

▼ Prologue

Welcome Zhorn-Man,

To another mind-blowing, eye-popping, adrenaline-rushing PDF presentation, with two brand new ideas for *Stickies 6*: '*Multi-Drag*' and '*Drop Shadows*', courtesy of yours truly.

... Well, maybe not all that mind-blowing. They won't exactly make the world a better place, and you won't probably be very interested in tampering with the current code in order to implement them, but nonetheless I thought they might be of some interest. They were fun to think about, anyway.

Now, straight to business...

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Multi-Drag

First we'll talk about '*Multi-Drag*'... There are three sources that inspired me for this 'eventually upcoming' *Stickies 6* feature, which I'd like to present head-on:

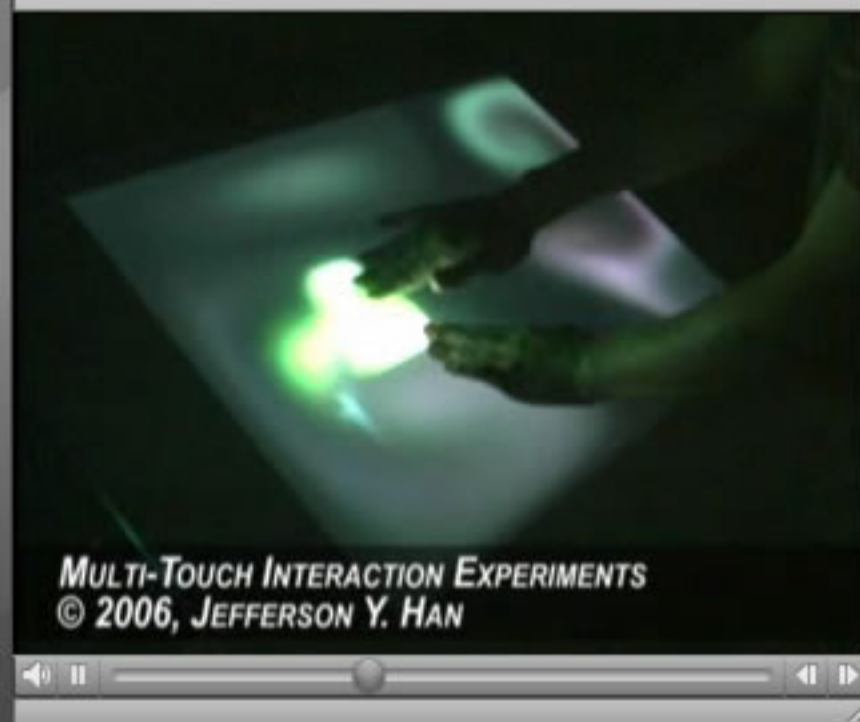
1. An already existing feature in *Stickies 5*, in which if you hold the *Control* key while holding a sticky's title bar and drag it somewhere else, the programme will not move the sticky but will instead move a *replicate* of the sticky onto the new screen location... Instant duplication. Nice.

2. Jeff Han's research on *Multi-Touch Interaction*... You know, that video I showed you from that guy from New York University... Impeccable stuff. Anyway, you can download the video at this address: <<http://mrl.nyu.edu/~jhan/>>

O brother, where art thou?

O brother, where art thou?

Multi-Touch Interaction Experiments...



Multi-Drag

3. A colleague of mine from work has this... apparently unorganized method of organization, in which he scribbles his ideas on post-its, covering his desk and monitor frame with entire columns of post-its (he attaches new post-its whenever he has run out of space on the one he was writing on).

