



Take Control *of* Customizing Tiger

by **Matt Neuburg**

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READ ME FIRST

Welcome to *Take Control of Customizing Tiger*, version 1.0.

Every couple of years, Apple plunges its excited users into a new world with a major revision of Mac OS X. This time, it's Tiger (Mac OS X 10.4). So, what's new in Tiger? What's all the fuss about? This ebook shows you, through a hands-on guided tour of the adjustments, tweaks, and customizations you can make in the System and the Finder. This ebook was written by Matt Neuburg, edited by Tonya Engst, and published by TidBITS Electronic Publishing.

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- Work with the Bookmarks tab or drawer showing so that you can always jump to any main topic by clicking its bookmark.
- Find more tips at <http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/reading-tips.html>.

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- In the unlikely event that Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader cannot successfully print this PDF, try Preview; several readers have solved printing problems by using Preview.

Basics

In reading this ebook, you may get stuck if you don't know certain basic facts or if you don't understand Take Control syntax for things

like working with menus or finding items in the Finder. Please note the following:

- **Path syntax:** I occasionally use a *path* to show the location of a file or folder in your file system. Path text is formatted in bold type. For example, Panther stores most utilities, such as Disk Utility, in the Utilities folder; the path to Disk Utility is **/Applications/Utilities/Disk Utility**.

The slash at the start of the path tells you to start from the root level of the disk. You will also encounter paths that begin with ~ (tilde), which is a shortcut for any user's home directory. For example, if a person with the user name **joe** wants to install fonts that only he can access, he would install them in his **~/Library/Fonts** folder, which is just another way of writing **/Users/joe/Library/Fonts**.

- **Menus:** When I describe choosing a command from a menu in the menu bar, I use an abbreviated description. For example, the abbreviated description for the menu command that creates a new default window in the Finder is "File > New Finder Window."
- **Preferences:** When I say "preference pane," or when I speak of "the so-and-so system preferences," I'm referring to the System Preferences application. To start up System Preferences, choose System Preferences from the Apple menu (or click its icon in the Dock, if it's there). You access a particular preference pane by way of its icon, or the View menu. For example, to see "the Displays preference pane," you would launch System Preferences and then click the Displays icon or choose View > Displays. To see "the Color pane of the Displays system preferences," you would do the same thing, and then click Color.

On the other hand, talk of preferences in relation to a particular application has to do with the window you see when you choose **AppName > Preferences** (where "AppName" is the name of the application). So, for example, when I say, "set the Terminal to emulate a vt100 or vt102 in its preference window," I'm telling you to start up Terminal and then choose **Terminal > Preferences** and do something in the window that appears.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps on the evening of April 29, 2005, you stood in line to obtain one of the first copies of Mac OS X version 10.4 Tiger at your local computer store. Or perhaps you were more cautious and waited until you felt Apple had straightened out the initial kinks inevitable in a new operating system release. One way or another, you wound up with a copy of Tiger. You stayed up late installing it on your Mac; then you fell asleep exhausted. You woke up the next morning excited as a child on Christmas. You rushed to the computer and started it up. You gasped with amazement at the new, improved startup speed. You gawked at the blue magnifying glass in your menu bar. You squealed with delight as you clicked the Dashboard icon in the Dock. You used Safari to do RSS and to save a Web archive. You inserted a table and an auto-numbered list in a TextEdit document, and added an annotation to a PDF with Preview. You looked up some dubious words in the new Dictionary.

Now it's the second day. You're finished playing and want to work. You'd like to Take Control. And, in particular, you'd like to take control of how your computer looks and behaves. But where to start? What, in this brave new world, is up to you? What is it that needs customization, so that things will go smoothly henceforward?

This ebook covers these second-day-of-Tiger sorts of things. It introduces you to Tiger by showing you ways you can customize your computer—ways that were impossible in previous versions of Mac OS X, or that might not be obvious from a casual inspection, or that experience has shown to be worthy of your attention. Whether you've upgraded from Panther or switched from Windows, whether you're brand new to Tiger or you just want to understand it better, this ebook is your guide to the parts of Tiger that you can and should customize to get the most out of it. I'm not writing for Unix hackers, so I don't talk about technical customizations such as causing your swap-file partition to be different from your boot partition; the customizations pointed out here are those that Tiger wants and expects you to perform directly in its normal interface. I do, however, point out areas where Tiger might need a little help from third-party utilities in order for you to work most comfortably and efficiently.

