Take the Captain's Chair of your Micro.Blog with the MarsEdit app for Mac

A Micro Camp 2023 presentation by Miraz Jordan, https://miraz.me

Micro Camp

Slide background uses an image of Rover Tracks on the Mars surface. Most slides use this background.

Based on MarsEdit 5 from Red Sweater software, https://redsweater.com/marsedit
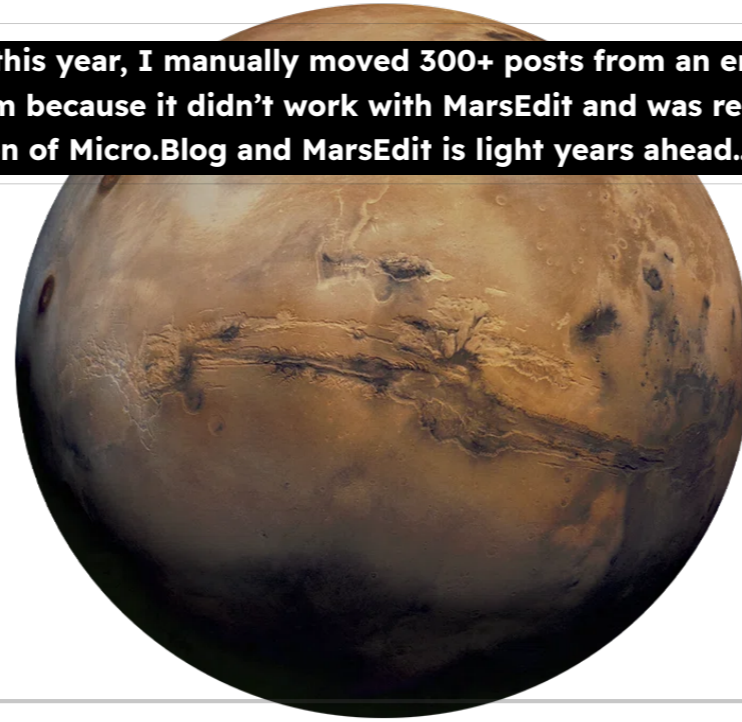
Slide background shows the Ingenuity helicopter on the Martian surface. This background is used for chapter slides.

I've used MarsEdit for about 20 years now — since the beginning —
so you could say I'm a happy customer.

—Miraz Jordan

In fact, earlier this year, I manually moved 300+ posts from an entirely different blogging system because it didn't work with MarsEdit and was really hard to use. The combination of Micro.Blog and MarsEdit is light years ahead...
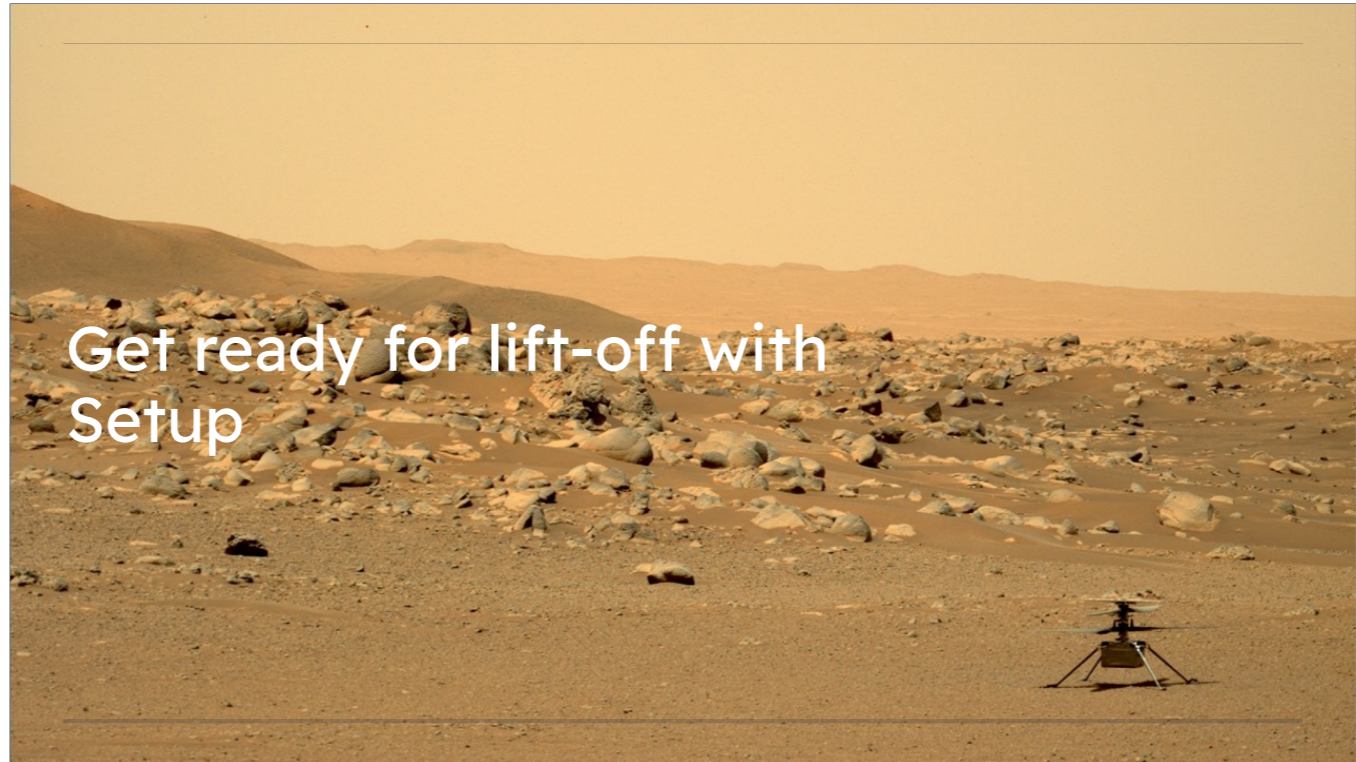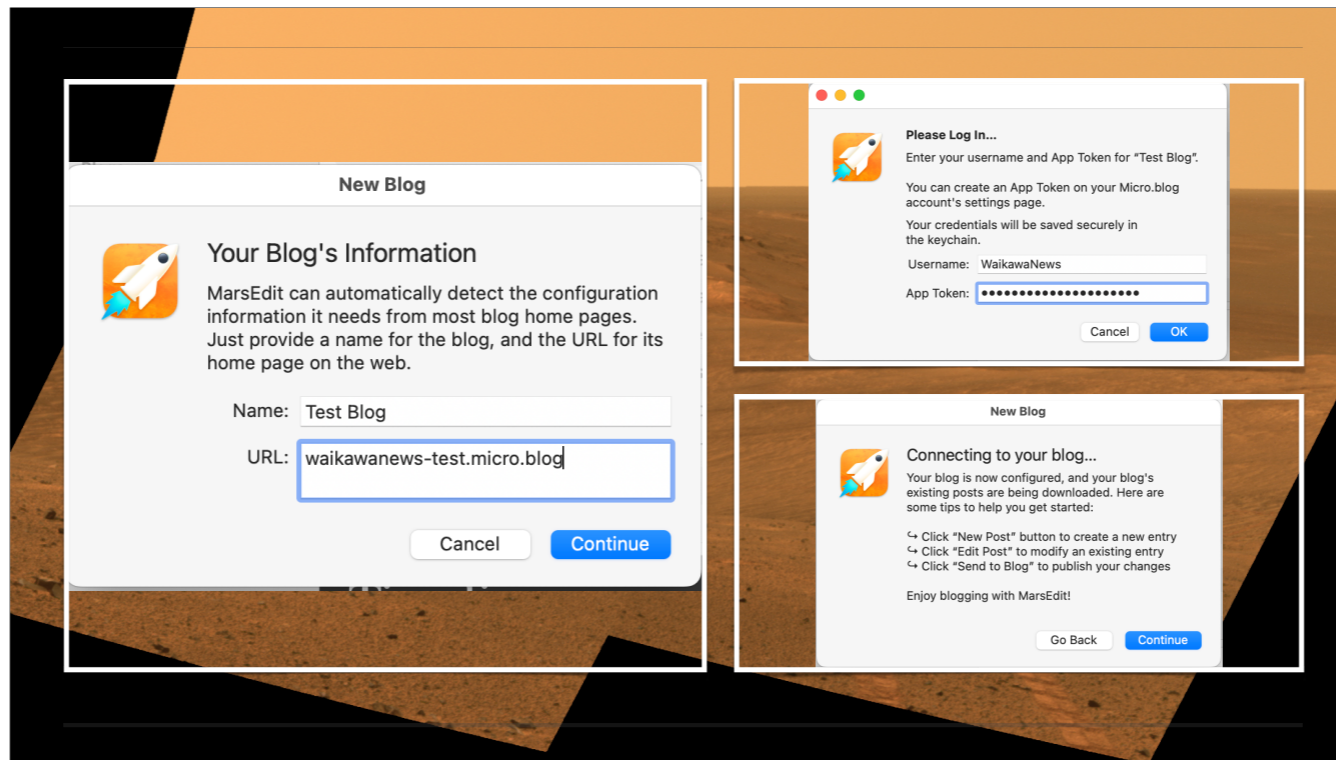
The slide background shows the planet Mars as photographed from space in 1965 by Mariner 4.

Note: some screenshots will be too small to read on this video. A package of downloads contains images big enough to read and study later.

The slide background shows the planet Mars as photographed from space in 1965 by Mariner 4.

Get ready for lift-off with Setup

New Blog

Your Blog's Information

MarsEdit can automatically detect the configuration information it needs from most blog home pages. Just provide a name for the blog, and the URL for its home page on the web.

Name: Test Blog

URL: waikawanews-test.micro.blog

Cancel   Continue

Please Log In...

Enter your username and App Token for "Test Blog".

You can create an App Token on your Micro.blog account's settings page.

Your credentials will be saved securely in the keychain.

Username: WaikawaNews

App Token: ••••••••••••••••••••

Cancel   OK

New Blog

Connecting to your blog...

