

# BEST OF MAC OS X HINTS

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# BEST OF HINTS

- [macosxhints.com](http://macosxhints.com) Background
- About Tiger [10.4]
  - 5 Tiger Hits
  - 5 Tiger Misses
- 10 Favorite Add-Ons
- 20 Favorite Hints



# BACKGROUND

- Flash back to 2000
  - Long-time Mac user..
  - Unix in upcoming OS X scared me!
- Started compiling tips in Filemaker Pro
- Launched site in November 2000
  - Learning experience more than anything
- Not a programmer by training
- June 2005: Joined Macworld as a Senior Editor



# BACKGROUND

- The Tech of [macosxhints.com](http://macosxhints.com)
  - Geeklog [[www.geeklog.net](http://www.geeklog.net)] powers the main site - free and open source
  - vBulletin [[www.vbulletin.com](http://www.vbulletin.com)] runs the forums - paid-for software
  - A copy of the site runs locally on my Mac
  - Hints are posted locally then uploaded
  - Backups are automated via cron and ssh

7,500+  
hints and  
counting!

Over  
55,000  
users

500,000+  
daily page  
views

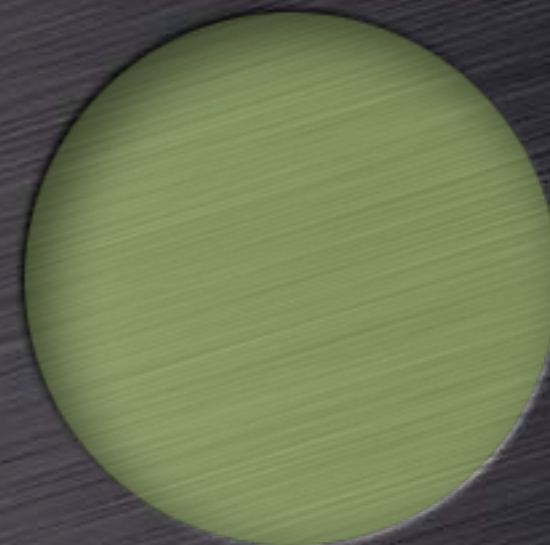
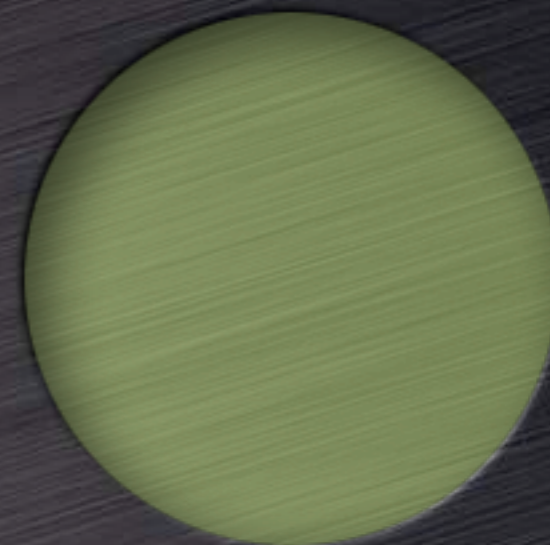
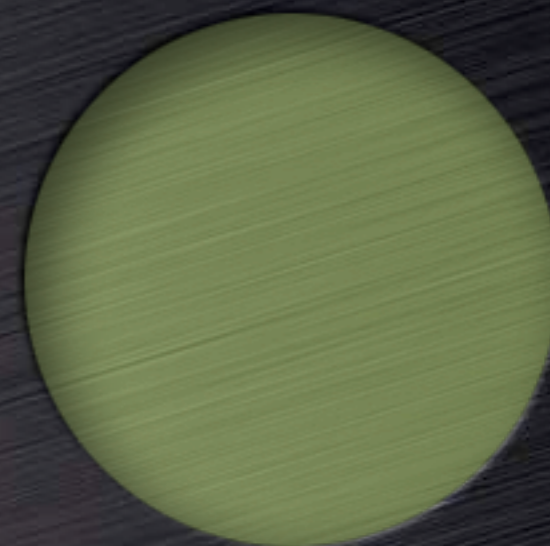


