

# printout

Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group ♦ [www.keystonemac.com](http://www.keystonemac.com)

## Keystone MacCentral November 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Please see your membership email for the links  
to this month's Zoom meeting or email us  
at [KeystoneMacCentral@mac.com](mailto:KeystoneMacCentral@mac.com).

During our program this month we plan to discuss

- ☞ Canva has received a significant upgrade since we reviewed a while ago. AI has been added to the program with results worth checking out.



We have virtual meetings via Zoom  
on the third Tuesday of each month.

Emails will be sent out prior to each meeting.  
Follow the directions/invitation each month  
on our email – that is, just click on the link  
to join our meeting.

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Keystone MacCentral is a not-for-profit group of Macintosh enthusiasts who generally meet the third Tuesday of every month to exchange information, participate in question-and-answer sessions, view product demonstrations, and obtain resource materials that will help them get the most out of their computer systems. Meetings are free and open to the public. **The Keystone MacCentral printout** is the official newsletter of Keystone MacCentral and an independent publication not affiliated or otherwise associated with or sponsored or sanctioned by any for-profit organization, including Apple Inc. Copyright © 2026, Keystone MacCentral, 310 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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# Be Cautious with Agentic Web Browsers

**A**t The Verge, [Robert Hart writes](#): In the past few weeks alone, researchers have uncovered [vulnerabilities in Atlas](#) allowing attackers to take advantage of ChatGPT’s “memory” to inject malicious code, grant themselves access privileges, or deploy malware. [Flaws discovered in Comet](#) could allow attackers to hijack the browser’s AI with hidden instructions. Perplexity, [through a blog](#), and OpenAI’s chief information security officer, Dane Stuckey, acknowledged prompt injections as a big threat last week, though both described them as a “frontier” problem that has no firm solution.

Read Hart’s article for more details on the security and privacy concerns plaguing agentic browsers, but in short, they’re all somewhat vulnerable to “[prompt injection](#)” attacks, in which malicious instructions are concealed within content read by an AI. These instructions could be hidden in HTML comments, white text on a white background, or in the page metadata. They might trick the chatbot into requesting personal information or instruct the browser to download and execute malware.

Right now, agentic browsers have limited defenses against prompt injections. While AI systems can distinguish between system instructions and user content at the architectural level, they can’t reliably identify malicious instructions hidden within legitimate content encountered on Web pages. To an LLM, all text is tokens, and all tokens carry essentially equal weight. These browsers do employ input sanitization and prompt classification, and there are guardrails in place, but we’re talking about an entirely new attack space, making it impossible to anticipate and block all potential attacks.

However, there aren’t yet enough users of these agentic browsers to attract sophisticated cybercriminals, and the browsers don’t work well enough to be reliably exploited, so I’m comfortable using one occasionally for experimentation (see “[Can Agentic Web Browsers Count?](#),” 30 October 2025). I think it’s safest to avoid using an agentic browser as your daily driver for now, though. At best, they are one-trick AI ponies that offer few features to enhance the human-powered Web browsing we all do. 🐾

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By Joe Kissell

## Nisus Writer: Schrödinger’s Word Processor

**A**t this moment, Nisus Writer is essentially Schrödinger’s word processor: it is simultaneously dead and alive, and there’s no way to know more than that right now. We do know that apps, like cats, don’t live long without care and feeding. So, the longer it takes to open the metaphorical box, the more likely it is that it will contain a dead word processor.

Nisus Writer Pro and its sibling Nisus Writer Express (collectively, “Nisus Writer”) are Mac word processors from Nisus Software that have existed in one form or another since 1989. (Normally I’d include links to the product pages here, but for reasons I discuss ahead, that might make a bad situation worse.) Nisus Writer has a unique set of features that distinguishes it from

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rivals such as Apple's Pages, Microsoft Word, and Mellel, and it's especially well-suited for multilingual writing, complex academic and technical documents, and word processing tasks that require a high degree of automation.

