so I don't have to worry so much about losing my Filo and its contents. After having tried several different planners to find one that reflects my new identity, I have finally realized that nothing comes close to my Filofax. All it needed was an overhaul of its life, too.

Nan (2007-05-12 18:46:00)

Hi Laurie – Thanks for your well-thought and inspiring comment! Welcome!

How old is your child now? When you have a kid, everything becomes more immediate and urgent.

Thanks for sharing with us!

Laurie (2007-05-13 01:58:00)

Hi Inky! She's two. And she has an 8 month old little brother! I've had a busy couple of years! They are great, and they definitely keep me on my toes.

Andrzej (2007-05-13 03:28:00)

Good posts inky and laurie! I'm good at keeping to a core system though I also try things once only to rediscover them months later. Life is a process of trial and error?

Jon (2007-05-13 11:50:00)

Interesting post. I switch between various systems and planners (Filofax, Time/Design, Franklin, and Moleskine). It's not that they don't work – they do – it's just that as soon as I "commit" to one, the others start whispering in my ear, reminding me of the other's shortcomings. So then I'm copying all of my tasks and appointments into my planner du jour and the process starts all over again. I went for years using only a Franklin system without even looking at another planner (I did change from the Classic to Compact size). At some point I was seduced by the sleek, Euro-cool Filofax, but it didn't last, and so here I am today. Is there any hope for me?

Strong Stiff Scotch... (2007-05-13 13:32:00)

And I thought perhaps I was the only one! How glorious to read of other's passion for the filofax; what a great blog, and its a pleasure to stumble across it.

I've never tried any other method of planning or organising, its been the filofax or nothing for more than 20 years (my obsession began as a teenager). It's something I've blogged about too - I'm happy to share my thoughts on it here....

<http://strongstiffscotch.blogspot.com/2007/02/mans-best-friend.html>

Cheers

Stevie

Strong Stiff Scotch... (2007-05-13 15:27:00)

Hi Inky

Of course! I'd be delighted!

Stevie

Nan (2007-05-13 15:37:00)

Jon – I too stuck with the Franklin Covey system for a number of years. They make beautiful leaves. My favorite was one called Seasons, and in 2000 I used the Millennium, which was filled with historical facts and quotes. The pages had an orange background, and it actually left me with quite an affection for that color. They used to also make quite a selection of page sets for sports, health, and other pursuits. I was sorry when they discontinued most of them.

I used the Classic size mostly, although I tried Compact, too. At one point I was juggling about 5 part-time jobs and volunteer jobs, and I swear the Covey system was what made it possible. I had everything with me to work anywhere I went. The Compact is a cool size, being the same height as the Filofax Personal size, but wider.

Jon, I understand about the voices whispering in your ear. That describes me completely. There's definitely hope for all of us.

I think you're totally right when you say that all systems work. They do! These days, I say look at how you're using what you have and whether that's helping you live the life or persona you want. With a Personal-size Filo, I tend to be less creative, live an efficient life, but a bit of a dry one. Right now, that's OK for me. With Moleskines or an A5 Filo, I'm really good at getting ideas down, but must less effective at putting them into action. Other people might find the opposite.

Tangerine (2007-05-14 15:16:00)

Great post Inky. It's good to know there are others who have switched calendars mid-year. I am still working out the kinks having both A5 and Personal Filofaxes. The new A5 is set up more simply and has less in it than the Personal did when it was my only planner - a surprise. The difficulty is I don't carry the A5 around the house, but there is a silver lining! I get exercise running up and down stairs to get it! Filofax fitness! This is because our computer is downstairs and the A5 lives on my desk upstairs. Perhaps if I fill it and carry it around it can count as weight lifting? I am determined not to make a problem out of the transition to having 2 Filofaxes. It is an experiment, so I'm sticking with it for 2007.

Tangerine (2007-05-14 15:23:00)

Great post Inky. Good to know others have changed calendars/planners mid-year. My transition to 2 Filofaxes has a few challenges, but I'm not giving up. I forget to carry the A5 around the house but am getting extra exercise going upstairs to get it off my desk. The A5 is set up more simply and has less in it than the Personal did when it was my only planner and I feel less compulsive about it. I too have a monthly calendar in front of a week on 2 pages with time slots. I use both for planning - the monthly for advance prep, monthly to dos, and avoiding getting over committed. The weekly helps with backcasting, blocking off how much time things actually take. I also highlight chunks of free hours to ensure that I use them for the most important things, which may be To Dos or creative projects. Filofaxy is helping me stay with the system I've chosen!

Nan (2007-05-14 18:53:00)

Thanks for your comments, Tangerine. I love, love, love your idea of blocking off that precious free time! That's what I call using your Filo to live life to the fullest.

Penny (2007-05-15 11:22:00)

This is a great post! Thank you Inky. It's true they all work but the whispers... ack! The whispers!

Shortie (2007-05-22 14:43:00)

Love this site. It is because of this and DIY planner that I am spending alot of time trying to get organised. So far I am the user of a classic DIY planner in a cheap three ring binder format. That was the gateway drug into the Filofax, which was ebay'ed recently (personal classic). Now I am see-sawing between the two formats. I have some DIY template for the Filofax, but have yet to get a hole puncher. My cooling off period is just to use the Filofax, sans tweaks for two weeks and see what I think. As it is, I am spending way too much time 'getting organised'.

Nan (2007-05-22 23:24:00)

Welcome, Shortie! I love your quote about "spending time getting organized." That is so true! Let us know how you do when two weeks are up.

I'd love to see your DIY or Filofax system. We have a Flickr group for pictures like that: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/40748476@N00/>. (You can look at the photo pool without posting anything, too, and there are some really classic Filo pictures that you haven't seen on this blog.)

shortie (2007-05-23 01:07:00)

Hey Inky,

Thanks for the welcome. I have been over the Flickr site many a times, researching, yes that was it. I felt so much like the voyeur, looking at other people's Filofax. Now that I have seen yours and others, I will have to contribute, showing one next to the other. Stay tuned. (Need to go find/borrow a digital camera. - Yes, that is written in the next action column, hmm...wait, should it be a project instead?)

paulien (2007-05-28 14:48:00)

Hi,

I really like your site, I found it while looking around for info on planners. I want my own filo, and I am looking at the personal piazza right now. Do you think that is a good choice?

