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Interactive Chess Books in Rybka Aquarium

This month's column is a preview of an upcoming feature of [Rybka Aquarium](#) that will be included in a free update for current users of the program.

In last month's [column](#) we saw that the large-scale analysis methods introduced with Rybka Aquarium require new methods for storing the analysis. The game notation simply wasn't designed for the huge number of analyzed positions and they are better kept in a totally different format – the tree structure used by Aquarium. There are other applications for which the database notation format is not suitable or too restrictive. One of them is writing about chess in such a way that the reader or student enjoys the most benefits. Besides a good knowledge of the subject, the chess author needs:

1. A system that allows him to present his analysis the way he wants, instead of being forced to follow a structure dictated by the system.
2. Easy and error-free transfer of positions, move numbers, moves and variations to his document, even when new analysis emerges and late modifications are needed.

These issues are addressed in a new Aquarium feature called “interactive chess books,” which I will call i-Books for short in this article.

What is an Aquarium i-Book?

An Aquarium i-Book is an electronic book (e-book) with special features for composing and reading chess texts. Both during writing and viewing, a link can be maintained between the i-Book and the underlying game database. Aquarium i-Books are not only for professional writers. Any Aquarium user can create an i-Book; e.g., for private use, for publishing on a website, etc. An i-Book can consist of hundreds of pages, or just a few paragraphs. The image below shows a typical, short i-Book consisting of some text, analysis, images and diagrams. It was created by converting the original tenth round [report](#) from the recent Corus tournament to an i-Book.

Report of round 10

Anonian Wins Again - Claims Lead

The collaboration of Anonian and his new second, Israeli GM Rodstein worked well for the Armenian's game against Adams.

They decided on a Catalan where "Adams had some problems in the main line" -- Anonian. More specifically, the rare move **9.Nc3** was the product of home cooking. The Brit's reaction **9...a6** was a slight inaccuracy according to Levon, who suggested **9...Bd7** (**10.O-O** **a5?**) as a better alternative. **10...O-O?** was the main cause of black's problems (**10...Bd7** again, was the best), and after **14.b3**, where the preparation stopped white was better.

Notation

[...] 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♟f3 dxc4 5.♟g2 ♖c6 6.♟a4 ♟b4 7.♟d2 ♖d5 8. ♟xb4 ♖dxb4 9.♟c3 a6

[9...♟d7 10.O-O ♟a5?]

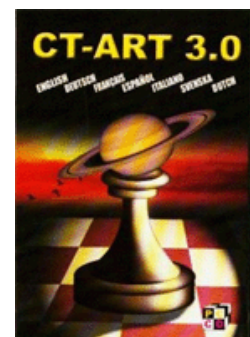
10.♟e5 O-O?!

[10...♟d7]


11.♟xc6 ♖xc6 12.♟xc6 bxc6 13.♟xc4 ♟b8 14.b3 ♟d5? 15.♟e4 ♟b4 16.♟xb4 ♟xb4 17.O-O e5 18.♟d2 a5

[18...♟x4 19.♟d1? d3!]

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The report itself runs down the right-hand side of the image. The difference from the original is that the moves mentioned in the report are clickable in the i-Book. When you click a move, the corresponding position is displayed on the chessboard in the upper left corner so you can easily follow the variations discussed in the report. The game notation – with the analysis – is displayed below the board. Other information, such as a table of contents and a tree configuration can also be displayed in an i-Book if the author chooses. Here is an example showing an IDeA analysis tree linked to an i-Book.



Here he gives [22.Bxg7](#) and [22.Qe2](#) but misses [22.Qf4](#) which leads to just as promising a position here as it did on move 20 where Fischer missed [20.Qf4!!](#). It's interesting how these two giants of chess

Move	flg	Positions	IDeA
→ 22.Qf4		1	+2.38
→ 22.Bxg7		165	+0.00
→ 22.Qe2		4	-0.37
22.bxc3		1	-1.56

The tree is synchronized with the book, so that when you click a move in the book the tree window is automatically updated, just like the chessboard and notation panes.

Who will use i-Books?

Aquarium comes with tools for both reading and writing i-Books and there is no doubt that users will take the opportunity to write their own notes, articles and books either for private use or for publishing; e.g., on the Internet. In addition this is an excellent media for professional chess books, so we can expect commercial books that will take advantage of the features offered by i-Books.

What are the advantages of i-Books for readers?

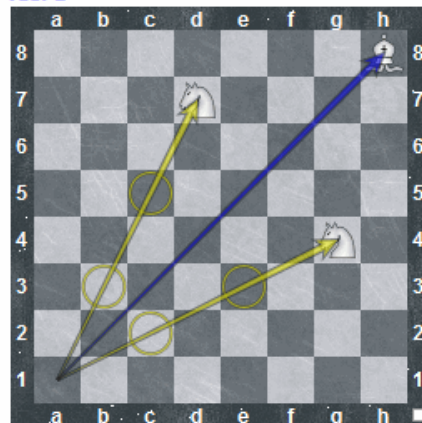
Reading and learning from Aquarium i-Books has several advantages, both over traditional books and typical database game annotations.