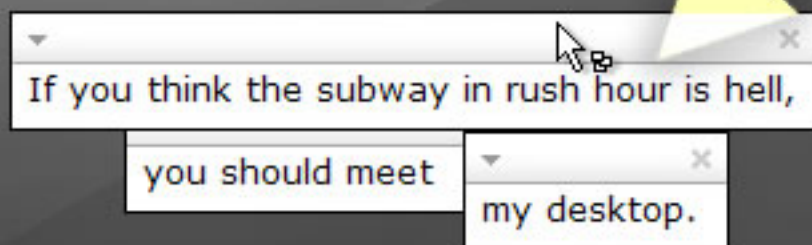
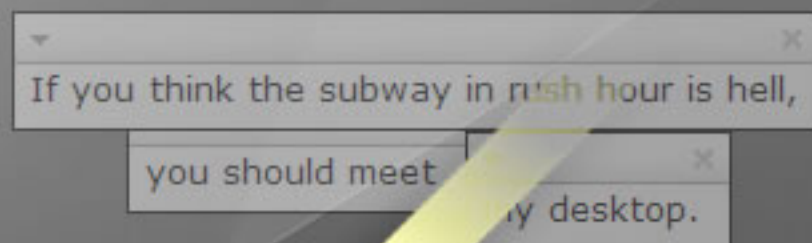
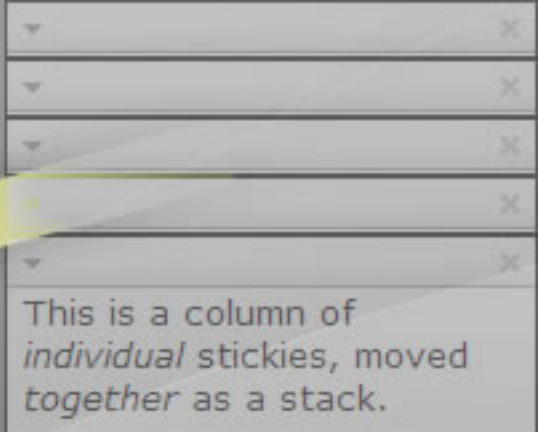
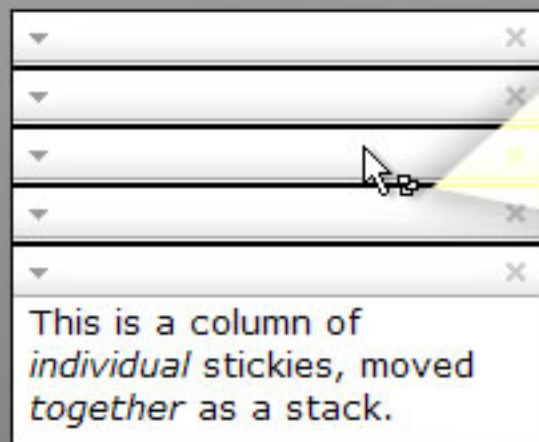
Anyway, and this is the fun part about it, the way he moves notes around caught my eye: he would detach the upper post-it with one hand while holding the bottom post-it with the other, lift the post-its column (it could reach sometimes up to five or six post-its chained together) and land it somewhere else, reattaching the sticky back of the upper post-it to the surface. The physicality of this procedure seems so... well, *physical*.

Multi-Drag

Moving on. Here are the features I thought of... I don't know if they're feasible, but at this point that's not important. We'll figure that out later on.

A) Hold the SHIFT key while holding a sticky's title bar and drag it somewhere else to relocate the sticky and all stickies that are either underneath or snapped-to the sticky you are moving.

Sometimes I have a lot of stickies on my screen. Why should I have to move them one by one, when they're all (partially) piled on top of each others?... For instance, I always have a column of rolled-up stickies on some corner of my screen and I usually want to move, not *one individual sticky*, but *the whole column* to some other area of the desktop, just because I don't want them in that particular area of the screen anymore... but if so, I have to move them one by one. Seems redundant to me.



B) Hold the ALT key while holding a sticky to be able to drag it as if the entire body was a tactile title bar.

Another thing that startled my mind was the fact that... stickies are considerably smaller than most windows opened on my desktop, and therefore, their title bars are considerably smaller targets for me to grab and dispose. But in real life I can drag post-its as a whole, not being confined to one particular tactile area of the post-it.

Because of the exceptional nature and size (and number) of digital stickies on my virtual desktop, I thought: why not be able to use the *entire sticky* as a *draggable* object whenever I needed to?... Yes, I would probably have preferred to resort to the *Control* key instead of *Alt* since on most keyboards the *Control* key is on the lower-left edge of the keypad, and therefore makes an easier, more reachable key than the *Alt* that is placed right beside the *Space* key... but *Control* is already taken, so what the hey.

hands-on: Involving active participation; applied, as opposed to theoretical.