**FIVE OS X  
HITS**



# 5 OS X HITS

- Multitasking
- Protected Memory
- Exposé
- PDF everywhere
- Unix at the core





**FIVE OS X  
MISSES**



# 5 OS X MISSES

- Out of control permissions
- Apps that break outside of /Applications
- Non-reversible system updates
- Spinning Rainbows
- Application interface inconsistency



# ABOUT TIGER



OS X 10.4

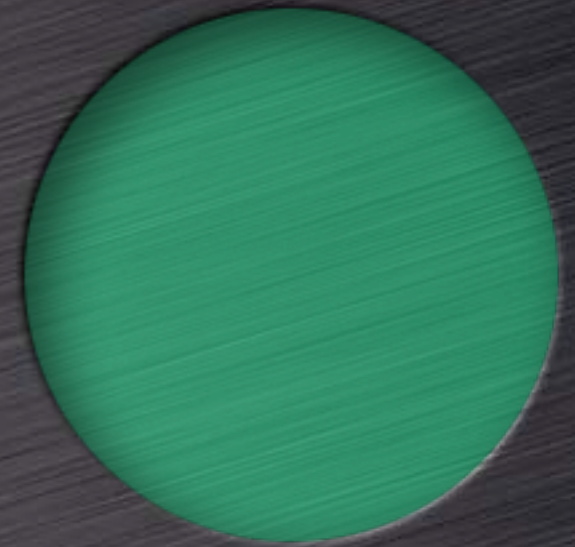
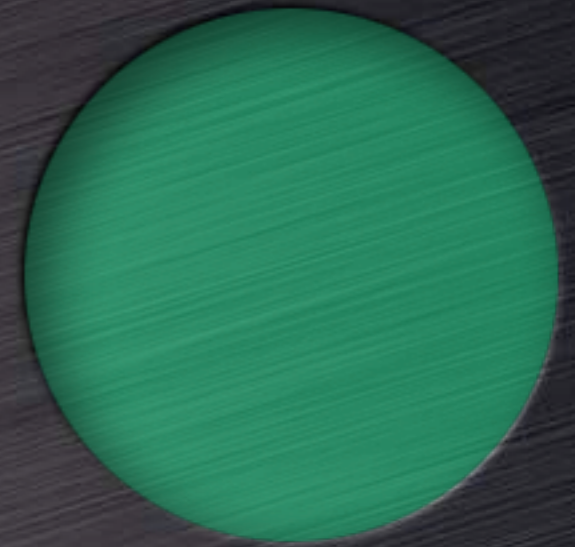
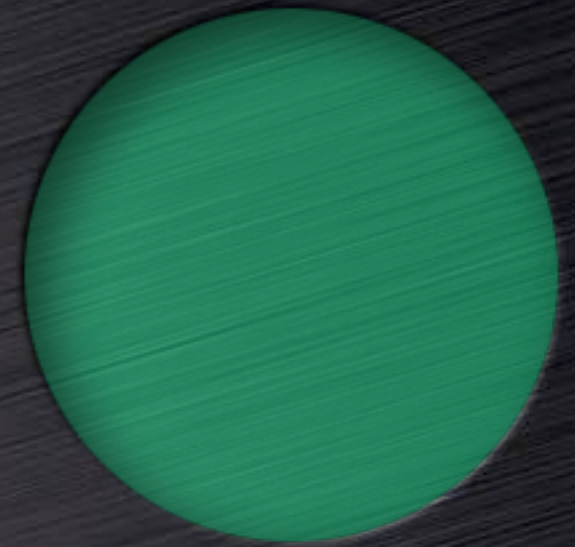


# FIVE TIGER HITS



# 5 TIGER HITS

- Automator
  - Easy programming for everyone
- Dashboard
  - Some good stuff amongst the fluff
- A better Finder
  - Fewer spinning rainbows, smart folders
- Mail
  - Smart folders, no more drawer
- Spotlight
  - Excellent for certain types of searches





**FIVE TIGER  
MISSES**



# 5 TIGER MISSES

- Spotlight
  - Can't find exact words ('car,' for instance)
  - Finder filename searches are a pain
  - Spotlight windows aren't selectable
  - No easy boolean (AND, OR, etc) logic
- AppleScript
  - Why aren't more Apple apps scriptable?
- Finder annoyances remain
  - Resizable grid, view options, defaults, etc.
- Burn Folder in the Finder is confusing
- Even more application GUIs!