I also asked this at the flickr site, that is me.

Paulien

Nan (2007-05-28 18:49:00)

Yes, the Personal seems to be the most versatile all-around size, and the Piazza is a beautiful, relatively new model.

shortie (2007-06-20 18:18:00)

Hi Inky,

I finally got pictures of both my setups, DIYplanner and Filofax. It is uploaded to:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/85113538@N00/>

They are both really nice to use and customize, so to come up with the verdict of which I prefer has been difficult. So far, I am leaning towards the Filofax. I love the feel and smell of leather and it is better for me to carry it around; I have a smallish backpack. And if it is any indication, I have been using the Filofax more than I have the DIY planner.

Shortie AKA ecor109

shortie (2007-06-20 18:21:00)

ps, not the best pictures out there, could have been better without the setting sun, the blue hue and with some photoshopping.

Shortie

Another Kindred Spirit (2007-05-14 18:53) - Nan

Stevie, a new reader to Philofaxy, wrote a fantastic Filofax post on his own blog, which I would like to share with you. Click [1]here to read about Man's Best Friend on Strong Stiff Scotch.

(It's actually some women's best friend, too. The Filofax, I mean, not the Scotch.)

1. <http://strongstiffscotch.blogspot.com/2007/02/mans-best-friend.html>

Laurie (2007-05-15 01:04:00)

I beg to differ! Scotch is certainly one of my best friends. In moderation, of course. Unlike my Filofax, of which I partake excessively!

Stevie, thank you so much for your essay on your beloved Filofax! I couldn't agree more.

Andrzej (2007-05-15 04:11:00)

SSS saved the best till last "my loyal constant companion".

To me this is the key to getting the most out of a Filofax; keep it close and its utility will reward you. (To beat my drum) always go for a version that can be carried everywhere.

Strong Stiff Scotch... (2007-05-16 18:20:00)

Thanks for the comments all - and thanks Inky for posting the link.

Yes, it is something of a trademark - more of a substitute for a brain, and a grown-up security blanket to boot! It prompted another filo-related post, which if its ok Inky, you can link to here...

<http://strongstiffscotch.blogspot.com/2007/02/well-addressed.html>

And yes, everything -except the filofax - in moderation!

Laurie (2007-05-17 06:11:00)

SSS, I agree about the addresses. Looking through my old addresses is certainly a trip down memory lane. I take them out of my binder though, and put them in an archive binder so I don't have to sift through my outdated stuff to find my current contacts.

In your blog you say you have something like 15 Filofaxes of various sizes and colors. Do you mind telling us what you do with these? Do you use them for projects, archiving, other things? Or are they purely "decorative?" I'd like to hear about them.

Strong Stiff Scotch... (2007-05-21 03:03:00)

Hey Laurie

I miscounted... I have 25! Collected between 1987 and today, they are mainly from the mid 1980's period - the filofax renaissance. I have all my diaries and address pages going back to 1987, and I use the filofaxes to store these. I also keep all my spare pages, blank note-paper, maps and accessories in these too. Occasionally I'll swap the filofax that I use as my every-day organiser with one of these.

I have 5 Vintage calf "Winchesters", made between 1978 and 1987 with the largest size ring size (about 1 and a quarter inches), and 3 Winchesters with the standard size rings. The Winchester is the classic filofax - tough calf leather with two flapped pockets and a window pocket for an ID pass. I also have some more modern examples including the Sandhurst, a pocket and mini, and a Mulberry 'planner'.

I also have a number of the leather accessories which fit on the rings of a filofax, such as change holders, wallets and jottas. The best place to see vintage Filofax products is at the website of a Japanese collector who has pictures of his considerable store of filofax products at <http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~m-task/index.htm>

If I get around to it, I'll post some photos!

Paul (2007-05-23 08:23:00)

SSS, may I ask, which filofax size do you use for every day use. I am constantly changing between a pocket size and personal size. Not too sure if it's a drive to find the best solution or just an excuse to continually change things.

Thanks

Paul

Strong Stiff Scotch... (2007-05-28 17:52:00)

Hi Paul

I don't swap between sizes; though I do use an A5 Hamilton as my desk diary at work, its the standard size filofax that has always suited me best for work and everyday personal organisation. I did try the Mulberry planner for a while, which has a beautiful leather cover and A5 pages but it was too bulky for everyday use, and I did think about downsizing on a trip with a pocket size filo, but it didn't "feel". I can't ever imagine not using a standard 'personal' size filofax. Everyday life, work, pleasure, holidays, trips, it goes with me. Hey it works for me, but then I'm a bit of a fan!

Stevie

Guest Blog: Filofax Adultery (2007-05-17 19:34) - Nan

Today's guest blog comes to us from world traveler and Filofaxer extraordinaire, Laurie Huff.

I have a smooth black leather Personal size Filofax that I picked up at a discount store for \$25 in 2001. Since then it has traveled the world with me, gotten me through graduate school and multiple moves, one of which was to a foreign country. In it I recorded the births of my daughter and of my son, all their milestones and cute antics. It has held my hopes and dreams along with my travel plans and financial planning. Everyone I know is written into my Filofax. It has been with me through thick and thin. Whenever I am without it, I crave it. When it is with me, I feel secure.

And yet, my wandering eye has settled upon the beautiful violet-hued Piazza, which I recently discovered on the Filofax UK website. (Here is the [1]link for your admiration).

There is no Filofax even available in that color in the U.S. I love all things purple, and have frequently wished I had a lovely purple Filofax to better represent my personality than the slick black. It seems my wish has come true. But I can't help feeling more than a twinge of guilt at the thought of leaving behind my trusty black one. Despite having been shoved into countless bags, being banged-around constantly, and being handled by my often dirty, sweaty, or sunscreen-covered hands, the smooth black leather looks good as new and handsome as ever. Would the lovely violet leather look dirty after a couple of years of abuse? What about that suede strip? Would it turn scrubby-looking and gray over time? Would it be as tough and unflinching as my black one?

