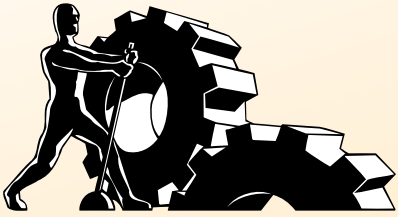


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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of Spotlight for Finding Anything on Your Mac*, version 1.0.1 published in October 2011 by TidBITS Publishing Inc. This book was written by Sharon Zardetto and edited by Tonya Engst (with assistance from Michael E. Cohen).

This book gives you all the information you need to find *your* information—the stuff you’ve stored on your Mac *somewhere*. Whether you remember the name (more or less) of a file but not its location, or part of the name of an item’s folder, or even some phrase you typed in a document, or—get this—the name you gave a layer in a Photoshop document, I’ll show you how to easily find things without wandering around a humongous hard drive, clicking your way through nested folders in hopes of stumbling across your elusive target.

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Updates and More

You can access extras related to this book on the Web (use the link in [Ebook Extras](#), near the end; it’s available only to purchasers). On the ebook’s Take Control Extras page, you can:

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- Get a discount when you order a print copy of the ebook.


Basics

There are only a few basic items you need to know to make your reading experience smoother:

- **Menu references:** The general “shorthand” description to refer to choosing something from a menu is, for instance, File > Open.
- **Path names:** The route you take to a file on your hard drive, whether by looking through columns in a window or by double-clicking your way through folders, is the file’s *path*, and there’s a standard “syntax” for referring to these paths.

The disk’s name is always the first thing in a path; we assume the disk is always there, so we don’t include its name, but we preserve the slash that would separate it from the next item. So, `HardDrive/System/Library` becomes `/System/Library`.

A path to something in a user’s home directory starts with the drive’s name, followed by `Users` and then the user’s name. For ease-of-reading, however, the convention is to replace those first three items with `~` (tilde), so `HardDrive/Users/Miriam/Library` becomes simply `~/Library`. (You’ve probably noticed by now that path text is formatted in special type.)


- **User Library:** The library folder mentioned in the previous paragraph, `~/Library`, is normally invisible in Lion to protect its important contents from accidental alterations or deletion. Open it in the Finder by pressing Option and choosing Go > Library.
- **System Preferences:** To work with System Preferences, choose Apple  > System Preferences and in the window that opens, click the icon for the settings you want to adjust. (Or, choose the pane from the Spotlight menu, as I describe in [Open a Preference Pane](#).) I usually describe this procedure simply as, for instance, “Open the Spotlight preference pane” or “Open Spotlight preferences.”

When a system preference pane has different areas that you access by clicking a button at the top of the window, I refer to them as “screens,” as in “the Privacy screen of Spotlight preferences.”

- **Contextual menus:** When I refer to accessing a contextual menu (also known as a “shortcut menu”), I usually write “Control-click

[whatever] for the contextual menu...”. This is a little ironic since I never Control-click: my main computer is a laptop, and I use a two-finger tap for a contextual menu. You might do the same, or you may be using a mouse that’s programmed to open a contextual menu with a right-click. Whenever you read “Control-click,” use your preferred method to open a contextual menu.

- **Lions and Leopards and Snow, oh my:** Although Apple decided to use its code names as “real” names for the Mac OS many years ago, it hasn’t followed through by putting the name anywhere in the system so that you can check what you’re running. Since this book is about using Lion, I refer to it a lot, and occasionally refer to one or two previous systems by their names: Snow Leopard and Leopard.

To see what system you’re running, choose Apple  > About This Mac and check the number just beneath the Mac OS X logo. The current and recent numbers/names are: Lion, 10.7; Snow Leopard, 10.6; and Leopard 10.5. A third number (the second decimal place, as in 10.7.1) is insignificant when it comes to the name.

What’s New in Version 1.0.1

To create this new version, I corrected a typo and made the following changes:

- I corrected an error relating to the Documents category in the Spotlight menu. As it turns out, some types of “documents,” such as spreadsheets, are not part of this category (see [Excluded Items Are Really Excluded](#)).
- In [Explore the Name Operators](#), the explanation of the Contains operator was expanded and the screenshot for **Figure 43** was modified.
- [Search for Tags with Spotlight](#) now discusses what happens if you delete a tagging utility.

If you are working from a printout of version 1.0, note that the changes in version 1.0.1 are on these pages: 2, 5, 7, 19–24, 31, 82, 142, and 144.

Introduction

This book explains how to use the Spotlight menu and Search windows in the Finder to find anything on your Mac

I originally intended to call this book simply “Take Control of Spotlight in Lion” but realized, after a brief, entirely unscientific yet revealing survey, that there’s a bit of a mystery even among experienced Mac users as to what, exactly, Spotlight is: “The magnifying glass/menu at the right of the menu bar”; “I never use it”; “I have no idea”; “It highlights stuff on your computer?”; “I see it in pop-up menus offering to search for something... it’s for Web searching?”