Now let's meet Tiger and take it by the tail!

QUICK START TO CUSTOMIZING TIGER

This ebook describes many customizations, not all of which you need employ, and some of which will be more important to you than others. Naturally, I think that sooner or later you should take the time to read this ebook through from start to finish, but I also understand that you're eager to get working with Tiger and that you've a busy life, so you might want to know what's most important to do right now, and come back to the rest of the book later. So, I suggest a three-stage approach:

1. Perform right away the customizations that will immediately improve your Desktop and interface experience.
2. Learn about the major new technologies and customizations that are possible in Tiger, so that you can get the most out of those technologies in your work.
3. Catch up on the remaining customizations whenever you have time. This makes sense especially for customizations where you can't know what you want to do until you see over time what your own needs and habits are.

Here, then, is an overview of how I suggest you customize and learn about Tiger with the help of this ebook:

Do these things right away:

- Check that you installed Tiger correctly, in accordance with what you want it to do for you; read [Customize Your Installation](#).
- If you were already using Panther and want to proceed by focusing on changes in Tiger, you may wish to skip out of this list and instead work through [What's New in Tiger](#).
- Customize your Finder windows so you can navigate easily to important areas of your hard disk; read [Master the Folder/File Hierarchy](#) (and possibly [Appendix A: Finder Window Customization](#).)
- Make the keyboard easier to use, the pointer easier to see, the screen easier to read, and lots more; read [Perform Miscellaneous Configurations](#).
- Make effective use of the icons at the right end of your menu bar; read [Customize Status Menus](#).

Learn more about Tiger:

- Explore and configure Exposé, to help you deal with window overload; read [See the Windows You Want to See](#).
- Simplify your font menus and make Tiger run leaner and meaner; read [Fix Your Fonts](#).
- Discover Spotlight, a new searching technology, and learn to make Smart Folders in the Finder that embody live Spotlight searches; read [Understand Spotlight](#).
- Find out about Dashboard, where you can get information and make settings quickly; read [Dashboard](#).
- Learn how a new utility lets you program your Mac without knowing a programming language; read [Understand Automator](#).
- Know about Unicode and how to type special characters and symbols in Mac OS X; read [Be Unicode-Savvy](#).

Do these things as needed and when time permits:

- Tweak keyboard shortcuts and keyboard behavior to match your needs and habits; read [Consider Application Keyboard Shortcuts](#).
- Find out where the remaining customizations are; read [Look Up a Configuration Location](#).

WHAT'S NEW IN TIGER

For readers who are already familiar with Mac OS X 10.3 Panther, here is a special road map for learning about what new customizations are possible with Tiger:

- Explore Spotlight, a new global metadata search technology; read [Understand Spotlight](#).
- Find out about the new kinds of Exposé shortcut; read [Customize Exposé triggers](#).
- Get acquainted with Dashboard, a new quick-interaction utility; read [Dashboard](#).
- Learn about a cool new way to get a word's definition in any application; read [Set Global Keyboard Shortcuts](#).
- Link applications into powerful workflows without learning a programming language; read [Understand Automator](#).
- Discover improvements in the Font Book utility; read [Fix Your Fonts](#).
- Dictate exactly what other users can and can't do on your Mac; read [Limit User Powers](#).
- Rearrange modifier keys without harming your keyboard; read [Kill the Caps Lock](#).
- Make the mouse more congenial to the left hand; read [Give Your Mouse the Finger](#).
- Bring Mac OS X's dates into line with your preferred style of calendar; read [Have a Nice Date](#).
- Get a better view of the mouse pointer (cursor) by making it bigger; read [Grow the Pointer](#).
- Save space in your menu bar by shrinking the status menu for Fast User Switching item to an icon; read [Overview of Status Menus](#).
- Discover a powerful new technology for helping the visually impaired; read [Have the Mac Read the Interface to You](#).

CUSTOMIZE YOUR INSTALLATION

If you've already installed Tiger, it may seem too late to speak of customizing the installation. Nevertheless, customization of Tiger does begin with installation. When you originally run the installer, you pass through a series of several screens leading to the actual installation; the third or fourth screen (depending how you count)—the one *after* the one where you select the destination disk—contains a Customize button at the lower left. (The button is easy to miss; this point in the process is rather badly designed, in my opinion.) If you click that button, you are shown a dialog where you have a chance to select which elements of the system should be installed.

