

Stuffit Ver 7.0
Product Review by Alan Baker

• **Product Information**

Name: Stuffit ver 7.0

Manufacturer: Aladdin Systems www.aladdinsys.com

Cost: \$29.95 (download or same plus shipping for physical delivery)

CDW: \$31.17 **Egghead:** \$24.99

Purchase: Aladdin web site www.aladdinsystems.com

Demo/Trial is available from the Aladdin web site

• **What is Stuffit??**

Stuffit is a suite of 5 applications that support the compression of files and the expansion of compressed files in several formats, enabling cross-platform archive sharing. The primary application, Stuffit Browser, has an Explorer-style interface and allows the user to create or expand archives in the following formats:

- SIT (MAC)
- ZIP
- CAB(like the MS Windows CABs)
- LZH
- ARC
- TAR (Solaris UNIX)
- TGZ (Solaris UNIX)
- GZ (Solaris UNIX)
- Z

Using the Stuffit Browser, the user can also create segmented and self-extracting SIT or ZIP archives.

The Archive Search application allows the user to search for files within an archive file, in a manner familiar to those who use the Windows Search feature.

The Stuffit Express application is used to automate a file compression and transfer task. The output of Stuffit Express is a drop box on the desktop into which files can be dropped and the pre-determined set of actions will be taken. This is like writing a script or macro and then being able to drop a file into the desktop icon to run the script process.

The DropStuff application provides a desktop icon into which a file can be dropped and then compressed, according to the user-defined settings or on an ad-hoc basis.

The StuffitExpander application provides a desktop icon into which an archive file can be dropped and then expanded according to the user-defined settings or on an ad-hoc basis.

• **Requirements**

OS: Win 98

Memory: 16Mb

Disk Space: 8 MB (not just for installation – it actually uses this much)

CPU: Pentium class

• Installation

Installation uses Install Shield™, a common and familiar installation script program and the actual “typical” installation went smoothly.

During the installation, I did not notice any error messages or changes to files (like .dlls) without notice. I installed Stuffit on a PC that already had WinZip installed, and both programs worked fine.

To uninstall, there is an uninstall shortcut in the Stuffit program group which calls the Install Shield installation program. One of the choices in the first dialog is to uninstall the program. When I uninstalled Stuffit, there were no obvious problems.

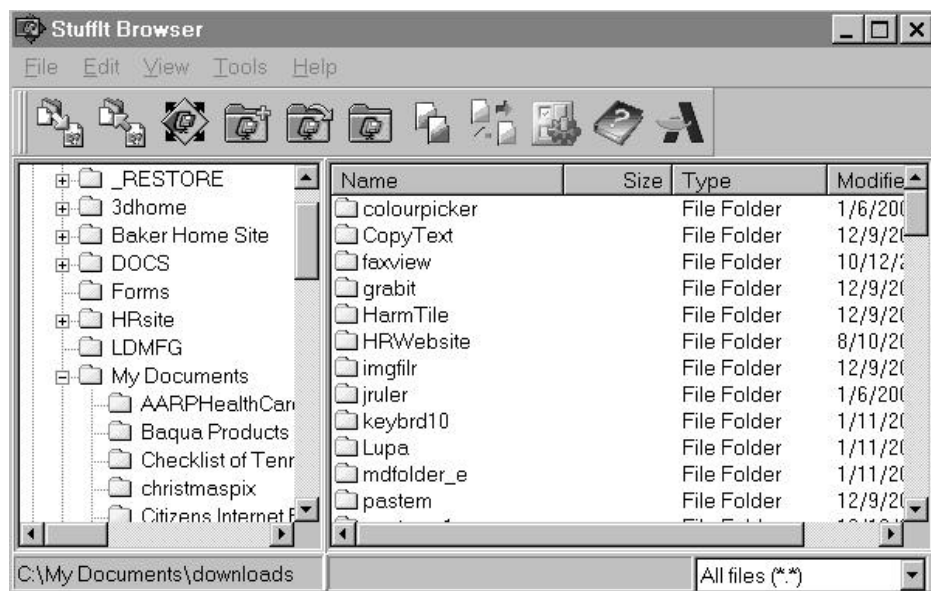
A nice touch was a file What was Installed.rtf in the Documentation folder in the installation path that shows what was installed and in what folder.