I've been involved with Nisus Writer since the early 1990s, when a grad school professor suggested I use Nisus (as it was known then) to write my master's thesis. I loved it and soon became an authorized Nisus trainer. Then, when I moved to San Diego for another round of grad school, I worked part-time at the company doing a variety of tasks, including indexing a five-volume printed instruction manual, managing its network, and providing telephone tech support. Before long, I took a full-time position as product manager for Nisus Writer. Along the way, I also wrote the 600-page book *The Nisus Way* (MIS:Press, 1996). Even after the company laid me off a couple of years later, I continued to rely on Nisus Writer, and to this day, we still use it to write and edit all Take Control books.

We've talked quite a lot about Nisus Writer here at TidBITS over the years. Adam and Tonya relied on it to write TidBITS articles from the very earliest days, thanks in large part to its macro language of the time, and it remained an integral part of the TidBITS publishing approach for years. So much so that, when I searched on this site for "Nisus Writer," I found [nearly 300 results](#)! The last time I wrote about it here was way back in 2018, with an article about the release of version 3.0 (see "[Nisus Writer Pro 3.0 Hits New Levels of Word-Processing Power](#)," 29 October 2018). I also discuss it at some length in my book [Take Control of Automating Your Mac](#).

I include this lengthy preamble not just as an introduction for those unfamiliar with the product but also to say that we (TidBITS, Take Control Books, and Adam and I personally) have a long and deep history with Nisus Writer. Because of that history, when someone has a problem or concern about Nisus Writer, they often write to Adam or me.

We have been getting a lot of email recently.

For more than a year, we've heard scattered complaints: problems with Nisus Software's website, particularly the user discussion forum;

slow or absent responses to support requests; assorted bugs; and other issues. But earlier this week, on 22 October 2025, the reports changed to: "Did you know the Nisus website is completely down, and that Nisus Writer is no longer in the Mac App Store? Does this mean Nisus is out of business?"

On the one hand: The site is back online as I write this. The app still works. I'm writing the first draft of this article in Nisus Writer Pro on a Mac running macOS 26 Tahoe, and it's fine. You can still download it and buy a license. At least one person is actively involved in the company, to some extent. It's (mostly) alive!

On the other hand: All available evidence suggests that development and support for Nisus Writer have ceased, and barring some new information, its future is doubtful. It's (mostly) dead!

I'm going to tell you what I know. (Well, most of what I know.) I'm also going to speculate a bit, because despite my best efforts, I have been unable to obtain verifiable information about certain topics, though I have a pretty good idea of what's likely the case.

On 29 April 2025, following a bunch of emails from people I knew who were worried about Nisus Software, I posted the following in a Nisus discussion forum thread about the state of the app, which I include here in its entirety because I don't know how long it will stay online:

**Hi Folks,**

Back in November 2024, Martin [Wierschin, the last remaining Nisus Writer developer] was chasing down a bug I reported, and we corresponded about it a bit. About a month ago, having not heard from him about it since then, I wrote to him again. It took a while for him to reply, but he told me he's now working at Apple and doesn't know anything about what's going on at the company.

So I wrote to my dear friend Mark Hurvitz, who worked at Nisus for many years and was pretty close to Jerzy. He and I chat regularly, and he's normally prompt in replying. So I asked him if he knew anything. A few weeks have gone by and he has not replied at all.

I then wrote directly to Jerzy [Lewak, the founder and CEO of Nisus Software], both by email and on LinkedIn. Again, it's been a couple of weeks with no reply whatsoever. His LinkedIn page makes it appear as though he's working on something else entirely.

I chatted about this with Adam Engst, and he checked in with Dave Larson, who hasn't worked at Nisus for I think five or six years. He didn't know anything either.

Ordinarily I'd say that the absence of information proves nothing, but, I mean, come on.

