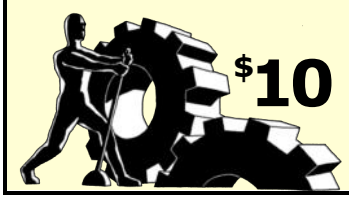
Take Control

of Customizing Leopard

by Matt Neuburg

Table of Contents (1.1)

Read Me First 2
Introduction 5
Customizing Leopard Quick Start 6
Know What's New 8
Install Intelligently 11
Preserve the Past with Time Machine 16
Dominate the Dock, Master the Menu Bar 28
Straighten Out Your System Preferences 33
Handle the Hierarchy 35
Wash Your Windows 72
Control the Keyboard, Master the Mouse 91
Ease Your Eyeballs 105
Fix Your Fonts 113
Tackle Your Text 120
Customize Status Menus 127
Perform Miscellaneous Configurations 130
Find Other Customizations 136
Appendix A: Use AppleScript to Make Every Window Open in List View, No Matter What 137
About This Book 139



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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of Customizing Leopard,* version 1.1, published in March 2008, by TidBITS Publishing Inc.

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 Leopard (Mac OS X 10.5). So, what's new in Leopard? What's all the fuss about? This book shows you, through a hands-on guided tour of the adjustments, tweaks, and customizations you can make in the System and the Finder. This book was written by Matt Neuburg and edited by Tonya Engst.

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Basics

In reading this book, 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, Leopard 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 (top) level of the disk. You will also encounter paths that begin

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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," especially when I speak of "the so-and-so preference pane," I'm referring to the System Preferences application. To start System Preferences, choose System Preferences from the 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.

  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 Terminal to emulate a vt100 or vt102 in its preference window," I'm telling you to start Terminal, and then choose Terminal > Preferences and do something in the window that appears.

- **Panes and views:** Window content in Mac OS X can be dynamic. What's in a window can change depending on what button you press. So there needs to be terminology describing the changeable portion of a window. I call the highest region of changeability in a window (often the entire content of the window) a "pane"; smaller areas within a pane that can change, I call a "view".

  For example, as I just mentioned, when you start System Preferences, you can then click an icon or choose from the View menu to see a particular preference pane, such as Displays or Energy Saver. Those, then, are panes. Similarly, in the Finder preferences window, you can click a toolbar item, such as General or Labels, to change the entire content of the window; so I'll speak of "the General pane" or "the Labels pane."

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Smaller regions whose content changes when you click a button—the sort of area that often used to be called "tabs"—are what I call "views" in this book. So, for example, to see "the Color view of the Displays preference pane," you would launch System Preferences and then click the Displays icon to switch to the Displays pane, and then click Color to see the Color view within the Displays pane.

What's New in This Version

Version 1.1 of *Take Control of Customizing Leopard* contains a number of changes from the original 1.0 release. Some of these changes are responses to Apple's release of the 10.5.2 update to Leopard, a major update which fixed many bugs and responded to user feedback, considerably altering certain aspects of the Leopard landscape. Other changes reflect discoveries subsequent to the 1.0 release, as well as the occasional accidental omission. The most significant differences are these:

- The 10.5.2 Leopard update introduced a preference for toggling menu bar transparency, and provided alternative Dock stack behavior. Both are now covered in the renamed and expanded section, Dominate the Dock, Master the Menu Bar (p. 28).

  The same section now also describes how to eliminate the Dock's "reflective shelf" look when positioned at the bottom of the screen.

- The 10.5.2 Leopard update introduced a status menu for Time Machine. To take account of this status menu, changes were made to the Preserve the Past with Time Machine (p. 16) section, as well as to Dominate the Dock, Master the Menu Bar (p. 28), and, of course, Customize Status Menus (p. 127).

- Some new pearls of wisdom were added to Preserve the Past with Time Machine (p. 16) and to Set Up Spaces (p. 78).

- A note (top of p. 73) was added to Set Up Exposé, because certain details might work differently if you have an Aluminum keyboard.

- A new subsection, Block Automatic Updates (p. 134), was added to Perform Miscellaneous Configurations.