As is to be expected, i-Books offer such basic features as table of contents, searching for text, browsing, diagrams, images, and hyperlinks for jumping to different chapters or pages. The author also has the option to display the table of contents in its own window so it's always accessible to the user.

When discussing games and positions, chess diagrams with graphic annotations can be displayed in addition to the notation and verbal commentary. An example is shown below.

Fig. B shows how the Bishop on the long diagonal bisects the angle formed by two Knights moving from a1 to d7 and g4 respectively.

FIG. B



This image is taken from an i-Book version of *The Middle Game in Chess* by Eugene Znosko-Borovsky.

One of the nicest features of i-Books is the ability to click on the moves in the book and see the chessboard updated accordingly. Last month's ChessOK Cafe column contained lots of complicated analysis that was not easy to follow just by reading. That's why the PGN file and the analysis tree were provided as downloads. The article has now been converted to an i-Book and below you can see that the reader has clicked on the move 20...Nxe5 and the board is immediately updated to show the position after that move.



The author can select to display the full game notation with variations in the notation window, so you can examine the game whenever you like. If you run into a particularly interesting position you can click a button to copy the game to the Sandbox and analyze it there.

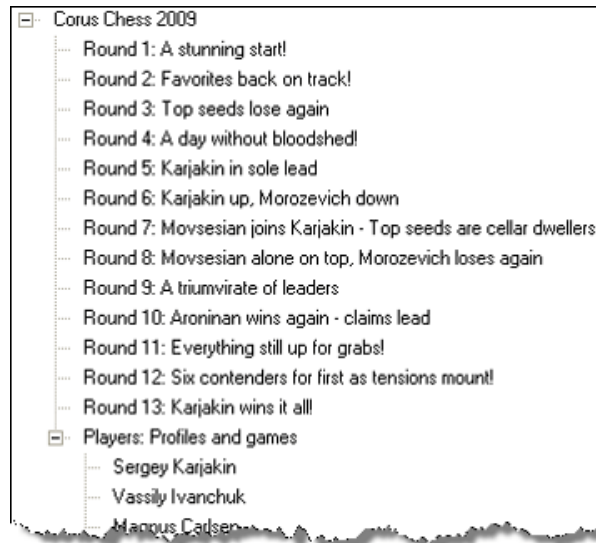
What are the advantages of i-Books for authors?

Aquarium i-Books are of great help for writers who require flexibility in their chess writings.

Authors can define their own customized table of contents or take advantage of so-called classifiers to generate the table semi-automatically.

The classifier is displayed in a separate pane, so it is always accessible to the user. This reduces the number of clicks required to switch from one section of the book to another.

Classifiers give the author flexibility in presenting the contents to the reader. He can create a traditional table of contents, referring to the chapters and sections in the book, but he can also create additional “views” of the book, depending on how he has organized it. An author writing a tournament book might prefer to write the book starting at round one and devote a section to each round. The main table of contents would reflect the round by round discussion. Then the author can add new sections to the classifier, allowing readers to locate the games by player, opening, endgame type, tactical themes, etc. In a well organized book all of this is possible without touching the text of the book itself. An example, based on the Corus tournament, is shown in the following image.

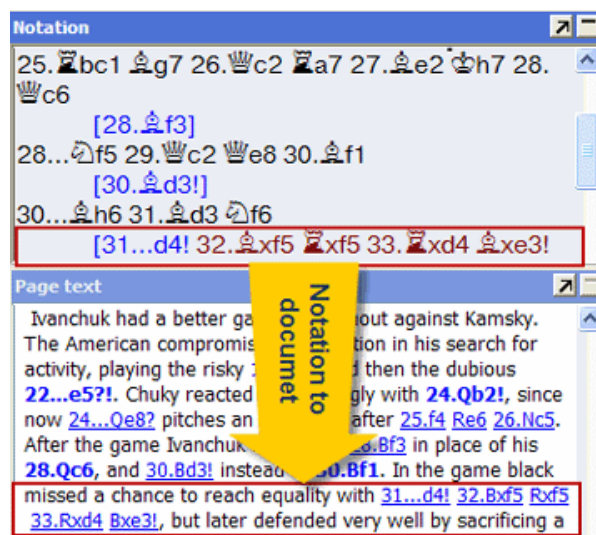


The round by round reports in this classifier are followed by information about the players and the games they played in the tournament. The reader can keep this window open at all times to gain immediate access to any part of the book by the click of a mouse.