**TEN  
FAVORITE  
ADD-ONS**



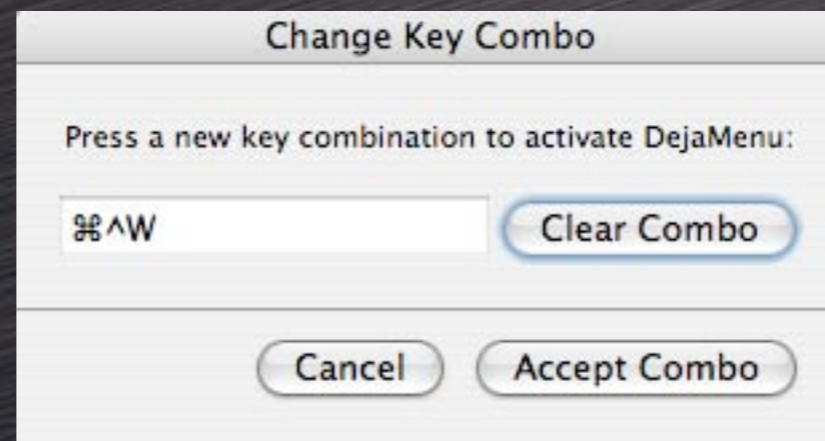
# SideTrack

- A must-have for PowerBook power users
- Adds four buttons and scrolling
- Fully programmable
- [www.ragingmenace.com/software/sidetrack](http://www.ragingmenace.com/software/sidetrack)
  - \$15.00 shareware



# DejaMenu

- Display app menus at mouse position
- Activate via a hot key
- Works great with SideTrack
- [homepage.mac.com/khsu/DejaMenu/DejaMenu.html](http://homepage.mac.com/khsu/DejaMenu/DejaMenu.html)
- Free!





# Logorrhea

- Bad name, good program
- Manage chat logs easily
- Recall a key word, find the chat
- Turns megabytes of data into usable information
- [www.spiny.com/logorrhea/](http://www.spiny.com/logorrhea/)
  - Free!



# jAlbum

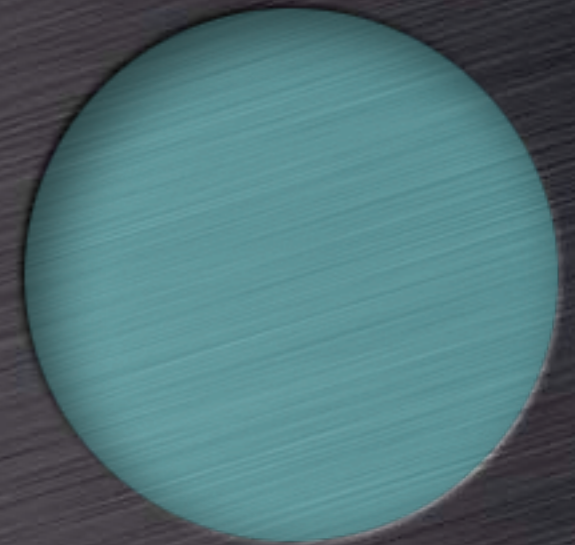
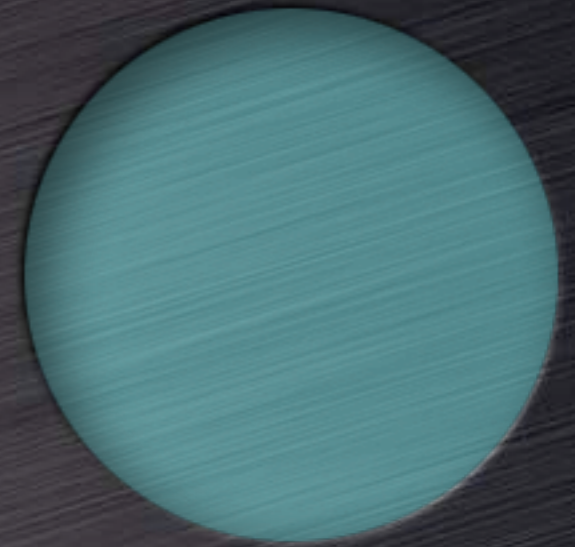
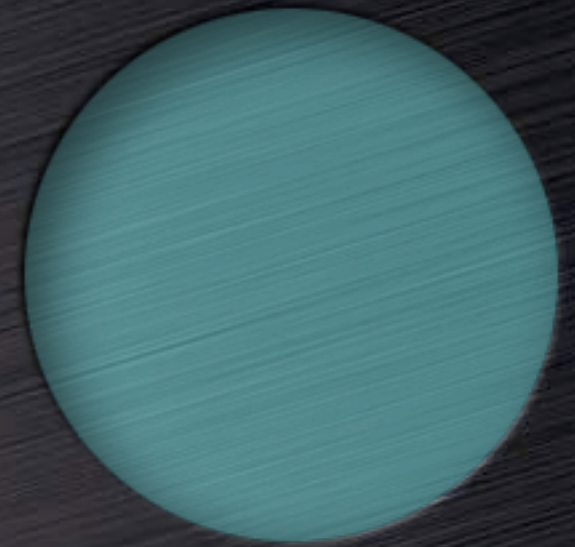
- Very powerful web album creator
- Pre-defined and custom layouts
- Automatic upload via FTP
- [www.jalbum.net/](http://www.jalbum.net/)
- Free!