Your blog is now configured, and your blog's existing posts are being downloaded. Here are some tips to help you get started:

↳ Click "New Post" button to create a new entry
↳ Click "Edit Post" to modify an existing entry
↳ Click "Send to Blog" to publish your changes

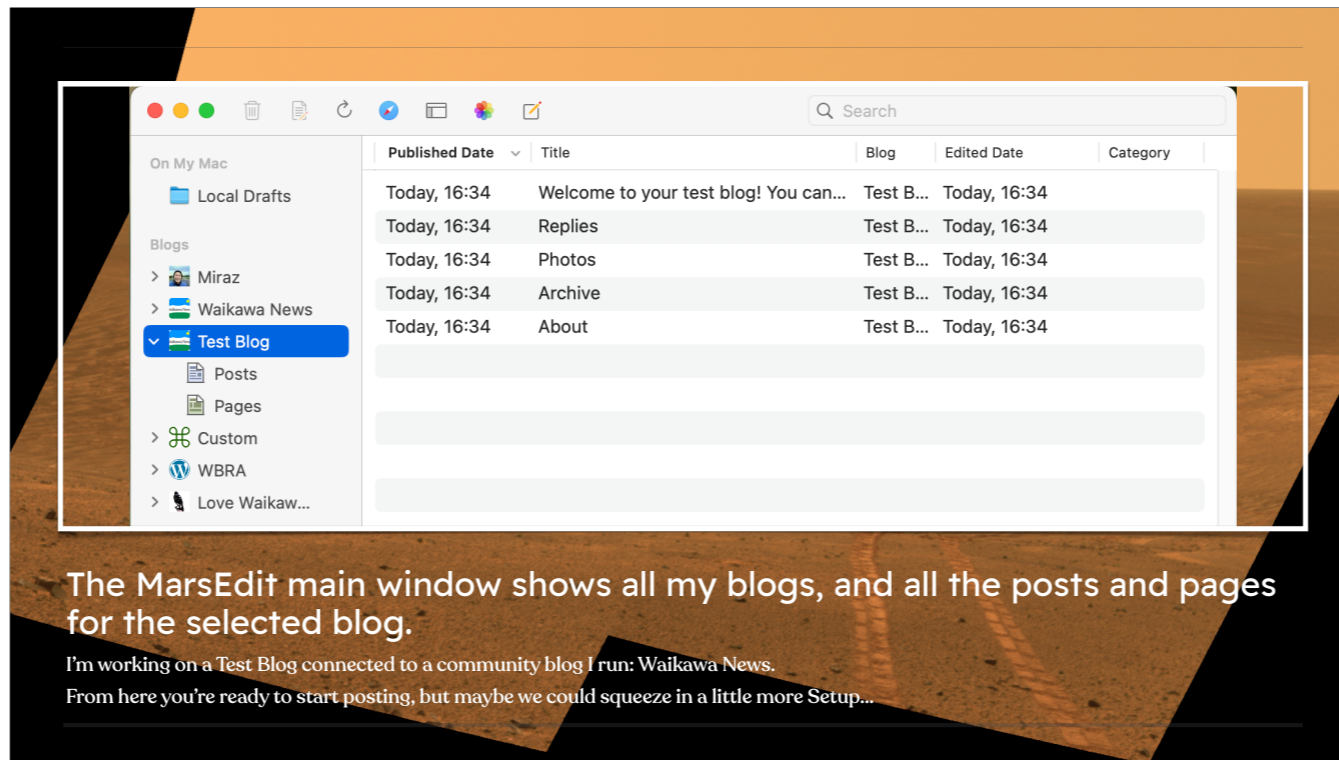Enjoy blogging with MarsEdit!

Go Back   Continue

Screenshot 1: The Mars Edit New Blog form asks for name and URL for the blog.
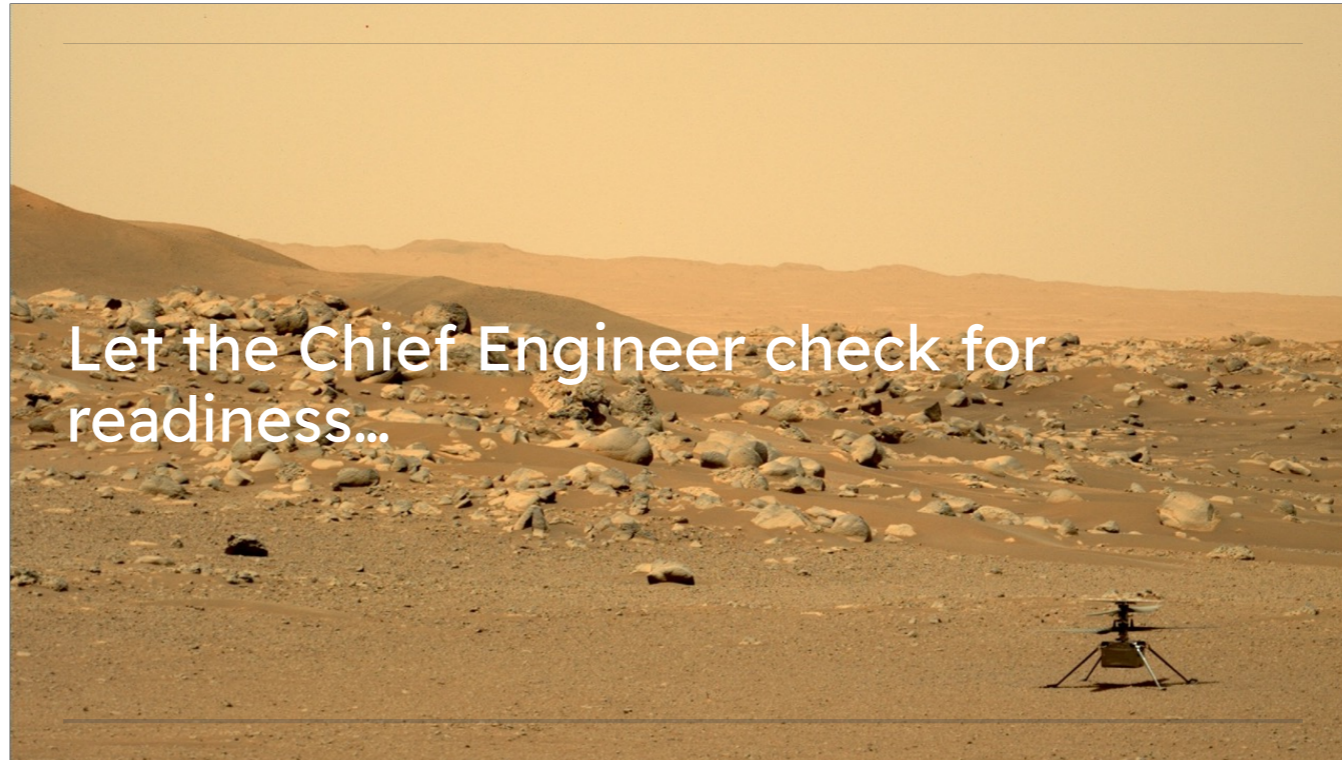
Screenshot 2: The form asks for your Micro.Blog username and app token.

Screenshot 3: Information window: A new blog has been added. There are brief instructions for making a new post, editing a post and publishing a post.
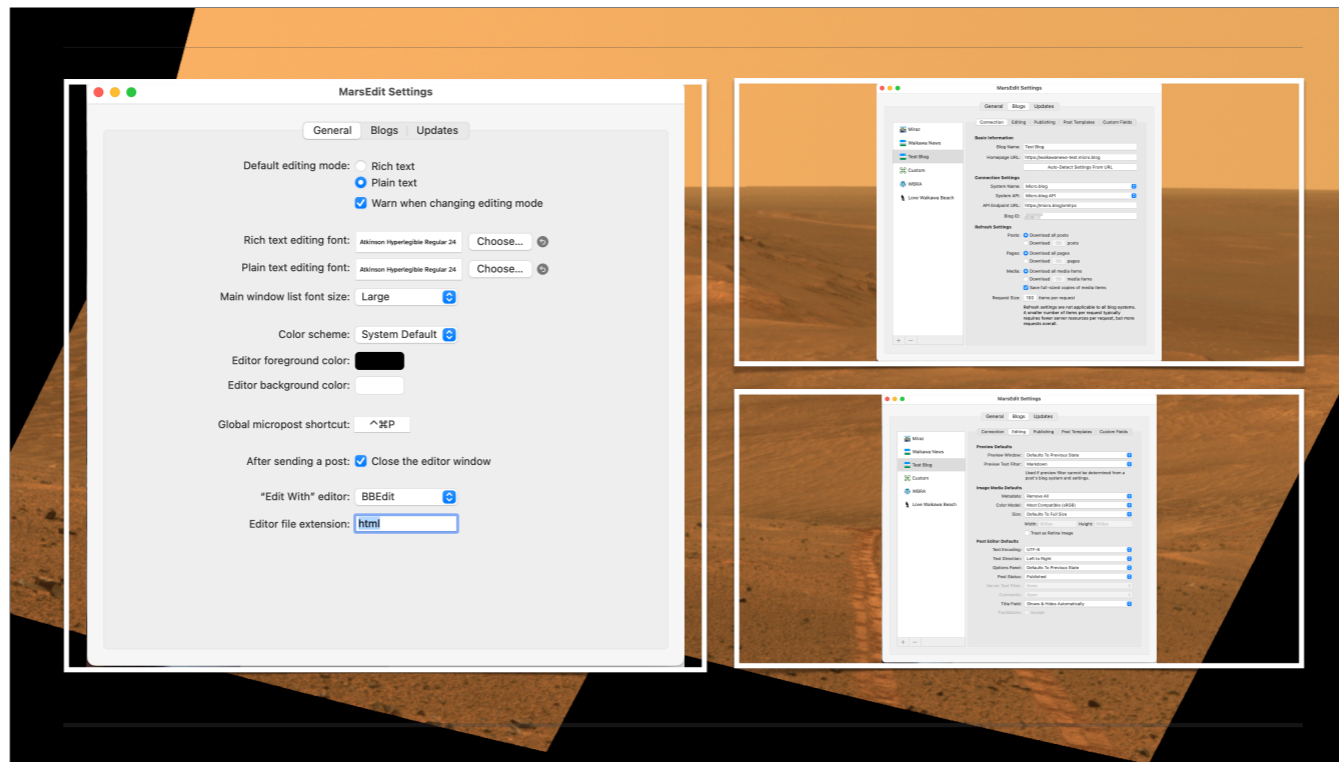
The MarsEdit main window shows all my blogs, and all the posts and pages for the selected blog.

I'm working on a Test Blog connected to a community blog I run: Waikawa News.
From here you're ready to start posting, but maybe we could squeeze in a little more Setup...