In my mind the dilemma has turned into the Team Aniston vs. Team Jolie debate of the Filofax world. Do I leave behind my faithful, lovely but rather vanilla-looking Filo and go for the sexy, beautiful, exciting Piazza? Will it be all I hope it will be, or will things turn sour later when it loses its luster? Am I better off just staying with what has worked for me so well for so many years? Or, if I let the Piazza pass me by, will I always wonder what could have been?

Not the least of my concerns is the price of the Piazza. It clocks in at a spendy \$126, which is beyond even splurge range for me. I'd have to save up for it, and consider it an investment that should last me for many years.

I want to know if anyone else has switched Filos not for a different size but just a different model. Especially, does anyone have a Piazza? How does it look after some abuse? Any wise words for me?

Meanwhile, my internal debate continues.

1. <http://www.filofax.co.uk/store/SEURLF/ASP/SFS/DISPLAY.434/COLOURID.94/RANGEID.83/SIZEID.3/DSIZEID.3/SFE/organiser.htm>

Andrzej (2007-05-18 04:43:00)

\$126 seems a lot though what price "sexy, beautiful, exciting"?

bethelln (2007-05-18 18:49:00)

I have a binder for every "season" I reuse them every year so I am attached to all of them. I have a bright yellow Piccadilly, a black Brompton, a fuschia Portobello and a turquoise Portobello. I love them all and they are like my "purse" which is why I think I change them out. If you love the purple one you could trade off seasonally. Just a thought.

Laurie (2007-05-19 13:19:00)

Oooo, I never thought of changing them seasonally. Hmmmm...

Anonymous (2007-06-02 06:28:00)

Check out the link below. They sell it only for \$75.50.

<http://www.made2shop.com/filofax-piazza-leather-personal-organizer-violet-msrp-p-1435.html>

Laurie (2007-06-03 14:59:00)

Wow, thank you!!!!

Misty (2007-06-06 04:18:00)

What a fantastic blog! Having just joined the Filofax ranks, this is great. I happen to have gone for the most impractical one possible (pictures on my blog), but it is a fabric one and I figure if I am still using it in a year, I can look at one of the sexy leather jobbies.

:-)

Anyway, back to the point. In my meanderings, I looked at the Piazza, as like you, I love its lilac hues. You might be happy to know that the only ones with the strip in suede is the pale blue and pink ones - the lilac ones I looked at had a smooth leather strip and no suede in sight. No need to worry about grubbiness there!

Nan (2007-06-06 08:15:00)

Hi Misty and welcome! Thanks for the info on the Piazza. There have been a lot of questions about it lately. I'll have to go check out your blog!

Treet (2007-06-28 09:56:00)

Although I've just started using Filofax, I have always been a "seasonal" binder user. My first one is the personal Denim, perfect for the summer. Last week I wanted the Topaz, but after receiving the FF catalog, I think my next quest will be the Eton. Anyone have this one?

Treet

Shortie (2007-06-28 15:26:00)

Now that I have one Filofax to call my own, I noticed that my eyes are wandering...and poof! I just got me an old, well-worn Windsor. I like the idea of seasonal Filofax changes. But seeing that the Windsor and the current Classis/Cross are in black leather, I can see that I will need to try again and get a few more in colours. Just how many Filofaxes can one boy use? It is starting to look like the start of a bad habit. Good thing Filofaxes are socially acceptable.

Anonymous (2007-08-01 11:49:00)

I totally agree with buying a Filofax to reflect your personality. I am currently looking into buying a new brightly colored Filofax to replace my beautiful black Portland. Topaz, in blue, I think. You can get some great deals by shopping the web.

Shubha (2007-08-22 13:57:00)

Been reading this blog for some days being a filofax addict - after trying to quit a few times, I am always back! I ordered a red Finsbury as the shade looked lovely online, then panicked as I had always used black and a tan before that. RED? emailed filofax in a hurry if I could change to acceptable brown, a much better colour for leather, will wear more naturally etc., but they said too late, they had despatched it. Now I am staring at a red organiser and trying to get used to it and not agonise about how it will age.. so I know about how filofax adultery feels!

Shubha

Nan (2007-08-22 14:43:00)

Hi Shuba - Glad you're enjoying the blog. Thanks for your comments!

I have a red Finsbury, Personal size, that I've been using daily for about a year. I've found it's wearing fine. It shows a little dirt on the snap closure, which I touch frequently. Someday I'll use some leather cleaner on it, but I'm worried. It still looks great!

Laurie (2008-01-17 05:46:00)

Recently I saw the violet Piazza at a shop in Heathrow airport. Am I glad I didn't spend the money to buy it back when I was lusting after it so much! The color is not what I would call violet (which I think of as some kind of purple), it is really a periwinkle blue. Definitely more blue than purple. Which puts this off the radar for me. Whew! Ended that lust with one glance!

OBG: Oldie but Goodie (2007-05-22 23:04) - Nan

Recently, someone commented on a 2005 post by Philofaxer, and it reminded me of what a great post it was. So since I've nothing Newie but Goodie to share with you today, I'd like to direct your attention to: [1]<http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2005/11/faith-in-system.html>.

1. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2005/11/faith-in-system.html>

Laurie (2007-05-24 01:39:00)

I love this post. I also "Get Plenty Done" with my Filofax without all the intense structure of other "systems." I tried Franklin Covey briefly, when it was supplied to me for free. There were so many steps and things to write and plan that I wound up spending way too much time planning and not nearly enough time doing things. I like the freedom of Filofax. Nobody telling me what to do. I'll decide, thank you very much!

neowagnerite (2007-06-04 13:41:00)

I've noticed that those who have made FILOFAX part of our lives are truly attached to our planners...in a personal, but NOT cultish, way.

Laurie (2007-06-05 01:17:00)

So true! I think many of us have affection toward our Filos (I know I do!) I just don't get warm fuzzy feelings from over-engineered systems. Filo is less structured and therefore can be personalized much more than a system with the "rules" already dictated.

1.6 June

In Praise of Procrastination (2007-06-10 21:17) - Nan

I've successfully scaled the wall of procrastination enough times to notice some side effects. For example, when I really crack down on keeping up with paperwork, I find that any money I save by paying my bills on time may actually be outdone by the extra money I end up spending through the mail. When I set aside time to do mail every week, I actually open and read subscription offers from fascinating magazines...and end up subscribing to them. Getting so I actually have time to fill out a Who's Who questionnaire – hoo boy, big mistake.