Take Note! *This version (1.1) of this book assumes you are using Leopard 10.5.2 or later.*

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Introduction

Perhaps on the evening of October 26, 2007, you stood in line to obtain one of the first copies of Mac OS X version 10.5 Leopard 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 Leopard.

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 gaped at its new, improved startup speed—even faster than Tiger, and with no "thermometer" dialog! You gasped with amazement at the transparent menu bar! You shivered at the icy look of the shiny, new, reflective Dock! You squealed with delight as you tried the new Search field in Safari! You gawked as you read a TextEdit document directly from the Finder, without opening TextEdit, using Quick Look! You drooled as you played with the Finder's new Cover Flow view!

Now it's the second day. You're finished playing (and tired of all those exclamation marks), and you want to get back 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 needs customization, so that things will go smoothly henceforward?

This book covers these second-day-of-Leopard sorts of things. It introduces you to Leopard by showing 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 Tiger or switched from Windows, whether you're new to Leopard or you just want to understand it better, this book is your guide to what you can and should customize in Leopard to get the most out of it. I'm not writing for Unix experts, so I don't talk about clever technical hacks; the customizations pointed out here are those that Leopard wants and expects you to perform directly in its normal interface. I do, however, point out areas where Leopard might need a little help from third-party utilities in order for you to work most comfortably and efficiently.

Now let's meet Leopard and make it change its spots!

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Customizing Leopard Quick Start

This book describes many customizations, not all of which you need to 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 book from start to finish, but I also understand that you're eager to get working with Leopard and that you live a busy life, and that 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. Right away, perform the customizations that will immediately improve your Desktop and interface experience.
2. Learn about the major new technologies and customizations in Leopard, 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 how I suggest you customize and learn about Leopard with the help of this book:

Do these things right away:

- If you were already using Tiger and would like to prepare yourself to change your work habits to fit the new Leopard environment, read Know What's New (p. 8).
- Check that you installed Leopard correctly, in accordance with what you want it to do for you; read Install Intelligently (p. 11).
- Set up your overall workspace; read Dominate the Dock, Master the Menu Bar (p. 28) and Straighten Out Your System Preferences (p. 33).
- Customize your Finder windows so you can navigate easily to important areas of your disks; read Handle the Hierarchy (p. 35) (and possibly Appendix A: Use AppleScript to Make Every Window Open in List View, No Matter What, p. 137).

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- Make the pointer—Apple calls it the cursor in this context—easier to see, the screen easier to read, and generally clear the decks so you have a good view of what you're doing; read Ease Your Eyeballs (p. 105).

Learn more about Leopard:

- Make your computer safer and studlier, thanks to Time Machine, a new Leopard feature that makes backups easy as pie; read Preserve the Past with Time Machine (p. 16).
- Discover Spaces, a new Leopard feature for helping you deal with window overload. Also, explore and configure Exposé and Dashboard. Read Wash Your Windows (p. 72).
- Simplify your font access and make Leopard run leaner and meaner; read Fix Your Fonts (p. 113).
- Know about Unicode and how to type special characters and symbols in Mac OS X; read Tackle Your Text (p. 120).

Do these things as needed and when time permits:

- Tweak keyboard shortcuts and keyboard behavior to match your needs and habits; read Control the Keyboard, Master the Mouse (p. 91).
- Make effective use of the icons at the right end of your menu bar; read Customize Status Menus (p. 127).
- Make various additional small customizations; read Perform Miscellaneous Configurations (p. 130).
- Be ready to continue exploring customizations; read Find Other Customizations (p. 136).