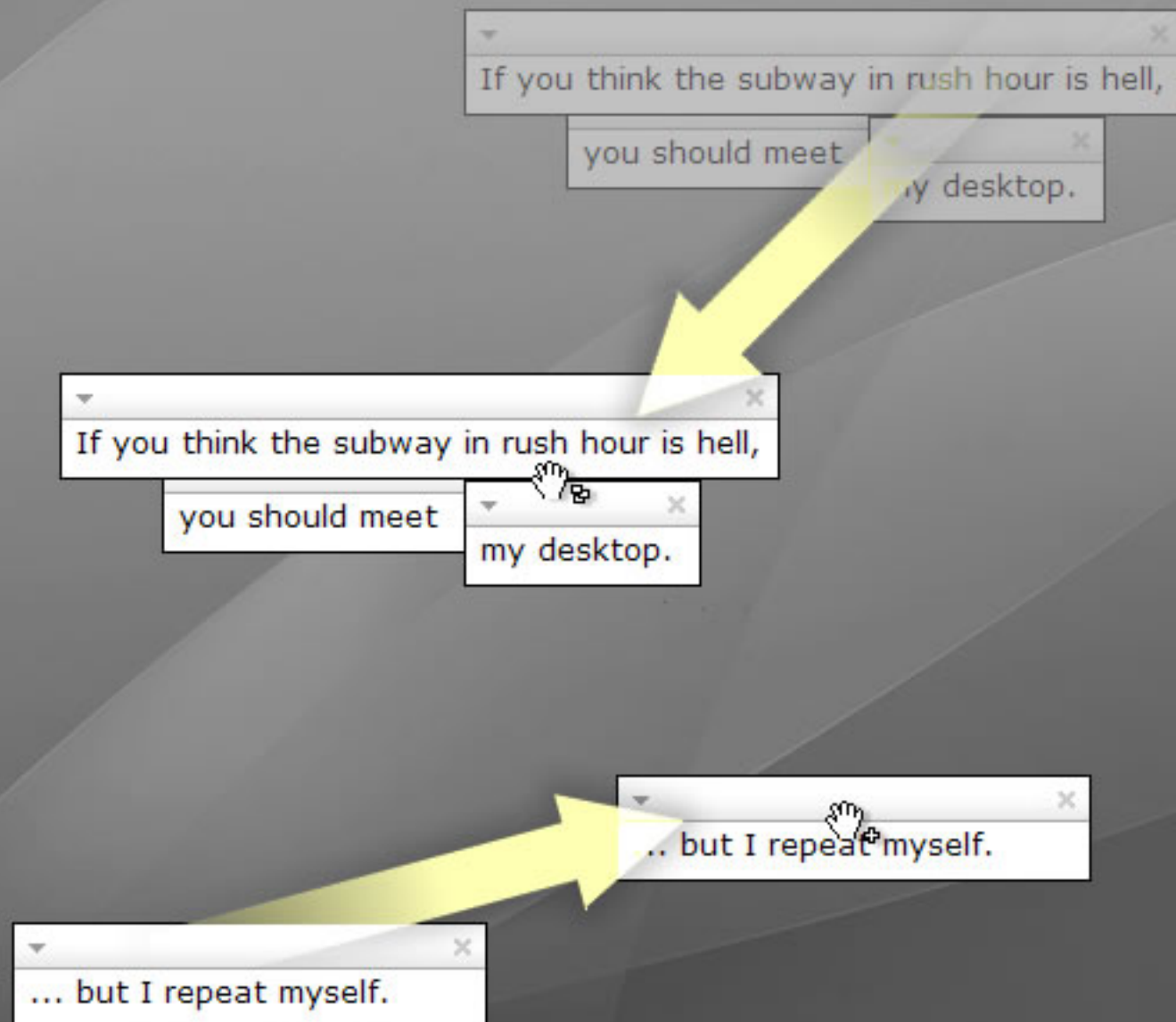
hands-on: Involving active participation; applied, as opposed to theoretical. 🖐

Multi-Drag

C) Hold the ALT and SHIFT keys while holding a sticky to be able to drag it as if the entire body was a tactile title bar, along with all stickies that are either underneath or snapped-to the sticky you are moving.

