



# Take Control *of* Customizing Panther

by **Matt Neuburg**

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## Take Control of Customizing Panther

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## Version 1.1 Changes

Version 1.0 of this ebook appeared one day after Panther itself went public. The book was thus very timely, but the rush to publication limited the depth of coverage that it could provide. Since then, lots of folks (including myself) have had a chance to dive deeper into Panther and gain more wisdom about the ways in which you can and should customize Panther. This version 1.1 update of *Take Control of Customizing Panther* draws upon that increased wisdom to help you better direct your customization efforts. Here are the major changes:

- Updated and improved the [Reading and Printing Tips](#) section.
- Enhanced suggestions for how to [customize Finder windows](#).
- Occasional changes in the [Customize Exposé](#) section.
- Modified the [discussion of using Font Book](#) to customize font menus to provide more depth and a more task-focused approach.
- New sections about [third-party utilities](#), [display profiles](#), [Internet helper applications](#), [the Classic menu](#), [Services](#), [Safari](#), and [Terminal](#).
- Occasional changes in the sections about the [Keyboard Viewer](#) and about [setting custom keyboard shortcuts](#).
- A new final section, written by Tonya Engst, lists customizations you can make in [System Preferences and Finder Preferences](#).

**Note** If you printed the 1.0 edition of this ebook and now want to reprint only significantly changed pages, we suggest you reprint the entire book, omitting pages 7–9 (but note new info about Epson printer drivers on [page 8](#)) and omitting page 50 to the end.

**Future Updates** TidBITS Electronic Publishing may publish minor updates to this ebook to account for errata, software updates, new information, or other reasons. Such updates will be offered at no extra charge; notification will go to the email address you gave at the time of purchase.

## Reading and Printing Tips

We designed this ebook to be read online or printed. Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of your reading experience.

### **Online reading tips:**

(We're still learning the tricks for Panther's Preview application, so these are for Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Reader):

- In Adobe Acrobat 5, the Take Control default settings on the View menu are Fit in Window and Continuous. For most people with larger monitors, those should be fine. To focus only on reading, in Acrobat 5, choose View > Full Screen, or in Acrobat 6, choose Window > Full Screen View. (Press Esc to leave full screen mode.)
- Increase the size of the text by clicking the window's Zoom button to make the window as wide as possible, then choose View > Fit Width.
- To scroll using keyboard shortcuts, you must click in the main text area before they will work. The Page Up and Page Down keys may be the easiest (and they scroll by screen when you view less than a full page). The Left and Right arrow keys scroll to the previous and next page starts.
- Blue text indicates links. You can click any item in the Table of Contents to jump to that section. Cross-references are also links, as are URLs and email addresses.
- Work with the Bookmarks tab showing so you can always see and jump to any main topic by clicking the associated bookmark.

### **Printing tips:**

- In the unlikely even that Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader cannot successfully print this PDF, try Apple's Preview utility; several readers have solved printing problems by trying Preview.
- When printing, if you prefer a tighter layout that uses fewer pages, check your printer options for a 2-up feature that places two ebook pages on one printed page. For instance, your Print dialog may have an unlabeled pop-up menu that offers Layout as a choice. After you choose Layout, choose 2 from the Pages per Sheet pop-up menu.

## Introduction

Perhaps on the evening of Friday, October 24, 2003, you stood in line to obtain one of the first copies of Mac OS X version 10.3 Panther at your local computer store. Or perhaps you were more cautious and waited until you felt the inevitable initial kinks had been straightened out. One way or another, you wound up with a copy of Panther. You stayed up late installing it on your computer; then you fell asleep exhausted. You woke up the next morning excited as a child on Christmas. You rushed to the computer and gasped with delight at the interesting Desktop icons, the weird Finder windows, the slick Exposé animations, and the super-fast Help Viewer. You squealed with amazement when you saw what Command-Tab did.

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-Panther sorts of things. In particular, it details ways you can customize your computer that were impossible in previous versions of Mac OS X, and that might not be obvious from a casual inspection.

Some customizations, of course, *are* fairly obvious to the experienced user, especially if you examine the panes of System Preferences (panes which, you'll discover, have been renamed, rearranged, and recombined in some rather startling ways). As you would expect, you can choose a system beep sound, a Desktop background, a favorite screensaver, a highlight color, and all the other simple furniture that makes computer life feel more cozy and familiar and pleasing. This book doesn't delve into those deeply, but do consult [Set Finder and System Preferences](#) for an extensive list of common customizations.

This is not a book intended to satisfy the Unix mavens. I don't talk about magic incantations you can perform in the Terminal or tricks that require editing arcane config files. So, for instance, I don't tell you how to move your swapfiles to a different partition; that involves Unix wizardry, and the way you do it hasn't changed from earlier systems. This ebook is about straightforward customizations that Panther allows and expects you to perform.

