

Montebello Software announces Ascent v1.6

Published on 05/25/07

Ascent is an "activity visualization" application designed to help cyclists, runners, and hikers organize and examine activity data downloaded from GPS devices or imported via various file formats. Ascent is a Macintosh-only application, designed from the start to take advantage of the Macintosh platform. Version 1.6 adds numerous new features and bug fixes. Suggestions from Ascent's expanding user community have been implemented as Ascent continues to evolve.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montebello Software has released version 1.6 of Ascent - an application designed for the Macintosh to help cyclists, runners, and hikers train better by organizing activity data and presenting it in useful ways. Using Ascent, you can download activity data directly from your GPS into the program, and immediately begin analyzing your activities as they are presented to you in various graphical and textual formats.

In addition to direct GPS sync, Ascent can import .tcx and .hst files exported from the Garmin Training Center application. It can also import and export files encoded in the standard GPS Exchange format (.gpx). Ascent can also save activities in Keyhole Markup Language (.kml) format for import into Google Earth and other applications supporting this format.

Ascent can export activity data into comma and tab-delimited text files, which can then be imported into other programs, such as Microsoft Excel or BBEdit, for further analysis. Activity data can also be copied from Ascent and pasted directly into other applications accepting tab-delimited text data.

Ascent 1.6 includes comprehensive zone support for heart rate, speed, pace, gradient, and cadence. Paths that display the route on a downloaded map can be color-coded based on zone, so that it is easy to spot where, for example, maximum heart rate, gradient, or speed occurred. Time spent in zones can also be displayed in Ascent's main browser, and in a statistics "Heads-Up Display" (HUD).

Ascent follows the multiple document architecture of Mac OSX. The default view of each document contains groups of activities that are organized by weeks, months, and years. Activities can be cut, copied, and pasted between documents. The browser includes search features that allow activities to be instantly found by typing a few characters of their title, user-supplied notes, or user-entered keywords. If desired, a separate document can be created for each activity type (cycling, running, hiking, etc), or all activities can be combined in the same document. Users can decide how to organize their data into documents that reflect their training goals.

Data managed by Ascent includes GPS location, speed, altitude, gradient, heart rate, cadence, pace, time in heart rate zones, activity type, equipment, effort, disposition, and weather. Data for each activity can be displayed in the Main Browser, Detailed (Graphical) Activity Window, or in a Summary Window that graphically displays the data as weekly and monthly totals.

Ascent includes advanced heart rate zone support. The number of heart rate zones has been increased from 4 to 5, and several methods of calculating heart rate thresholds are now offered: Karvonen, Zoladz, Classic, and Custom. Ascent can also now calculate maximum heart rate based on age.

A "Statistics" Heads-Up Display in the Activity view can display data such as average min/max speed, pace, heart rate, gradient, altitude, and any category of zone times for any arbitrary region of the activity. Activity regions are easily selectable by option-click-dragging the mouse, and can selections can be fine tuned using the arrow keys.

The Activity View supports display of the entire activity, or of an individual lap. A "Data" Heads-Up Display can be dragged along the activity graph to view instantaneous data values (speed, pace, heart rate, cadence, gradient, altitude, and current distance). This makes it easy to see where in the activity extreme data values occurred such as maximum speed or heart rate.

"Markers" and "Peaks" are optionally available for display in the Activity View. Markers allow the user to place a short text phrase at any point in the graph. This can be used to indicate road names or any other significant activity event. Peaks can be enabled to display iconically the points along the graph where maximum altitude, speed, heart rate, gradient, or cadence values occurred.

Ascent's "Animation" feature lets you re-play the activity so you can review in detail your performance during any segment of the activity. The advanced animation features of Ascent are unique among products of this class. Activities can be played back in real-time (or faster than real-time, playback speed is adjustable), forward or reverse. Heads-up displays show instantaneous data values (speed, gradient, heart rate, cadence) as the animation proceeds. Multiple windows showing paths overlaid on maps, or data graphs against altitude, can be animated simultaneously and Ascent's core animation engine synchronizes the display.

Ascent's Main Browser is completely configurable. Columns may be added, re-arranged, removed, or adjusted in width. Activities can be sorted by any column's data. Activities can be organized hierarchically with yearly, monthly, weekly totals, or can be displayed in a "flat" mode by week, month, or year. All browser settings are saved persistently, per document, so customized data displays can be created, saved, and recalled.

Ascent supports direct export of activity into Google Earth, where 3D "fly-by" playbacks of the activity can be viewed. Additionally, Ascent activities can now be saved individually, or packaged (using a single menu command) into an email message for sending to another Ascent user.

Ascent's extensive set of graph display settings are saved persistently so the the last settings are always used when returning to the program. Graphs of extremely long "endurance" activities (10 hours or more) with many data points are rendered and analyzed quickly in Ascent.

All the major views in Ascent support contextual right (or control-click) menus that are now available in the main views. The most commonly-used commands are available in these menus for quick access and improved workflow.

Ascent includes a drag-and-drop installer, as well as an auto-update facility that checks for program updates at user-specified intervals. If an update is available, the user can choose to immediately install the update (which is handled completely automatically), or to be reminded later that the update is available.

Montebello Software:
<http://www.montebellosoftware.com>

prMac: Publish Once, Broadcast the World :: <http://prmac.com>

Ascent Direct Download:

http://www.montebellosoftware.com/downloads/Ascent_1.3.3.dmg

Ascent On-Line Forum:

<http://www.montebellosoftware.com/cgi-bin/forum/ikonboard.cgi?>

Montebello Software creates applications and utilities optimized for the Macintosh platform. It was created in January 2007 with the release of its first product: Ascent.

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