No, it’s not for Web searching—it’s for looking through the gazillion items on your Mac. Yes, that magnifying glass at the right of your menu bar opens a search field, but that’s only one way to use Spotlight. When you use a Find command in the Finder and a Search window opens, that’s Spotlight working. If you use the search field inside an Open or Save dialog—yep, Spotlight again.

Spotlight doesn’t just help you find misplaced files (and folders) by name: it finds them by kind, created and modified dates, content, and dozens of other criteria. And it can find them by multiple criteria: a Word document created last month with “memo” but not “monthly” in its title, or a photo you took back in the summer of 2009 that had a particular f-stop setting.

Spotlight finds more than just files: it can, for instance, look up your second cousin’s cell number without opening Address Book. And it does more than just find things: it can check synonyms for “tyro,” get a definition for “crepuscular,” and launch any application with a few keystrokes.

Even if you’re familiar with the ways you can make Spotlight work for you, knowing how it “thinks” means you’ll be able to construct search criteria quickly. What is a “word” as far as Spotlight is concerned? How do you construct a search to find files that match any of three criteria?

When you know the details, it’s amazing what Spotlight can do for you.

Spotlight Quick Start

Although this ebook is written in a linear fashion, with the assumption that you'll read it in order, it's not necessary to do so—else why would the computer gods have invented links?

However, I encourage you to at least skim the chapters that you assume you don't need, because if you don't know something about, say, how Spotlight interprets the text you type or what it thinks is a “word”—well, you don't *know* that you don't know it, so how will you ever find out?

Check out what's new in Lion searching:

- If you're already familiar with Mac OS X's Spotlight menu and Search windows in the Finder, you can get up to speed with the changes in Lion in [What's New in Lion Spotlight and Searching](#).

Learn about Spotlight and searching basics:

- If you're not sure, exactly, what Spotlight is (it's not just that menu in the upper right!), start by reading the [Introduction](#) and then read [Understand and Access Spotlight](#).
- To understand how Spotlight keeps track of things on your Mac, read [Learn about Spotlight Indexing](#).
- Get the terminology straight with [Learn the Lingo](#) and understand how Spotlight interprets the text you type with [Master Text Entry in the Search Field](#).

Configure search options:

- Learn how to activate or redefine the keyboard shortcuts for the Spotlight menu and a special Finder Search window in [Set the Keyboard Shortcuts](#).
- Design your Spotlight menu list with [Organize the Menu Results](#), and [Customize the Privacy List](#).

Check out the Spotlight menu:

- For an overview of what's in the Spotlight menu—especially its new Lion features—check [Anatomy of the Spotlight Menu](#) and [Quick Look in the Spotlight Menu](#).

- Learn what you can do with Spotlight menu results besides just opening them in [Work with the Results List](#).
- Find out what the Spotlight menu can do besides search for things (Math! Definitions! And that's not all!) with [Use Special Spotlight Menu Capabilities](#).

Understand basic Finder search options:

- How you [Open a Search Window](#) affects your search's starting point; get acquainted with Lion's new approach to the window's search field with [Use the Search Field](#).
- Learn the [Anatomy of a Search Window](#), and then specify how you want results displayed with [Customize the Search Window](#).
- See what you can do with found items besides open them in [Work with Search Results](#).

Explore advanced Finder search options:

- Go beyond searching for text in filenames and content with the information in [Define Searches with Criteria Bars](#). Learn about criteria bar options in [Explore the Name Operators](#), [Work with the Kind Descriptors](#), and [Explore the "Other" Attributes](#).
- Would you prefer to *type* complex search queries? See how you can forgo some criteria bars with fancy fingerwork in a search field: read [Use Attribute Keywords in Search Fields](#).
- Learn how to use logical operators for more complex searches in [Wield the Power of Boolean Searches](#).
- Save time by saving searches, described in [Save Searches with Smart Folders](#).

Learn to make the most of Spotlight:

- Find out how to [Plan Ahead for Spotlight Searches](#) with [Set Spotlight Comments](#) and [Create Metadata for Documents within Applications](#); learn about the joy of tags in [Tag, You're It!](#).
- Take full advantage of Spotlight: [Use Spotlight in Open and Save Dialogs](#), and [Make an Application-Specific Smart Folder](#).


Supplement Spotlight:

- [Appendix B: Third-Party Search Utilities](#) describes some third-party options.