Screenshot of the MarsEdit Main Window, listing Blogs, Posts and Pages.
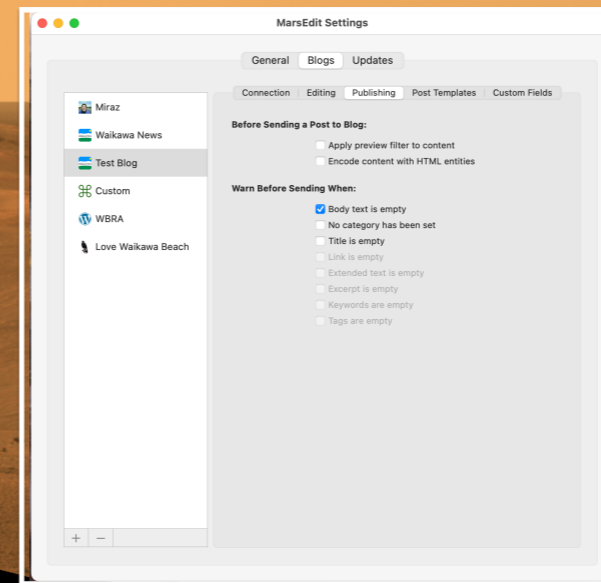
Let the Chief Engineer check for readiness…

Screenshot 1: The MarsEdit General settings window— choose Rich or Plain text, fonts for editing, and the Main Window list font size, color scheme. Select a shortcut for Microposts and choose an external text editor.

Screenshot 2: The Connection settings window for one blog. Includes blog name and URL, system name (eg Micro.Blog), API and Endpoint, Blog ID, Refresh settings such as number of posts, pages and media items to download and how many items to request at a time.
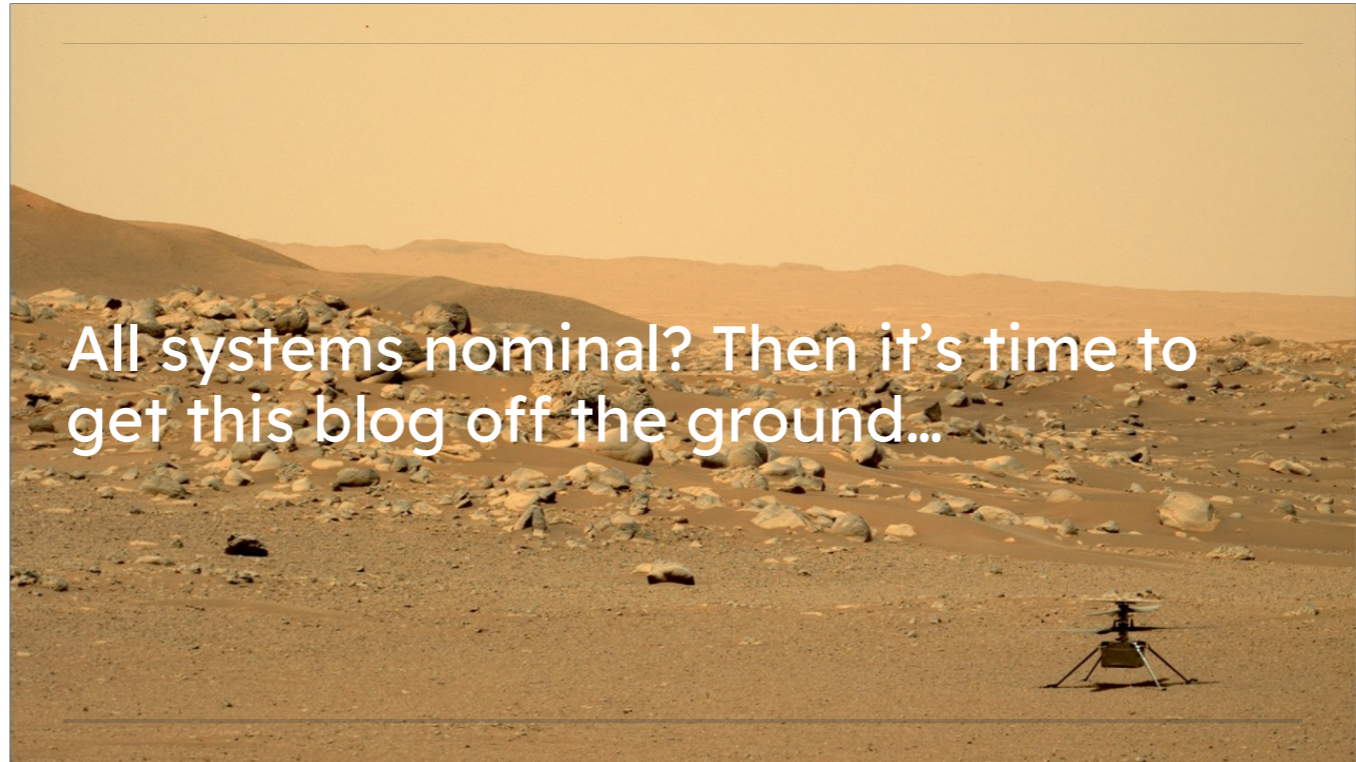
Screenshot 3: The Editing settings window for one blog. Includes defaults for the Preview window and Preview Text Filter, image defaults for metadata, color model and size, and text defaults such as UTF-8, left to right script, defaults for the Options panel and Post Status (eg Published or Draft). Choose when to show or hide the Title field.
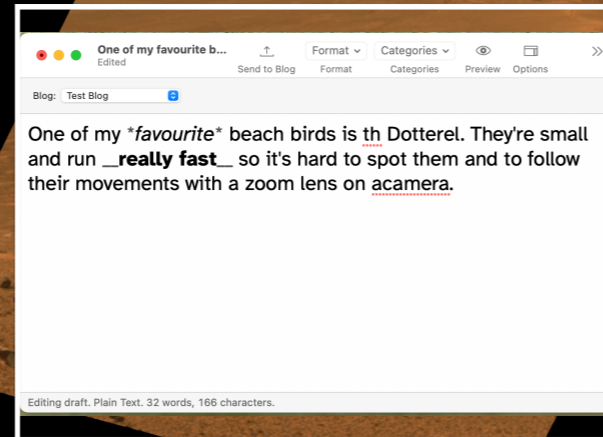
Screenshot : The MarsEdit Blog Publishing settings window, including checkboxes for applying a preview filter to content, encoding with HTML entities; and warnings if sending with empty body, category or title.

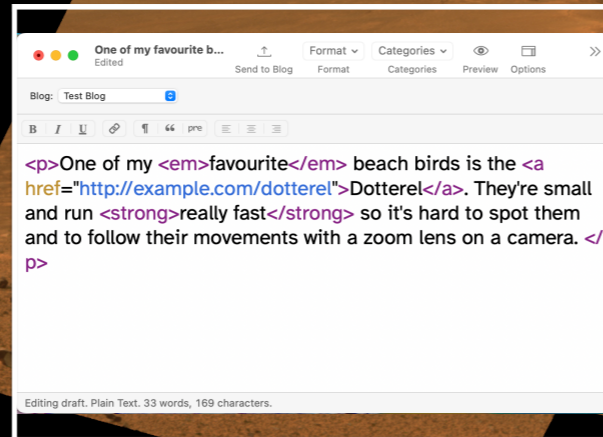All systems nominal? Then it's time to get this blog off the ground…

Write text

One of my *favourite* beach birds is th Dotterel. They're small and run __really fast__ so it's hard to spot them and to follow their movements with a zoom lens on acamera.

Editing draft. Plain Text. 32 words, 166 characters.

- Menu Bar, key command or Toolbar: create a new Post.

- Just start writing.

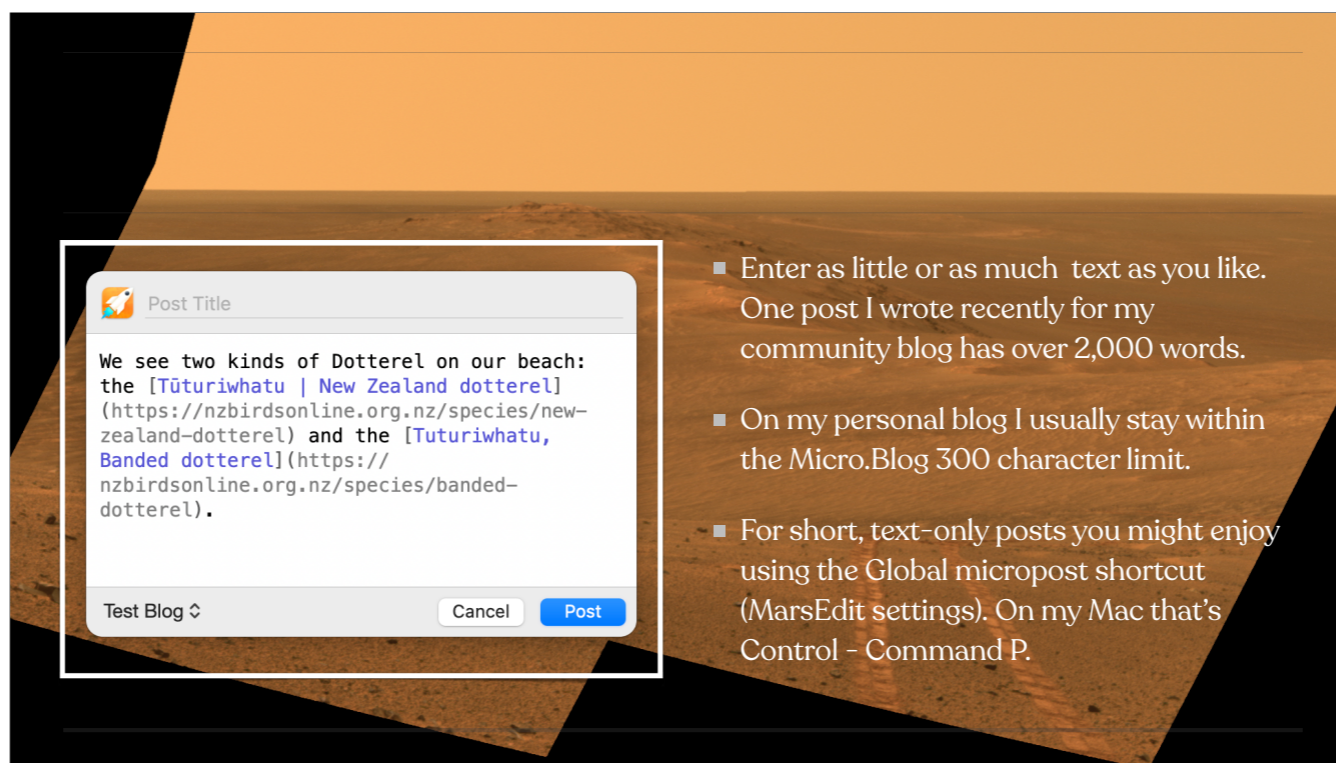- Markdown works well. ME shows my typos too!