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Know What's New

If you're familiar with Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger, Leopard presents interesting changes that you may want to take account of as you adjust your work habits to fit the new environment. Not all of these involve customization, so they don't fit into the overall theme of this book. But in order for you, a habituated Tiger user, to work with Leopard effectively, you may have to customize yourself! Here are some of the biggest Leopard changes that may demand a change in your mental orientation (with reference, where appropriate, to later sections of this book):

- The menu bar, the Dock, and windows in general all have a new look. This is largely cosmetic, but it might affect your work habits. For example, the menu bar is now optionally transparent, so Desktop pictures behind it can make it difficult to read. The Dock's new look is bold and shiny, which I find distracting; the way an application's icon in the Dock is marked to indicate that the application is running is much less discernable than in the past; and a folder in the Dock, now called a *stack*, has a new behavior that I find objectionable. To me, and perhaps to you also, using Leopard absolutely requires learning about these changes and customizing your Mac so that you can best deal with them (see Dominate the Dock, Master the Menu Bar, p. 28).

- Downloads are no longer directed by default to the Desktop; instead, they go to a new Downloads folder in your Home directory. This will help keep the Desktop clutter-free, which is a good thing (see Set Up the Desktop, p. 47).

- A pervasive feature of Leopard, mostly in the Finder but with implications for elsewhere, is Quick Look, which displays a large full-length preview of a file's contents without actually opening the document in its associated program. To display the Quick Look view of an item or multiple items selected in the Finder, press Space or Command-Y (or click the button in the Finder window's toolbar).

  Experiment with Quick Look, as it may have value for exploring files you are thinking of opening, for playing sound files, and for displaying pictures; Quick Look replaces the Tiger "Slideshow" feature of the Finder (see Quick Look, p. 42).

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INSTALL INTELLIGENTLY

If you've already installed Leopard, it may seem too late to speak of customizing the installation. Nevertheless, customization of Leopard does begin with installation. When you originally run the installer, you pass through a series of several screens leading to the actual installation:

1. The language screen
2. The Welcome screen
3. The License Agreement screen
4. The Select a Destination screen
5. The Install Summary screen

The last two screens, Select a Destination and Install Summary, are places where you can perform important customizations.

DON'T PANIC You don't have to reinstall if you missed performing customizations in Select a Destination and Install Summary. You can if you want to, though; it isn't difficult, and nothing will be lost (unless you choose Erase and Install). In any case, regardless of how you installed, you probably have a working installation of Leopard, and that's the important thing. If you omitted installing a system component listed in the Install Summary screen, such as the drivers for a new printer, you can install it later by double-clicking the file `Optional Installs.mpkg`; it's inside the `Optional Installs` folder.

Select a Destination

The Select a Destination screen contains an Options button. Click it to determine whether this installation will be an Erase and Install, an Archive and Install, or a simple Install (or this third option might be called Upgrade Mac OS X).

Erase and Install does precisely what it says: it erases everything on the volume it installs to, so that afterwards the only thing on that volume is the newly installed clean Leopard system (including the single admin user that you create when the computer restarts after

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Preserve the Past with Time Machine

Leopard includes, for the first time in the history of the Macintosh, a built-in method of backing up your computer's data and restoring past versions of your files with ease and transparency. This is the appropriately named Time Machine, a simple device for making sure you can recover the past when you need to.

Time Machine requires that you have a spare volume to back up to. This can be a partition on (or the whole of) either a secondary internal hard disk or an external disk. *You cannot use Time Machine to back up the volume that is receiving your backups.* So plan accordingly.

Note Take Control of Time Machine

When you first install Leopard, once the computer restarts and you are booted from the newly installed system, you may see a dialog asking you whether to enable Time Machine automatically.

I recommend that you decline this offer; rather than letting Time Machine decide on its own settings and start working, you should customize and configure Time Machine manually as described here.

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Dominate the Dock, Master the Menu Bar

The Dock and the menu bar are effectively always present, overlaying your entire experience of Leopard. Adjusting them to your taste is therefore crucial.

The Dock

The Dock is one of the most controversial elements of the Mac OS X interface. Some users feel they couldn't manage without it; others find it poorly implemented and misconceived. In Leopard, furthermore, the Dock has a new look: when it is located at the bottom of the screen, it is "painted" as a highly reflective "shelf," and its icons sit higher on that shelf than they sat on the Dock background of earlier Mac OS X systems. The Dock is thus more noticeable (some might say "distracting") and occupies more room than it previously did.