# WhatSize

- Find lost gigabytes of drive space
- Great on multi-drive machines
- Great on multi-partition machines
- Looks at visible and invisible files
- <http://www.id-design.com/software/whatsize>
  - Free!





# Mouseposé

- Highlight the mouse cursor onscreen
- Great for demos, presentations
- Useful for finding I-beam cursors
- [www.boinx.com/mousepose/](http://www.boinx.com/mousepose/)
  - Free!

[iPod](#). 15,000 songs. 25,000 photos. 150 hours of video. The new iPod. 30GB and 60GB models start at just \$299.

[iPod nano](#). Carry 500 to 1,000 songs or up to 25,000 photos. Listen for up to 14 hours. Look like a rock star. From \$199.

[iPod shuffle](#). Load it up. Put it on. See where it takes you. Choose from pocket-size 512MB or 1G models starting at \$99.

## Portables

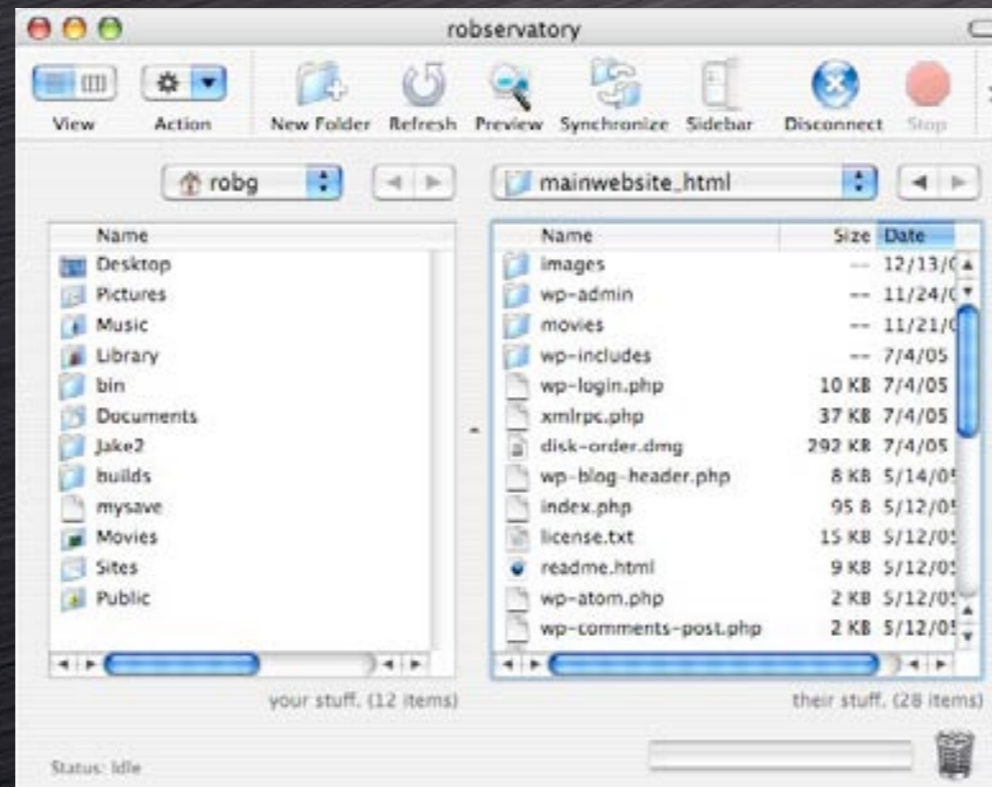
[iBook G4](#). Two display sizes, built-in wireless, Combo or