Now, don't panic—you don't have to reinstall if you missed this step, or if you customized your installation but regret the way you did it. Regardless of how you installed, you have a working installation of Tiger (unless something very unusual happened), and that's all that really matters. Also, if you want to, you can later install any additional system element, such as the drivers for a new printer, by double-clicking the file **OptionalInstalls.mpkg**; it's at the top level of the installation disc window (scroll down in order to see it).

NOTE If you're installing Tiger from CDs, not from a DVD, your approach to adding system elements after installation will be different. For details, see the latest edition of Joe Kissell's ebook, *Take Control of Upgrading to Tiger*. It provides a more complete discussion of these matters, and will help you master the entire installation process.
<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/tiger-upgrading.html>

Let's run through the options you're offered when you customize your initial installation, so you can see if there's anything you want to install after the fact:

- **Printer drivers:** You should install at least the Gimp Printer drivers, because these let you print on just about any printer; if you have a printer and its manufacturer appears in the list, you should install the drivers for that manufacturer as well. You needn't install drivers for printers you don't have, and it's a good idea not to, because these can take up a lot space (1.6 GB to install all of them).

MASTER THE FOLDER/FILE HIERARCHY

Getting work done on your computer involves using an application (for example, to surf the Web, you might use Safari); and if the results of that work are to persist over time, it also involves a document (for example, to write a term paper, you might create a word processing document, using Microsoft Word or Apple's own Pages). Applications and documents live somewhere on your hard disk. So, to get any work done at all, you need to be able to *locate your applications and documents*. Tiger gives you several ways to locate applications and documents, and lets you customize certain aspects of the process of locating them. You will work most productively, happily, and comfortably if you do customize them, to suit your own preferences, desires, and ways of working. This section tells you how to do so.

How do you locate things on your hard disk? There are two main ways, which you can think of as polar opposites of one another. One way is through the *folder hierarchy*. Every file (whether it's a document or an application) is in a folder. Every folder is in a folder. This series of containers—a file in a folder in a folder in a folder—continues upward until we reach the top level, called a *volume*: this is usually your hard disk, or a partition of your hard disk. So, to reach any file or folder, you can traverse that same path in reverse, downward: starting with a volume, you look inside a folder, then inside a folder within that, and so forth, level by level, until you reach the file or folder you're after. The application on your Mac that lets you traverse this hierarchy is the Finder. The Finder's basic purpose is to reflect the hierarchy of files within folders within folders that organizes what's on your computer.

Many of us have been using computers for so long that we take the hierarchy for granted; but it's still a pretty terrible mode of organization. It works, but it isn't how your mind works—at least, it's not the *only* way your mind works. To locate a file in a hierarchy, you must know what it's called and where it is; and if you've ever said to yourself, "Now what on earth was that file I downloaded the other day?" or "Where did I save that word processing document I was writing?" you're well aware that, often, those are exactly the things you do *not* know. And even if you do know, working your way down the hierarchy, level by level, is tedious.

work in a non-metal Finder world, completely without toolbars and sidebars.

NOTE Working in a non-metal Finder world, though possible, is not recommended. Not only would you be robbing yourself of the advantages of the toolbar and sidebar, but also you'd be fighting the Finder all the time. You can hide the toolbar on a folder window, but if you open that folder window again separately (for example, by Command-double-clicking the folder), you will probably find that the toolbar has returned.

So much for customizing Finder windows. Now let's turn to another major way of jumping directly across the hierarchy of files and folders—Spotlight, a technology that's new in Tiger.

Understand Spotlight

Spotlight is a technology for tracking files in terms of their features. These features of a file are called its *metadata*, and they include all sorts of information about the file: its name, its creation and modification date, its size, its contents, and so forth. Different kinds of file provide different kinds of metadata: for example, a word processing file has text contents, but an image file has a two-dimensional size, a resolution, and a color profile. Spotlight knows how to extract metadata from many types of file; furthermore, any application can provide metadata information about whatever types of file are special to it, and Apple's own applications, such as iCal, Mail, and Address Book, already do this. An unrestricted Spotlight search embraces all the kinds of metadata; a search on "rock" might find applications with "rock" in their name, word processing files with "rock" in their contents, iPhoto images with "rock" as a keyword, and MP3 music files with "rock" as their genre.

