

Chapter 3: Viewing and Navigating Mac OS X Finder Windows

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The Mac OS X Finder

The basic purpose of the Finder under Mac OS X is the same as it has always been; the Finder is the Mac application that provides the desktop, enables you to work with folders and files, and provides the basic interface for interacting with the system. The Finder does look quite a bit different than it did under previous versions of the OS, and it offers many more features, but most of the basic tasks work in the same or very similar ways. These tasks include those that you use to view and navigate Finder windows. In addition to its new appearance, the Mac OS X Finder also offers better views, more customization options, and more tools.

Working with Finder Windows

When it comes to viewing Mac OS X Finder windows, there is definitely good news and bad news—assuming that you have used a previous version of the Mac OS, of course (if you haven't, there is only good news). The good news is that Mac OS X windows offer the same functionality that windows in previous Mac OSes did plus some improvements. The bad news is that under Mac OS X, windows look quite a bit different and you might have to adjust some of your normal working habits a bit (see [Figure 3.1](#)).

[Figure 3.1](#)

The basic functionality of Mac OS X Finder windows is similar to that of previous Mac windows, but Mac OS X windows include various improvements.

The fundamental purpose of Finder windows is the same as it has always been—Finder windows enable you to view and manipulate the contents of disks, CD-ROMs, DVDs, folders, and so on.

Opening Finder Windows

You can open Finder windows in several ways.

If you click the Finder icon on the Dock (which is the Mac OS icon), one of two things can happen. If no Finder windows are open currently, a new Finder window appears showing the contents of the Computer directory. If at least one Finder window is open already, you will move to the Finder window in which you most recently worked.

Tip - If you hold down the Control key while you click the Finder icon on the Dock, a menu showing all open Finder windows will appear. Select a window to jump into it.

You can also open a new Finder window by choosing File, New Finder Window (Command+N). By default, new Finder windows that you open will always display the contents of the Computer directory, which is the "base" level of Mac OS X. You can use a Finder preference to change this behavior so that new Finder windows always open to your Home directory instead. To change this, perform the following steps:

1. Choose Finder, Preferences.
2. In the Finder Preferences window, select the "Home" radio button to cause new Finder windows to display your Home directory, or "Computer" to cause that directory to be displayed instead.
3. Close the Finder Preferences window.

Note - Under previous versions of the Mac OS, the Command+N shortcut created a new folder. Under Mac OS X, that shortcut is now Shift+Command+N. This is a bit annoying, but you will have to get used to it.

→ To learn more about Mac OS X directories, see "Understanding Mac OS X Directories," p. 80.

When you open a new Finder window, the result is always the same—the contents of either the Computer or the Home directory are displayed. The Mac OS X Finder uses a Web-like model in that each new Finder window you open starts a "chain" of windows (thus, the Back and Forward buttons in the Finder window toolbar). The first window in every new chain you start is always the directory you define as the default (Computer or Home). You can have many window chains open at the same time, again being similar to Web windows. (You can quickly jump into specific directories using the toolbar, the Go menu, and keyboard shortcuts.)

→ To learn how to navigate Finder windows, **see** "Navigating Finder Windows," **p. 53**.

After you have one Finder window open, other Finder windows open in the same way that they did under previous versions of the OS. To open a window, double-click the icon for the item you want to open. Or select an item and choose File, Open. The Open keyboard shortcut still works, too—just select an item and press Command+O to open it.

One difference from previous versions of the OS is that by default, a new Finder window opens within the current window instead of in a new, separate window. You can override this behavior so that the new Finder window is separate from the first one by holding down the Command key while you double-click an icon.

Tip - This default behavior assumes that the toolbar is shown in a Finder window. If the toolbar isn't displayed in a Finder window, opening a folder always opens a new, separate Finder window.

When you open a new Finder window, it always assumes the view you selected the last time you viewed that item in a Finder window. You'll learn more about Mac OS X Finder window views later in this chapter.

Note - To reiterate this sometimes confusing behavior of Mac OS X windows, the view that a new window opens in is determined by the view you used for that window the last time you viewed it. In other words, windows retain their view settings, even if the window from which you opened a separate Finder window is different. For example, if you viewed the Applications directory in List view, it will appear in List view whenever you open it in a new Finder

window until you change the view in which it appears.

You can set Mac OS X so that folders always open in a new window (which was the default case in previous versions of the Mac OS). To set this preference, do the following:

1. Choose Finder, Preferences.
 2. In the Finder Preferences window, check the "Always open folders in a new window" check box.
 3. Close the Finder Preferences window.
-

Note - One of the neat features of Mac OS X is that most preference changes are made in real-time—you don't have to close the Preferences window to see the results of your changes. For example, when you make the change in the previous steps, the window-opening behavior becomes active as soon as you change the check box. A good habit is to leave preferences windows open as you make changes and close the windows only when you are happy with all the changes you have made.