- And keeps a count of words and characters.

Screenshot : shows the composition window containing toolbars and text, with typos underlined in red and Markdown syntax for emphasis and strong emphasis showing italics and bold. At the bottom is a status bar showing word and character count.
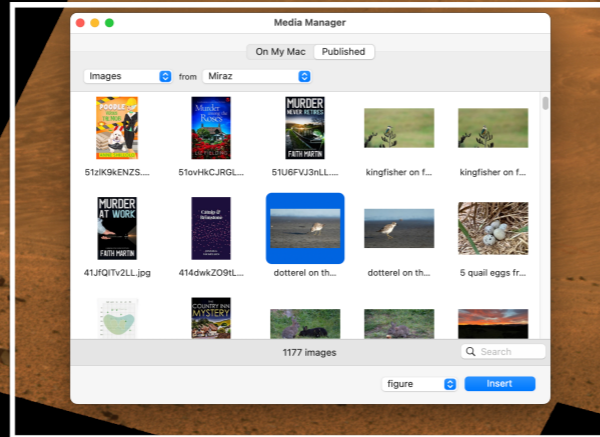
Sometimes I prefer to write in HTML

One of my favourite b...
Edited

Blog: Test Blog

\<p\>One of my \<em\>favourite\</em\> beach birds is the \<a href="http://example.com/dotterel"\>Dotterel\</a\>. They're small and run \<strong\>really fast\</strong\> so it's hard to spot them and to follow their movements with a zoom lens on a camera. \</p\>

Editing draft. Plain Text. 33 words, 169 characters.

- View Menu – Show Formatting Bar helps with HTML.

- I fixed my typos and the word and character count have updated.

- Syntax highlighting shows when you've made errors in the HTML. (None here!)

- Rich text is another option, if that's your thing.

Screenshot : shows the composition window containing toolbars and text, with HTML syntax colouring for tags. At the bottom is a status bar showing word and character count.

Screenshot : shows the quick post window containing toolbars and text, with Markdown syntax colouring. At the bottom is a pop-up for choosing which blog to post to.
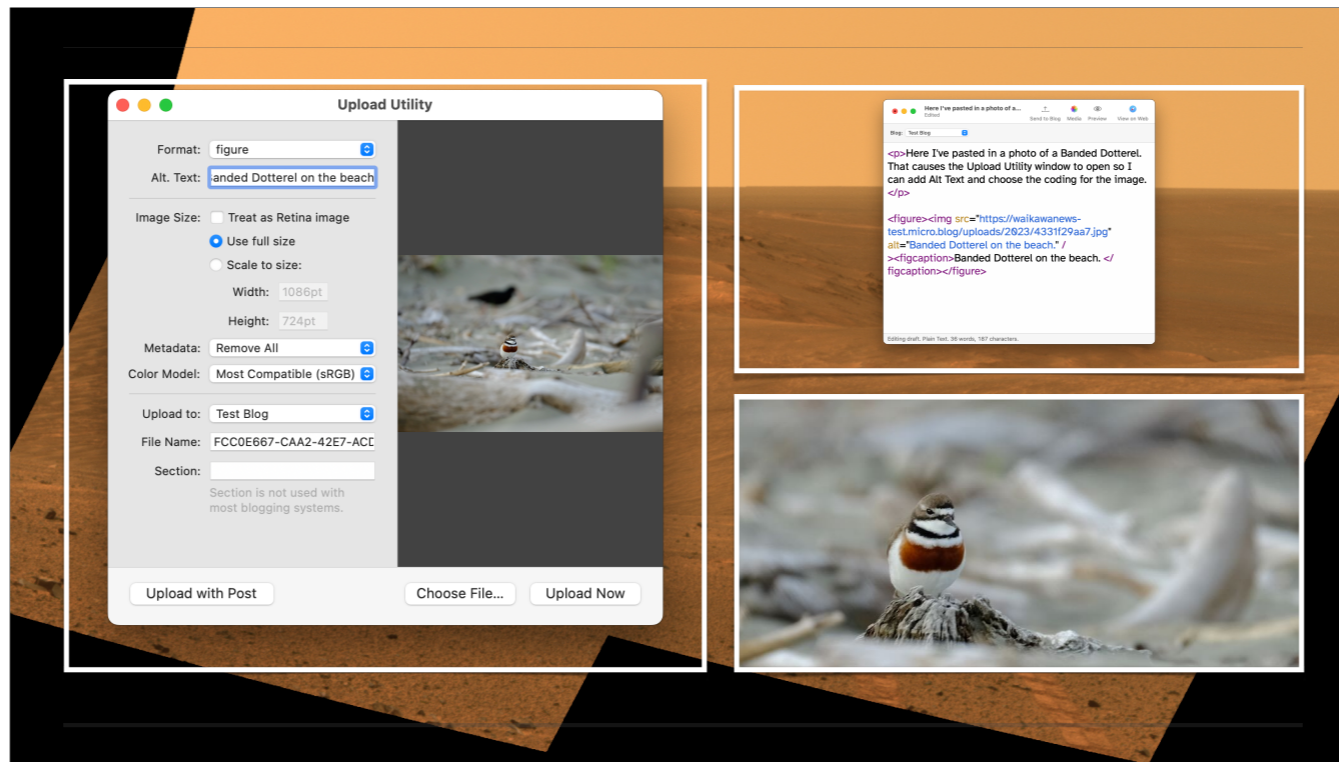
Screenshot shows the Media Manager window with thumbnail images. Available options include showing photos On My Mac or already Published, Images or other kinds of uploads from a selected blog. You can also choose specific coding to wrap around the selected item.
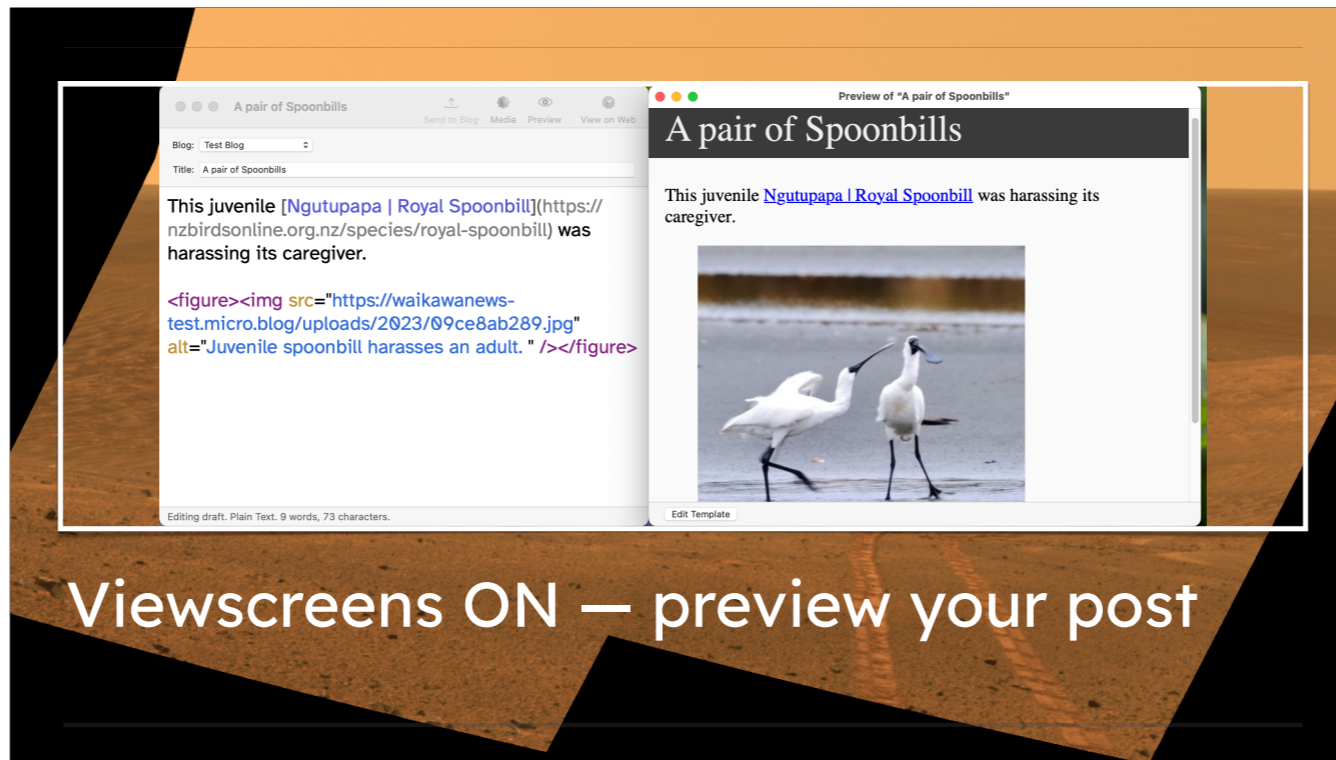
Screenshot 1 shows the Upload Utility window. It shows a preview of a selected image, and allows you to choose a file, whether to upload it now or later, what coding to wrap around it. It has a space to enter alt text and includes options around image size, blog to upload to and file name.

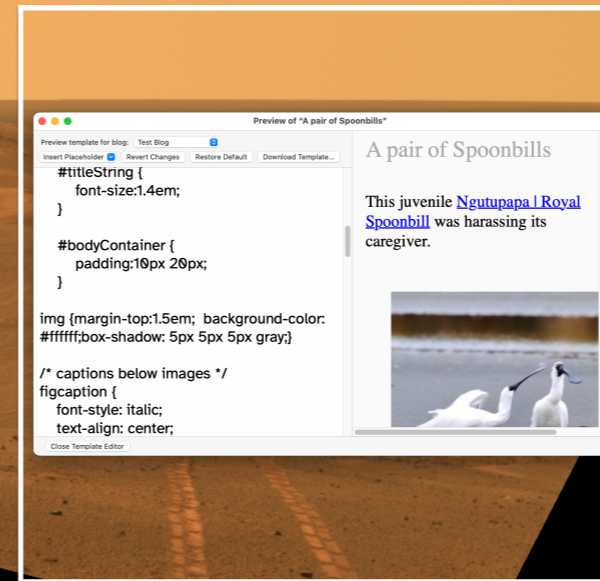Screenshot 2 shows the coding entered into the composition window after uploading a file.