Nothing is so annoying as using a computer whose Dock is in your way, or in some other sense isn't how you want it. You can customize the Dock's position, size, and behavior to some extent, and you can't comfortably get any other work done until you do; so it makes sense to take a moment, early on, to set up the Dock according to your tastes (which is why this section appears so early in this book).

Customize the contents

Apple front-loads the Dock with icons for some commonly used applications, but you can change Apple's defaults.

- To *remove an icon*, drag it out of the Dock, or choose Remove from Dock from that icon's Dock menu (Control-click, or right-click, a Dock icon, or hold the mouse down on the icon for a while, to access its menu).

  If, like me, you're going to use a third-party launcher, you might like the Dock to consist of nothing but running applications; thus, one of my first moves after installing Mac OS X is to remove *all* application icons from the Dock, using the Dock solely as a way to access applications that are already running.

  But I recommend that you leave the Spaces icon in place for now, until you've decided on a means for activating Spaces (as I discuss later, under Set Up Spaces).

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Straighten Out Your System Preferences

The vast majority of Leopard customizations are performed through the System Preferences application. Therefore, one of the first things to customize after you've installed and started up Leopard for the first time is System Preferences itself.

The default arrangement of preference pane icons in System Preferences' window is by category (Personal, Hardware, Internet & Network, and System). Perhaps this arrangement is to your taste, but it certainly isn't to mine, because I can never find anything! I like to see these icons in straightforward alphabetical order, by the name of the preference pane. To obtain that arrangement (**Figure 6**), start up System Preferences and choose View > Organize Alphabetically.

Figure 6

System Preferences, in the possibly more convenient alphabetical arrangement.

Incidentally, another way to navigate to a desired System Preferences pane is through the View menu, which also lists the panes in alphabetical order. Plus, when System Preferences is running, the same menu appears when you click and hold on its Dock icon.

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Handle the Hierarchy

Your hard disk is full of things, such as applications you want to use, or documents you want to read or edit. They live somewhere on your hard disk—but where? To get anything done at all, you must be able to *locate your files*. The better you understand how to locate files, and the more you customize that process to suit your own preferences and needs, the more comfortable and productive you'll be.

There are two main ways of locating files on your computer, which you can think of as polar opposites of one another:

- **The folder hierarchy:** Every file is in a folder, every folder is in a folder, and so on, 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 downward: starting at some high level, such a volume or your Home folder, you enter a folder, then a folder within that, and so forth, until you reach whatever you're after.
- **Jumping:** Navigating the folder hierarchy can be pretty tedious, and besides, the hierarchy itself is a pretty terrible mode of organization; it's organized like a filing cabinet, but your mind isn't, and to locate something this way, you must know beforehand the entire sequence of folders containing it, which is not always the case. You need ways to slice through the hierarchy and reach your stuff, no matter where it is. You want to jump directly to the file or folder you have in mind—so let's call this way of locating things *jumping*.

You can customize your Leopard environment—in particular, the Finder and Spotlight, as well as your Open and Save dialogs—so that you can *both* navigate the hierarchy *and* jump directly to your stuff, comfortably and easily. In this section, I explain how.

Set Up the Default Finder Window

Your first concern is to customize the size, position, and style of your Finder windows—in particular, your *default Finder window*. This is the window that you summon in the Finder by choosing File > New Finder Window (Command-N).

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Wash Your Windows

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. This is particularly a problem on an operating system like Mac OS X, where the windows of different applications can become intermingled with one another. Finding the window you want can be like searching, amid the distracting red herrings, for the Purloined Letter: you might not be able to see it even if it's in plain sight.

To ease the window traffic on your monitor, Apple has provided various devices for helping you see the windows you want to see. In 2003, in Panther, Apple introduced Exposé as a way of letting you switch quickly among all your open windows (or get them all out of the way so you can see your Desktop). Now Leopard introduces Spaces, a true *virtual desktops* implementation that lets you switch between entire sets of windows at once. Your task is to decide whether you went to use either or both of these, and to customize them with triggers so that you'll use them readily.