Mac OS X Finder windows can be spring-loaded (this feature is turned on by default), meaning that they "pop" open when you drag an item onto a closed folder. This enables you to quickly place an item within nested folders without having to open each folder individually. Simply drag an item onto a closed folder so that the folder is highlighted. After the delay time has passed, the highlighted folder will open in a separate Finder window. You can then drag the item onto the next folder and continue the process until you have placed it in its final destination. When you release the mouse button, all the folders that have "sprung" open are closed again.

Tip - You can cause a folder to spring open immediately by pressing the spacebar when you drag an item onto a closed folder.

You can configure this behavior by using the following steps:

1. Choose Finder, Preferences.

2. Check the "Spring-loaded folders and windows" check box to turn this feature back on if you have turned it off (it is on by default).
3. Use the Delay slider to set the amount of delay time (the time between when you drag an item onto a folder and when that folder springs open).
4. Experiment to see whether the delay time is set correctly for you; if not, change it.
5. Close the Finder Preferences window.

Scrolling Finder Windows

You scroll Mac OS X windows in basically the same way you always have, although the scrolling controls look a bit different than they did under previous versions of the OS. The most obvious difference is with the bars themselves. Because of the Aqua interface, by default, the scrollbars are Mac OS X blue; you can change this to graphite with the General pane of the System Preferences utility. As with previous versions of the OS, you can set the scroll arrows to both be located in the lower-right corner of windows or have an arrow located at each end of the scrollbar.

Mac OS X scrolling controls work as you expect them to. You have the following options:

- Drag the scrollbars.

Note - As with previous versions of the OS, the length of the scrollbar is proportional to the amount of the window you can see in the view.

- Click above or below or to the left or right of the bar to scroll one screen's worth at a time.
- Click the scroll arrows.
- Press the Page Up and Page Down keys to scroll vertically.
- Press the Home key to jump to the top of the window or the End key to jump to the bottom.
- Use the arrow keys or Tab (and Shift+Tab) to move among the items in the window (which will also scroll the window when you move outside the current view).

- When using the Icon or List views, hold down the Command and Option keys and drag (when you can drag to scroll, the pointer changes to the gloved hand icon).
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Note - This is another minor difference from previous versions of the OS; you used to hold down the Command key while dragging to scroll.

You can modify a couple of aspects of scrolling behavior. You can change the location of the scroll arrows. And, rather than moving an entire page each time you click above, below, to the left, or to the right of a scrollbar, you can set the scrolling such that you move to the relative location that you click instead. Follow these steps to modify these scrolling features:

1. Open the System Preferences utility.
2. In the Personal section, click General (see [Figure 3.2](#)).

Figure 3.2

The General pane of the System Preferences utility enables you to modify the behavior of window scrolling.

3. To change the locations of the scroll arrows, click the "Together" radio button to have the scroll arrows in the lower-right corner of windows or the "At top and bottom" radio button to place an arrow at each end of the scrollbars.
 4. To change how scrolling works when you click in the scrollbar, click the "Jump to the next page" radio button to scroll a screen at a time or the "Scroll to here" radio button to move to a position in the window that is relative to where you click in the scrollbar.
 5. Quit the System Preferences utility.
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Tip - This is a good chance to practice Mac OS X preference setting techniques. Make your changes to the General pane, but leave the System Preferences utility open. Click in a Finder window; your changes will immediately become active. If you are satisfied, jump back to the System Preferences utility and close it. If not, jump back into the General pane and continue making changes until you are.

Resizing Windows

Resizing windows also works as you might expect. To change the size of a window, drag its Resizing handle until the window is the size you want it to be. You can also use the Maximize button to swap between two sizes for a window.

Closing, Minimizing, and Maximizing Finder Windows

Among the most distinctive features of Mac OS X are the three "stoplight" type controls located in the upper-left corner of windows (see Figure 3.1). The red button (on the far left) closes the window. The gold button (in the middle) minimizes the window, which shrinks it and moves it to the right side of the Dock. The green button maximizes a window, which makes it as large as it needs to be to display all the items in the window until that window fills the screen.

→ To learn how to use the Dock, see Chapter 5, "Using and Customizing the Dock," p. 105.

Maximizing Windows - The Maximize button acts like a toggle switch between two window sizes. If you click it after you have maximized a window, the window returns to the size it was before you clicked it the first time. This can be a handy way to quickly make a large window smaller if you don't want to minimize that window (for example, you might want to keep the window on the desktop so that you can drag files into it). Make the window as small as you'd like it to be. When you want to view its contents, click the Maximize button. The window expands so that you can see its contents. When you are done, click the Maximize button again to return the window to the smaller size.