Image 3 shows a Banded Dotterel on a beach.

Viewscreens ON — preview your post

The screenshot shows a composition window on the left, containing text, an image path, and coding, and a preview window on the right showing the text rendered into HTML and the image.

- Click Edit Template on the Preview window to change how the Preview appears.
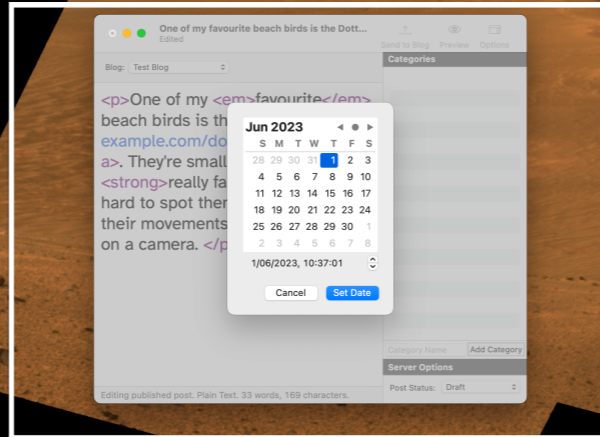- Add CSS from your blog design to have it look close to how it will appear on your website.

The screenshot shows the preview window divided with the preview on the right and on the left the template editor — an area for entering CSS to affect the display of the post in the preview window.

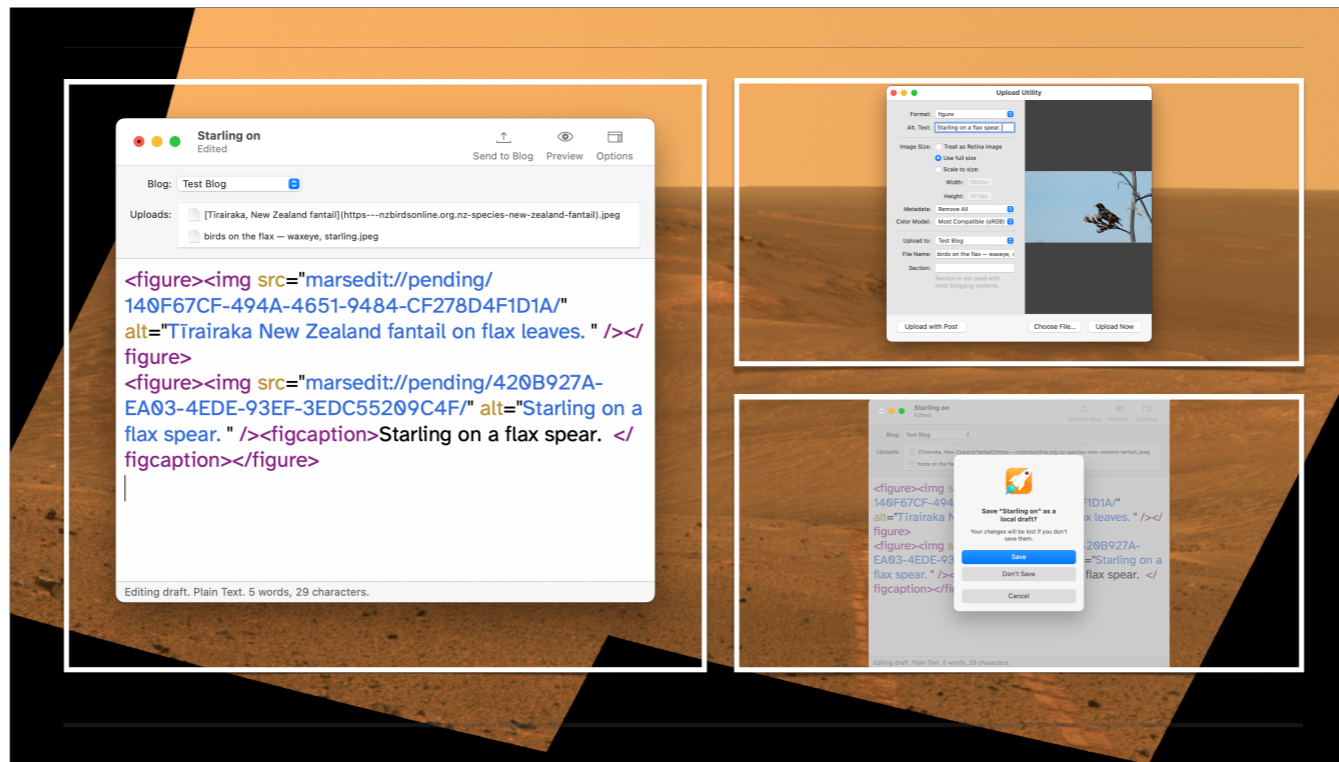Time Travel: The future is the past, the past is the future. It all gives me a headache.

Choose the publication date

- Save as Draft locally or on the Micro.Blog server
- Set the publication date and time
  - in the past or future
- Don't upload photos till you're ready

Screenshot shows the Date and Time picker window in MarsEdit.

Screenshot 1 shows a composition window with text entered and a section showing uploads to be sent to the server on publication.
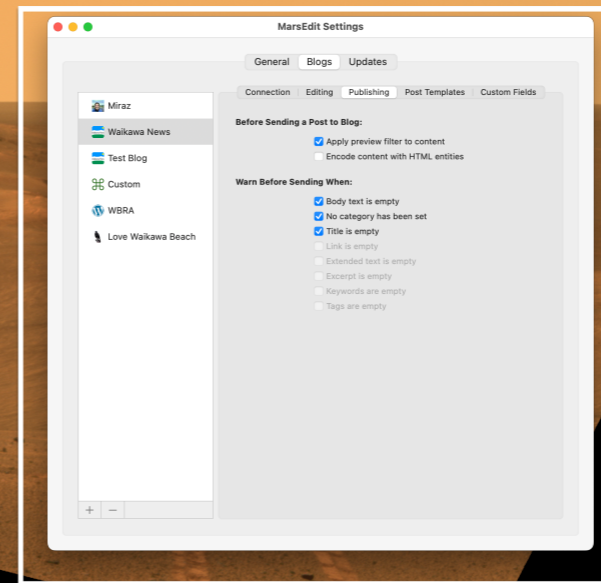
Screenshot 2 shows the Upload Utility window with buttons at the bottom for Upload Now or Upload with Post.

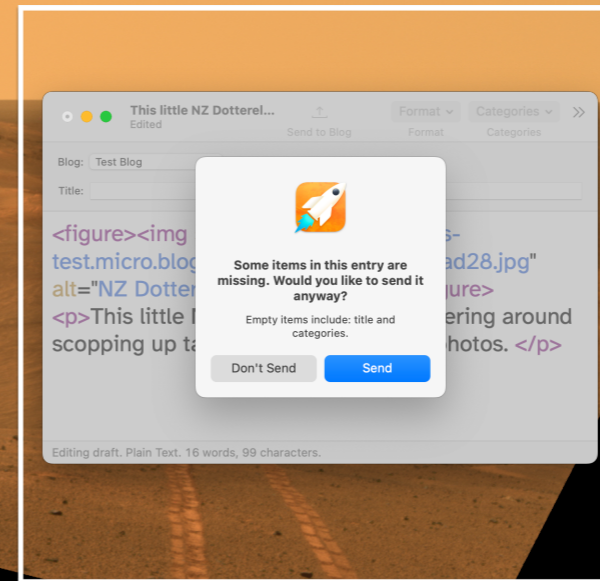Screenshot 3 shows the window to choose between save and not save as local draft.

Red Alert!

On my Waikawa News site I want Mars Edit to warn me if I forget a Title or a Category

Screenshot shows the MarsEdit Blog Publishing Settings window with options for alerting the user if the Body text, Title or Category are empty.

I made the same choice for my Test Blog and got the warning (good thing too with that typo!)
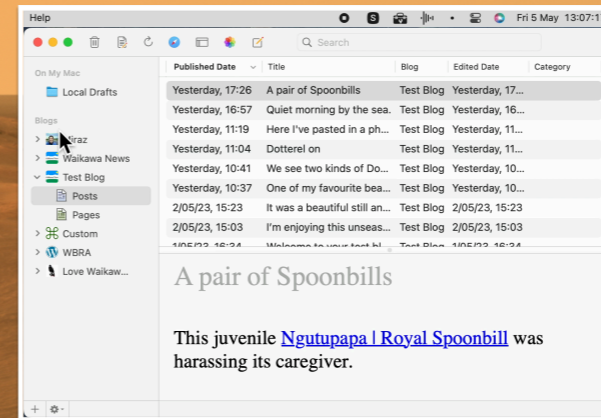
The MarsEdit alert window warning that some items are missing, should the post still be sent to the server?
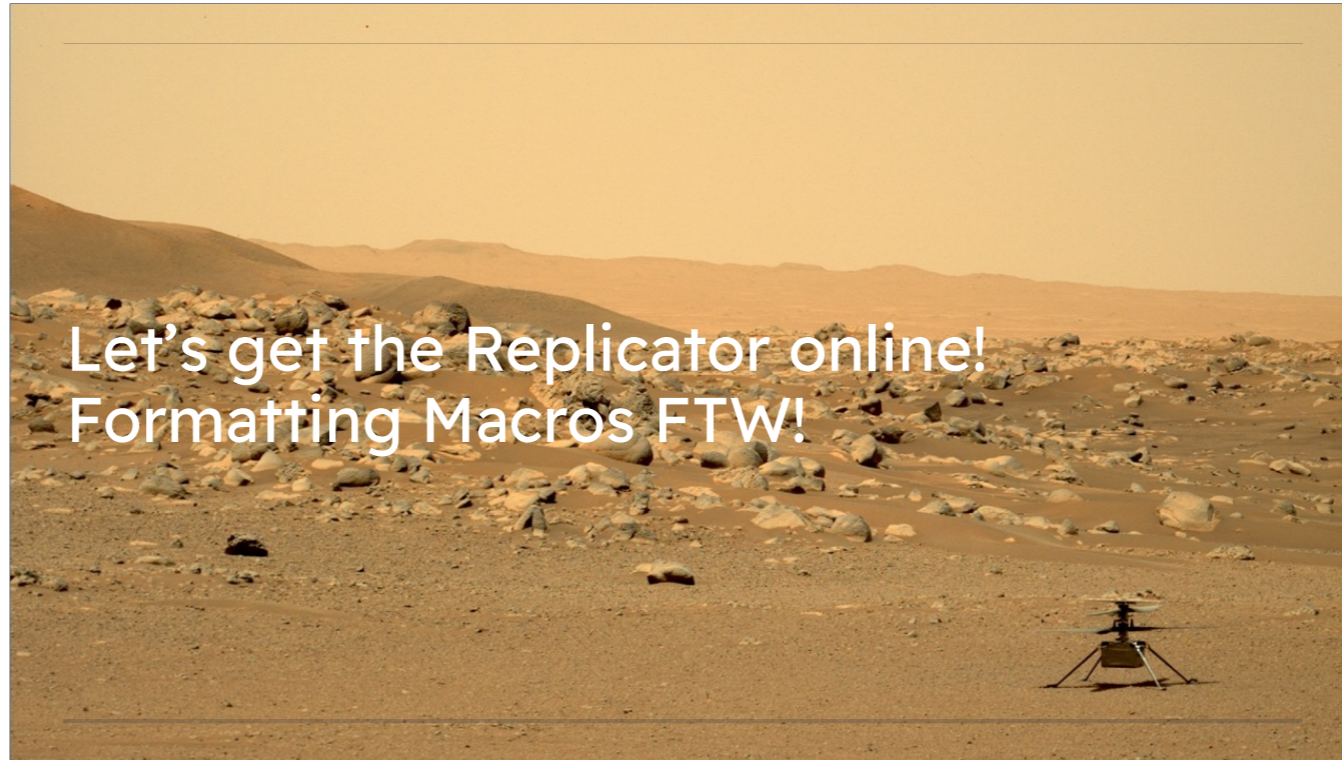
Ready for Warp Factor 9…