## Customizing Panther Quick Start

This ebook mentions many customizations, not all of which you need employ. To use this ebook effectively, I suggest you use a systematic approach that differentiates between things you must customize before you can work comfortably in Panther at all and things you can customize later. Here is an overview of how I recommend you customize your Panther installation:

### **Do these things right away:**

- Check that you customized your installation correctly for what you want Panther to do for you; see [Customize Your Installation](#).
- Customize your Finder windows so you can navigate easily in the Finder and in Open and Save dialogs to important areas of your hard disk; see [Customize Finder Windows](#).
- Learn and configure Exposé, a new and exciting way to deal with window overload; see [Customize Exposé](#).
- Customize which fonts appear in Font menus and Font palettes; see [Customize the Font Palette and Menu](#).
- Update third-party utilities (such as DragThing or Default Folder X) that you can't live without. Also, use TinkerTool to set up double-headed scroll arrows. See [Restore \(or Install\) Third-Party Utilities](#).

### **Do these things as time permits or when the need arises:**

- Set up your display profile; see [Configure Your Display Profile](#).
- Configure your Internet helper applications so you can easily open Web links in email, email links from your Web browser, and so on; see [Set Up Internet Helper Applications](#).
- If you use Classic (that is, Mac OS 9 from within Mac OS X), turn on and customize your Classic menu; see [Set Up the Classic Menu](#).
- Make the new Keyboard Viewer available from your menu bar; see [Enable Keyboard Viewer](#).
- Create custom keyboard shortcuts for global actions like taking screenshots and program-specific menu items; see [Customize Keyboard Shortcuts](#).
- Perform other customizations, as described in this ebook: there's information about customizing [Services](#), [Open and Save dialogs](#), [Safari](#), [Terminal](#), and the many [Finder and system preferences](#).

## Customize Finder Windows

The Finder is arguably the single most important application on your computer, because through its windows you see all your files and folders. Customizing your Finder windows is therefore key to working enjoyably and efficiently in Panther. Furthermore, the way you customize your Finder windows has a profound effect on how your Open and Save dialog boxes look, because the Open and Save dialog boxes share the sidebar with the Finder (as you see in the next section, [Sidebar Basics](#)).

### Set Up the Default Finder Window

Let's start with the simple matter of the size, position, and style of your Finder windows. As in previous versions of Mac OS X, the way to set the default appearance of your Finder windows is to make a new window, arrange it as you like it, and then close it without doing anything else.

**Tip** Open a default Finder window, as a basis for navigating your hard disk, by choosing File > New Finder Window (Command-N).

Here's how to proceed with customizing your Finder windows:

1. Open a default Finder window, as explained in the tip just above.
2. Adjust the window size by dragging its lower right corner. I prefer a width just slightly narrower than the width of the monitor. The reason I like this width is that my preferred view is column view, and I want as many columns as I can get without sacrificing legibility. I like the height to be less than half the height of my monitor, so that I can open two Finder windows and see them both at once without changing the height of either one.
3. Adjust the window's position by dragging the title bar at the top. I like it to occupy roughly the upper half of my monitor, so that if I open a second window I can just drag it down to the lower half in order to see both at once.
4. Set the view (icons, list, or columns). If you choose column view, then you should also set the width of the columns. To do so, *Option-drag* the size widget at the bottom of a column. That's important,