# Transmit

- Powerful file transfer tool
- Great two-panel interface
- Dashboard and Automator features
- [www.panic.com/transmit/](http://www.panic.com/transmit/)

• \$29.95





# MenuMeters

- System info at a glance
- CPU, disk, network, memory
- Takes some menubar space!
- [www.ragingmenace.com/menumeters](http://www.ragingmenace.com/menumeters)
  - Free!





# SnapzPro X

- Screenshot options galore
  - Movie capture, too!
- Great for training, troubleshooting, writing, web site work...
- [www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/snapzprox](http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/snapzprox)
  - \$29 [pictures] / \$69 [pictures and video]



# Butler

- Launcher, Spotlight search, iTunes controller, Fast User Switching tool, web searching, pop-up menus, macros, multi-clipboard...
- The Swiss Army Knife of productivity tools
- Not for everyone -- high learning curve
- [www.petermaurer.de/butler](http://www.petermaurer.de/butler)
  - \$18.00 donationware



**TWENTY  
FAVORITE  
HINTS...**



# BEFORE THE HINTS...

- Finding “demoable” hints isn’t easy
  - Not too hard, not too easy
  - Not too long
  - Must not require logout or restart
  - “You can’t please everyone all of the time...”
- Many hints show a Terminal solution
  - Teaching the method, not just the result
- Use Tinker Tool to avoid the Terminal
  - [www.bresink.com/osx/TinkerTool.html](http://www.bresink.com/osx/TinkerTool.html)
  - May not have all the tweaks you’ll see today
  - There are other such apps as well...



# DICTIONARY TIPS

- See word completions in Cocoa apps
  - Press Escape after typing a few letters
    - Option-Escape works in 10.3, too!
- Check word definitions
  - Select word and use contextual menu
  - Press Control-Command-D over a word
    - Add this definition as a SideTrack hot corner
- Change the Dictionary style
  - Choose between application and panel
- Look up other words via double-click
  - Within the Dictionary app itself



Tiger Only



# PREVIEW'S NEW POWER

- Open a whole folder of images
  - Command-Option drag folder onto Preview
- Change the image sort order
  - Control-click on a blank section of the drawer
  - Sort by name, path, date, size, kind, keyword
- Add annotations to PDFs
  - Either text or red call-out circles
- Add Spotlight-searchable keywords
  - Add to PDFs, JPEGs, etc.