Idea C is a mere logical add-up of ideas A and B... Duh.

A *Control+Alt* (drag a *replicate* out of the body of the sticky) might also be interesting, but... a *Control+Shift+Alt* would be potentially 'dangerous', in a sense that you could incidentally duplicate over a dozen stickies in one shot - dangerous in the sense it would momentarily slow down the system and, when involuntary, the user would have to close the new stickies one by one. Also, you might want to somehow restrict how many stickies the user will be able to move in a single multi-drag?... Maybe through some options on the *Settings* dialogue?





Drop Shadows

Moving on to 'Drop Shadows': this idea arose out of the need to add some extra eye-candy to *Stickies 6*, since the *V6* skins won't be taking full use of the *Vista* blending properties concerning windows... They'll still look like old *XP*-tech skins - some areas being opaque, others invisible. I come up with four possible contexts for the usage of 'Drop-Shadows', which I'll now explain.

A. Shadow when sticky is active

Usually we can tell at a glance whether an application window is active or not by the dimness of its title bar. With *Stickies*, we can't: there is no visual contrast between an active sticky and the rest of the lot, other than a text cursor blinking - and even that can be deceiving: when a sticky awakes, it pops-up onto the screen presenting a blinking text cursor, despite the fact that I am using / writing on some other programme at the time.

So I thought we could add a *shadow* under the sticky currently being used to highlight it from all others that are just lying there - this way we don't overload the system, since there would only be ONE shadow at a time.

Don't mind me, I'm just lying here...

I am an *active* sticky... You can tell just by looking at my *cool* shadow.

Don't mind me, I'm just lying here...

Don't mind me, I'm just lying here...

Drop Shadows

... but there is a catch: if we multi-drag several stickies altogether, would there still be a shadow under such circumstance? Would there be a shadow on the top sticky, on all of the stickies involved, or just the silhouette of the pile being dragged? Would this slow down the whole dragging and redrawing of the image processes? This sort of stuff would need to be thought out.

B. Shadows for Always-On-Top

On this idea we explore visual contrast between *Always-On-Top* stickies and the rest of the lot. Also, it's a humorous approach to the whole 'Always-On-Top' metaphor: the drop-shadow on these particular stickies would suggest them as if they were stuck outside the monitor – separated from the digital desktop by the screen – like common, physical post-its... This visual nuance is also suggested in the previous context, but with a little twist here.

Don't mind me, I'm just lying here...

I am an *always-on-top* sticky... You can tell by looking at my *cool* shadow.

Don't mind me, I'm just lying here...

Don't mind me, I'm just lying here...

C. Shadows for all stickies

Hmmm sounds really nice, and would provide a distinctive visual appeal for the whole *Stickies* programme, but it also sounds like a possible technical overdemanding of the computer to me, and it would probably slow down the system?... You could set an option on the *Settings* dialogue to enable users with old PCs to deactivate shadows, and users with high-powered *Vista*-prepared PCs (if such PCs even exist) to activate shadows for all stickies.

Don't mind me, I'm just lying her... hey, I got a shadow too!... Nice.

I am a *regular* sticky... We *all* have *cool* shadows.

Don't mind me, I'm just lying her... hey, I got a shadow too!... Nice.

Don't mind me, I'm just lying her... hey, I got a shadow too!... Nice.

D. Shadows when relocating stickies

Nice touch - they have a shadow because we've *detached them from the desktop* and are hovering them to a new location - but adding a shadow effect to a process that will already consume more computer resources than usual doesn't sound... hmmm reasonable to me? I don't know.


Then again, I don't really know jack about programming, nor how you'd actually produced this shadow effect. PNG graphic file? Code? Beats me... Also, maybe we could colour-code different types of shadow (or glow) depending on the sort of operation being performed - single drag, multi-drag, etc.

Shadowless again.

Can a sticky outspeed its own shadow?...

Shadowless again.

Shadowless again.

Can a sticky outspeed its own shadow? 

▼ Afterword

Ideas, Tom, just ideas - waiting to be discussed, improved... or not ;) But the least you can do is give them some serious thought. I'll work on these if you are interested, or discard them and move on to other ideas I have.

Cheers,

Tiago