You can also minimize a window (thus moving it onto the Dock) by double-clicking its title bar.

The Close, Minimize, and Maximize buttons work even if the window on which they appear is not active. For example, you can close a window that is in the background by clicking its Close button without making the window active first. (When you point to a button on an inactive window, the buttons become colored so that you know they are active, even though the window is not.)

Tip - As under previous versions of the Mac OS, you can close all open Finder windows by holding down the Option key while you click the Close button in one of the windows.

Moving Finder Windows

As with previous versions of the Mac OS, you can move a Finder window by dragging its Title bar. Unlike earlier versions of the OS, you can't move an OS X Finder window by dragging its borders.

Note - If you used previous versions of Mac OS X, you'll notice that moving windows around is considerably faster under version 10.2, as are other window tasks such as changing size.

Using the Icon, List, or Columns Views for a Finder Window

Again like previous versions of the Mac OS, you can view Finder windows in different views. The views that Mac OS X shares with previous versions are the Icon and List view. New to Mac OS X is the Columns view, which is an incredibly useful view you will probably be using in many situations.

Note - Not present in Mac OS X, and not likely to be missed much, is the Button view.

Viewing a Finder Window in Icon View

You can easily argue that icons made the Mac. Using friendly pictures to represent files and folders made the computer much friendlier and more approachable than any command line could ever hope to be. Mac OS X continues the use of icons to represent objects, and with their improved appearance under OS X, icons have never looked so good.

You can view Finder windows in the Icon view by opening a window and then choosing View, As Icons or by clicking the Icon view button in the toolbar (see [Figure 3.3](#)). The

objects in the window will become icons, and if you have never seen OS X icons before, prepare to be impressed.

→ You can customize the Icon view for Finder windows. See "Customizing Finder Windows," **p. 59**.

Figure 3.3

The familiar Icon view of the Mac OS is now even more visually appealing. Other operating systems may have copied the Mac's icons, but none can compare to this snazzy new look.

If you find that a window in the Icon view is messy, you can use the Clean Up command (View, Clean Up) to straighten the window up for you. This command will neatly arrange icons so that they line up in an orderly fashion.

To arrange icons by a specific criterion, choose View and then select the criterion by which you want the window's icons ordered. Your options are the following: by Name, by Date Created, by Date Modified, by Size, or by Kind.

Although the Icon view is clearly the most pleasing view to look at, it is one of the least useful in terms of the information you see.

Viewing a Finder Window in List View

The List view presents more information than does the Icon view (see [Figure 3.4](#)). To switch to the List view, click the List view button (or choose View, As List).

Figure 3.4

At the top of the window, you see the same controls visible in the Icon view. The lower part of the window contains more data than is available in the Icon view.

The information in the List view is organized into columns, with a header at the top of the column indicating the information in each column. The information in the List view is always sorted—you can choose the information that is used to sort the contents of the window. You can also determine the order in which the columns appear, change the width of columns, and expand or collapse the contents of folders. The information for each item you see in the default List view is the following:

- **Name** This is a filename for files, the folder name for folders, the volume name for volumes, and so on.

- **Date Modified** The most recent date on which the object was changed. If the date is the current date, you will see the time at which the object was changed.
 - **Size** The size of the item, in kilobytes (KB), megabytes (MB), or gigabytes (GB).
 - **Kind** The type of object it is, such as folder, document, application, volume, and so on.
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→ You can customize the List view for a single window or for all windows.
See "Customizing Finder Windows," p. 59.

The column by which the window is sorted is highlighted with the highlight color (blue or graphite). To change the sort column, click the Column heading of the column by which you want the list to be sorted. That heading will be highlighted and the list will be resorted by that criterion.

At the right edge of the column heading for the column by which the window is sorted, you see the Sort order indicator. This shows you in which "direction" the list is sorted. For example, if the list is sorted by the Name column, an up arrow indicates that the list is sorted alphabetically. A down arrow indicates that the list is sorted in reverse alphabetical order. To change the direction of the sort, click the Column heading—the list will be sorted in the opposite direction.

You can resize a column by moving the pointer to the right edge of the column heading. When you do, the cursor will change from the pointer to a vertical line with outward-facing arrows on each side of it. When you see this cursor, drag the column border to resize the column.

You can change the order in which columns appear by dragging the column head of the column you want to move and dropping it in the new location. The columns will reshuffle and will then appear in the order you have indicated.

Note - You can't change the location of the Name column; it is always the first column in a window in List view.