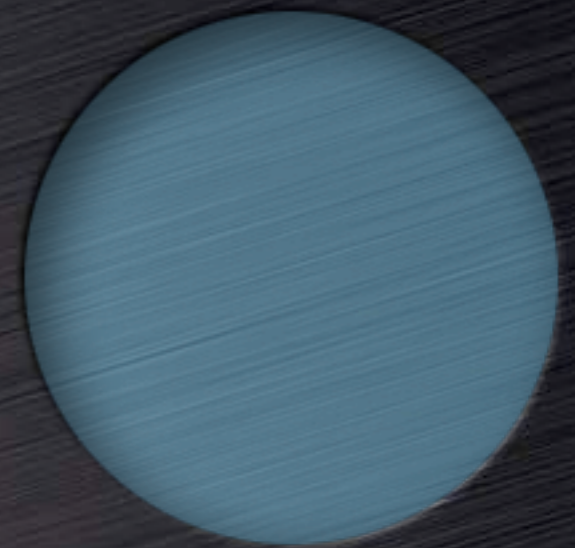


Tiger Only

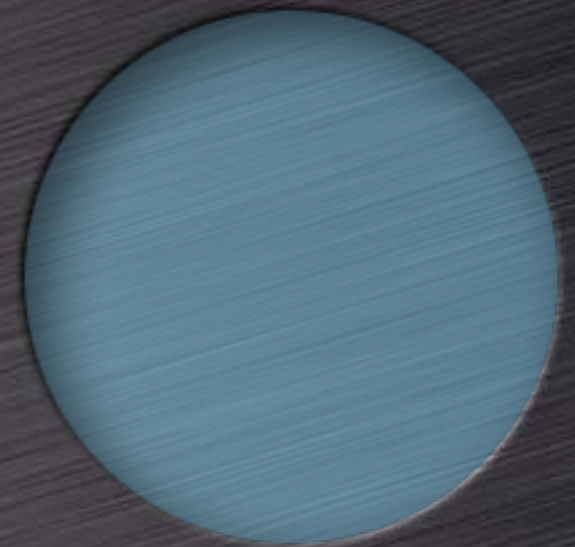


# FLOATING WIDGETS

- Move widgets out of the Dashboard area
  - Moved widgets float above all other windows
- Use for often-viewed widgets
  - Stocks, weather, world clock, etc.
- Use for widgets that need context
  - Unit converter to see source figure



Tiger Only



```
$ defaults write com.apple.dashboard devmode YES
```

```
$ ## reverse it by changing YES to NO
```



# SCREENSHOT FORMAT

- 10.4's default screenshot format is PNG
- Change formats to...
  - Reduce file size
  - Change image quality
- Kill the System UI Server to apply changes

```
$ defaults write com.apple.screencapture type tiff  
$ # type can be tiff, jpg, pict, pdf, gif, or png  
  
$ killall SystemUIServer  
$ # to have the changes take effect
```



Tiger Only



# DASHBOARD SHELF

- Change Dashboard's G5 'mesh' to whatever you like
- Navigate to `/System/Library/CoreServices`
  - Open Dock package
  - Copy `perf.png` twice (backup plus edit)
- Create new `perf.png`
  - Copy back into Dock package
  - Restart the Dock to see new backdrop



Tiger Only



# ⌘-F FIX [bonus hint]

- Bring back 10.3's Command-F behavior
- Create a new Smart Folder
  - Search by name contains, use a non-common search string
  - Save to Desktop
- Navigate into the Finder's package
  - Copy *default\_smart.plist* elsewhere as backup
- Rename saved Smart Folder
  - Name it *default\_smart.plist*
- Copy from Desktop to Finder's package
  - Restart Finder



Tiger Only



# APP SWITCHING TIPS

- When using Command-Tab...
  - Command-` will cycle backward
  - Other ways to choose an app:
    - Scroll wheel
    - Arrow keys
    - Mouse
  - H will hide the highlighted app
  - Q will hit the highlighted app
  - Home / End will jump to start / end of list
- Command-Tab works in Exposé modes



# FOLDER JUMPING

- Use Go -> Go to Folder to save time
  - Shift-Command-G for super-fast access
  - Use from Open and Save dialogs, too
    - Press / to access
  - Auto-completes path when you hit Tab
    - Case insensitive in the Finder
    - Case sensitive in Open/Save dialogs
  - Reach hidden folders with ease
    - /Library/WebServer, /usr/bin, etc.



# TABBING IN FIREFOX

- Using Tab in Firefox forms is frustrating
  - Not all fields are selectable
  - This is easily fixed
- Enter *about:config* in the URL bar
- Double-click on *accessibility.tabfocus*
  - Enter either 7 or 3 in the dialog box
    - 7 enables tabbing to all page elements, links included
    - 3 enables tabbing to only form elements and text boxes
- Browser does not need to be restarted



# BETTER FINDER LABELS

- Color labels are a great way to sort
- Finder defaults to sorting by color name!
  - Red is first in color list, but last by alpha
- Use Finder > Preferences > Labels
  - Rename with numeric prefixes
- Sorted list views will now have red at top
  - Or whatever color has the lowest number