I think the reason I'm procrastinating with mail right now is I know there's a jury duty notice in there. The last time I returned one of those, my boss threatened to revoke a recent promotion if I failed to keep up with all my new responsibilities while I was, you know, in a jury room instead of the office 8 hours a day for 2 weeks. *That* was a fun couple of weeks. I'd rather be arrested for forgetting to update my address, thank you.

I guess sometimes when I postpone or avoid decisions, it actually helps me not make the wrong decisions. If subscription offers expire, I end up not subscribing to magazines that I really didn't need in the first place. Which begs the question, why am I not better at making decisions in the first place? Could it be because I've procrastinated so many times, that I've never really learned to make them?

Scary thought.

Oh, well, I'm little behind in mail right now, but not drowning in it. As I pick my way through the small pile on Monday, my paperwork night, I'll strive to do only what's necessary, not what looks interesting, even though I have the time to do it.

Andrzej (2007-06-11 04:18:00)

Procrastination is the thief of time yet can be a friend in the process of decision making. As you conclude the trick is to prioritise decision making. Procrastination allows the unimportant to drop off the radar.

Laurie (2007-06-12 02:46:00)

I agree with postponing the unimportant. Also, you can decide not to decide. We make so many decisions in our lives on a daily basis. When you open the mail, it is a stack of decisions right there. Should I subscribe? Should I apply? Should I respond? When I decide not to decide about the unimportant stuff, I eliminate this process. Sometimes I just cannot be bothered!

Anonymous (2007-06-14 07:22:00)

I struggle with procrastination every day. One thing I have learned for sure – if you put something off long enough and refuse to act on it, you can bet someone else will act on it for you. The results may be less than desirable and we have no one to blame but ourselves.

Chet (2007-06-14 11:40:00)

Have you read this article on [1]Structured Procrastination?

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

Anonymous (2007-06-14 13:10:00)

Thanks for the link! Just read it and I actually enjoyed it. However, it is proof that as human beings we can justify anything.

Andrzej (2007-06-15 03:34:00)

Some work deferring procrastination: What is Flag Day (USA)? This doesn't figure in my filofax whilst it was shown on my tear off calendar (June 14, 2007). Could it be as simple as flying the flag?

Anonymous (2007-09-17 22:02:00)

I have a comment I wanted to make...did you know that the really cool stickers that Franklin covey sells fit PERFECTLY in my personal size binder? I LOVE the appointment stickers! (I'm a thwarted scrapbooker)

Anonymous (2007-12-25 19:44:00)

you really need to read David Allen's GTD. Just click on your link for Merlin on 43folders.com. You haven't sat down to decide what the outcome you want and the action steps it takes to complete them. This is a HUGE part of why we procrastinate. that and fear of the unknown, i.e.,commitment.

Flags and Frenzy (2007-06-24 17:05) - Nan



[1] A reader recently asked about a day that's not listed in the Filofax, but on many American calendars – Flag Day; June 14. "Could it be as simple as flying a flag?"

Well, it's even simpler than that. According to [2]US CODE: Title 36,110, it's just a day to recognize the adoption of the American flag, which became official in 1777. No one's required to fly the flag, but many cities and towns do put up a few extra flags on the main street, though. Some places have parades.

Here's a Web page with more than you ever wanted to know about the Stars and Stripes – the *original* Stars and Stripes, that is, which is still on display in the [3]Smithsonian. (I love stuff like this.)

I haven't been posting during my current busy season at work, but I'll try to do something about that soon. My A5 Filo has come through for me at times, let me down at others. Its To-Do pages are great for recording *everything* I need to do and what I'm waiting for others to do, but not for helping me decide what to do first and when. Some days I just have to grab a separate sheet and make a quick daily list.

Editor's note: President and Mrs. Bush are violating Flag Code in the above picture, according to [4]USHistory.org. Thought you'd like to know.

1. http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_H4Rx8LSaPk/Rn7iX91fwZI/AAAAAAAAAC8/RBFWimTNk28/s1600-h/bush911.jpg

2. http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode36/usc_sec_36_00000110----000-.html

3. http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/nmah/starflag.htm
4. <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagetiq.html>

Treet (2007-06-24 17:44:00)

As a new Filofax user, I have been appreciating your blog so very much! I have been through every post and comment here!:) A planner/paper/ obsessive one, cannot believe I have waited so long to investigate Filofax! Loving the paper, reminds me of moleskine paper. Thanks for sharing a great blog, and looking forward to your posts!

Treet

Nan (2007-06-24 19:41:00)

Thanks, Treet! You've provided me with much-needed motivation!

So let's have the dirt! What kind of Filo do you have? Do you have the cotton cream paper? You must, if you're comparing it to Moleskine paper.

I'm planning to switch to that paper myself, after reading [1]posts like this in the Philofaxy Flickr pool.

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/85113538@N00/574341877/>

neowagnerite (2007-06-24 20:43:00)

Wonderful post....

As a political aside, Mr. Bush has been ignoring the Constitution, so why shouldn't he trample the Flag? ANYWAY.. love my Filofax, and love this blog.

Nan (2007-06-24 21:02:00)

Thanks, Neo!

(Thanks for the aside, too! :))

Simon (2007-06-25 09:06:00)

I've been a filofax user for some years & have just discovered this site too & am very impressed. I'm still trawling through the archives & loving what I've found. Keep up the good work.