Across 3 active blogs I have 5,000 Posts and Pages.
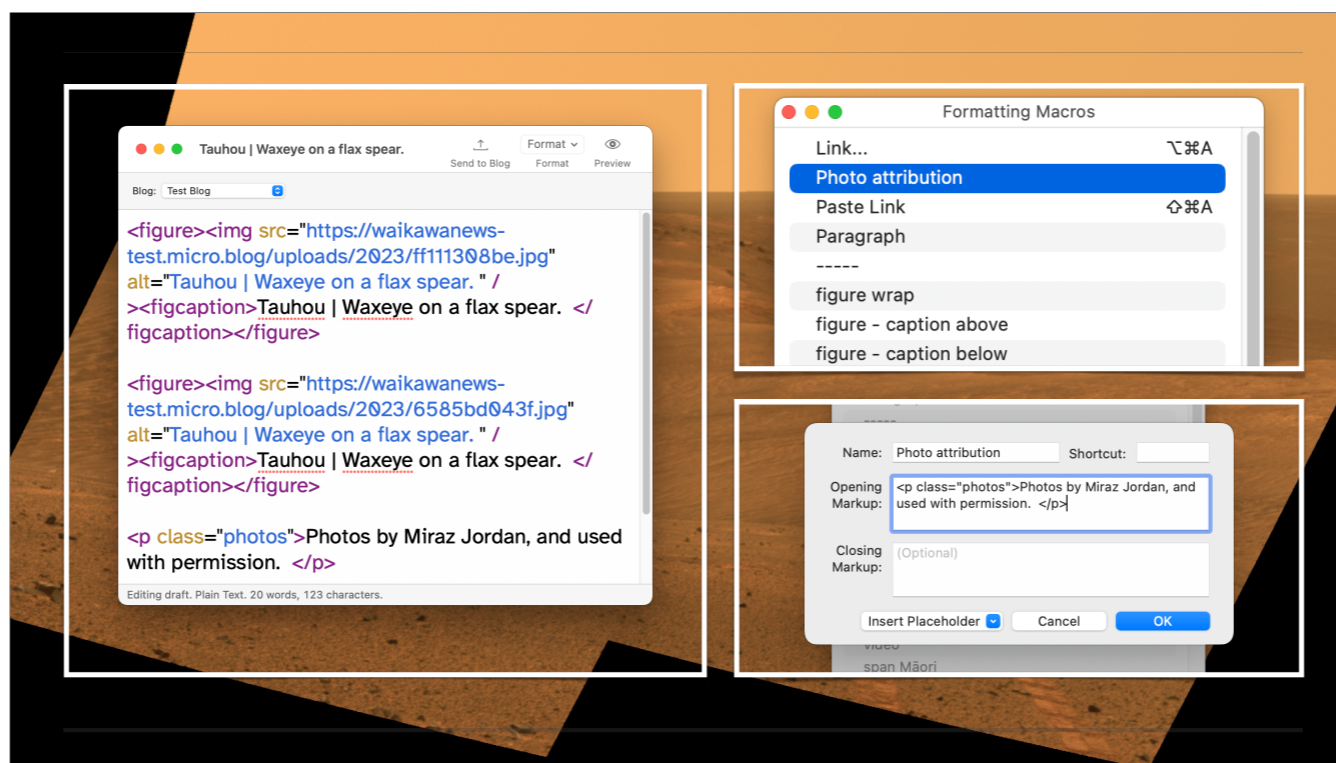Now, where was that post where I mentioned Kea Gyms?

Warp speed sensor scans — Found in 3 seconds! January 2018 on my Miraz blog...

This movie shows a search for the term Kea Gyms takes 3 seconds on my Mac.

Let's get the Replicator online!
Formatting Macros FTW!

Screenshot 1 shows a composition window containing some standard text I want to use frequently.
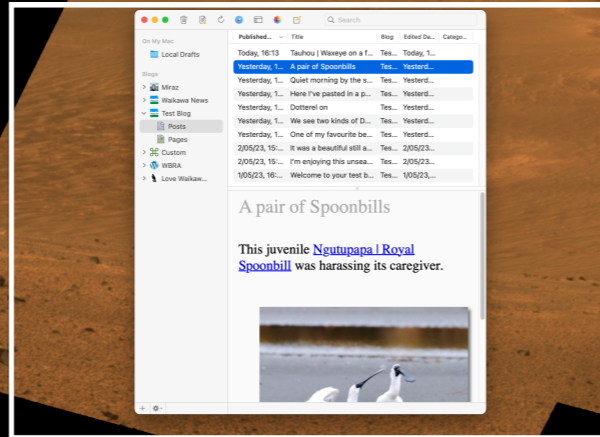
Screenshot 2 shows the list of Formatting Macros with an item for my standard text highlighted.

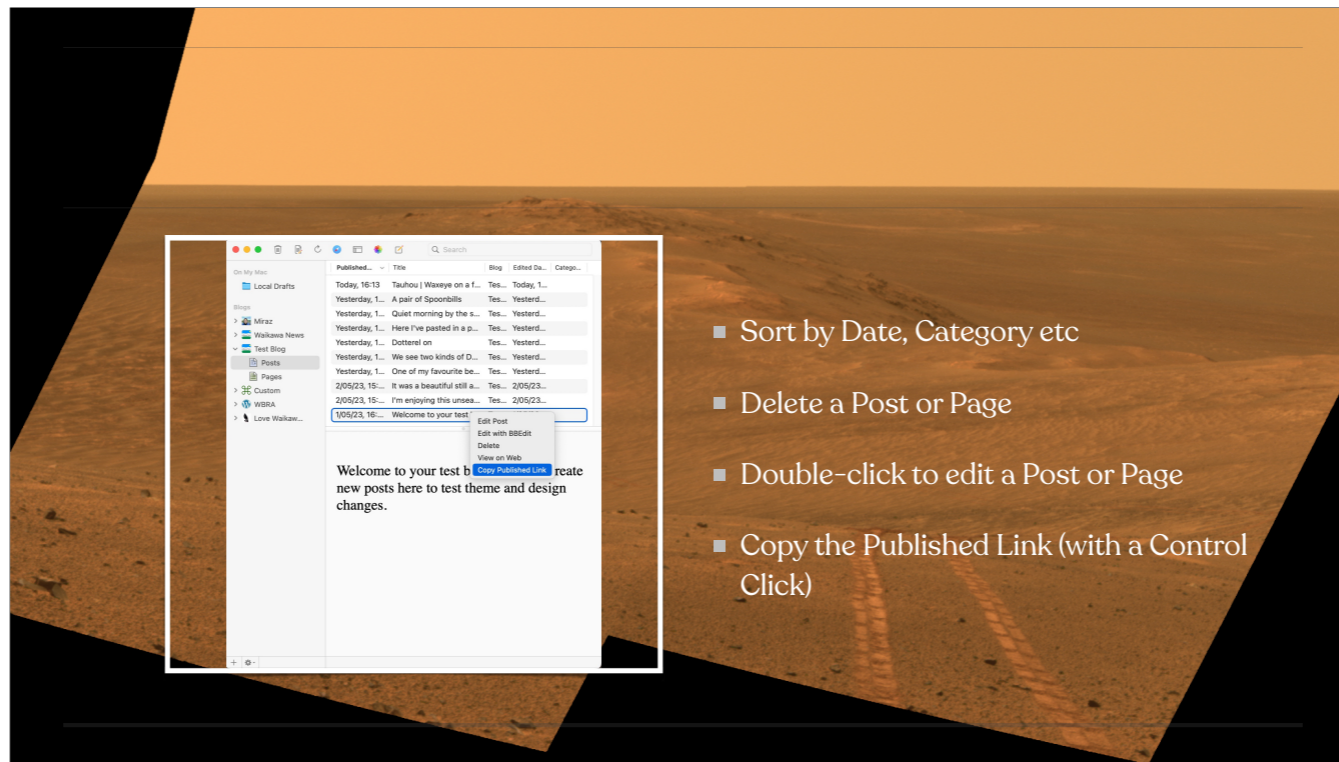Screenshot 3 shows the actual text in the specific Formatting Macro.
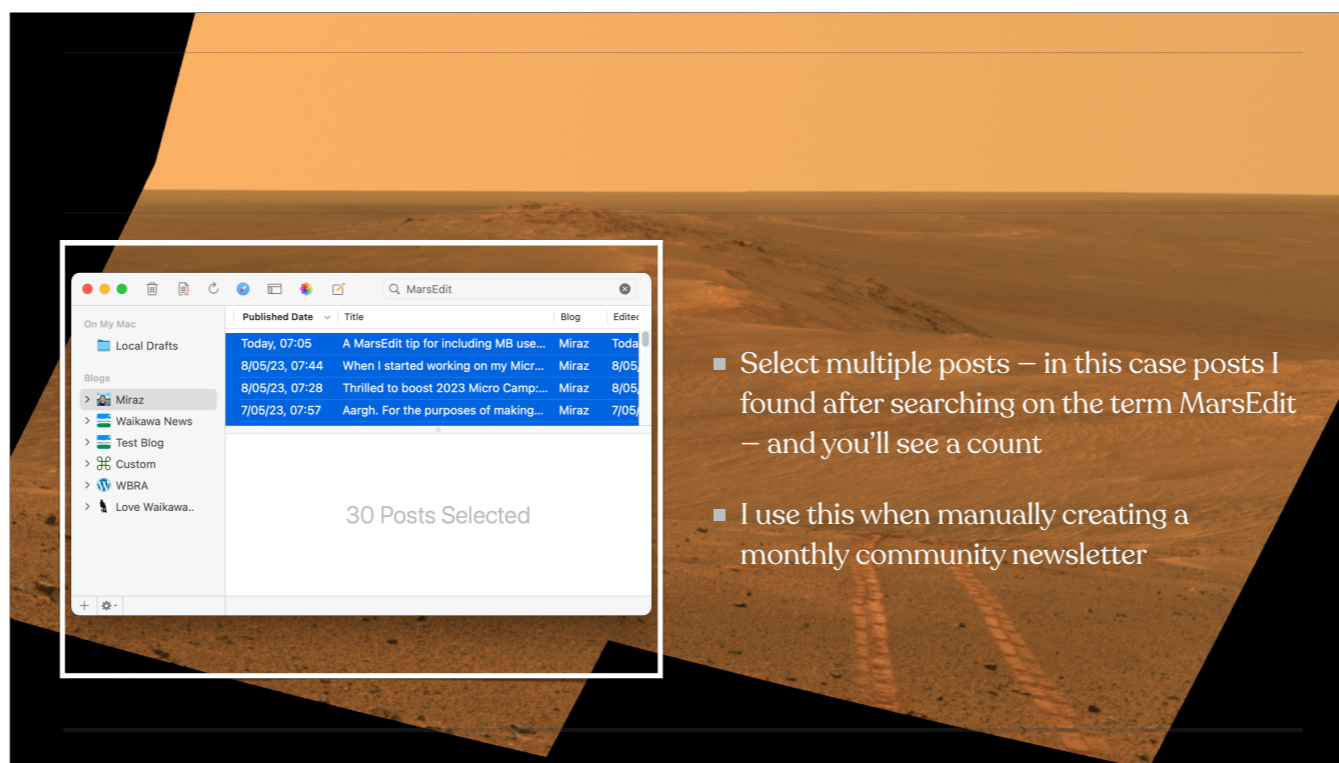
Life in the Captain's Chair