What's New in Lion

Spotlight and Searching

If you've never plumbed the depths of searching with the Spotlight menu and Finder windows in the previous release of Mac OS X (10.6 Snow Leopard), then skip this section and jump to [Understand and Access Spotlight](#). However, if you're familiar with Snow Leopard's search options, you'll notice that Lion's changes to Spotlight are evolutionary, not revolutionary, and some are just by-products of general Lion changes to Finder windows:

- Changes to the Spotlight  menu are the most obvious. Commands have been added (Search Web, Search Wikipedia), reworded, and moved, but these are all mere cosmetic changes.

The best change of all: point to something in the menu and you get a Quick Look popover that displays the item in all its glory—and by “glory” I mean you can slide through the pages of a multi-page document or play a music file without even moving to the Finder (see [Quick Look in the Spotlight Menu](#)).


In addition, you can drag a listed item out of the menu to make a copy of it wherever you drop it—in the Finder or a compatible document window.

- The most obvious change to Search windows in the Finder is the way the search field works (see [Use the Search Field](#)), providing a drop-down menu so you can narrow a search from the default “Everything” to just filenames, or dates, or kinds, or whatever else the menu offers based on what you've typed.

Then there's the trickle-down effect of the new Arrange By option for windows, which lets you group things in a window (documents, images, and so on) while sorting them however you like within those groups (by name or date modified, for instance).

In the Little Things Mean a Lot category, you can now sort a found list of items by size, a helpful feature years in the making. There's also a new Date Added column, and the new capability of displaying search results in a Column view window.

Understand and Access Spotlight


If Spotlight is not just the magnifying glass  at the right of the menu bar, just what is it, and what does it do? And how do you get to it *besides* that magnifying glass?

What Is Spotlight?

Spotlight is the Mac’s “search engine,” the way Google is a search engine for the Web. It’s what kicks in when you ask the Mac to find something (just in case you can’t keep track of your thousands of documents in your head). It looks for, and inside, files—and that doesn’t mean just documents: a “file” is a discrete item on your Mac, so that includes applications, background files that applications create as you work, many system components, and more. Spotlight can even search through *metadata*: information about a file that you probably don’t realize is either recorded or searchable, such as the names of layers in a Photoshop document!

Spotlight Access Options

You can initiate Spotlight’s searching capabilities in four basic ways, three of which are always available and a fourth that depends on the application you’re using:

- **Spotlight menu:** The magnifying-glass icon  at the far right of your menu bar is always available no matter what application you’re working in. Click the icon or press Command-Space to open the menu (**Figure 1**) so you can type your search criteria. (Read [Set the Keyboard Shortcuts](#) if this shortcut doesn’t work).

The Spotlight menu, because it presents a limited number of search results, is for a quick shortlist of most-likely hits. It also has special features that aren’t just for searching, as described in [Use Special Spotlight Menu Capabilities](#).



Figure 1: The Spotlight menu is always at the right of the menu bar.

- **Finder windows:** When you want to see a longer list of hits, or use a wider range of search criteria, you work in a Finder window, where you can define all sorts of special searches, such as a document created on a specific date, or of a specific kind (PDF, music, and so on). A Finder window also lets you use multiple criteria to either widen or narrow the scope of your search. (You can even both widen *and* narrow it: widen it to include both “gray” and “grey,” for instance, while narrowing it to include looking through only Word documents.)

The two easiest ways to start a Finder-window search are to either type in the search field of an open window, or press Command-F to open a new Search window. Details on these, and further options, are described in [Open a Search Window](#).

Search or Find: These windows are also sometimes referred to as “Find” windows; “Search window” and “Find window” are interchangeable terms.

- **Contextual menus:** In certain applications (including Safari, Mail, and most other Apple applications), you can Control-click a word—without even selecting it first—and one of the menu choices is Search in Spotlight. Select it, and you’ll be switched to the Finder with an automatic Everything search through your computer. (If your favorite app doesn’t include the command, you can [Add Spotlight to Contextual Menus](#).)
- **Open and Save dialogs:** Search fields are so ubiquitous in Mac windows that it’s easy to overlook the one in Open and Save dialogs. But you can search for a document whose location is a vague memory, or for a specific folder that you wish to save your current document in. See [Use Spotlight in Open and Save Dialogs](#).

Learn about Spotlight Indexing

When you tell Spotlight to look for something, it doesn't scour your disk, searching for your needle in the data haystack. Instead, it looks through an *index* of the disk's contents, the same way you might peruse a book's index to find where specific information is in the book.

But index creation is sometimes a major pain in one or more body parts. Not that you have to *do* anything, since it's an automatic procedure; it's just that it can take a very long time for the initial indexing of a large disk—on the order of hours, often overnight—for a very full, large disk. And when it's an external drive with a connection that's slower than the internal bus your main disk uses, that slows things down even further.

Even if you can't do anything about sometimes slowpoke indexing, it's important that you know what's going on, both generally and while it's happening.