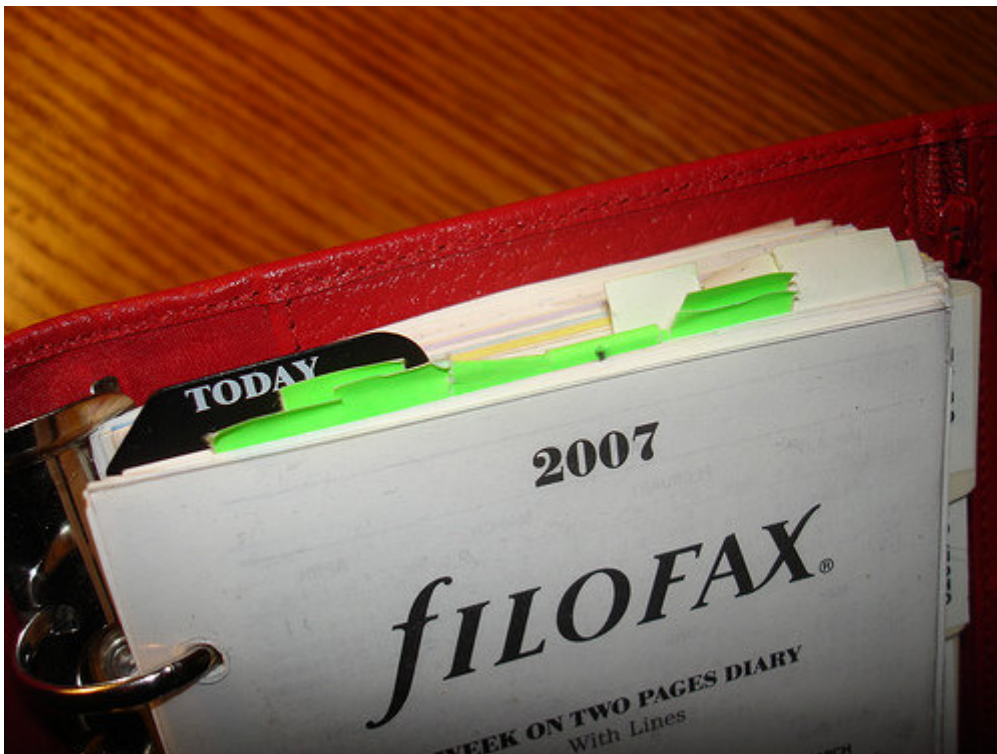
Simon

Treet (2007-06-25 10:02:00)

I'm starting with the Denim Personal Filo for the summer. I think my next venture will be the Topaz Personal. The cotton cream paper is a dream! Thanks for the Flickr pool reference.

Andrzej (2007-06-25 11:36:00)

Thank you Inky! Here we have three flags; European Union Flag, The Union Flag (also known as the Union Jack) and since 1959 a Welsh Flag (which might suggest something about my age). I have enjoyed following the Inky links for lots of interesting reading. I'm not sure if the gas tank on Peter Fonda's Captain America motorcycle (Easy Rider 1969) conforms to Section 8 of the flag code.



[1] I write my day-to-day to-dos ("call the bank," etc.) right on my daily pages, and if I don't get them done by the end of the week, I flag them. I make my own flags by tearing small Post-it notes into strips. So now I have green flags going back to February. What month is it...July? I used to use a To Do page and bind it in the middle of the weekly spread. I quit doing that because the page started collecting "maybe do's." But it occurs to me now, I could just move it behind to To Do tab, which is where I keep all of those nonurgent to-dos. Or I could at least look more respectable by using actual Post-it flags, maybe in red to match the binder.

But that doesn't answer the real question: why do I have undone URGENT tasks going back to February?

1. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gonanb/654192512/>

Klaus-Otto (2007-06-29 08:35:00)

Maybe the problem with your undone todos is the fact that you are using your calendar as a todo list, something it is not meant to be!

Personally I only write a todo in my calendar if it needs to be done at that exact date (e.g. a phone call). After that date, done or not, the todo will have taken care of itself. All others go into the various todo lists that I keep in another section of the planner.

Since you are familiar with the principles of GTD another solution might be that your unresolved todos are in reality projects.

Shortie (2007-06-29 13:46:00)

My system is a half-baked GTD sort.

I write my to-dos for the day on the diary for that particular day. If they are not done for whatever varied reasons, I snowball them to the next day. But once they get deferred too many times, they go into the Next Action tab, which is for me a sort of a Some Day section.

When I first got back to paper organisers, I was almost made a Procrastination tab. Reason was to have a list of things to do that I know I will keep putting off, that way it is listed, but I don't have to feel guilty for not getting to them. It is current called the SomeDay tab in my Filofax.

Anyway, love the green flag with the red Finsbury.

Nan (2007-06-29 20:43:00)

Thanks for the voice of reason, Klaus.

I love the Procrastination tab, Shortie, and the idea behind it. Why cause unnecessary guilt.

Right now, I've had enough of tweaking my system. I'm going to do the stuff that I've written in the wrong place before I change where I'm writing it. I need to make prioritization the name of the game.

Tangerine (2007-06-29 22:08:00)

This is helpful, Inky! My Personal Filo is week on 2 pages, so for lack of space I only write things I intend to do that week - either I do them, because I have to, or I don't, because they didn't really matter anyhow. I've been struggling with my other to do lists - I tend not to look at them and resort to sticky notes. I also need to plan blocks of time for projects. I tend to do little tasks - this is my form of procrastination - never ending maintenance.

Andrzej (2007-07-03 08:38:00)

Perhaps the trick is to write less? Like tangerine my diary section is tight for space so I must try to be economical with my words. I "line on" unclosed actions by inking arrows from one day to the next. If the task still fails to be done I either remember to do it another day or simply forget about it completely. Currently I regularly use the diary, notes, information and addresses sections. Perversely projects (a new one started yesterday) live in the notes section.

1.7 July

American Eagle Day (2007-07-04 16:27) - Nan



[1] Don't bother checking your Filofaxes, gentle readers. I guarantee you won't find this one. In fact, I spent an embarrassing portion of my July 4th holiday searching the Internet to find out whether American Eagle Day is for real.

It all started with the June 19 episode of the [2]Colbert Report. Stephen Colbert featured a [3]bald eagle on his show, and invited everyone over to his house for an American Eagle Day celebration. I wasn't sure whether to believe it. (When faced with a sexy guy in a well-tailored suit and silk tie, my powers of reasoning somewhat fail me.)

Here are the facts, as I've been able to ascertain them:

May 1, 2007: According to the [4]American Eagle Foundation, the U. S. Senate unanimously passed a special resolution naming June 20 "American Eagle Day." The House of Representatives is expected to pass a similar resolution.