Also in this category we will consider Dashboard, which qualifies as a form of window management because it presents certain miniature applications 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.

Set Up 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 start with (and which you might want to customize) are the Leopard defaults.

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Control the Keyboard, Master the Mouse

Advanced as it is, Leopard can't read your mind. So, with the possible exception of some valiant pioneers who are making use of speech recognition or other innovations, the main way to get anything done on your Mac is still by pressing keys and manipulating the mouse. Therefore you owe it to yourself to give a little thought to what the keyboard and the mouse do. You can make a number of customizations regarding how the computer responds to your keypresses and mouse clicks. Individually, each of these customizations may seem small, but considering how much time you'll spend mousing and typing, they can add up to the difference between annoyance (or even wrist pain) and nimbleness.

Modify Your Modifiers

The modifier keys are Shift, Control, Option, Command, and Caps Lock. Some users don't like the placement of these keys; perhaps they are accustomed to a different layout. Leopard lets you change their placement (except for that of the Shift key, which is always the Shift key). To make such a change, go to the Keyboard view of the Keyboard & Mouse preference pane, and click the Modifier Keys button.

This might seem rather an arcane setting; but it can be practical. Consider, for example, the Caps Lock key. It's an anachronistic holdover from the typewriter era. Doesn't it drive you crazy? Don't you sometimes accidentally turn on Caps Lock, and then your passwords don't work or you're suddenly typing capital letters by mistake? Don't you just wish you could rip it off the keyboard?

Well, you can: In the Caps Lock Key pop-up menu, choose No Action. Presto, the Caps Lock key is completely disabled. Alternatively, you can re-map the Caps Lock key so that it acts as some other modifier key; you might, for example, make it into an extra Control key.

You can use this feature to swap modifier key functionality in other ways. (You can even rearrange modifier key functionality differently for different keyboards, if you have multiple keyboards.) But make sure you don't leave yourself with no way to access important modifiers. For example, without the Option and Command modifiers, you can't type certain characters or press most keyboard shortcuts.

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Ease Your Eyeballs

A common complaint about using computers is an inability to see comfortably. You sit at the computer for long stretches of time; you read text on the screen; you peer at minute details. You deserve as pleasant a viewing experience as you can possibly get. Leopard gives you many ways to improve the way your monitor portrays the computer's world.

Calibrate Your Screen

When you first install Leopard, the default screen calibration may give your screen a pale, washed-out appearance, making icons difficult to distinguish and text difficult to read.

If you don't like, or have doubts about, the way your screen looks, go to the Color view of the Displays system preference pane and pick a different display profile, if there is one. If that doesn't help, you can calibrate the display manually. Follow these steps:

1. Wait until a time of day, and be in a location and under lighting conditions, where you commonly use your computer. Your perception of the screen is greatly affected by the incident and ambient light. Position yourself where the screen is at its best viewing angle. Many screens give false colors or reduced visibility if seen from too high or low or from one side.

2. In the Display view of the Displays preference pane (or using whatever physical control is supplied by your monitor), set the screen's brightness to maximum. In the Seeing view of the Universal Access preference pane, set the contrast to normal (and if your monitor has a physical Contrast control, set it to maximum).

3. It may be useful to have open some windows in the background that can serve as a reference point. I like to open TextEdit, because the background of an empty window works as a standard white point reference. Also, in Text Edit, I like to summon the Open dialog and display it in List view, because the blue and white stripes are quite indicative of how things are going (using the default calibration, I can't see them at all, which shows just how poor it is).

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Fix Your Fonts

Font management has always been a problem on the Mac, and fonts remain an extraordinarily rocky area of Mac OS X. Once you have more than a few fonts, the mere act of choosing a font in an application becomes a trial, because the list of available fonts is so long. Font versioning, especially when different fonts have the same name, is a troublesome business. And a surprisingly high percentage of crashes and other strange phenomena experienced by Mac OS X users are due to font problems, such as conflicts between fonts, or fonts that are in some way badly structured.

It doesn't help matters that, on Mac OS X, a wide variety of font types are acceptable. In addition to the old-style TrueType font suitcases, 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).

