KICKING the TIRES

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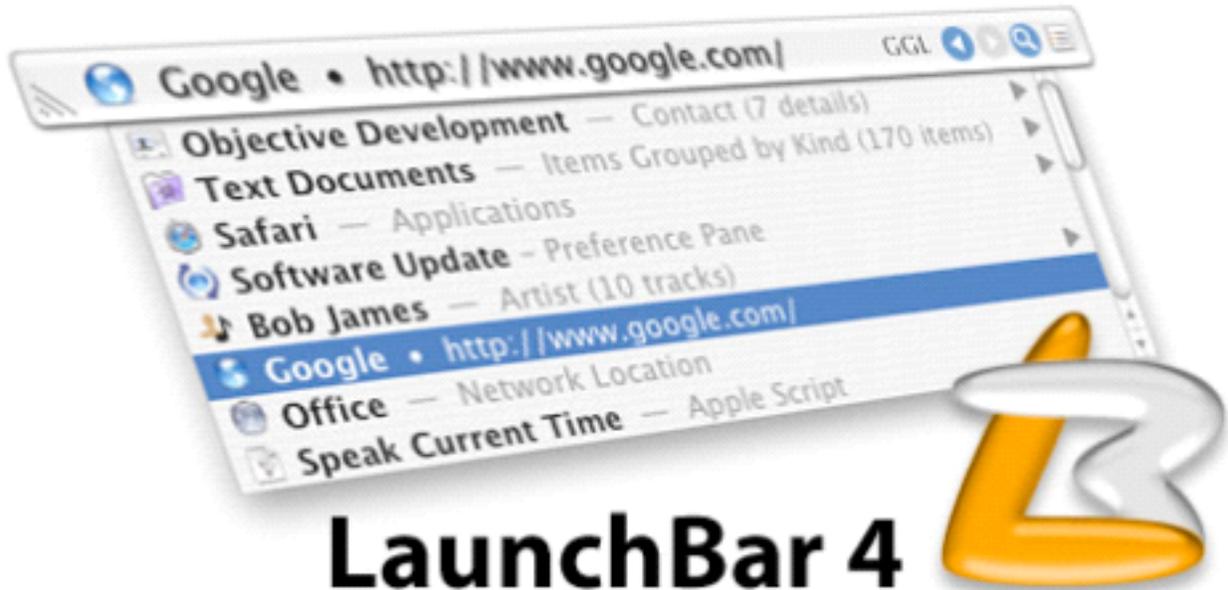
With the introduction of Panther came my new friend, Columns. With Columns I can burrow level after level in the twinkling of an eye (is that a European measurement or an American device, BTW?). But sometimes 'in a second' isn't quick enough. I need it 'right now.' Or I'm just being lazy.

"LaunchBar is an award winning productivity utility that offers an amazingly intuitive and efficient way to control your computer. It provides instant access to thousands of documents, folders, bookmarks and email addresses, applications and preference panes just by entering short abbreviations of the searched item's name.

You just hit Command–Space to bring LaunchBar's input window to front, enter an arbitrary abbreviation, and as soon as you start typing LaunchBar displays the best matching choices, ready to be opened immediately."

Now, I've been using LaunchBar for well over a year. Love it. I find it indispensable. It's also included in the "Ten for X" package. Well, ObjectiveDevelopment found more features to add. Are they worth the upgrade?

The Good

"Drag the icon yadda, yadda, yadda ..." Double click to launch. In earlier versions, a 'thermometer' would pop–up to let you know that is what cataloging all your apps, files, URLs, etc. No longer. It does it in the background.

LB also now brings up what it believes you're looking for in groups; i.e., apps, mail addresses, files, URLs, etc. The "Items Grouped by Kind" indexing rule now provides separate smart groups for "Web Browser Bookmarks", "Web Browser History Items" and "URLs", allowing you to perform specific sub–searches in each of these categories. You can open an ".mbox" file which will select the corresponding Mailbox in the current Mail viewer window instead of opening a new viewer.

And there's many other new features. For example, LB treats your Entourage Address Book the same as it treats Apple's Address Book – no importing, it just accesses and reads it. There is even improved iTunes Browsing: i.e. browse a genre's artists or albums, an artist's albums, etc.

The Bad

Nada.

The Ugly

I didn't get a freebie out of this. :–)

The Close

There are many apps that I have recommended that you get for your toolbox in order to maintain your Mac. This is something different altogether.

LaunchBar is one of those applications, when worked into your workflow, can increase your speed many fold. After a week or two, you won't be able to work without it. It evolves into becoming a major part of your X experience.

My recommendation is to test drive it. In fact, I command you to buy it! :-)

Rating: 7 out of 7