June 20, 2007: The [5]International Fraternal Order of Eagles celebrates American Eagle Day. (According to [6]legend, the Eagles were always a little ahead of their time; they were early proponents of legislation that created Social Security and Mother's Day.)

June 28, 2007: U. S. Dept of Interior removes bald eagle from [7]endangered species list.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to watch a [8]cute guy in a well-tailored suit conduct a 4th of July concert.

1. http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_H4Rx8LSaPk/RowNxuRoInI/AAAAAAAAADE/puODsM_syQU/s1600-h/bald-eagle.gif

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

3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bald_eagle
4. http://www.eagles.org/eagle_pr_5_1_07.htm
5. <http://biz.yahoo.com/bw/070702/20070702005672.html?.v=1>
6. <http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/pacificnw/2002/0825/nowthen.html>
7. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/06/28/tech/main2994344.shtml>
8. <http://www.keithlockhart.com/>

Andrzej (2007-07-05 02:41:00)

Be happy, at least your national emblem is real (unlike our Welsh dragon). Our national day is recorded on March 1 in the diary section (though it's not listed as a public holiday).

neowagnerite (2007-07-24 19:33:00)

A Jeffersonian comment—

And therefore, I hope, pertinent to this thread. I've always thought that there was something wonderfully "18th Century" about the Filofax—keeping records, notes, and so on. I was recently in a wonderful restaurant here in Cleveland and sampled a wine of the same type that Thomas Jefferson loved— a Carmignano wine. I, of course, recorded the name and vintage under the "W" tab in my Filofax.

pauien (2007-09-10 14:57:00)

Are you still around here? I enjoy this blog so much, just as my filofax. And I want to mention that I made my first official filofax convert: my boyfriend! It was his birthday last week, and when I asked what he wanted, he said he wanted a fancy planner. So we looked at the filofax website, and he picked a personal filofax in brown. He has had it for three days now and he is very happy with it. Who knew, when he was making fun of me when I started to think about one ...

1.8 September

Guest Blog: Jeff Abbott (2007-09-28 17:59) - Nan

Okay, it's official. Filofaxy has gone—temporarily—fallow again. But like the proverbial Little Engine, *I think I can, I think I can, I know I can* bring it back again. Actually, that should be WE can, because the comeback post this time is from a special guest blogger, [1]Jeff Abbott. The following passage was inspired by, and originally published on, a discussion forum on [2]43 Folders.

I hope you all find it as inspiring as I do:

I've had nine suspense novels published; my most recent, FEAR, was a top 5 bestseller in the UK. I've also done some rewriting work for a major film studio. I use a simple GTD set up, paper-based, to both clear the decks so I can deal with the administrative side of being a full-time novelist and get my creative writing done.

I use an @Studio context for all my creative writing work. If I need to write five pages each day in completing a draft, then "write the next five pages" is a next action and it repeats until the draft is done. Not glamorous but it keeps nose to grindstone. If I need to devote an afternoon to brainstorming, I will block out that time on my calendar, to be as sacrosanct as a business appointment would be. If I have more than one project—say a rewrite on a novel and writing a film treatment—I may divide the day between the projects, just as if I had two appointments that split my day. So some example Next Actions for @Studio context might be: —write the next five pages —rewrite character bio for Lucy —brainstorm on how James can steal a gun in Chapter 13 —rewrite murder scene from new notes on blood splatter or in the case of film work: —reread Act One to find a more dramatic way to introduce the character of Fred.

This sounds uncreative, I guess, but this keeps my focus on what I need to accomplish to move the book/film forward. If I have a brainstorm I capture it and deal with it later if

it's not relevant to what I'm writing at the moment. If I feel like surrendering to distraction (say I'm writing and I suddenly feel I must get on the internet to research some obscure data, a common way for writers to avoid working), I add that as an action for @Online so I remember it, but I don't let it derail me from what I'm doing at the moment.) If I'm not worrying about what to do next, my brain is free to concentrate on the art. So my writing next actions tend to be different depending whether I'm writing first drafts or rewriting. For research, I will use a mix of contexts—@Online for web-based work, @Errands for when I need to go to the library or the bookstore. If I'm interviewing someone, the context depends on if it's face-to-face or more likely, through email or phone. I don't have a lot of phone calls to make in a normal day, but I do use an @Office context for calls and administrative stuff—filing and research I'm doing via phone. I use an @Home context for normal family life.

When I'm on book tour, I create an @Tour context just for that period of time, although since my publisher handles the details of touring for me most items land on the calendar (radio interview or book signing or print interview), but I feel better having the context when I'm out of the office—although it could be argued it's a project not a context, but I don't want to think that much.

I now have a part-time assistant and quite a bit of those next actions that used to crowd @Office and @Errands are now delegated. I use Someday/Maybe lists for things I'd like to do in the future, but NOT for forthcoming book ideas—those get captured and then processed into a notebook where I keep such musings.

I used to try to do all my simple GTD via my Mac and my Palm, but I found it distracted me from writing (mostly when I'm at the computer, I just want to write). I also never found an electronic way to manage projects that I liked. So I now use a Filofax Classic A5 to hold all my project notes, my To Do lists, and my calendar. It lays open on the desk all day. I keep a lot of blank pages in there for idea capture and I find the paper approach is easier to review than on the computer. Again, not at all sophisticated but simple and it gets the job done. The tabs on my Filofax read: PROJ—for all project notes, and also includes a vertical year planner with due dates for projects so I can see my year at a glance DO—my next action lists IDEAS—whatever I need to capture LISTS—books to read or buy, movies to see, music to buy MAYBE—a Someday/Maybe section REF—reference that's useful to have always—phone numbers, sources, the last time I had my oil changed, etc.

I do think GTD is very useful for ensuring forward movement on creative projects, but I think there is a big danger in fiddling overmuch with the system instead of doing actual work. I keep thinking an electronic way might be better but I haven't found one yet, so I've happily stuck with paper. Hope this is helpful.

1. <http://jeffabbott.com/>

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

Shubha (2007-10-01 09:24:00)

Having just found Philofaxy when I was delighting in having bought a new organiser after years, I have been sorry that it has been dormant and so am delighted to see it revived !!

There is a renewed interest in Filofaxes I think. I was in London last month and stores where Filofaxes were not very visible a few years ago, have a whole rack once again!

that is my optimistic report!