NOTE As you experiment with Tiger, you'll discover that Apple has modified some of its applications to allow you specify certain kinds of metadata. For example, user comments in a file's Get Info window in the Finder are now called Spotlight Comments, and a TextEdit document now has Document Properties, such as an Author (choose File > Show Properties in TextEdit to see them). All of that is so this information can be found through Spotlight.

On the whole, you won't be aware that Spotlight is present until you need it. After you first install Tiger, you may notice background disk activity, along with a subtle "throbbing" of the Spotlight menu icon, as Spotlight constructs an initial index of the metadata of all the files on your hard disk; this can take quite a long time (several hours). But after that, Spotlight becomes more or less invisible: the index is updated live each time you save or move a file (this happens so quickly that you probably won't be aware of it). Thus, whenever you do a Spotlight search, it is usually rapid and completely up-to-date.

By now you're probably chomping at the bit, eager to stop reading about Spotlight and to try it. Before we do that, here are some additional cool facts about Spotlight to get you drooling even more:

- **It's live:** If the results of a Spotlight search are open, and if the situation on the hard disk changes—you download some files from the Internet, for example—the results of the search will change immediately to take those changes into account.
- **It's everywhere:** When you perform a local (non-Internet) search in any Apple application, you're probably using Spotlight. The search field in the System Preferences window, the search field in a Finder window, the search field in the Mail window, the search field in an Open or Save dialog—they're all Spotlight. As Tiger matures, third-party developers will add Spotlight searching to their applications as well.
- **It's persistent:** A Spotlight search can be saved, and various Apple applications provide a way to do this. The Finder gives you Smart Folders (which I talk about more in a moment); Mail gives you Smart Mailboxes; Address Book gives you Smart Groups. Because a Spotlight search is live, any time you open a Smart Folder or a Smart Mailbox, it updates immediately.

SEE THE WINDOWS YOU WANT TO SEE

Here's a news flash from the Department of Unintended Consequences: windows are great, but they're also a problem. As soon as you have more than a few windows open at once, it's clear that those windows are like automobiles, and your monitor is like a Los Angeles freeway: it's overcrowded, and no matter how much you widen it, it's *still* going to be overcrowded.

To ease the window traffic on your monitor, you can take advantage of certain devices for seeing the windows you want to see. One of these is Exposé, which lets you switch quickly among all your open windows (or get them all out of the way so you can see your Desktop). Another is Dashboard, which lets certain miniature applications live in a special window layer that's visible only when you want to use it. Finally, if all that isn't enough, a third-party application might make windows work in a more satisfactory way for you.

Exposé

Let's start with Exposé, and in particular with an overview of how to use each of Exposé's three modes: All Windows, Application Windows, and Desktop. Once you understand these three modes, you'll be ready to customize Exposé so that you can summon those modes whenever you like. I assume that you have not yet customized Exposé; the keyboard shortcuts I use to start with (and which you might want to customize) are the Tiger defaults.

All Windows mode

Press F9 to see Exposé's All Windows mode in action (**Figure 7**). It reduces every open window of *all* applications to a thumbnail. (By "a thumbnail" I mean the windows show at a size small enough, and in such a position, that they all fit on the screen without overlapping.) You can move from window to window by pressing the arrow keys, and pick the one you want by pressing Return; or use the mouse, hovering over a window to see its name and clicking to select it. To cancel All Windows mode, press F9 again or press Esc (or click the Desktop).

Dashboard

Dashboard is a special application, new in Tiger, that hosts mini-applications called *widgets*. When I say that a widget is a mini-application, I'm not kidding: a widget has just one window (without a title bar) and no menus. It doesn't even have standard interface elements such as Cocoa buttons and text fields; a widget's single window is "painted" on the screen, in any style the developer wishes.

EXTRA FOR EXPERTS You don't need to know this, but I'll tell you anyway: behind the scenes, widgets are based on HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. A widget is actually more akin to a Web page than to an application.

The Dashboard application consists of a single semi-transparent window which, if present, covers everything else on the screen. If Dashboard is in front, you can access the widgets and nothing else; otherwise, Dashboard is out of sight and out of mind. The default way to trigger Dashboard is to click its icon on the Dock or press F12. (On some keyboards you might have to press Fn-F12, because F12 alone ejects a CD.) To dismiss Dashboard, click anywhere on the screen, but *not* on a widget.