Understand Initial Indexing

Indexing for your startup disk starts when you first install a new operating system or set up a new machine. But it's not only your startup disk that gets indexed: every internal or external volume connected to your Mac is indexed the first time the Mac sees it, unless you tell Spotlight *not* to index it.

You can see if Spotlight is indexing something by looking at the Spotlight menu icon (sometimes you can also tell because your Mac is running sluggishly). There's a dot in the middle of the icon when indexing is in progress; opening the menu gives you a full explanation of what's going on (**Figure 2**). As the menu itself notes during this process, you can use Spotlight (both the menu and in Finder windows) during indexing, but not—yet-indexed items won't be found.

Configure Spotlight Options


To more easily use Spotlight, you should set it up in a way that matches your needs. You can configure three aspects of Spotlight:

- The keyboard shortcuts that open the menu or a Finder window
- The types of items you want ignored in any search operation
- What kinds of items appear in the Spotlight menu results list (as well as the order in which they're listed)

In this chapter, I help you set up each option.

Set the Keyboard Shortcuts

The default keyboard shortcut for opening the Spotlight menu is Command-Space, while Command-Option-Space opens a Search window in the Finder. ([Open a Search Window](#) describes the difference between this “Spotlight window” and a standard Finder Search window.)

To change the shortcuts or activate them if they're not on, you can use either the Spotlight preference pane or the Keyboard preference pane. There's a quick way to open the Spotlight preference pane if the Spotlight menu is already open: choose the Spotlight Preferences command at its bottom. Otherwise, open it through Apple  > System Preferences and, working in either of the Spotlight preference pane's screens:

1. Activate the shortcuts with the two checkboxes at the bottom of the of the pane (**Figure 3**).

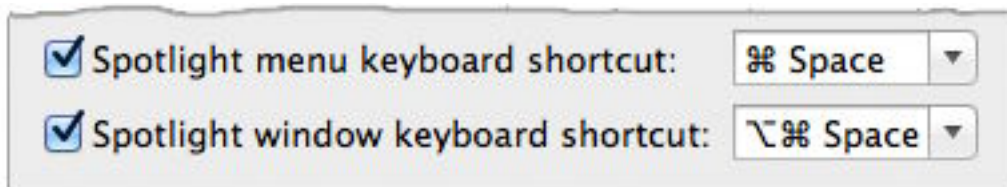


Figure 3: The keyboard shortcut settings in the Spotlight preference pane.

Learn Search Basics

You probably already know enough of the *basic* basics because if you've had your Mac for more than a few weeks, you've had to look for some file or another already. But sometimes the basics include unfamiliar terminology and the fine points, such as what makes a word a word in Spotlight's estimation.

You can continue to ignore the basics and get along fine. Or, you can learn them and get along much better.

Learn the Lingo

There's not a lot of jargon when it comes to searching for things on your Mac, but knowing the terms that *are* used makes everything else more understandable:

- **Search field:** This is the area where you type what you're looking for. The one in the Spotlight menu is often referred to as the Spotlight search field, or the Spotlight field, even though the search field in a Finder window is also Spotlight-driven (**Figure 5**).



Figure 5: Left: An empty but activated (by a click) search field. Right: With text entered, the field gets a Cancel button so you can quickly erase the entry and cancel the search.

- **Search text, search term:** This is simply the words you type in a search field—not special constructs like `kind:folder`, but the words you expect to find as a filename, or in a document or its metadata.
- **Query:** In informal usage, search text can be a query all by itself, but we usually use the term *query* to describe a combination of criteria that will be used in a search: “Any file created in the last 6 months that hasn't been modified in the last 30 days, has ‘report’ in the title, does not include ‘earnings’ in its contents, and was not originally written by George down the hall.” You can build simple or complex queries for Spotlight when you [Define Searches with Criteria Bars](#) or [Type Attribute Keywords in Search Fields](#).


Search from the Spotlight Menu

Searching from the Spotlight menu is easy, but you'll be far more successful if you learn to go beyond the basics. In this chapter, we'll start with the basics and then look at how to: preview your results with Quick Look; jump to a Search window with the Spotlight menu search term intact; cope if Spotlight doesn't find what you think it should; and use Spotlight to get to a specific option in System Preferences even if you aren't sure of which preference pane you need.

Basic Spotlight Menu Searches

A Spotlight menu search is one of those terrific Mac OS X features that is extremely simple in its basics and yet can perform sophisticated feats when you know its details.

To start a search:

1. Open the Spotlight menu with Command-Space (see [Set the Keyboard Shortcuts](#)) or by clicking the Spotlight  icon in the menu bar.
2. Type what you're looking for. Spotlight starts listing hits before you even finish typing (**Figure 9**).