Screenshot of the MarsEdit Main Window where blogs are listed with their Posts and Pages and a preview of any selected item.

- Sort by Date, Category etc

- Delete a Post or Page

- Double-click to edit a Post or Page

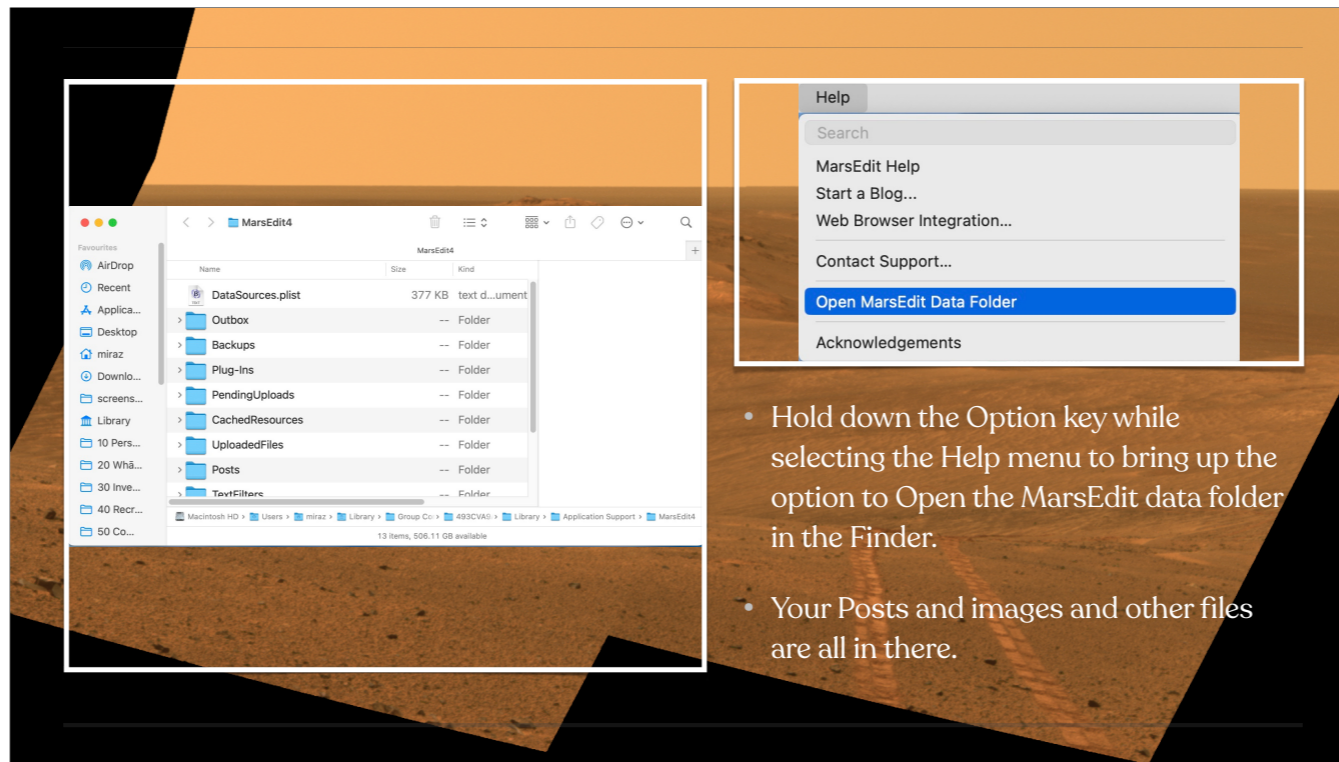- Copy the Published Link (with a Control Click)

Screenshot of the MarsEdit Main Window. I have Control clicked on an item to call up a contextual menu which lists options to Edit Post, Edit with a Text Editor, Delete, View on Web or Copy Published Link.

Screenshot of MarsEdit Main window with multiple posts selected. The preview area tells me I've selected 30 Posts.

Screenshot 1 : The MarsEdit Data folder revealed in the Finder.

Screenshot 2 : Hold down the Option key while selecting the Help menu to bring up the option to Open the MarsEdit data folder in the Finder.

What's this? A secret control panel
down in Engineering?
It's powered not by the Warp Core,
but by AppleScript!

Screenshot 1 : this AppleScript gets the title and link for a selected post and wraps them in HTML tags.

Screenshot 2 : this AppleScript gets the title and link for a selected post and wraps them in Markdown tags.

Screenshot 3 : this AppleScript gets the title and link for a selected post and writes them out in plain text.

```
-- arrange the windows how I like them

tell application "MarsEdit"

        set bounds of window index 1 to {0, 22, 762, 900}

        set bounds of window index 2 to {763, 22, 1440, 900}

end tell
```

```
duplicate-post-me.scpt

AppleScript  <No selected element>

-- duplicate an existing Post
-- to be the basis for a new Post
-- created by Miraz Jordan, http://knowit.co.nz
-- July 2009 Tuesday, 21 July 2009 12:46

-- Note: there is no error checking. Use at your own risk.

tell application "MarsEdit"
        set newTitle to (title of selected post) as text
        -- set newCategory to (category of selected post) as text
        set newTags to (tags of selected post) as text
        set newExcerpt to (excerpt entry of selected post) as text
        set newBody to (body of selected post) as text

        make new document

        set title of front document to "DRAFT Duplicate: " & newTitle as text
        -- set category of front document to newCategory as text
        set tags of front document to newTags as text
        set excerpt entry of front document to newExcerpt as text
        set published status of front document to "Draft"
        set body of front document to newBody as text

end tell
```

Screenshot 1 : this AppleScript arranges the composition and preview windows side by side.

Screenshot 2 : this lengthy AppleScript duplicates an existing post to be the basis for a new post.

I used to use a version of this script back in 2010 when a client would email me info to post to their blog.

Screenshot: this lengthy AppleScript creates a new post, allows me to choose a blog, sets certain elements of the post and makes it ready for me to finetune.
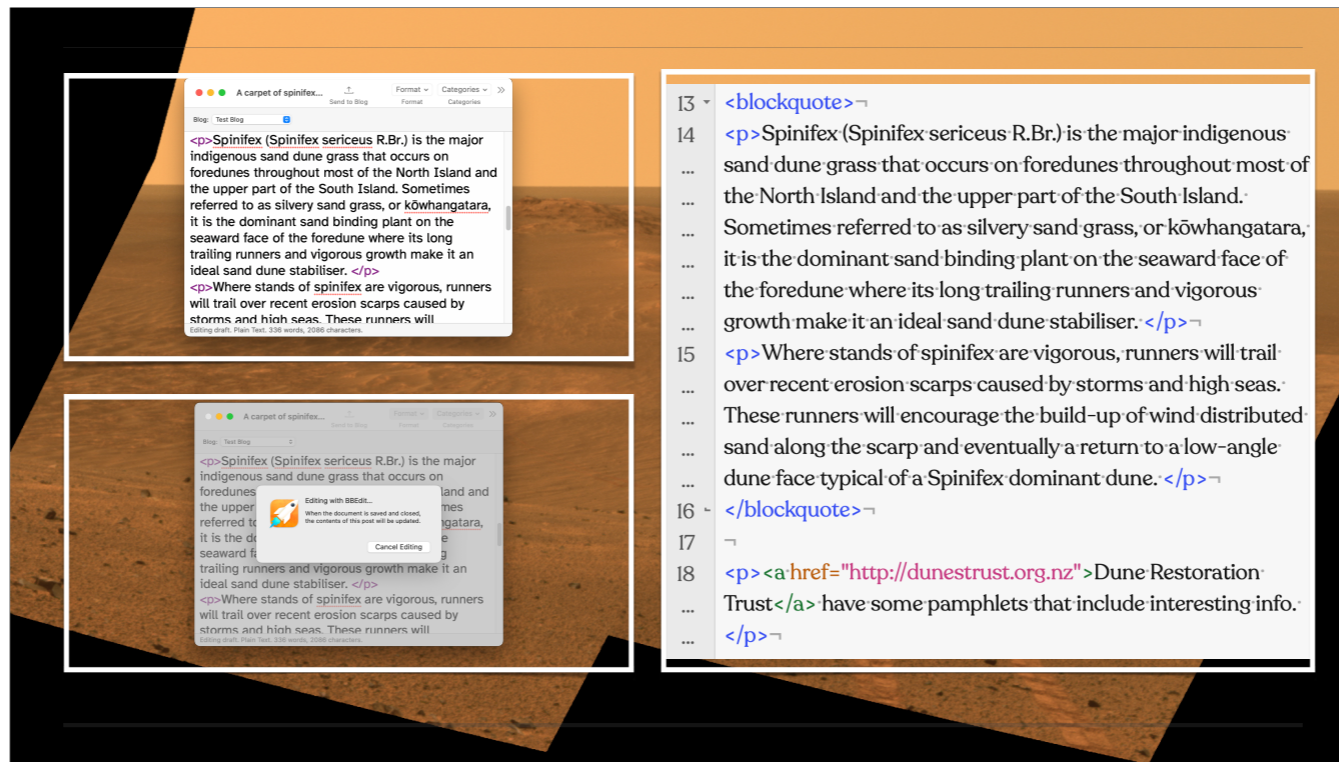
The Holodeck