Any developer can create a Dashboard widget, and you can expect to see a spate of new widgets as Tiger matures. Meanwhile, Tiger ships with several widgets, most of which are alternatives to existing utilities. For example, instead of running the Calculator or keeping a clock in your menu bar, you can use the corresponding Dashboard widgets to compute a sum or check the time. Other included widgets, such as Weather and Phone Book, give you quick ways to look up information on the Internet.

NOTE The built-in widgets are located in `/Library/Widgets`. As you accumulate third-party widgets, you can add them here, or you may want to put them in your own personal `~/Library/Widgets` folder.

Think of a widget as something you consult for a moment and then dismiss. So, for example, if you need to see the time of day before your eyes constantly as you work, then the World Clock widget isn't for you. But if you need merely to glance at the time of day occasionally and then return to what you were doing, the World Clock widget should be right up your street.

Your computer should obey your orders with a minimum of fuss. You should be able to launch applications, choose menu items, and even make applications work together, as simply as possible. Ideally the computer should just read your mind, but that's still in the realm of science fiction. This section is about some customizations that are possible now, to make your computer respond more nimbly to your keypresses and mouse clicks.

Consider Application Keyboard Shortcuts

Have you ever wished that a menu item you commonly use had a keyboard shortcut? For instance, sometimes you'd like to *zoom* a window, meaning you want it to occupy more of the screen. You could click the green button in the title bar, or choose Window > Zoom from the menu; but why not press a keyboard shortcut, so that you can zoom the window without fiddling with the mouse?

What about the situation where applications don't adopt the same keyboard shortcut for the same command? Take File > Save As, which brings up a File Save dialog so you can save a file under a new name. In TextEdit, Save As is Shift-Command-S. In Safari, it's Command-S; if you also use the Shift key, Safari just beeps at you. Your habits from one application let you down in another.

Here's a subtle variant on that scenario. In Mail, Shift-Command-N means to check for new mail. Naturally you press that combination of keys often. But sometimes you think you're in Mail, but you're actually in the Finder. You press Shift-Command-N, and what happens? You've created a new untitled folder. Again, your habits from one application have backfired in a different application.

Or, you may tend to press the wrong keyboard shortcut. In Safari, how often have you accidentally pressed Command-Q (meaning, perhaps, to press either Command-Tab or Command-W)—quitting Safari, and losing the Web pages you were reading?

Wouldn't it be nice to straighten things out? Well, you can, and you should. Tiger lets you customize keyboard shortcuts for menu items in particular applications as well as globally for all applications. Keep track of your habits, and if keyboard shortcuts aren't working the way you need them to, you should customize them.

- **Apple's way:** Apple wants you to use the helper application itself to make the setting. So, for example, you can choose your preferred email client in the preferences for Apple's Mail, and your preferred Web browser in the preferences for Safari. But what if an Internet program doesn't do this—how would you make it the default helper application? Also, what if you want to examine all such settings in a single central location?
- **Microsoft's way:** If you have Microsoft Internet Explorer, you can view and customize all your Internet helper applications in the Protocol Helpers pane of Internet Explorer's Preferences window (choose Internet Explorer > Preferences). It feels silly modifying system-wide settings in a Web browser's preferences, not to mention the irony of compensating for an Apple failing by using a Microsoft application; but at least the interface is excellent.
- **The third-party way:** Forget Apple and Microsoft. I recommend that you download one of three third-party utilities that let you access your Internet Config settings directly. In fact, download them all! They are free; life is good. One is the More Internet preference pane; the second is Alexander Clauss's MisFox application; the third is Rubicode's amazing RCDefaultApp, which lets you set the application that opens given file extensions and file types as well.
<http://www.monkeyfood.com/software/MoreInternet/>
<http://www.clauss-net.de/misfox/misfox.html>
<http://www.rubicode.com/Software/RCDefaultApp/>

Understand Automator

The ultimate purpose of a computer is automation. Even when you're doing something as simple as editing text in a word processor, you're automating actions that would be terribly tedious if you had to perform them yourself, one at a time. (If you don't believe me, trade your computer in for a typewriter. Slam the carriage return at the end of every line; remember to add extra space before every paragraph; get all the spelling right; make a mistake and retype the whole page—no thanks!)