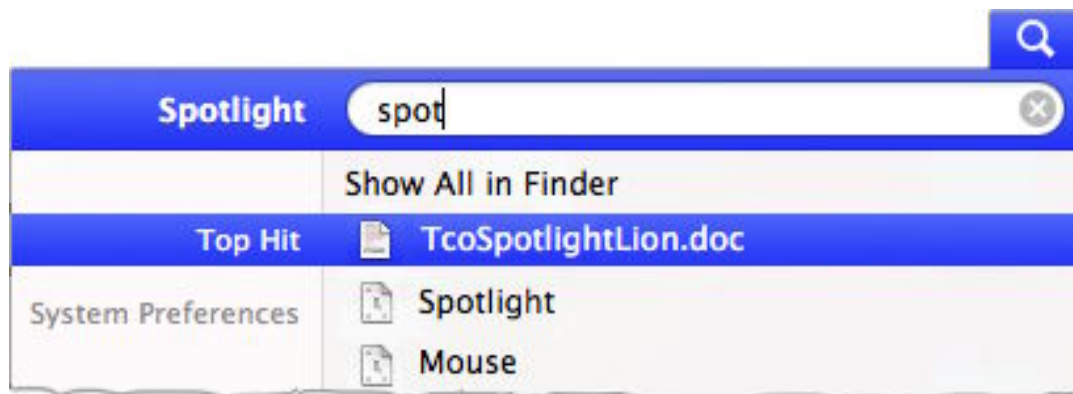


Figure 9: The Top Hit is automatically selected; press Return to open it.

Use Special Spotlight Menu Capabilities

It's a launcher! It's a calculator! It slices and dices! Well, maybe it doesn't slice or dice, but the Spotlight menu is somewhat of a Swiss knife with numerous, sometimes surprising, features.

Launch Applications

There are many different ways to open, or “launch” applications; the Dock is the obvious one for often-used programs, but there's a Spotlight procedure that's extra handy for anyone with reasonable typing skills. Open the Spotlight menu with Command-Space, start typing the name of the program in the search field—just enough to uniquely identify it—and, since the Top Hit is always an application, and always selected, all you have to do is hit Return to launch it. So, to launch Numbers, just type: Command-Space, `nu`, Return (**Figure 18**).

Failure to launch: *If you've unchecked the Applications category in the Search Results screen of Spotlight preferences (see [Organize the Menu Results](#)), an application can't show up as a Top Hit.*

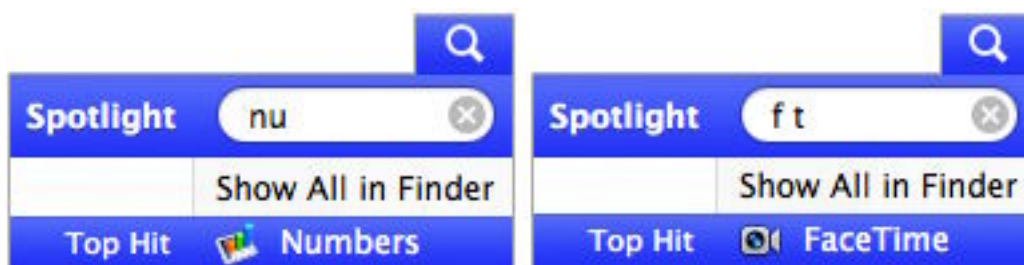


Figure 18: Left, typing just enough to identify the app you want to launch makes it the Top Hit. Right: Because Spotlight sees an “intercap” as the start of a new word, the search term `f t`—which tells Spotlight to look for two words, one starting with each of those letters—finds FaceTime.

Using the various techniques in [Master Text Entry in the Search Field](#), earlier, regarding partial-word searches and what Spotlight thinks is a “word,” you can type quick shortcuts to identify a program you want

Search from Finder Windows

A Search window is a powerful tool. If you've never moved beyond simply typing a few words in a search field, you'll be amazed at the sophisticated possibilities that Search windows provide. Likewise, if you've never moved beyond simply opening items that you've found, learning about the ways you can manipulate found items in a results list will boost your productivity.

Anatomy of a Search Window

Let's take a quick tour of the components of a Search window so you'll know the parts I'm referring to later in this chapter. I describe several ways to open this window later in this chapter, but for now, you can simply choose File > Find (Command-F) to see one. The letters in this list refer to the labels in **Figure 22**:

- a. **Proxy icon and window title:** The icon for a Search window is that of a smart folder (see [Save Searches with Smart Folders](#)), and its title describes the search scope, such as Searching "This Mac" or Searching "Documents".
- b. **Search field:** This is part of regular Finder windows, too. Note that you can do many kinds of searches without putting anything in the search field, as shown in the figure.
- c. **Search bar:** This lets you set the search scope, provides a way to save a search, and allows you to add an initial criteria bar if there is none.
- d. **Criteria bars:** Use these to refine your search ("It's a document, it has the word 'Important' in the title, and it was created within the last 2 months"). Depending on how you start your search, the window may not have an initial criteria bar (see [Open a Search Window](#)).
- e. **Results:** The list of found items can be manipulated in many ways, not merely opened; see [Work with Search Results](#).


