Elegant Thinking

D o you think you could fit your entire day on a single sheet of paper? The daily calendar you check in the morning, meetings and contacts, notes, the Sudoku puzzle you do during lunch, the to-do list for tomorrow, the items you need to pick up on the way home? Maybe on your PDA or cell phone, but surely not on one piece of paper.

Some ideas are so pedestrian they escape notice, and some are so crackpot they're hilarious. And then there are those we call elegant—the ones that remind us of what it was that got us out of the swamp. Elegant ideas are usually surprisingly simple, yet there's something secretly miraculous about them. An elegant computer program or algorithm, for instance, has little code used to great effect.

Chad Adams's Analog Task Management System (the Pocket-Mod) is a modest, but nonetheless elegant, idea. Basically, it's a single sheet of paper that folds ingeniously into an eight-page organizer. Based on a small Flash program, the PocketMod creator lets you choose the eight pages you

want in your 2.75" × 4.25" booklet. There's a menu of six basic kinds of pages including the following 35 choices: eight writing guides—lines, grids, music staffs; seven calendars—daily to full year; five organizers—lists, contacts, even a food diary; six reference pages—formulas, conversions, tip tables; four games—dots, tic-tac-toe, Sudoku; and three miscellaneous—emergency notification, Ben Franklin's virtues, and a folding guide. The cover page and a blank fill out the list.

After you drag and drop your choices onto the page template, you send it to the printer. Folding includes a scissor cut halfway across the middle of the page. There's a guide and a short video that show you how it's done.

This pro bono programming by Adams is just another one of those small gifts you occasionally come across while wandering around the Internet. And the elegance of this little solution has the added feature of persuading us, once again, that we belong to a relatively clever group of creatures. Fold your own at www.PocketMod.com. ■