Nevertheless, your computer doesn't know in advance everything you will want to do, and there are times when you probably find yourself performing the same actions over and over again. Or perhaps there are things you don't do, because, although you know how you *could* do them, the prospect would be too tedious and time-consuming. This

is a bad state of affairs. It means that the roles have been reversed: you, the human being, are being automated, instead of the computer.

Since the dawn of computer time, the traditional way to solve this problem has been to write a new computer program that performs the repetitious or tedious actions. But writing a brand new program shouldn't be necessary when you already have applications on your computer that can perform the desired individual steps. The problem is to get those applications to perform those steps themselves, rather than your having to do it one step at a time. This is why Apple created AppleScript, which lets you assemble a sequence of actions that your existing applications can perform, and then set that sequence going whenever you like.

However, AppleScript is a programming language, and many users have an aversion to programming languages. So Apple introduced, in Tiger, a new automation technique—an application called Automator, which lets you, the user, assemble a series of steps (called *actions*) into a single sequence (called a *workflow*) without doing any programming at all. A workflow can be saved as a document, so once you've created a workflow, you can open it again later and perform the same sequence of steps, in a single move.

EXTRA FOR EXPERTS

An application that responds to AppleScript (that is, a *scriptable* application) is a good candidate to be the target of an Automator action, and behind the scenes, the heart of an Automator action that targets a scriptable application typically is an AppleScript script. So, when you construct a workflow in Automator, you may well be stringing together a series of AppleScript scripts—except that you don't need to know AppleScript; the scripts are already written, and you never see them.

Tiger comes with a number of Automator actions; these actions are stored in `/System/Library/Automator`. You may also expect that many third-party actions will be written as Tiger matures; as you acquire such actions, you'll store them in `/Library/Automator` or in your own user `~/Library/Automator`. It is also possible for a third-party application to be written in such a way as to include its own actions; in a case like that, its actions will be available in Automator, but you won't see them as individual files.

FIX YOUR FONTS

Font management has always been a problem on the Mac. The main trouble is that once you have more than a few fonts, Font menus become long and unwieldy. Mac OS X is no exception; plus, it's even harder than in previous systems to know what fonts are installed and where they are. In Mac OS X, fonts can be in any of (at least) four places:

- `/System/Library/Fonts`
- `/Library/Fonts`
- `~/Library/Fonts`
- the Fonts folder of your Classic System Folder

TIP Here's a little-known fact: instead of installing fonts directly in your user `~/Library/Fonts` folder, you can put them *in a folder* within your user `~/Library/Fonts` folder. The system will still see them. I use this trick a lot, as a way of reminding myself why a font was installed. For example, fonts installed by Microsoft Office I keep in a folder called **InstalledByMicrosoft**.

Also, Mac OS X supports an exceptionally wide range of font file formats; in addition to the old-style TrueType font suitcases (which, by the way, can't easily be opened to see what fonts are inside them, as they could be in Mac OS 9 and earlier), Mac OS X fonts can be TrueType data-fork files (`.dfont`), Windows TrueType (`.ttf` and `.ttc`), OpenType, and PostScript Type 1 and Multiple Master (`LWFN` and `sfnt`).

NOTE Fonts that worked on previous systems may not work on Mac OS X! This could be because of their file format; for example, pure bitmap fonts are no longer supported. It could also be because of the font's structure; for example, fonts that used to provide special characters such as symbols and non-English letters may not be compatible with Mac OS X's Unicode underpinnings, and can show up as blanks or boxes. This is particularly frustrating when you have old documents that depend on such fonts. The matter is complex and outside the scope of this ebook.

CUSTOMIZE STATUS MENUS

Status menus (also called status items, status icons, menu extras, and menu bar extras) are the icons that appear at the right end of your menu bar. (This area is technically called the *system status bar*.) In general it is up to you which status menus appear, and you can further customize some status menus. Status menus can be a convenience or a waste of valuable menu bar space, depending on your needs, your monitor size, and what you had for breakfast. The tools for status menu management are scattered all over your computer; this section summarizes them.

Status Menu Removal and Rearrangement

To rearrange status menus, hold the Command key and drag a menu icon to a different location in the menu bar. To remove a status menu, hold the Command key and drag its icon right off the menu bar.

You can't move or remove the Spotlight icon. That's because it isn't really a status menu; it's a system menu, like the Apple menu at the other end of the menu bar.

Overview of Status Menus

Table 3 lists some of the major status menus that are part of Tiger, and tells how to enable them. It's followed by some comments on a couple of individual status menus that deserve further exploration but haven't been discussed earlier in this ebook.