Nan (2007-10-16 21:43:00)

Thanks, Shubha. Let us know what you saw in London!

Jeff Abbott (2007-10-18 09:54:00)

Hi Inky:

Thanks for including me on the blog. I'm glad it's active again, it's provided useful tips in the past.

Best,

Jeff Abbott

Anonymous (2007-12-13 21:15:00)

I was obsessed with Philofaxy for ages, sadly I've not visited it much due to dwindling posts.

Jeff's little article refreshed my mind and I'm glad that he (as an Author and not as a Computer or Business person) has shared with us how he plans his week. Very interesting. Thanks Jeff.

Will try to incorporate some of the ideas that Jeff has put down here, I needed some inspiration quite badly...

As a side note: I've recently moved from my personal sized Filo (Black, Classic) to my A5 (Black, Bloomsbury) primarily as I needed more space to 'write', also I love the fact that the A5 I own stays flat. I never did get around to posting that picture of my altered and Flat-i-cised Filo... Filoflat...

Sincerely,

Miss Anon E. Mous. (a.k.a. AK)

1.9 October

Guest Blog: Laurie Huff (2007-10-16 21:29) - Nan

Today's guest blog touches on points that are near and dear to all of our hearts. I know they are to mine. Especially since I've solved my own constant "should I switch" dilemma by making a simple rule: Only switch at the change of a calendar year. (OK, at the change of an academic year if I'm really desperate.) Well, the change of a calendar year is coming. What's in store for us Philofaxers?

The 2008 Itch

As 2007 starts to wind down, my thoughts turn to 2008. Specifically, what calendar will I use next year? My lust for the new and exciting has me reeling with the possibilities. Will I stick with the Filofax week on 2 pages? Should I go for that nifty week plus notes? This of course runs into my classic problem: My Personal size Filofax just doesn't give me enough room to write each day with a week at a view. So now I wonder, should I branch out? Should I switch to a page per day? I tried this one year and, though I had more space to expand my thoughts and plans on a daily basis, I tended to do a poor job of planning ahead without the whole week spread in front of me and the next whole week just a page-turn away. I was lost in a sea of individual days.

So then this begs the question: Should I upgrade my Filofax? Is it time to move up to the A5 size? Will sacrificing portability be worth the gains of writing space and future planning?

Which begs another question: Why do I think about it so much? Is my life really so complicated that I need to find a system that works absolutely flawlessly for me? What about the fact that my needs change every few months and suddenly what worked before is now woefully inadequate?

Questions, questions. Maybe I feel this way because of testimonials from people about how the "perfect" planner system changed their life. Covey, GTD, Uncalendar—the list of systems is endless. People seem to find their perfect system, and suddenly their life is easier, more efficient, and they accomplish their goals! Why can't I do that??

Every year I continue my quest for the Filofax Holy Grail. Would I accomplish just as much with a spiral bound notebook and some Post-Its?

(By the way, Laurie, here's how I settle the A5/Personal conundrum: I use an A5 for business and a Personal for personal. In both cases, I use a week-per-2-pages...vertical for the A5 and horizontal for Personal. I used a day-per-page A5 for work for quite a while, though. In that case, I need to supplement it with a month-per-2-pages or a fold-out year. Since my daily activities are ratcheting up these days...more appointments, workouts, events, and errands to record, I'm seriously considering a day-per-page Personal for 2008. Just thinking about it is delicious. – *Inky*)

Filo-Dream (2007-10-16 22:21:00)

Magnificent! I was wondering is there an opening for a new contributor? I would really like to help.
Thanks

Nan (2007-10-16 23:07:00)

Hi Filo-Dream! We'd love more contributors! Please write to me at nanbarber@gmail.com.

Anonymous (2007-10-17 09:30:00)

I struggle with the same thoughts. The amazing, perhaps sad, part is that these thoughts hang around for days. I am trying to curb my urge to splurge on a new filo simply because I'm not fully appreciating the one I have. I have come to the conclusion that any system will work if it is used and referenced regularly. I struggle with being burdened by carrying around so much history, even in the personal size, that I simply do not need on a daily basis. When I purge things and return to the slimline version, I always leave something out. Customizing and reorganizing an existing system never worked for me because no matter how much I tweaked and edited, it was never enough. My frustration boils down to boredom more than anything else. If I find myself unhappy with the inadequacy of my Filofax, it usually stems from unhappiness with myself, my habits and my lack of productivity, not the tool itself.

Nickleby (2007-10-17 15:22:00)

I too struggle with and have gone through the different calendar formats and different size Filos. Personal fits me best, and I am currently on 1 week per page (in elegant Cotton Cream, no less), but would love the 2 page per day route as I am coming from a Franklin Covey and Day Timer background. The problem I have found when I have tried this in the past though, is that the Personal Filos can't hold the entire year of days at once and still have room for all the other stuff I want to carry. This might be okay if like the FC and DT 2 page per day they inserted blank pages at the end of a month so that you could just have a month (or two or three) in your filo at once, perhaps backed up by a month per page for longer range planning. Anyone else run into this challenge? If so, what was your solution? I am hopeful I am just missing something simple and obvious—as the character and quality of my Filofax leaves any other planner I have owned in the dust.

Simon (2007-10-18 14:38:00)

As I read your blog I kept thinking "I do that", "I do that too" and "I do that as well!"
I'm so glad that someone is as sad (bad?) as I am! I've used the A4 & for a very brief period, the Pocket sizes, but I've returned to the Personal size.
Also, I'm forever looking at the different diary formats. I like the Week plus Notes format, but my handwriting is too large to cope. I've tried the Day per Page, but didn't like the lack of easy forward planning. I've finally settled on Week per View (Sunday start), it has room for notes plus the weekend is given equal space (important to me) 2008 will be my second year of use.
My wife often points out that I'm a sad muppet & frequently asks why I think about it so much & whether my life is so complicated that I need to think about it at all! However, as I can quite happily while away an hour looking at different filofaxes and their accessories; diary, paper or hardware; I sometimes think that she might have a point!
Great post.