Define Searches with Criteria Bars

Finding a document by its name alone—and getting so few results that the one you’re looking for is *right there* as soon as you use the search field—is great, but it’s not necessarily a common occurrence on a drive filled with hundreds of gigabytes of information.

You can, however, add all sorts of search criteria to the basic filename-searching techniques discussed earlier in this book. And, you can search for items based solely on other basic criteria such as file size, document type, or last-opened date, or on much fancier criteria such as the dimensions of a graphic, the composer of a piece of music, or even the exposure time of a photo.

Whether you use such criteria instead of text in the search field, or in addition to it, for refining a search, you must work with one or more criteria bars.

Add or Delete a Criteria Bar

A single criteria bar (see [Anatomy of a Search Window](#)) is sometimes automatically included in a new Search window, depending on how you opened it. If there’s no criteria bar in a Search window, click the Add  button in the Search bar (**Figure 37**). For subsequent criteria bars (see [Refine Searches with Multiple Criteria Bars](#)), click the Add button in the existing criteria bar.

Each criteria bar starts with a default definition. The first is [Kind is Any](#), which uses the first item—Kind—from the *Attribute* menu (the first menu in the criteria bar), along with its first *descriptor* option, Any. Each new criteria bar starts with the next option in the Attribute menu: [Last Opened Date](#), [Last Modified Date](#), [Created Date](#), and so on.

Type Attribute Keywords in Search Fields

Once you've used attributes in a Search window's criteria bar to refine a search, the Spotlight menu feels a little too... well, *unrefined* for targeted searches. But you can use attributes in the Spotlight menu's search field, too, by typing them with *keywords*. You can do the same in the Finder window's search field, too; depending on your typing skills, that can be faster than opening a criteria bar to specify an attribute.

Use Keywords with Attributes

As with so many things on the Mac, using keywords in a search field to define attributes for a search is quite simple, but can turn into a power-user technique once you know how to do it.

To use a keyword, you type the attribute, a colon, and then the keyword, like this: `kind:document` or `kind:folder`, using **no space** on either side of the colon. (I'm going to call this pairing a "keyword description" for the rest of this chapter.) This is the same as working in a criteria bar and choosing something from the Attribute menu and then a descriptor to go with it.

Of course, these two searches are totally useless by themselves because they'd result in *all* documents or *all* folders. However, you can put a search term either before or after the keyword description, separated from the description by a space, to describe a more likely search: `kind:document medical` or `medical kind:document` defines a search for a document with the word *medical* in its name, contents, or metadata.

Wield the Power of Boolean Searches

Who could predict that the ideas developed by someone born 200 years ago would be the basis for digital computing? And now, George Boole’s “logical operators” (he didn’t name them Boolean operators!) can help in the Spotlight menu or a Search window—both what you’re looking for and what you *don’t* want..

You’re familiar with mathematical *operators*, even if you don’t immediately recognize the term: when you use a minus or plus sign, or multiply or divide, you’re using mathematical operators—they operate on the numbers you put on either side of them. *Logical* operators are words—AND, OR, and NOT—that work with text to quickly and easily define what can be a quite sophisticated search.

For the examples in this chapter, we’ll be working with a folder that contains the 13 esoteric scholarly papers shown in **Figure 59**.



Figure 59: The sample folder for the examples in this chapter.

Save Searches with Smart Folders

A *smart folder* isn't really a folder, with the capability of displaying items that are inside it—because there's never anything actually inside a smart folder.

A smart folder is a saved set of search criteria, so it displays a list of items that meet that criteria, continually updating the list as necessary. Want to access all your documents over 500MB in size? All your PDFs? All your OpenType fonts? Pictures taken with your Canon PowerShot within the last 2 weeks that have less than a specified focal length and greater than a specified exposure time? If you can set up a search for it in the Finder, you can make a smart folder for it and revisit the list without reinventing the criteria wheel.

Create a Smart Folder

To create a smart folder:

1. Choose File > New Smart Folder (Command-Option-N).

A new Search window, cleverly titled New Smart Folder, opens.

2. Specify your search criteria.
3. Click the Save button in the Search bar.

After-the-fact smart folder: If you work in a standard Search window and then decide you want to save it as a smart folder, no problem: save the search at any time by clicking the Save button in the Search bar.

4. Name the folder in the dialog that appears (**Figure 77**).
5. To store the folder someplace other than the default Saved Searches folder (on the Desktop, perhaps, where a quick double-click opens it), specify a location.

