

Mac OS X Wizardry

Tips, Hints, Tricks, Hacks & Utilities
to Solve Problems, Enhance Productivity,
and Just Have Fun

Ted Landau & Dan Frakes

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My favorite Spotlight-
Automator-Info Window-
Contextual menu tip

Batch add Spotlight Comments & Search

👁️ How to do it:

👁️ Launch Automator.

1. Add "Get Selected Finder Items" and "Add Spotlight Comments to Finder Items."
2. Enable "Show Action When Run."
3. Save as a Plug-in.

👁️ Select desired items in Finder [Can use Spotlight here!]

1. Control click to get contextual menu.
2. From Automator menu, select plug-in.
3. Add Comment text when prompted.

👁️ Check Info window to confirm that it worked.

👁️ Search in Spotlight for Comment text.

.plist file
wizardry

Modify Unexpected Quit behavior

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Go to Developer>Applications>Utilities and launch CrashReporterPrefs. Make selection.
- 👁️ OR: Open com.apple.CrashReporter.plist in Property List Editor. Change DialogType value. OR
- 👁️ OR: Use <defaults> command in Terminal. e.g.
<defaults write com.apple.crashreporter DialogType developer>.
- 👁️ **Bonus:** Changes when reopening a crashed application twice.

Move a Dashboard Widget to the Desktop

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Open `com.apple.dashboard.plist` in Property List Editor and add a property. Name it `devmode` and give it a value of `YES`.
- 👁️ OR: in Terminal, type:
`defaults write com.apple.dashboard devmode YES.`

- 👁️ Log out and log back in again.
- 👁️ OR: Relaunch Dock via Activity Monitor.

- 👁️ Activate Dashboard, click-drag desired widget to desktop.
- 👁️ Before releasing mouse, press `F12` to de-activate Dashboard.

Change the format of a screen capture

👁 How to do it:

- 👁 Open `com.apple.screencapture.plist` in Property List Editor and add a property. Name it `type` and give it a value of `{format type}` - where format type is TIFF, JPEG, PDF or an of a number of other formats.
- 👁 OR: in Terminal, type:
`defaults write com.apple.screencapture type {format type}`.
- 👁 Log out and log back in again.

Super-enlarge Dock icons

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Enable Dock Magnification: "Turn Magnification On."
- 👁️ Change magnification size/slider in Dock System Preferences pane. This just creates the property, if not already created.
- 👁️ Open `com.apple.Dock.plist` in Property List Editor.
- 👁️ Change the value of the `largesize` property to 512 (which is the maximum value that affects the appearance). Save the change.
- 👁️ Relaunch the Dock.

Eliminate the Desktop

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Open `com.apple.Finder.plist` in Property List Editor.
- 👁️ Create a new property: called `CreateDesktop`.
- 👁️ Make it Boolean and give it a value of `No`.
- 👁️ Relaunch Finder.

Permissions wizardry

Open applications with root access

👁 How to do it:

- 👁 Drag the application icon to the Pseudo icon. Documents that would not save before will now save.
- 👁 **Note:** BBEdit has its own option to save "unsavble" files.
- 👁 **Note:** Can also use `<sudo>` command in Terminal.

Packages
wizardry

Edit text of dialogs

👁 How to do it:

- 👁 As an example, change the text of the unexpected quit message:
 1. Go to `/System/Library/CoreServices` and open the Crash Reporter package. [Save a copy before making changes.]
 2. Navigate to `Contents/Resources/English.lproj` and open the `Localizable.strings` file in TextEdit. Use Pseudo to open TextEdit.
 3. Change the message to whatever you like, and save it.
- 👁 **Note:** As just covered, BareBones' TextWrangler and BBEdit let you edit root-owned files, bypassing the need for Pseudo.

Change a document via its file extension

👁 How to do it:

- 👁 Change or delete the portion of the name after the period.
- 👁 For example, you can use this as an alternate way to get inside a package (deleting extension changes package to folder).
- 👁 OR: Change an html file to a text file.

Invisible
wizardry

Hide files for security

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Use InVisibles or TinkerTool etc. to make all invisible items visible.
- 👁️ Create a folder and name it `.TopSecret`. Put any files you want to hide in here.
- 👁️ Use InVisibles to make invisible files visible again.
- 👁️ Redo procedure to access or modify folder contents.
- 👁️ **Note:** Can use Terminal to access/move files in `.TopSecret` folder.
- 👁️ **Note:** Can use Property List Editor or Terminal instead of InVisibles. Modify `AppleShowAllFiles` in `com.apple.Finder.plist`.

Finding song files on an iPod

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Use Invisibles or TinkerTool etc. to make all invisible items visible.
- 👁️ Mount iPod on Desktop.
- 👁️ Open iPod Control/Music folder.

Assorted Wizadry

Finder slide show

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Select a group of graphics in a Finder window.
- 👁️ Go to Action menu and select Slideshow.

Add a Disk Images System Prefs pane

👁 How to do it:

- 👁 Go to `/System/Library/PrivateFrameworks/
DiskImages.framework/Versions/A/Resources`.
- 👁 Double-click the `DiskImages.prefPane`.

Adjust hard drive sleep with more options

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ With Developer software installed, go to Developer>Applications>Performance Tools>CHUD>Hardware Tools>SpindownHD.app
- 👁️ Launch the app and make the desired settings.

Time permitting

Add an image to default screen saver categories

👁️ How to do it:

- 👁️ Go to `/System/Library/Screen Savers`.
- 👁️ Open package such as `Forest.slideSaver` or `Beach.slideSaver`
- 👁️ Go to Resources folder.
- 👁️ Add and/or subtract images as desired. Authenticate when needed. [Work with a copy!]
- 👁️ **Note:** Other pictures in `/Library/Desktop Pictures` and `/Library/User Pictures`.

Create a launchd item

- ② **Why to do it:** To see how this new technology in Tiger works.
- ② **Utility:** Property List Editor and Terminal.
- ② **How to do it:**
 - ② Create a file with name and text as shown in next display. Essentials:
 - ② Program Arguments: Identifies program to be launched
 - ② WatchPaths: Identifies path to folder that, if modified, will cause program to launch.
 - ② Put file in /Library/LaunchAgents folder.
 - ② In Terminal, type: `launchctl load /Library/LaunchAgents/com.apple.preview.plist`. [Or just restart.]
 - ② Drag a file into folder.

com.apple.preview.plist

New Sibling Delete Dump

Property List	Class	Value
▼ Root	Dictionary	3 key/value pairs
Label	String	com.apple.preview
OnDemand	Boolean	Yes
▼ ProgramArguments	Array	1 ordered object
0	String	/Applications/Preview.app/Contents/MacOS/Preview

Add scrollbars to Stickies

- 👁️ **How to do it:** {Doesn't work in Tiger!?!}
- 👁️ Open Stickies package. Go to: Contents/Resources/English.lproj.
- 👁️ Open StickiesDocument.nib in Interface Builder.
- 👁️ Click Window from Instances. Select Show Inspector.
- 👁️ Click on text area of Stickies window so Attributes list of Info window is NSTextView.
- 👁️ Enable Show Scroller. Save.
- 👁️ **Note:** A backup copy of the original is saved automatically.

For more help and info:

Ted Landau's Mac OS X Help Line
www.macosexhelpline.com

Mac OS X Power Tools
www.MacOSXPowerTools.com

MacFixIt:
www.macfixit.com

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How to reach us:

Ted Landau: expo@tedlandau.com

Dan Frakes: expo@danfrakes.com