One of the other benefits of the List view is that you can expand the contents of a folder so that you can view them without having to open the folder's window first. To do this, click the right-facing Expansion triangle next to the folder's name. The folder will

expand, and its contents will be listed in the window.

Tip - When you Option+click the Expansion triangle for a collapsed folder, the folder and all the folders that it contains are expanded. When you Option+click the Expansion triangle for an expanded folder, the folder and all of its contents are collapsed again.

Viewing a Finder Window in Columns View

The Columns view is new to Mac OS X; its benefit is that you can use it to quickly see and navigate levels of the hierarchy (see [Figure 3.5](#)). To switch to the Columns view, click the Columns view button on the toolbar (or choose View, as Columns).

[Figure 3.5](#)

The Columns view is a great way to see the hierarchical organization of directories and folders.

Note - One reason that the Columns view is so important is that you use this view to navigate within Open, Save, and other dialog boxes. When you are using the Columns view in dialog boxes, it works just as it does in Finder windows.

As you might suspect, in the Columns view, the window is organized into columns, with each column representing a level of the file organization hierarchy. The leftmost column shows the highest level you can see, each column to its right shows the next level down the structure, and the column on the far right shows the lowest level you can see. The "path" at which you are looking is indicated by the highlighted items in each column.

Folder icons have a right-facing arrow at the right edge of the column to indicate that when you select them, their contents will appear in the column to the immediate right.

For example, put a Finder window in the Columns view and click Home on the Toolbar to see the contents of the Home directory. The Home directory becomes highlighted in one of the middle columns; click that icon and its contents appear in a column to that column's right. In the next column to the right, click the Documents directory to select it. In the third column, the contents of the Documents directory are shown.

You can move down into the hierarchy by clicking the item about which you want more

detail. The column to the right of the item on which you click will show the contents of what you click. If you click something in the right column and the window is not large enough to display the contents of all the columns, the view "shifts" and the columns appear to move to the left. You can use this approach to quickly see the contents of any folder on your Mac, no matter how far down in the hierarchy it is stored.

When there are more columns than can be displayed in the window, you can use the scrollbars to view all the columns. Scrolling to the left moves up the hierarchy, whereas scrolling to the right moves down the hierarchy. You can also make the window larger to view more columns at the same time.

You can resize the width of all of the columns in a window by dragging the resize handle located in the lower-left corner of each column. Dragging this handle changes the width of all the columns in the window.

When you click a file to select it, the far-right column shows a large icon or a preview of the file, and information about that file is displayed (see [Figure 3.6](#)).

Figure 3.6

When you click a file, information about that file is shown in the right column; this information can include a preview of the file, as in the case of this QuickTime movie file.

If you click document files for which Mac OS X can create a preview, you will see the preview in the column. If the file you select has dynamic content, you can play that content in the preview that you see in the Columns view. For example, if you select a QuickTime movie, you can use the QuickTime Player controls to watch the movie without opening the file. Certain types of text files will also be displayed so that you can read them (scrollbars will appear in the column to enable you to read the entire document). You can also see large thumbnail views of graphics stored in certain formats. For those items that Mac OS X cannot create previews of (an application is one example), you see a large icon instead of a preview.

Note - If you switch from the Columns view to one of the other views, the contents of the folder you most recently selected will be shown in the window.

Because the Columns view is so useful, you can choose to have all new Finder windows open in this view.

1. Choose Finder, Preferences.
2. Check the "Open new windows in Column view" check box. Each time you open a

new Finder window, it will appear in the Columns view.

3. Close the Finder Preferences window.

If you prefer not to see the preview, there are two ways to hide it. You can hide it in individual windows or you can hide it by using the View Options.

To hide the preview in specific windows, use the Expansion triangle next to the word "Preview" that appears just above the preview of a selected file in the Preview pane. This will hide all previews for the current window.

You will learn about the View Options later in this chapter.

Navigating Finder Windows

Mac OS X includes several features that enable you to navigate Finder windows. There are two basic navigation tasks you do: moving around inside windows (to select items for example) or changing the contents of windows in order to view other folders and directories.

Using the Keyboard to Select Items in a Finder Window

Although you can use the mouse to point to and click items to select them (or double-click to open them), it can be faster to move to items and select them using the keyboard. There are two basic ways to navigate inside a window using the keyboard.

You can type an item's name to move to and select it. The OS matches item names as you type, so most of the time you don't need to type the item's whole name to move to it (for example, typing "mp3" moves you to the first item whose name begins with mp3). The more of the name you type, the more specific your movement becomes.

You can also move among items using the Tab and arrow keys. How this works depends on the view you are using for the windows.