Besides flexibility in categorizing the contents of the book via classifiers and other means, the author can write the book chapters in any order he likes. He can delete pages, replace them, change their order, add new ones, etc. When he is finished writing the book he can decide how it is presented to the user via a classifier or a table of contents, regardless of the order in which the pages were written.

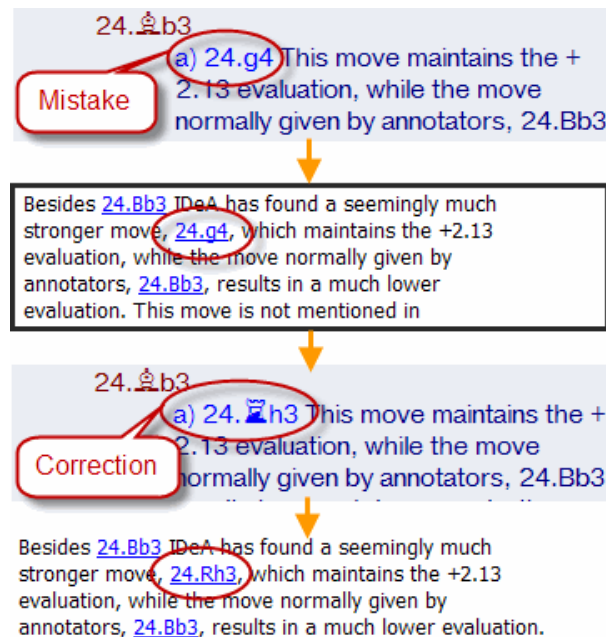
One challenge in writing chess books is making sure that every move, move number, and position is correct. Otherwise, even the most instructive analysis will be of little use to the reader. It is relatively easy to avoid such errors in a book or an article where the games and analysis are published with little editing after they are copied from the database. Yet an Aquarium i-Book enables writers to be more creative in their presentation without the typical risks of introducing errors into the notation.

When you write a book or an article you need to make every effort to ensure that your analysis is correct. This often means that you will continue analyzing as you write. The variations that you decide to publish need to be checked and revised and you may find some new ideas and variations that you want to discuss. Aquarium i-Books can maintain a link between the game notation and your text allowing variations to be automatically added to your document. Therefore, even late additions are no more likely to contain errors than moves and variations that were added earlier when there was more time to review and check.



This image illustrates that you can select any variation from the notation and let Aquarium add it automatically to your i-Book.

Variations can also be marked in such a way that if they are changed in the notation, the document will be automatically updated to reflect the changes. This is illustrated in the graphic below.



As can be seen at the top of the image, the author has made a mistake and given the move 24.g4 instead of the intended 24.Rh3. You can see the part of the document reflecting this mistake below the notation. In the next step the author corrects the error in the notation and replaces 24.g4 with 24.Rh3. The last step at the bottom of the image shows the document after the notation was corrected. It has been automatically updated and shows the correct move. There is no need for manual adjustment to the text with the inherent risk of making mistakes. This feature can be helpful for variations that you expect to extend or revise after you first add them to your document.

The author can insert hyperlinks in his text, referring to different parts of the document or external websites as shown in the following snippet.

Corus Chess 2009

The [Corus Chess Tournament 2009](#) will be held from 16 January - 1 February 2009 in Wijk aan Zee. The tournament venue is the [De Moriaan](#) Community Centre (Dorpsduinen 4, 1949 EG Wijk aan Zee) and the nearby bar de Zon. Commentators on the games in Grandmaster groups A, B and C will be based in the Corus Chess Pavilion (see [schedule](#)), on the Village Green in Wijk aan Zee (one minute walking from De Moriaan, you will pass the Pavilion on your left side when driving into Wijk aan Zee).

The winners of last year, [Magnus Carlsen](#) and [Levon Aronian](#) will compete again.

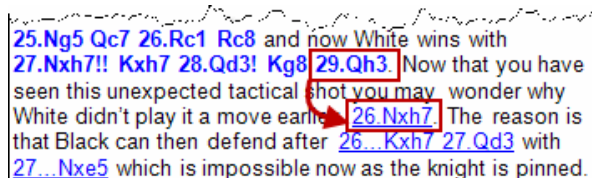
This i-Book introduction to the Corus tournament contains both external links and links referring to different sections of the book, such as the tournament schedule and the player profiles for Carlsen and Aronian.

Sometimes you may wish to write an i-Book that doesn't have any links to a game database after it is published. This is also supported by Aquarium. A reader may not notice any difference and he can still enjoy the book in much the same way as described above. When writing an i-Book without a database connection, the author has two options:

1. Write it just like an i-Book based on a database, but break the link between the book and the game, so the game is not needed when the book is read.
2. Use FEN strings and moves in PGN format within the book itself to generate the positions and moves that are displayed to the reader.