Nisus Writer Pro is 100% mission-critical for my business (Take Control Books). I use it every single day, and although I've spent many many hours researching potential alternatives, there simply isn't anything else that does what I need to do. I would be devastated to lose this app. But it certainly appears as though no one is working at Nisus Software anymore, and if I had to make an educated guess, I'd say Jerzy has given up on it. I would VERY much like to be proven wrong about that.

I know Nisus Software is still taking people's money. Someone wrote to me just today saying they'd purchased the app but then had trouble downloading it, though that eventually resolved itself. But I don't think any human beings are paying the slightest attention.

Over the years, I've occasionally daydreamed about buying rights to the app myself, though at this point, I couldn't make a business case for injecting the kind of money into Nisus Writer that it would need to remain viable and maybe even regain a foothold. My personal feeling is that the honorable thing would be for Nisus Software, if there's anything left of it, to open-source Nisus Writer Pro and post a candid "Thanks, it was nice, but it's time to move on" message. I think we'd all respect that, and I'm sure someone would be interested in stepping in as a volunteer maintainer so the software can live on even if the company does not. I'd certainly be willing to help! But if no one even answers an email message, I expect we're all just going to wait until some macOS update kills it for good, and that will be that. What an inglorious end that would be.

## Joe

(Note: Mark and I did eventually make contact a couple of months afterward and had a nice talk about the state of the app and the company.)

Shortly thereafter, Adam was able to get in touch by email with a person associated with the owners. He asked that we not use his name, so I'll refer to him as "Chris." We set up a three-way Zoom call with him on 9 May 2025 and talked for about an hour. Chris did not want us to share details of that call, but I can say generally that he expressed every hope and intention of keeping Nisus Writer alive, suggested that a long-term solution could be in the offing, and said he would post something on the site.

Ten days passed, and no statement appeared. We checked in with Chris, who said he was trying to figure out how to get access to the site to make changes. But months went by without any news, so I wrote back in early August. Chris said he was still working on it, but that he couldn't do anything unilaterally. Then, after Internet luminary Seth Godin praised Nisus Writer Pro in a post that was probably seen by hundreds of thousands of people in early October, Adam wrote to Chris again but received no response.

As we approached the six-month anniversary of that initial Zoom call, people started emailing us to say that the [nisus.com](https://nisus.com) site was down and that the app had disappeared from the App Store, with the implication being that Nisus Software had abruptly shut down. Adam wrote back to Chris once more to ask for an update, and I chimed in with my own questions. We were both clear about the fact that it was time to write an article about what we know.

After a couple of days, Chris told me that the site had been the victim of a DDoS (distributed denial of service) attack, as a result of which their hosting provider was forced to take it offline pending architectural changes to the site that would mitigate such attacks in the future. The site came back up on 24 October 2025, but Chris said attacks were continuing and could force the hosting provider to take it offline again. (That's why I'm not linking to the site in this article; the more traffic it gets before the underlying problem is resolved, the more likely it is that the site will go down again.)

for a while, but it didn't address the bigger issues. Adam and I posed several pointed questions, including these:

- Do you have plans to continue development on Nisus Writer Express and Nisus Writer Pro?
- Are you investigating the sale of the apps to another company?
- Barring either of those, would you consider making the code open source?
- Do you have a plan to address the site architecture?
- Who is actually running the company?
- What can Nisus customers reasonably expect in the coming months and years in terms of support and updates?

His response: "I am unable to say anything publicly." I don't know what to make of that.

Absent a public statement, it's tricky to pin down what's going on at the company. Public records about Nisus Software indicate Jerzy Lewak as the CEO and his wife, Jolanta Lewak, as the COO, which has been true since before I worked there. Although I ran into Chris occasionally when I worked at Nisus in the mid-1990s, it was never clear to me what official position, if any, he had or has in the company. My guess—and it is only a guess—is that he's helping out the owners as a favor.