At the same time, 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 (see Tackle Your Text, later), and characters in those fonts can show up as blanks or boxes. And some fonts appear to be just plain buggy, or use features that Mac OS X doesn't support.

Then there's the fact that even knowing what fonts are installed is no easy matter, because, unlike earlier systems with just one Fonts folder, in Mac OS X fonts are automatically loaded if they are in any of (at least) three places:

- **`/System/Library/Fonts`**
- **`/Library/Fonts`**
- **`~/Library/Fonts`**

In short, fonts are a quagmire. Even worse, Apple provides insufficient end-user tools for dealing with them. For instance, there are still font suitcases, but Mac OS X gives you no way to open them, to modify them, or even to inspect which fonts are inside them.

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Tackle Your Text

Once upon a time (and not so long ago), fonts and text characters were intimately connected; but now they are almost independent of one another. To see what I mean, consider "special characters," by which I mean just about any character that an English-speaking user can't type just by pressing a key under normal circumstances.

Suppose, for example, you want to type a Greek character. Time was, you used to do that by switching *fonts*. For example, to type a Greek "alpha," you might have switched to the Symbol font, or some specialized Greek font, and typed the A key.

In Mac OS X, that doesn't work. If typing the A key gives you an "a" in one font, it gives you an "a" in every font. So how *do* you access special characters in Mac OS X? You do it by switching *keyboard layouts* (and input methods).

Keyboard layouts remap the keyboard, and they remap it regardless of what font you're using. If you remap the keyboard and then use that remapping to enter a Greek "alpha" in whatever way the remapping makes this possible, an "alpha" will be entered, regardless of what font you're using. (In fact, an "alpha" will be entered even if the font you're using doesn't contain the "alpha" glyph! The rule is that provided *some* font contains the character, you can enter it; the system will automatically find the character in a font that contains it, even if that isn't the font you're using.)

You change keyboard layouts with the Input menu. The Input menu is thus the primary locus for dealing with special characters; if you want to type any interesting characters, you need to know about the Input menu. That's a customization: you have to make the Input menu appear, and you have to populate it with the keyboard layouts and input methods that you need. That's what we'll do now.

Use the Input Menu

Here's how to enable and configure the Input menu:

1. Open the International preference pane, and switch to the Input Menu view.

2. At the bottom of the Input Menu view, check "Show input menu in menu bar."

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Customize Status Menus

Status menus (also called status items, status icons, menu extras, or 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*.) 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. In any case, controlling which status menus appear is a customization you can and should perform.

Unfortunately, the tools for status menu management are scattered all over your computer. This section will try to help you find most of them, but finding all of them would be an impossible task.

How do status menus come into being? There are two ways:

- Some status menus are present by virtue of being enabled in a System Preferences pane through a checkbox that you can check or uncheck.
- Some status menus are put there by some application, either through its preferences or because the application happens to be running.

In the system status bar shown above, the first two status menus (starting from the left) come from third-party utilities—respectively, the preference pane PTHPasteboard and the application FastScripts. Then come status menus placed by various built-in System Preference panes—Universal Access, Spaces, Network (AirPort), Sound, International (Input menu), Energy Saver, Date & Time, and Accounts (Fast User Switching). At the far right is the magnifying glass for the Spotlight menu, which isn't really a status menu.

Because status menus can come into being in various ways, there is no single way to remove them all. What you'd like to do, if you want to get rid of a status menu, is to reverse whatever it was that brought the status menu into being in the first place. But it is often far from obvious what that was.

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Perform Miscellaneous Configurations

This section points out some miscellaneous customizations that you should not neglect in your eagerness to get on with using Leopard. These customizations are not less important than those that have preceded; I've collected them here because they couldn't be categorized into an earlier section.

Set Up Login Items

Your *login items* are applications that launch automatically when you log in to your user account. These are typically applications that you like to be always active; because of Mac OS X's virtual memory model and non-polling event loop architecture, there is usually no penalty for having numerous applications running, except that when you start up your Mac, you must wait for them to all launch before you can get much done.