You can choose any of the available methods for writing your i-Books and you can even use different methods within the same book.

Authors have complete freedom in how they present games, game fragments, and analysis. They can use the conventional approach of starting at the first move and then present the moves in order, interspersed with annotations. They can break the game into sections with headings between them. The discussion of a particular position can be split into several major branches, each starting from the same position. When analyzing a position in a game the discussion of an earlier position can be taken up again as shown in this example:



25.Ng5 Qc7 26.Rc1 Rc8 and now White wins with 27.Nxh7!! Kxh7 28.Qd3! Kg8 29.Qh3. Now that you have seen this unexpected tactical shot you may wonder why White didn't play it a move earlier. 26.Nxh7. The reason is that Black can then defend after 26...Kxh7 27.Qd3 with 27...Nxe5 which is impossible now as the knight is pinned.

Here the annotator follows the mainline of the game up to move twenty-nine and then shows a variation starting back at move twenty-six in order to answer a question that is likely to be asked by the reader. Since this is an i-Book it's easy for the reader to follow such variations. Note that this style of annotation is not possible in a database game. The variation starting with 26.Nxh7 could not be located after move twenty-nine in the mainline.

In short, i-Books offer the same flexibility in structuring your analysis as if you were using a word processor. The big difference is that a word processor doesn't have any chess-specific features, whereas i-Books are specifically intended for chess publishing.

Security

The author can protect his book with a password so that others can't modify it. There is also an option that prevents printing and copying the text from the book.

When should I use an i-Book instead of annotated games?

There is clearly little point in creating an i-Book to present a single game without annotations. Even a collection of such games are better stored in a traditional chess database. The same can be said for games with variations and symbolic annotations (Chess Informant style). There are, however, cases where i-Books are clearly superior to annotations in a chess database:

1. When you want to include verbal commentary; the more text and structure, the greater the advantage of i-Books becomes.
2. When you need to break out of the structure imposed by chess databases and their game notation.

Another possible reason is if you want to create a classifier based on various criteria for viewing subsets of games from a database.

Converting i-Books to other formats

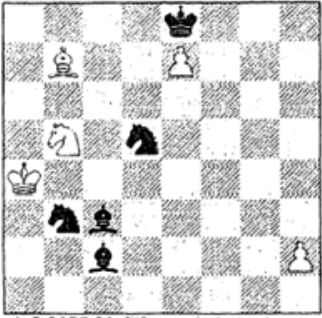
Aquarium i-Books can be exported to web pages for online viewing and to a word processor. If required, the author can perform final formatting and layout changes after exporting the i-Book to a word processor.

What types of chess publications are suitable for i-Books?

Aquarium i-Books can be used for a wide variety of chess publications. Most printed chess books that you are likely to run into could be converted to i-Book format, preserving the general layout and structure of the book. This means that interested authors could easily publish their books in both i-Book format and printed format at the same time as separate products, or include an i-Book with the printed book.

We'll end this introduction to i-Books with an example that requires some unusual formatting. [EG](#) is a chess magazine devoted exclusively to the endgame study. The following image shows an excerpt from the article "Genrich Kasparyan (1910-1995)" that was published in *EG* (No. 120 - (Vol. VII), April 1996).

106 G. Kasparyan
1st prize Memorial tourney for L. Kubbel, 1953



a4e8 0077.20 5/5 Draw

106 G. Kasparyan 1.Ka3! Bb4+ 2.Kb2 Se3/i
3.Sc7+ Kxe7 4.Sd5+ Sxd5 5.Kxc2!/ii Sa1+/iii
6.Kb1/iv Sc3+!/v 7.Kb2!/vi Kf6! 8.h4!/vii
Kf5/viii 9.h5!/ix Kg5 10.Bf3/x Kh6/xi 11.Bg4!/xii
Kg5 12.Bf3, positional draw via reciprocal
zugzwang. The black knight on the a1 square is
en prise, but there is a dynamic balance in effect,
for White can no more afford to capture it
(allowing the reply Ba3;) than Black can effect its
escape (as long as the white king stays put on the
b2 square).

As you can see in the image, the magazine uses a very specific method to present the solution to studies. First a mainline is given where some of the moves are marked with roman numerals, which refer to notes that follow the mainline. The notes (not shown in the image) contain supporting analysis and discussion. We converted the article to i-Book format without problems. We can't reproduce the whole i-Book here, but the image below shows the beginning of the study above after conversion.



Next month we will take an even closer look at i-Books. The new Aquarium version should be out around that time, so you can start writing your own i-Books!

Many of the Chess Assistant programs described by Dadi in this column are available in the [USCFSales Online Catalog](#).

Do you have a question about a Chess Assistant product? Send it along and perhaps it will be answered in an upcoming column. Please include your name and country of residence.

[Yes, I have a question for Dadi!](#)

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