Using the Keyboard to Select Items in the Icon View

When you are in the Icon view, pressing the Tab key selects the next item according to alphabetical order. Holding down the Shift key while you press Tab moves you among the items in reverse alphabetical order.

You can also use the arrow keys to move to and select items. The keys work just as you might expect. The Up-arrow key moves you up the window, the Right-arrow key moves you right, and so on.

The window scrolls automatically to keep the items you select in view.

Using the Keyboard to Select Items in the List View

When a window is shown in List view, you can use the Up- and Down-arrow keys to move up and down the list of items in the window.

When you select an item, you can use the Right-arrow key to expand it and the Left-arrow key to collapse it.

Tip - The Option key works with the arrow keys as well. If you hold down the Option key and press the Right-arrow key, all the folders within the selected folder will be expanded as well.

Using the Keyboard to Select Items in the Columns View

In the Columns view, the Right-arrow key moves you down the hierarchy, whereas the Left-arrow key moves you up the hierarchy. The Up- and Down-arrow keys enable you to move up and down within a selected folder.

Using these keys, you can move around your directories quite rapidly. As you move through the structure using these keys, the window scrolls so that you always see the currently selected item. It maintains your view at all times so that you can quickly jump into different areas without scrolling manually.

Tip - When you get used to it, using the keyboard in combination with the Columns view is the fastest way to navigate Mac OS X Finder windows.

Using the Search Tool to Select Items

The Finder window toolbar includes a Search tool you can use to find and move to items within a folder.

1. Open the window that contains the items you want to locate.
2. Click in the Search tool and enter the text for which you want to search. The more specific you make the text, the fewer items will appear in the window when you perform the search.

3. Press Return to perform the search. The window will be refreshed and only the items that met your search criterion will appear in the window. At the top of the window, you will see the search you have performed, including the search criterion and the area in which you searched.
4. Use the grab handle to expand the window to reveal the path pane. This shows the location of the item selected in the upper pane (see [Figure 3.7](#)).

Figure 3.7

You can use the Finder window Search tool to reduce the contents of a folder to only those items that meet your search criterion.

5. Use the Up- and Down-arrow keys to select the items shown in the window.
6. If you want to modify the search, change the search criterion and click the refresh search button.

Navigating Up and Down the Directory Structure

There are several ways to move up and down the directory structure within Finder windows. You can use the keyboard as discussed in the previous section. You can also use the buttons on the toolbar as well as the Path pop-up menu. The Go menu also enables you to jump to specific directories quickly.

Changing Directories with the Toolbar

The Finder's toolbar is a fast way to change the directory that is displayed in the current Finder window. The Toolbar contains buttons that take you to specific directories that are on your Mac. To open a directory, click its button on the Toolbar. The Finder window will display the contents of that directory.

Click the Back button on the toolbar to move back to the previous Finder window. You can continue to click the Back button as many times as you want until you reach the first window you viewed using the current Finder window; at that point, the Back button is grayed out. Similarly, the Forward button moves you forward in a chain of Finder windows.

→ To learn how to customize the Toolbar, see "Customizing the Toolbar," p. 59.

Note - If you open a new Finder window, the Back and Forward buttons will be grayed out because there is no window to move back or forward to. Opening a new window starts a new sequence of windows, so both buttons are disabled. As soon as you open a second window within the same Finder window, the Back button becomes active. If you move back along that chain of windows, the Forward button becomes active.

Tip - You can press Command+[to move back and Command+] to move forward.

Changing Directories with the Path Pop-Up Menu

The Path pop-up menu enables you to quickly move up and down the directory structure of your Mac. To change directories, hold down the Command key and click the window name in the title bar of a Finder window. When you do so, you will see all the directories from the one currently displayed in the window up to the Computer directory (which is the highest level on your Mac). Choose a directory from the menu and the Finder window will display the directory you chose.

Tip - You can add the Path button to your toolbar so that you can select a directory without using the Command key. You'll learn how later in this chapter.

Changing Directories with the Go Menu

You can also use the Finder Go menu to open specific directories. To do so, open the Go menu and choose the directory you want to view. Its contents will replace those shown in the active Finder window (if no Finder windows are active, the directory's contents appear in a new Finder window).

Tip - Keyboard shortcuts are available for the specific directories on the Go menu. See the "Mac OS X to the Max" section at the end of this chapter for a list of these shortcuts.

If you choose Go, Favorites, you will see a hierarchical menu containing your favorite items; choose an item to open it. Similarly, if you choose, Go, Recent Folders, you can quickly move back to one of the recent folders you have viewed (you can set the number of recent folders on this list using the General pane of the System Preferences utility).

→ To learn more about setting and using favorites, **see** "The Favorites Directory," **p. 83**.