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 view.
3. Locate a desired application in the Finder and drag it from the Finder into the Login Items list. Or, click the button and navigate to the application in the Open dialog.

Tip You can make any application in the Dock a login item, without using the Accounts preference pane. To do so, Control-click the application's Dock icon and choose Open at Login from the pop-up menu.

Limit User Powers

If you're the administrator of a Mac with multiple users, and you want to restrict the abilities of certain users beyond what permissions alone can achieve, you're in luck: new in Leopard is the Parental Controls preference pane. This feature has come a long way from the simple-minded, inflexible "No Limits/Some Limits/Simple Finder" of earlier

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Find Other Customizations

On the one hand, a systematic discussion of every pane of System Preferences, and every option in every application'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—a final word of advice.

Here it is:

Final Advice

This book has pointed out Leopard customizations that are particularly important or difficult to find, but many other customizations remain, and you should still search out those other customizations and tweak Leopard so that it's the way you like it. For example, this book hasn't talked about setting your computer's sound volume, or specifying its Beep sound.

So take some time, after the excitement of meeting Leopard has subsided, to march through every view of every pane of System Preferences. Look at your options, and make sure things are set up the way you like them.

Similarly, as you start up an application, take a moment to examine its preferences and see what customizations are available to you. For example, in Safari, do you like tabbed browsing? When you click a link to open a page in a new tab, do you want holding the Shift key to mean "open the page in the background" or "open the page and switch to that tab right now"? This book hasn't talked about how you set up Safari's preferences. But those are still things you should do.

Finally, if you think a particularly important customization has been omitted from this book, email us and let us know. Maybe we'll include it in a future update. Many of our ideas about what customizations our readers find significant have come from our readers themselves.

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Appendix A: Use AppleScript to Make Every Window Open in List View, No Matter What

There are some disappointing limits on 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.

For example, suppose in the Finder, with no windows open, you choose Go > Utilities. This move doesn't involve a default Finder window, so all bets are off as to what view this window will use. Of course, you can now change the Utilities folder window to List view if that's what you prefer. But you've fixed the problem for only one window; the next time you open a folder in a separate window, the problem recurs.

Here's the upshot: 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. This is why Apple has provided a scripting language that can make applications perform repetitive or tedious actions automatically—AppleScript. With AppleScript, you can write a program, called a *script*, and execute it. The script can tell an application—in this case, the Finder—to do the same kinds of thing you would normally make it do by manipulating the mouse and keyboard. The difference is that you *don't* use the mouse and keyboard; you don't do anything! The script is faster and more accurate than you would be, operating manually, and the computer doesn't get bored or tired at doing the same thing over and over (or at least, if it does, it doesn't complain).

So here's a script that does automatically the very same thing you'd have to do manually in order to set all your folder windows to List view. It starts with a folder, and looks at all the folders inside that folder. It opens each of those folders and sets its window to List view,

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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.

Matt is also a consultant, documentation writer, and programmer; his popular freeware utilities include MemoryStick and NotLight. He has written three books for O'Reilly Media: *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. You can find Matt's home page at http://www.tidbits.com/matt/.

Author's Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to sun and sand, which provided rest and relaxation at just the right moment.

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 a computer. Lengthy operations can be reduced to a single step, and applications

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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* (second edition), from O'Reilly Media (http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/applescpttdg2/).

About the Publisher

Publishers Adam and Tonya Engst have been creating Mac-related content since they started the online newsletter *TidBITS*, in 1990. In *TidBITS*, you can find the latest Macintosh news, plus read reviews, opinions, and more (http://www.tidbits.com/).

Adam and Tonya are known in the Mac world as writers, editors, and speakers. They are also parents to Tristan, who thinks ebooks about clipper ships and castles would be cool.

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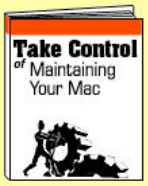

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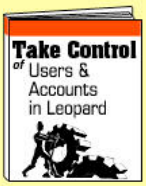

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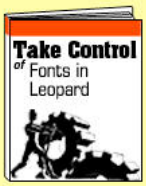

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