Anonymous (2007-10-19 13:55:00)

Glad to know other people share the same problems. I have thought too of changing to the A5, and the only thing that keeps me from it is finding a binder to archive the years. I do not like the Filofax post binders, if you have to make a copy of something, you have to take it completely apart and put it all back together again. Anybody have a line on a good ring binder in A5 size.
Crofter

Anonymous (2007-10-21 21:24:00)

So glad I found you guys!

I'm stressing over my calendar choice for 2008 - anyone have a clue if the A5 will hold the page-a-day calendar with room left for other pages?

Thanks

Nan (2007-10-21 22:09:00)

To answer your question (just above), it depends on your ring size. If you have an A5 with 1.25" rings, like the Finsbury, you can definitely hold the entire year of day-per-page. That's what I did in 2006.

However, you're somewhat limited in what else you can carry behind it. You'll probably have to make a choice between 6-subject tabs or a set of A-Z tabs, but not both. I used the 6 tabs, and kept the alphabetical pages behind the last one. It worked well.

Nan (2007-10-21 22:39:00)

Laurie - I just wanted to comment on something else in your post. I actually had the same experience when I once tried one-page-per-day in my Personal size Filo. I experienced the exact same feeling of being unable to see enough of the big picture to plan. Lost in a sea of days...that's such a beautiful way of describing it!

justathought (2007-10-25 12:42:00)

Why not put a blank sheet in between the week per 2 pages for extra writing room and to do lists instead of upgrading to an A5 if you love the portability of the Personal.

Anonymous (2007-10-29 00:08:00)

I would think that the issue is with the method one uses their Filofax with. If one makes adjustments to create a new way to use their organizer more efficiently, the rest of success will follow.

I used to use the Tony Robbins RPM binder system (yes, the big, dark brick), and I enjoyed it for a while, but the thing was too heavy and bulky to transport with me. I did take his planning method and carried it over to my personal-size Filofax. Now I am able to enjoy the best of both worlds.

My suggestion would be perhaps looking into other systems and transfer any favorite points to your present organizer, or take a time management class as offered by companies such as Covey and The Learning Annex. I have read several times recently that attendees walk away with a wealth of ideas from these events.

Good luck from Connecticut!

Anonymous (2008-01-07 04:03:00)

I stumbled upon your blog site along with a filofax collector's website, so I thought I would share my discovery with everyone.

While I use my Mac for everything, I still love my calf hide Durham Filofax; Purchased at Lincoln Stationers, New York City, NY in 1988.

Happy New Year to all Filofax fans....

<http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~m-task/index.htm>

<http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~m-task/durham/0CLF7-8BN.htm>

Thanks for the comments! (2007-10-17 23:17) - Nan

I just wanted to thank everyone who's been commenting on new (and not-so-new) entries. I don't always respond, but I do read them, and so do our regular readers and those who come to this blog via search engines.

Thanks for contributing to the discussion! It feels good that this blog gets so many visitors, and I'll try to come up with more posts to gratify all of you!

Andrzej (2007-10-19 02:35:00)

I am delighted that your back!

Chocolate Filo and I have missed you.

Nan (2007-10-19 20:35:00)

Awww, I'm glad I came back to keep Chocolate Filo company!

A5 Access (2007-10-19 20:36) - Nan

In a comment on a recent [1]guest post, a reader asked about the availability of A5 binders to store archived Filofax pages. The Filofax post storage binders make it hard to read or photocopy completed pages.

In Europe, there's not much of a problem. A5 2-ring binders and hole punches are everywhere. (You need a separate hole punch, because none of the 6 holes in Filo paper line up with the 2 holes in an A5 binder. Funny, that.)

But in the U.S., A5 paper and accessories are very hard to find. You can possibly find items in the Japantowns of major cities, as I did in [2]New York last year.

Recently, I found another source, located in Massachusetts, that will ship anywhere in the U.S. It's [3]Empire Imports. The #1075 binder on [4]this page is A5 size. There's only one color (dark), and only one spine size (3"), but it's available in the U.S., it holds tons of paper, and Empire Imports is increasing its selection all the time. For example, the company recently added reams of [5]A5 paper, so you can print your own Filo forms. You can also get [6]hole punches from them.

(By the way, if you need A4 or A3 paper and accessories in the U.S., Empire Imports has an even bigger selection.)

1. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2007/10/guest-blog-laurie-huff.html>

2. <http://philofaxy.blogspot.com/2006/10/where-do-i-put-it.html>

3. <http://www.empireimports.com/>

4. <http://empireimports.stores.yahoo.net/specsizbin.html>

5. <http://empireimports.stores.yahoo.net/newa5sizepaper.html>

6. <http://empireimports.stores.yahoo.net/noname1.html>

Anonymous (2007-10-20 22:29:00)

Thank you for the help Inky. I will continue to use my personal, but will get a new A5 for my desk at home.

Thank you for the link.

Crofter

The Monkey (2007-12-07 08:41:00)

What are the dimensions of these supposedly "standard" 2-hole binding systems? Meaning, what is the diameter of the holes used, and where are they placed on the page? I've never seen a 2-hole binder, but I'm working on designing some A5 pages, and I'd like to know what I can expect if I use these binders as storage binders.

Nan (2008-01-13 20:37:00)

Amper, the 2 holes are centered approximately 6.3cm from the top and 6.3cm from the bottom of the page.

Laurie (2008-02-01 04:53:00)

I have a question about storage binders for the Personal size. I also don't like the post-style binders. Several years ago I bought 6 binders at a stationery store, they were cheap and had a simple ring format that fits Personal size pages exactly. Now I have used them all up and I can't find any of these anywhere!! What do most people use to archive Personal size pages? Inky, if we don't get enough responses here, can we post this topic on the main page? I'm getting a little desperate for Personal size ring archive binders. Thank you!!!

Nan (2008-02-03 20:14:00)

Laurie – Yes, I'll post that on the main page, too. I've bought those little 6-ring notebooks at stationery stores in the past, and I have one that I can take a picture of for the blog. I wasn't aware they'd become hard to find. My dad used to use those as his everyday notepads, and I was fascinated by them. Maybe that's where my Filo obsession began.

BlogBook v0.4,
L^AT_EX 2_ε & GNU/Linux.
<http://www.blogbooker.com>

Edited: October 2, 2010