You can also move to a directory using the Go To Folder command. Choose Go, Go To Folder to see the Go To Folder dialog box (see [Figure 3.8](#)). You can type a pathname in this dialog box and click Go to open a Finder window for that directory. Following are some tips on how to type pathnames:

- Pathnames are case sensitive.
- A slash (/) separates each level in the path.
- Almost all paths should begin and end with the slash (/).
- The exception to the previous rule is when you want to move to a specific user's Home directory, in which case you can just type `~username`, where *username* is the short name for the user's account.
- If the path begins with the directory on which Mac OS X is stored, you can skip that directory name and start the path beginning with the next level. If it is on another volume, you can include that volume's name at the beginning of the path.

[Figure 3.8](#)

This Go To Folder directory shows the path to the folder called Documents that is located on the volume named Mac OS 9.

Note - Although you should be careful to use the proper case in pathnames, sometimes it doesn't make a difference. For example, the path to the Mac OS X System directory can be `/SYSTEM/`, `/system/`, or `/System/`. Sometimes, the case of the path you type must match exactly, so it is good practice to always match the case of the directory names you type.

Table 3.1 provides some examples of paths you would enter in the Go To Folder dialog box to move to specific directories.

Table 3.1 Paths to Specific Directories

Location	Path
Directory called Documents on a volume named Mac OS 9	/Mac OS 9/Documents/
The Documents folder in the Home directory for the user account with the short name bmiser	~bmiser/Documents/
The Mac OS X System Folder	/System/
A folder called Ch_02_figs located in the Documents directory in my User folder	~bmiser/Documents/Ch_02_figs

Following are some additional tips for the Go To Folder command:

- You can open the Go To Folder dialog box by pressing Command+Shift+G. Type the path and press Return to move there.
- If you are patient when you type, Mac OS X will try to match the path you are typing and complete it for you. This usually takes more time than to type it yourself, but if the path gets filled in for you, press Enter to accept that path entered for you to move there.
- The most recent path you have typed remains in the Go To Folder dialog box; you can modify this path to move to a different directory.

Tip - Although pathnames should end in /, you don't really have to type the last /. If it is needed, Mac OS X will add it for you. If not, the path will work

without it.

Note - You can use the Connect To Server command to move to directories that are located on your network.

→ To learn how to connect to servers, see "Accessing Shared Files from a Mac OS X Computer," p. 732.

Changing Directories with the Keyboard

One of the cool navigation features of Mac OS X is the ability to move up and down the directory structure using only the keyboard. Use the previous tips to select an item, and then press Command+Down arrow to move "into" the item, such as a folder, application, document, and so on. For example, if you use the Tab key to select an application icon, and then press Command+Down arrow, that application will open. Similarly, if you press this key combination when you have a folder selected, the contents of that folder will be shown in its previous view state.

Note - This technique also works in the Columns view to open applications or documents. When you are viewing folders and volumes, you don't need to hold down the Command key because in the Columns view, the contents of a folder or volume are displayed when you select it.

To move up the directory structure, press Command+Up arrow.

Customizing Finder Windows

Mac OS X enables you to customize many aspects of Finder windows, including the toolbar, the status bar, and the views you use.

Customizing the Toolbar

You can control many aspects of the toolbar that appears in Finder windows. You can show or hide it, and you can customize the tools that it contains.

Showing or Hiding the Toolbar

You can hide or show the toolbar in a Finder window in any of the following ways:

- Click the Show/Hide Toolbar button in the upper-right corner of the Finder window.
- Choose View, Hide Toolbar or View, Show Toolbar.
- Press Command+B.

The state of the toolbar controls how new Finder windows open. If the toolbar is displayed, then new Finder windows open according to the preferences you set in the System Preferences utility. If the toolbar is hidden, new Finder windows always open in a separate window.

When you open a new Finder window (for example, by holding down the Option key when you open a new Finder window), the toolbar is hidden in the new window.

The toolbar state in currently open Finder windows is independent. For example, you can show the toolbar in one Finder window while it is hidden in another. In fact, if you have two Finder windows for the same directory open at the same time, you can hide the toolbar in one window while it is shown in the other.

The toolbar state is not independent when you open one Finder window inside another one. The toolbar for that window takes on the state that it was in in the previous window.

Changing the Tools on the Toolbar

The default toolbar contains various useful buttons, but you can customize its content by adding tools to it or removing tools from it.

1. Open a Finder window.
2. Choose View, Customize Toolbar (or hold down the Shift key while clicking on the Show/Hide Toolbar button). The contents of the Finder window will be replaced by the Toolbar customization window (see [Figure 3.9](#)).

Figure 3.9

You can add buttons to or remove them from the toolbar using the Customize Toolbar command.