Martin Wierschin, Dave Larson, and Mark Hurvitz (each of whom was the public face of Nisus Software at one point) are no longer at the company. Jolanta is in her late 80s, and Jerzy is older than Jolanta. As best I can determine, Jerzy is not actively involved with the business anymore, and Jolanta's involvement appears to be minimal. I don't think there are any other employees left at Nisus Software.

The latest update to the app was on 12 November 2024, and it appears the last time a Nisus employee posted on their discussion forum was also in November 2024. (It's a bit hard to tell because their forum software, and in particular its search feature, have been badly broken for months.) To the best of my knowledge, no developers have touched the code since then. Chris was able to get the site back online, so clearly he has some degree of access and authority. And... that's pretty much all I can say for

educated guesses. For what it's worth, here's what I think:

- Without ongoing development to fix bugs and keep up with changes in macOS, Nisus Writer's days are numbered. It could continue working for another ten years, or some change on Apple's side could break it tomorrow.
- In theory, the app could be kept alive if it were sold to another company or if outside investors came on board. But given the cost of software development, the competition, and what I can only assume are minimal sales, I consider it unlikely that another company would be willing to invest the substantial sum that would be required to keep Nisus Writer viable into the future.
- Happy customers are the key to any business's survival. But Nisus Software hasn't engaged much with its customers in recent years and isn't engaging at all now. The goodwill that the company has accrued over the years—existing users love the app—won't last forever without support and updates.
- I fear that Nisus Writer has pretty much saturated its market: after 36 years, the people who want the app already have it. Plus, the world has changed, and most people are content with whatever word processor they already have (namely, Word, Pages, or even Google Docs). Nisus Software could theoretically boost revenues with a big paid upgrade, or attract new customers with flashy new features or support for additional platforms. Continuing to sell the app as is won't lead to meaningful income. Unfortunately, without enough income to pay developers, new versions can't appear. That sounds to me like a recipe for a death spiral.

Maybe whoever's left at the company has a terrific plan that they're unable to share yet. Maybe some prospective buyer or investor sees a big, untapped commercial market that would persuade them to put a lot of cash into the app. If so, that's great! I would be extremely happy if my pessimistic projections did not come to pass. One way or another, I hope the company makes some statement—any statement—about their intentions.

But I have to be honest about the facts as I see them. I can't picture a scenario in which any company

could make a profit from Nisus Writer as things stand now. I'm all in favor of finding clever solutions that benefit all parties. I simply have zero confidence that such a thing will happen.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: in my opinion, the kindest thing Nisus Software could do for its loyal customers is to open-source its code so that volunteers could step in and maintain the app. Lots of other small software companies have done exactly that when they realized they no longer had a viable business. I worry, though, that the company won't do that as long as it believes it can derive further income from Nisus Writer, no matter the effect on users. It's absolutely true that if the company did this, it would stop earning money from Nisus Writer. But if Nisus can't come up with a commercial deal soon, the only options left that I can see are making it open source or letting the app die entirely (which would be the worst possible outcome for everyone). Even taking Nisus Writer open source isn't a trivial undertaking, and the longer the delay, the harder and less likely to succeed the effort will be.

I have repeatedly offered to help in any way I can. I can create websites, update forum software, manage an open source repository, or whatever else would help the cause. I'd do it for free (within reason) because I love and depend on the app. I'm sure Adam and a lot of TidBITS readers who are also Nisus Writer fans from way back would also pitch in. But Nisus Software doesn't seem to be looking to its customers for clues about how to proceed.

I remember once asking Victor Romano, one of the early Nisus Writer engineers, whether he could make a certain change to the find-and-replace feature, and he said, "Oh, no. That's a black box. We don't want to touch that!" I think he was joking a little, because later engineers did in fact tinker with that feature successfully. But "black box" is an apt description of Nisus Software. What's in the box? It seems to be an app in a state of quantum superposition. Maybe the wave function will collapse and reveal a word processor with a bright future, or maybe we'll find that it has been dead for months already. 📦