Use Spotlight in Open and Save Dialogs

There's a search field in every Open and Save dialog, yet another one of my small, entirely unscientific surveys, showed that an overwhelming majority of users hardly notice the ubiquitous element, never mind actually use it! Learn to use it in both the Open and the Save dialogs to save time and frustration.

And, to save space in your Finder window sidebar, you can [Make an Application-Specific Sidebar](#).

It may be obvious why you'd want to search from within an Open dialog: you're looking for a file to open. But you might want to search for a folder: one that holds an item whose name you've forgotten—and you can't remember where the folder is, either; or you want to scan a folder's contents, yet you don't recall where you put the folder.

Conversely, you may think you'd only ever search for *folders* in a Save dialog, so you can save the current document someplace—but what if you don't remember your clever folder name (“ClntIndFls”)? Searching for a file that's also in the folder can save you a trip to the Finder.

Search in an Open or Save Dialog

Open and Save dialogs offer almost everything a Finder window does in the way of search capabilities, including attribute keywords, Boolean operators, and criteria bars (although if you're *really* lost, you might want to switch to the Finder after all). If you've read through all the earlier information about searching in the Finder, you already know what you can do in Open/Save; you just need a little nudging.

Here are some tips for starting a search, and for customizing your dialogs so they work better for you (whether or not you're searching):

- **Activate the search field:** With an Open or Save dialog open, press Command-F or Tab. Subsequent presses of Tab cycles from the search field to the sidebar to the the list, and then back to the search field.

Plan Ahead for Spotlight Searches

There's one obvious thing you can do to make future searches easier and more fruitful: use some consistency when naming your files and folders.

Beyond that, however, you can use built-in features of the Finder and various applications to embed metadata (see [Learn the Lingo](#)) in a file that you can use to search for later. You can also use a tagging utility to tag your files in interesting and useful ways.

Set Spotlight Comments in the Finder

Using Spotlight comments to add identifiers to metadata has two special benefits beyond the advantage of making up your own search terms: you can add them to files you didn't create yourself, and you can apply them to folders.

To add a comment:

1. Select the item in the Finder.
2. Open the file's Info window by choosing File > Get Info (or press Command-I).
3. Type your keywords in the Spotlight Comments field (**Figure 81**).

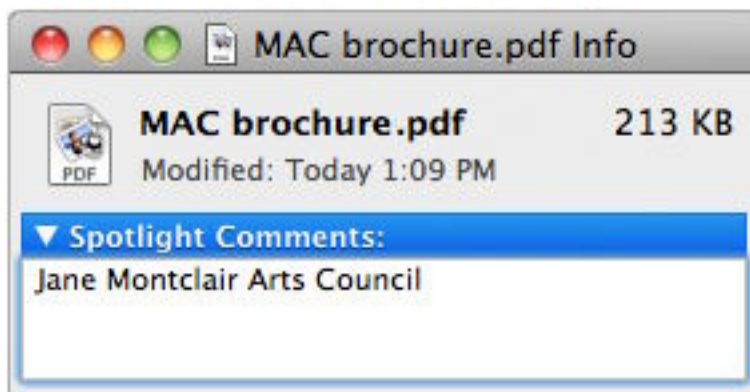


Figure 81: The Spotlight Comments field in an Info window.

Appendix A: Spotlight Keyboard Shortcuts

Ever since Spotlight was introduced in Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger, the default keyboard shortcut for opening its menu has had a built-in conflict with another default keyboard shortcut. Three big cats later, the potential conflict is still there. If you use alternative “input keyboards” to type foreign characters, you’ll run into this problem.

As described in [Set the Keyboard Shortcuts](#), Mac OS X assigns Command-Space and Command-Option-Space to opening the Spotlight menu and opening a Spotlight window.

But Command-Space and Command-Option-Space are also assigned to features that let you choose either the previous or next “input source” (a foreign language keyboard) for your typing. You won’t see an immediate conflict, because the input features are turned off by default, since they’re available only when you have added at least one new input source (or “input keyboard”).

To add an input keyboard, you open System Preferences and go to the Input Sources screen of Language & Text preferences. As shown in **Figure 87**, the screen refers to the Command-Space and Command-Option-Space shortcuts, and starts with a dimmed Keyboard Shortcuts button.