Screenshot shows a small section of the MarsEdit Settings where I've selected BBEdit as my external text editor and will use html as the file extension.
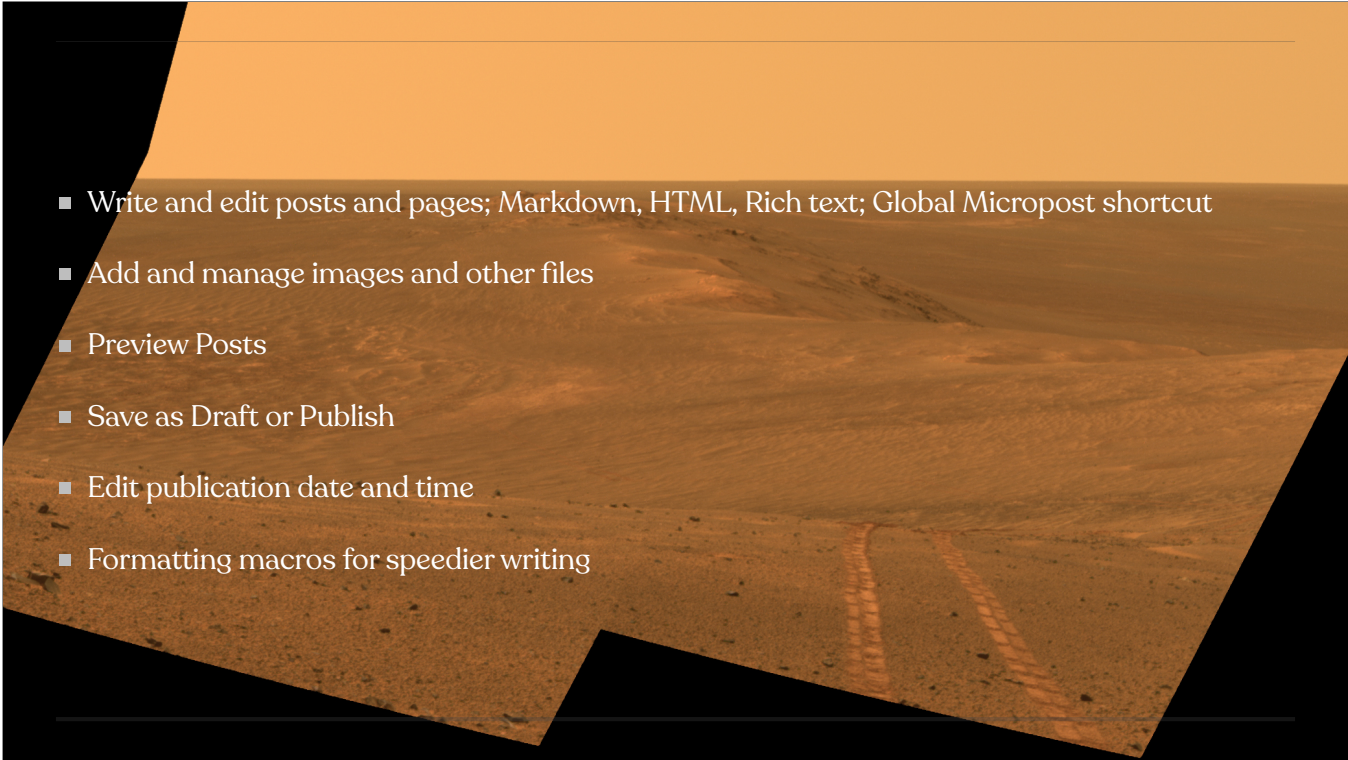
Screenshot 1 : a MarsEdit composition window with text in it.

Screenshot 2 : a MarsEdit window showing I'm currently editing a post with BBEdit.

Screenshot 3 : the same post in BBEdit.

All decks report!

- Write and edit posts and pages; Markdown, HTML, Rich text; Global Micropost shortcut

- Add and manage images and other files

- Preview Posts

- Save as Draft or Publish

- Edit publication date and time

- Formatting macros for speedier writing

- Download Posts, Pages, Media
- Forgotten Title or Category warnings
- Use a dedicated external text editor
- Lightning fast search
- Manage multiple blogs
- Sort lists of Posts and Pages
- Supercharge with AppleScript

Thank you

- Daniel Jalkut of Red Sweater Software, for Mars Edit, https://redsweater.com

- Manton, Jean and the others for Micro.Blog and allowing me to do this presentation

- NASA for the Mars images listed on the next slide

- Star Trek Voyager for some sound effects and the Captain Janeway quote about time travel, Future's End Pt. I – http://www.sjtrek.com/trek/quotes/S_Voyager

  - "Ever since my first day on the job as a Starfleet Captain, I swore I'd never let myself get caught in one of these Godforsaken paradoxes. The past is the future, the future is the past, it all gives me a headache."
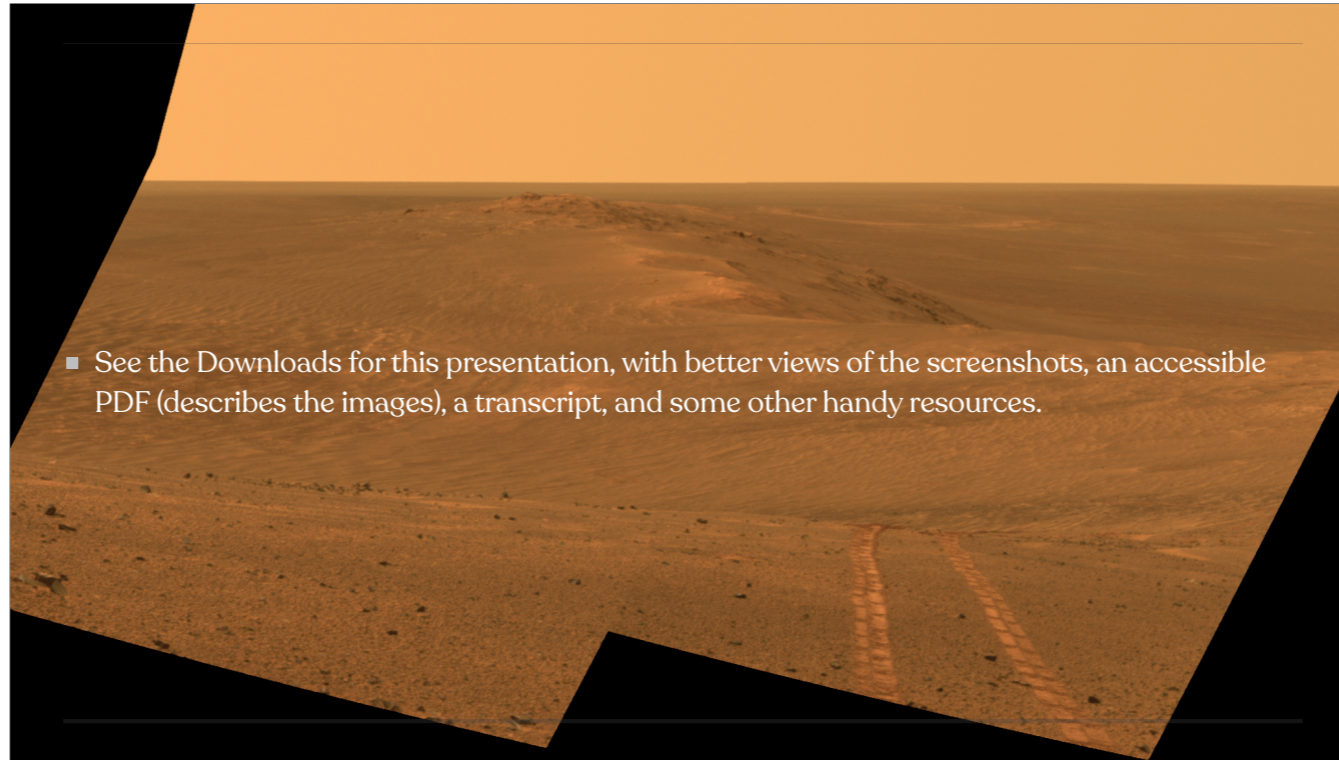
NASA's Mars images

- [Rover Tracks in Northward View Along West Rim of Endeavour](https://www.nasa.gov/jpl/mer/pia18604)

  - NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity looks back toward part of the west rim of Endeavour Crater that the rover drove along, heading southward, during the summer of 2014.

- [Ingenuity at Airfield D](https://mars.nasa.gov/resources/26729/ingenuity-at-airfield-d/)

  - The image of NASA's Ingenuity Mars Helicopter was taken by the Perseverance rover on June 15, 2021.

- [Mars](https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/missions/mariner-4)

  - July 15, 1965 Mariner 4 makes its closest approach to Mars, simultaneously making history by taking the first photos of another planet from space.

To make this presentation I relied on:

- Mars Edit v5.0.5, https://redsweater.com

- A Micro.Blog test blog connected to one of my 'real' blogs, https://micro.blog

- Apple Keynote v13.0

- Shottr v1.6.2, https://shottr.cc

- Audio Hijack v4.1.2, https://rogueamoeba.com

- iMovie v10.3.5

Miraz Jordan, https://miraz.me, May 2023

- See the Downloads for this presentation, with better views of the screenshots, an accessible PDF (describes the images), a transcript, and some other handy resources.

E noho rā — (I'll be off then...)