• Features

File Compression works well either in Stuffit Browser or Drop Stuff. I only tested the .zip format for readability with other programs, but found these archives to be readable with WinZip™ and PKZip. The Expansion function was equally comfortable with WinZip and PKZip generated files. Using the Browser, simply navigate to a file, select it and select the operation desired from the File drop down menu.

If you want to send a zipped file to someone and you don't know if they have a program like Stuffit to un-zip it, you can easily create a self extracting archive file that when double clicked by the recipient will extract (“un-zip”) itself without other programs.

The Stuffit Browser dialog looks familiar except for the tool bar icons:



Archive Search is accessible with a Start button right-click and the option “Search Archives” opens a dialog box that is similar to the Windows Search dialog. The difference in function is that this search dialog can locate a file that is inside a compressed (archived) file, whereas the Windows search can only “see” the

archived file itself. This is helpful, for example, when trying to find a certain .dll file that is within a Windows CAB file.



The desktop icon for Stuffit Expander is created based on an installation choice. If the user drags and drops a file into this icon, the previously set expansion options are used to automatically expand the file. The options dialog, accessed by double clicking on the icon has several tabs, each with several settings.



This applet is also available from Aladdin Systems for free, via download.



The desktop icon for DropStuff is also optionally created. If a user drags and drops a file into this icon, the previously set compression options are used to automatically compress the file. The option dialog, accessed by double clicking on the icon, includes three option pages, each with several option settings.



This program seems to do everything very well, once the user gets used to the new interfaces. Like many programs, the added flexibility of Stuffit over its competition comes at the price of more complexity.

Of particular interest to me was the Stuffit Express scripted action functionality.. This feature allows the user to create and save a script of compression and other actions and provide input to the script by merely dragging a file into the desktop icon. For example, a file could be compressed, FTP'd to a server and then e-mail notices sent to users altering them to the new file all by dropping that file into the icon. I really could have used this in a prior occupation.

I have only used this program for a few days and I have simple archive support needs, but so far I don't have any suggestions for improvements in the program, nor any ideas on what I think should be added.

Stuffit has competitors. From my experience, WinZip (\$29 plus \$5 shipping) and freeware compression utilities are the most commonly found programs for creating and expanding .ZIP files. As far as I know, Stuffit is unique in its cross-platform approach, probably coming from its MAC history. Stuffit offers a lot of program for the casual user, compared to WinZip and share/freeware compression utilities. If you have very basic needs and don't need support, then freeware is an option worth checking out. WinZip and Stuffit are about the same price – if you need MAC SIT file support, then Stuffit is the obvious choice. Otherwise it's a matter of which program interface suits you the best.

- **Documentation**

A 16-page user guide is shipped with the software and this same document is on the CD as a .PDF file. The document was sufficient to get the software installed and to use the various features. Help files or “what’s this” help [?] exist in each of the interfaces.

- **Product Support**

Tech support is provided via the web site as a FAQ section and via e-mail support requests. Tech support is also available via a toll number. Remember that this is only a \$29 product.

Although I did not need it, I tried to use Aladdins online support system. I did read the FAQ section, and it seemed to cover several meaningful issues. After registering the product, a support request can be generated via e-mail. I sent a request and I got an automated response. Unfortunately, the message said that they were very busy with new releases and new OS support, so they suggested that I call Tech Support instead. I did not get an e-mail response from Tech Support .

- **Other Information of interest**

The CD comes with both Stuffit 7.0 and Stuffit Deluxe 6.5. It turns out that Stuffit Deluxe 6.5 is the Mac version.