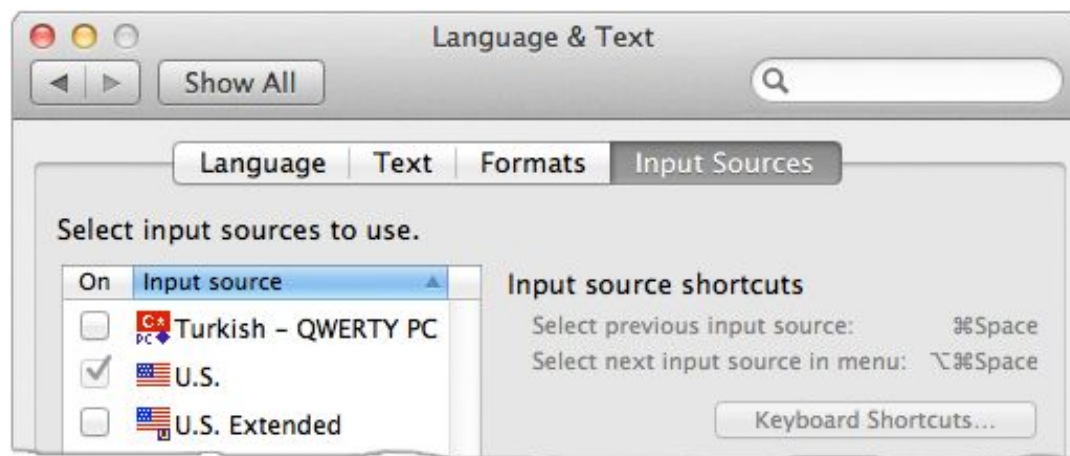


Figure 87: Checking a keyboard in the list will make the Keyboard Shortcuts available.

Appendix B: Third-Party Search Utilities

Spotlight has grown in capability and speed with every Mac OS release since its (rather deplorable) debut in Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger. But it doesn't have everything that everyone needs. In fact, it has a few obvious things missing. (Want to search an attached hard drive as well as a shared volume, anyone? And, by golly, what about wildcard searches so you can type *gr*y* for *gray* or *grey*?).

That's what third-party software is all about. The utilities described here have all been around for awhile and have been well-reviewed in versions made for previous versions of Mac OS X.

Sometimes it's hard to decide, when writing a roundup of software utilities, how to present them. In order of price? Functionality? According to publisher? No such problem here. These utilities range from free to \$150; their features are in line with their prices, and each publisher has carved a particular feature/price niche for itself. Not one, however, is a *substitute* for Spotlight. Depending on the kinds of things you search for, and where, one or more of these packages may be able to provide the Spotlight supplement you need.

EasyFind

On the low end for feature/price is the free EasyFind from DEVONtechnologies. It's an odd mix of easy-to-use basics and do-they-know-the-user's-not-a-programmer features (<http://www.devontechnologies.com/download/>).

EasyFind's best features are its sophisticated wildcard searching and "extended" Boolean operators. Not only can you use a simple asterisk to signify "any character," you can also specify one or more characters in a range ("Find me a file that includes 'Version' followed by a letter A-D"). You can look for words that are *near* each other, and define how near; there are also After, Before, and Next operators. The additional XOR ("exclusive OR") operator that says "either one of these terms, but not both" is another option that adds flexibility to searches.

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About the Author

Sharon Zardetto started out with a Timex-Sinclair membrane-keyboard computer with 2K of memory (that's not a typo) and wrote her first magazine articles and book about programming it. Luckily, the Mac eventually came along and offered, among other things, 64 times that amount of memory. She's been writing about the Mac ever since, racking up nearly 1,000 magazine articles and more than 20 print books before ebooks came along. Her current Mac has 8,388,608K of memory, and sometimes it doesn't seem enough. You can follow her in the Twitterverse: @SharonZardetto.

Author's Acknowledgments

As usual, my thanks to Tonya and Adam as publishers; extra this time for letting me convince them to do this particular title. And to editors

extraordinaire Tonya Engst and Michael E. Cohen, who make corrections and criticisms practically fun. Sympathy, also, to Michael because we had to deal with so many Spotlight bugs and differences between outcomes on our two computers.

Thanks to my husband, Rich Wolfson for taking care of so many, many things on the work and home fronts as a result of my latest hardware upgrade (for my spine, not my computer).

And a shout-out to Richard Healey for asking me about covering Spotlight and tagging software!

About the Publisher



Publishers Adam and Tonya Engst have been creating Apple-related content since they started the online newsletter *TidBITS*, in 1990. In *TidBITS*, you can find the latest Apple news, plus read reviews, opinions, and more (<http://tidbits.com/>). Adam and Tonya are known in the Apple world as writers, editors, and speakers.

Production credits:

- Take Control logo: Jeff Tolbert
- Cover design: Jon Hersh
- Editor: Tonya Engst (with ample assistance from Michael E. Cohen)
- Editor in Chief: Tonya Engst
- Publisher: Adam Engst

Thanks to Pixie the Cat for entertainment!

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Take Control of Spotlight for Finding Anything on Your Mac

ISBN: 978-1-61542-393-4

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TidBITS Publishing Inc.

50 Hickory Road

Ithaca, NY 14850 USA

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/>

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