3. To add a button to the toolbar, drag it from the window to the toolbar; place it in the

location where you want it. (Table 3.2 lists the available buttons and what they do.)

When you move a button between two current buttons on the toolbar, existing buttons will slide apart to make room for the new button.

Note - If you place more buttons on the toolbar than can be shown in the current window's width, a set of double arrows appears at the right edge of the toolbar. Click this to pop up a menu showing the additional buttons.

4. Remove a button from the toolbar by dragging it off of the toolbar.
5. Change the location of the icons by dragging them.
6. Use the Show pop-up menu to determine whether the tools have text and an icon, text only, or an icon only.
7. Click Done.

The toolbar will reflect the changes you made (see [Figure 3.10](#)).

Figure 3.10

Several buttons that are not on the default toolbar, such as the Path, Burn, and iDisk buttons, are quite useful. In the figure, you can see that I have added them to my toolbar.

Table 3.2 Useful Toolbar Buttons

Button Name	What It Does
Back/Forward	Moves you back or forward in a chain of Finder windows.
Path	Pops up a menu that shows the path to the current directory. You can choose a directory on the pop-up menu to move there.
View	Changes the view for the current window.
Eject	Enables you to eject items, such as mounted volumes, CD-ROM discs, and so on, from the desktop.

Burn	Enables you to burn a CD-R, CD-RW, or DVD-R.
Customize	Enables you to open the Customize Toolbar window.
Separator	A graphic element you can use to organize your toolbar.
New Folder	Creates a new folder.
Delete	Deletes the selected item.
Connect	Opens the Connect to Server dialog box.
Find	Opens the Finder's Find tool.
Get Info	Opens the Get Info window for a selected item.
Computer	Opens the Computer directory.
Home	Opens the Home directory.
iDisk	Accesses your iDisk.
Directories	There are several buttons for the Mac OS X directories, such as Documents, Movies, Music, and so on. Clicking these buttons moves you into the directory.
Search	Enables you to search Finder windows.

Tip - You can return to the default toolbar by dragging the default toolbar set onto the toolbar in the Customize Toolbar window.

Tip - If you add more buttons than can be displayed and then want to remove some of the buttons you can't see (you see the double arrows instead), you have to make the window wider so that you can see the button on the toolbar to remove it; you can't remove a button from the pop-up menu. You can also temporarily remove other buttons until you can see the one you want to remove.

Customizing the Status Bar

The status bar, which is hidden by default, is located under the toolbar, and provides status information for the current directory, volume, or whatever else is being displayed in the Finder window. Mostly, the status bar provides information about the number of items in the window, and the amount of free space on the current volume. It also contains an icon for those situations in which the current directory is read-only (the icon is a pencil with a slash through it). As with the toolbar, you can hide or show the status bar using the View menu. Unlike the toolbar, you can't change the contents of the status bar.

Customizing Finder Window Views

For each view type of Finder window view, you can set Global view preferences that affect all windows you open using that view type. You can then set the Window options for individual windows to override the global settings for that view type. One of the customization options for the List view is the data you see in the window. For example, you can choose to display the Comments column for a window in List view. If you set this as a Global preference, each time you open a new window in List view, you will see the Comments column. If there is a window in which you don't want to see the Comments column, you can change the Window preferences for that window so that the Comments column is not displayed.

When you change a Global preference, it affects all windows shown in that view. When you change a window's preference, it affects only the current window.

Customizing the Icon View

The Icon view has the following view options:

- **Icon size** You can set the relative size of the icons you see.
- **Text size** You can set the size of text displayed next to the icons you see.
- **Label position** You can set the location of the text next to icons. Your choices are on the bottom or to the right of the icon.
- **Snap to grid** With this option enabled, icons align themselves to an invisible grid.
- **Show item info** With this option enabled, you see information for the items in a window. The information you see depends on the items being displayed. For example, when the window shows volumes, you see the total space on the volume and the free space on each volume. When you view folders, you see the number of items in that folder.

- **Show icon preview** By default, file icons contain a preview of the file's content within the icon. At press time, this preference does not seem to affect anything. Presumably, when this feature is activated in a later update of OS X, it will cause the icon preview to be hidden if the check box is unchecked.
- **Keep arranged by** You can choose to keep icons grouped by a criterion you select, including Name, Date Modified, Date Created, Size, and Kind.
- **Folder background** You can choose the background used for a Finder window. Your choices are White, a color of your choice, or a picture of your choice. If you choose Color or Picture, tools will appear to enable you to select the color or picture you want to use.