# PLAIN TEXT MAIL

- Some people (me!) dislike HTML email
- Mail has no obvious way to display all messages in plain text mode
  - Message-by-message basis only via the menus
- A hidden preference solves the problem

```
$ defaults write com.apple.mail PreferPlainText -bool TRUE  
  
$ # to switch it back to 'normal' handling:  
$ defaults write com.apple.mail PreferPlainText -bool FALSE
```



# DOUBLE SCROLLING

- Two standard scroll arrow options
  - Together at bottom only
  - Up arrow at top; down arrow at bottom
- Best choice: Together at both ends
- Changes take effect on next program launch
- To switch back, use the Appearance System Prefs panel



```
$ defaults write "Apple Global Domain" AppleScrollBarVariant DoubleBoth
```



# THE EXPOSÉ BLOB

- A visual means of activating Exposé
- Click = App Windows mode
- Option click = All Windows mode
- Drag and drop The Blob anywhere onscreen

```
$ defaults write com.apple.dock wvous-floater -bool true
```

```
$ # restart the dock to see the blob
```

```
$ killall Dock
```

```
$ # to disable, repeat with false, kill the dock again
```





# iTUNES ARROWS

- Change the behavior of iTunes' 'music store linking' arrows
- iTunes prefs allow disabling arrows
  - But not modifying their behavior
- Link to your library, not the store
- Quit iTunes prior to executing command

```
$ defaults write com.apple.iTunes invertStoreLinks -bool YES
```

```
$ # to reverse, repeat the above with NO at the end
```



# TERMINAL WELCOME

- "Welcome to Darwin!" says the Terminal
  - What's Darwin and why did I go there?
- Use your own message instead

```
$ cd /etc  
  
$ # make a backup first  
$ sudo cp motd motd_ORIG  
  
$ # edit the file  
$ sudo pico motd
```



# LOGIN BACKGROUND

- Replace the image that shows behind the login window
  - Use any image you like
  - Add customization info (name, return info, reward, etc.) as minor theft deterrent
  - Give yourself a nicer picture to look at
- Copy /Library/Desktop Pictures/Aqua Blue.jpg to another location for backup
- Place an image named Aqua Blue.jpg in this same location



# OPEN IN TRASH

- Normally items in the trash cannot be viewed
  - The Dock provides a solution
  - Drag and drop an item from the trash to a docked application
- Will not work with applications in the Finder, Toolbar, or Sidebar
- A quick way of viewing a file before permanently deleting it

Hall  
of  
Fame



# KEY REMAPPING

- Prevent user stupidity
- Some obvious candidates
  - Command-L
    - Log out of iChat or Open Location in Safari
  - Command-W
    - Remap to prevent accidental window closure
  - Command-Q
    - Remap to prevent quitting
  - Add commands Apple 'left out'
    - Secure empty trash in Finder, etc.

Hall  
of  
Fame



# HIDDEN APPS IN DOCK

- Visibly distinguish hidden apps
- Prevents accidentally activating a hidden app with many open windows
- Makes it easier to see 'active' apps



```
$ defaults write com.apple.dock showhidden -bool true  
  
$ # restart the dock to see changes  
$ killall Dock  
  
$ # reverse it by changing true to false  
$ # and restarting the Dock
```

Hall  
of  
Fame



# DOCK POSITION

- Disabling the dock has side effects
- So don't disable it, move it
- To the top of the screen!
- Leave it auto-hidden
  - It's virtually impossible to activate accidentally

```
$ defaults write com.apple.dock orientation -string top  
$ # restart the dock to see changes  
$ killall Dock  
  
$ # reverse it by using the Dock's menu to pick a  
$ # different position.
```

Hall  
of  
Fame



# SHEET SPEED

- Sheets are 'attached' dialog boxes
- Reduce the time needed to draw them
  - Great timesaver in dialog-heavy apps
- For fun, go the other way
  - A mostly harmless prank...

```
$ # to speed it up:  
$ defaults write NSGlobalDomain NSWindowResizeTime .001  
  
$ # to reset to default:  
$ defaults delete NSGlobalDomain NSWindowResizeTime  
  
$ # as a prank  
$ defaults write NSGlobalDomain NSWindowResizeTime 10
```

Hall  
of  
Fame



**QUESTIONS**

**&**

**ANSWERS**