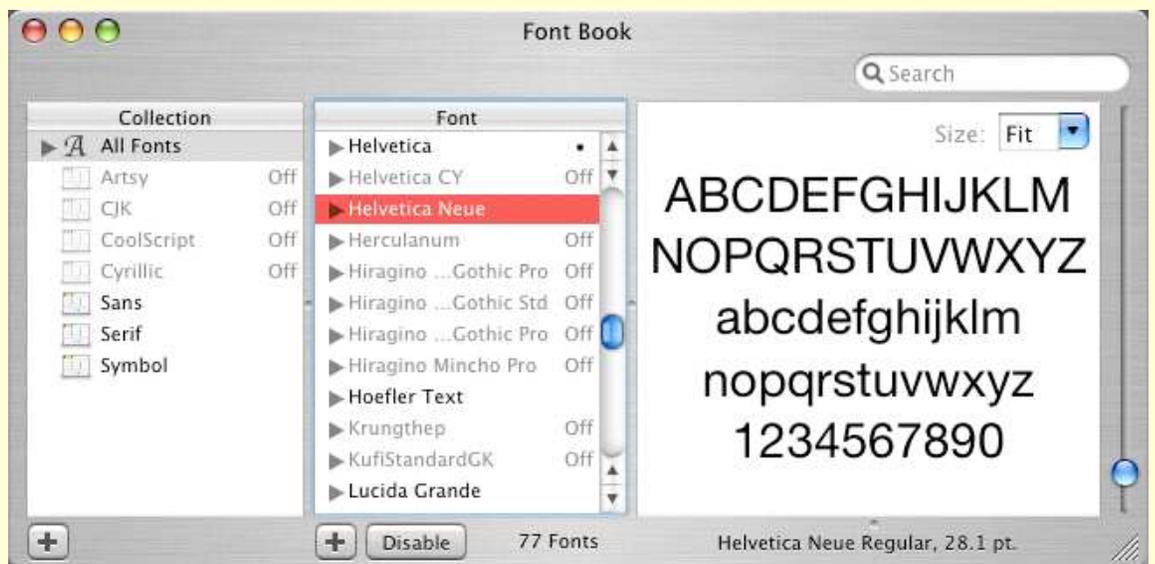
## Customize the Font Palette and Menu

Font management has always been a problem on the Mac, which is why there have always been third-party font management utilities. The main problem is that once you have more than a few fonts, Font menus become long and unwieldy. Mac OS X aggravates the difficulty by placing over two dozen fonts in the **/System/Library/Fonts** folder that you're not supposed to remove. Also, on Mac OS X, fonts can be installed in any of four different places, which makes them hard to keep track of.

If you suffer from too-long Font menus, or related font management problems, you may wish to use Font Book, a new utility available in Panther. You'll find it in the Applications folder.

Font Book lets you customize what appears in your Font palette and Font menu. Thus, you can keep lots of fonts installed for occasional use without having them appear every day. Furthermore, Font Book lets you clump your fonts into "collections"; these collections can be enabled and disabled as a whole, and they appear in the Cocoa Font palette, as way of accessing more quickly the fonts that they contain. You can see in **Figure 4** that I have lots of fonts, but only a few of them, scattered sparsely through the list, are enabled. You can also see that I've created several collections that categorize my fonts, and only a few of these collections are enabled.

**Figure 4**



Font Book, as customized on my machine.

## 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 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.

**Matt's home page:** <http://www.tidbits.com/matt/>

## Take Control of Panther: The Series

Take control of computing with the Take Control series of highly practical, tightly focused electronic books! Written by leading Macintosh authors, edited by TidBITS Electronic Publishing, and delivered to your electronic doorstep within moments of “going to press,” Take Control ebooks provide the technical help you need.  
<http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/>

### **Other available Take Control ebooks:**

*Take Control of Upgrading to Panther*, by Joe Kissell  
<http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/panther/upgrading.html>

### **Additional ebooks planned for release in 2003 include:**

*Take Control of Users & Accounts in Panther*

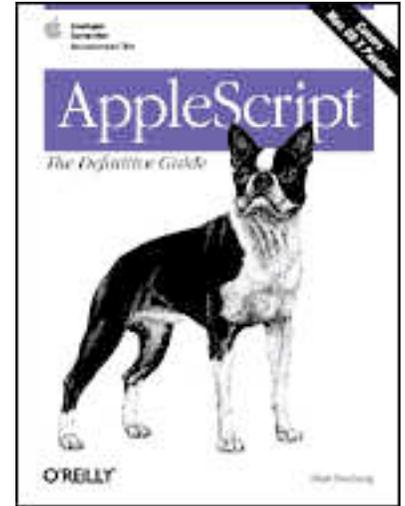
*Take Control of Sharing Files in Panther*

*Take Control of .Mac*

With your support, we plan to publish a number of additional ebooks in early 2004.

## Shameless Plug

One extremely powerful way to customize your computer 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 this means and what you should do next, and so forth, the computer 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 itself. 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 computer does when a music CD is inserted.



TidBITS Electronic Publishing will probably publish one or more Take Control ebooks about AppleScript in the future, but for the full story you might wish to obtain my new book, *AppleScript: The Definitive Guide*, from O'Reilly & Associates.

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/applescpttdg/>

## About TidBITS Electronic Publishing

Take Control ebooks are a project of TidBITS Electronic Publishing. TidBITS Electronic Publishing has been publishing online since 1990 when publishers Adam and Tonya Engst first created their online newsletter, *TidBITS*, about Macintosh and Internet-related topics. *TidBITS* has been in continuous, weekly production since then, and it is the leading online Macintosh newsletter.

To stay up to date on Mac OS X 10.3 Panther and other Macintosh topics, be sure to read *TidBITS* each week. At the *TidBITS* Web site you can subscribe to *TidBITS* for free, participate in TidBITS Talk discussions, or search 13 years of news, reviews, and editorial analysis.

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 is almost five and thinks ebooks about trains, clipper ships, and dinosaurs would be cool.



**TidBITS Web site:** <http://www.tidbits.com/>

**Adam's home page:** <http://www.tidbits.com/adam/>

**Tonya's home page:** <http://www.tidbits.com/tonya/>

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...and the many friends and relatives that helped in large and small ways by providing technical expertise, dinner, childcare, and so on.