NOTE In **Table 3**, everything in the second column is a preference pane (in System Preferences, as always in this ebook), unless explicitly noted otherwise. As a shorthand, sub-panes are notated like menus. For example, "Desktop & Screen Saver > Desktop" means the Desktop pane of the Desktop & Screen Saver system preferences. Some status menus (such as Ink) are not listed because I lack the hardware or other necessary paraphernalia to test them.

PERFORM MISCELLANEOUS CONFIGURATIONS

This section points out some chief miscellaneous customizations that you should not neglect in your eagerness to get on with using Tiger. Don't be fooled by the fact that this section comes late in the ebook. It comes late because it collects information that couldn't be categorized into an earlier section. But these customizations are not unimportant. Indeed, many of them are crucial, allowing you to do such things as read your screen more clearly or use your mouse more effectively—things that are fundamental to your accomplishing anything at all with Tiger.

Set Up Login Items

Your *login items* are the Mac OS X equivalent of what Mac OS 9 and earlier systems called “startup items”—applications that launch automatically. Obviously, these are typically applications that you like to have always running. A wonderful feature of Mac OS X is that, because of its virtual memory model and non-polling event loop architecture, there is usually no penalty whatever for having extra applications running.

To set up applications as login items:

1. Open the Accounts preference pane.
2. Select your user name in the list on the left, and click the Login Items button to show the Login Items pane. (Since Mac OS X first appeared, this pane has changed names and locations repeatedly. First it was called Login Items, then it was called Startup Items, now it's called Login Items again. This is the right name for it, because these are applications that will be launched when you log in as you—not when the computer merely powers on.)
3. Locate a desired application in the Finder and drag it from the Finder into the Login Items list. Or, click the + (plus) button and navigate to the application in the Open dialog.

TIP A new feature in Tiger is that you can make any application in the Dock a login item, without using the Accounts preference pane. To do so, choose Open at Login from the application's Dock menu.

LOOK UP A CONFIGURATION LOCATION

On the one hand, a systematic discussion of every pane of System Preferences, and every option in the Finder's Preferences window, one by one, would bore most readers to tears. On the other hand, you can (and should) make important customizations in these locations. So here's a compromise—tables that present customizations grouped by topic. If you are unfamiliar with the many options available, or just want to review what's possible, the tables in the rest of this section are for you—they list things you might like to customize and point you to the right location for doing so.

Any categorization such as this one is arbitrary and artificial, but I do think that these categories (originally created by Take Control editor in chief Tonya Engst) stand a good chance of being less confusing and easier to deal with than the way Apple scatters in various locations configurations that clearly have to do with the same thing. The categories are:

- Customize the Desktop and Menus
- Customize Colors
- Customize Fonts, Text, and Languages
- Customize the Interface (i.e. features of the interface appearance not covered in the previous three categories)
- Customize Hardware Settings
- Customize Miscellaneous Settings (i.e. everything else)

TIP Having trouble finding a configuration location? Use Spotlight ([Understand Spotlight](#))! The interface of many preference panes is included in the search; for example, a Spotlight search on “battery” can lead you to the Energy Saver preference pane. (Unfortunately, Spotlight searches do not include Help documentation or the preferences of other applications such as the Finder.)

APPENDIX A: FINDER WINDOW CUSTOMIZATION

I have encountered (and readers have reported) some disappointing limits to how far you can readily customize Finder windows. For example, if you prefer list view, you can set the default Finder window (the one that appears when you press Command-N) to be in list view; but you cannot specify that you want *every* Finder window you *ever* open to be in list view. Thus, if you click the Music icon in a Finder window sidebar, you may find that the Music folder opens in icon view, and there is no setting by which you can prevent this.

The only way to impose your desired view on every Finder window is to do it the way Superman puts on his pants—one leg at a time. As you open a window, if it is not in list view, you choose View > as List. Assuming you have the necessary permissions, the window should remember its setting from then on.

To guarantee that every window you open from now on will be in list view, you would have to open every window of every folder on your Mac and set it to list view! Sounds prohibitively tedious, doesn't it? On the other hand, this is a computer, after all, and the point of having a computer is to make it do the tedious stuff for you. You could, therefore, do all that work with a script, instead of doing it manually. For example, this script sets every folder within your Home folder to list view:

```
on dealWith(f)
  local L, ff
  tell application "Finder"
    try
      open f
      set current view of (get Finder window 1) to list view
      close f
      set L to (get every folder of f)
      repeat with ff in L
        tell me to dealWith(ff)
      end repeat
    end try
  end tell
end dealWith
local L, f
tell application "Finder"
  close every Finder window
  set L to (get every folder of (get path to home folder))
  repeat with f in L
    tell me to dealWith(f)
  end repeat
end tell
```

ABOUT THIS EBOOK

In contrast to traditional print books, Take Control ebooks offer clickable links, full-text searching, and free minor updates. We hope you find them both useful and enjoyable to read.

About the Author

Matt Neuburg is a former Classics professor. One of his students, to whom he tried to teach the fine art of composing Greek sentences, was Adam Engst, who later went on to publish *TidBITS*. Matt eventually left academe and became a *TidBITS* Contributing Editor, writing reviews of software such as outliners and databases.

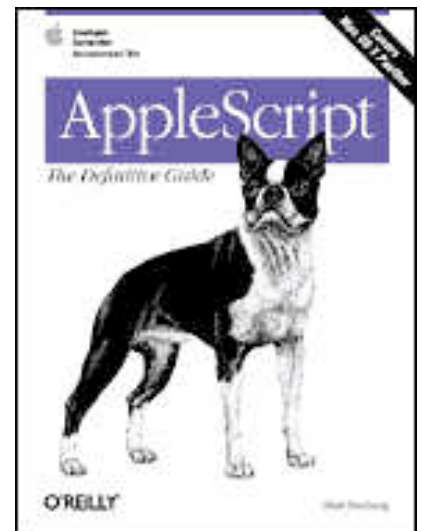
He is also a consultant, documentation writer, and programmer, and has written three books for O'Reilly & Associates: *Frontier: The Definitive Guide*, *REALbasic: The Definitive Guide*, and *AppleScript: The Definitive Guide*. He lives in the village of Ojai, California, which he regards as all but indistinguishable from Paradise.

Shameless Plug

One extremely powerful way to customize your Macintosh is with AppleScript, a system-level language that can make applications do things programmatically. Instead of your doing something with the mouse, then reading the screen, then thinking about what you should do next, and so forth, the Mac does the doing, the reading, and the thinking. This means that your hands and eyes and brain are freed from having to perform repetitive or tiresome activities better suited to the computer. Lengthy operations can be reduced to a single step, and applications can be made to work together. You can also use AppleScript to customize such things as what happens when a file is placed into a certain folder in the Finder, or what your Mac does when a music CD is inserted.

For the full story you might wish to obtain my book, *AppleScript: The Definitive Guide*, from O'Reilly & Associates.

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Adam and Tonya are well-known in the Macintosh world as writers, editors, and speakers, and they have written innumerable online and print publications. They are also parents to Tristan, who thinks ebooks about trains, clipper ships, and dinosaurs would be cool.

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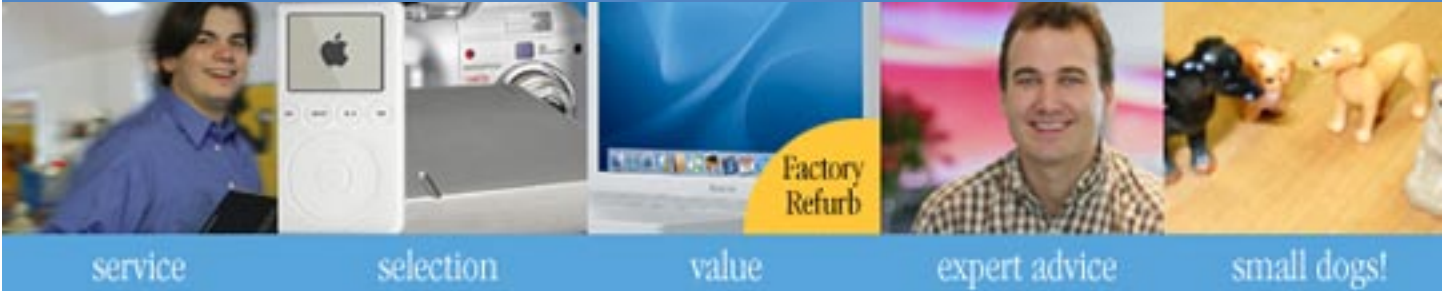
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