Set your Global preferences for the Icon view using the following steps:

1. Open a Finder window so that you can preview the preferences you will set.
2. Choose View, Show View Options or press Command+J. The View Options window appears (see [Figure 3.11](#)). You use this window to set both Global and window settings.

[Figure 3.11](#)

The View Options window enables you to customize Finder window views.

Note - The name of the current Finder window is shown at the top of the View Options window.

3. Click the "All windows" radio button.
4. Use the Icon size slider to set the relative size of the icons you see. As you move the slider, the icons in the open window will reflect the size you set. When you are happy with the size of the icons, release the slider.
5. Use the Text size pop-up menu to set the size of the text.
6. Use the radio buttons in the Label position area to choose the location of icon text.
7. Use the four check boxes to enable or disable the options described in the previous bulleted list.
8. If you enabled "Keep arranged by," choose the criterion by which you want icons

grouped using the pop-up menu (Name is selected by default).

9. Choose the folder background option by choosing one of the radio buttons under Background.
10. If you chose Color, use the Color button to open the Color Picker to choose the background color you want to use.
11. If you chose Picture, click the Select button and then use the Select a Picture dialog box to choose a background image.

Note - Supported image formats include PICT, TIFF, and JPEG. The background image you choose will appear in folders you view using the Global icon settings. This does not affect any image you are using as a background image on your desktop.

12. Close the View Options window when you have finished setting the global options.

After you have made these settings, any window you view in Icon view will be displayed using your global preferences unless you override the Global settings by setting a window's preference.

To change the preferences for an individual window, do the following:

1. Open the window you want to view and put it in the Icon view.
2. Open the View Options window by choosing View, Show View Options (or press Command+J).
3. Click the "This window only" radio button.
4. Use the controls to set the Icon view preferences for the window you opened in Step 1 (see the previous steps for help).
5. Close the View Options window when you are done.

Tip - You can also modify the view of the desktop, which is always in icon view. Click anywhere on the desktop and open the View Options window. You will be able to set the icon size, text size, and other options just like a folder window (except for the folder background that is set using the Desktop

pane of the System Preferences Utility).

This window will use the preferences you set for it until you change them.

Tip - You can reapply the global preferences at any time by returning to the View Options dialog box and clicking the "All windows" radio button. The window will return to your global view settings.

Customizing the List View

Customizing List view works pretty much the same way as Icon view, except that you have different options.

Set your Global List view preferences using the following steps:

1. Open a Finder window in List view.
 2. Open the View Options window (Command+J).
 3. Click the "This window only" radio button.
 4. Check the radio button you want to use under Icon Size.
 5. Choose the text size on the Text size pop-up menu.
 6. Check the check boxes next to the data columns you want to be displayed in List views. The default data are Date Modified, Size, and Kind. The other data that are available are Date Created, Version, and Comments. Data for which you check the check boxes will be displayed in columns in the List view.
 7. Check the "Use Relative Dates" check box if you want to use relative dates.
-

Note - When you use the relative dates option, you will see relative date information (such as yesterday) for some dates rather than the full date for all dates.

8. Check the "Calculate all sizes" check box if you want the size of folders to be displayed in the Size column.

Tip - This option uses lots of extra computing power, especially for those folders that contain many folders and files. You should usually leave this check box unchecked unless folder size information is critical to you.

9. Close the View Options window.

Every window you see in List view will use these options, unless you override the global settings for a particular window.

Overriding the global options for a specific window is analogous to what you do for the Icon view. Open the window, open the View Options window, click the "This window only" radio button, and use the controls to set the view options for the current window.

To reapply the Global List view preferences to a window, click the "All windows" radio button in the View Options window.

Tip - The Window settings for a window are retained (although not used) even after you reapply the Global settings to it. You can easily switch back to them by clicking the "This window only" radio button again. The window will return to the most recent window settings you applied to it.

Customizing the Columns View

The Columns view has fewer customization options than do the other views. The Columns view preferences that you set apply to all windows in the Columns view.

1. Open a Finder window in Columns view.
2. Open the View Options window (Command+J).
3. Uncheck the "Show icons" check box to hide the icons in the window.
4. Uncheck the "Show preview column" check box if you prefer not to see the preview of selected files in the window.

5. Close the View Options window.

Note - As far as I can tell, there isn't a way to choose the List view or the Icon view for every window you open (you can set the Columns view for every new window you open by using the Finder Preferences dialog box). The Finder remembers the view you used the last time you opened a specific window and maintains that view each time you open that window—until you change that window's view. Unfortunately, you can't set the view to be List or Icon on a system-wide basis.

Note - Similarly, you can't tell the Finder to apply the global view preferences to all windows at the same time. If you have changed the view preferences for individual windows, you have to reapply the global view preferences to that window if you want to use them (by using the View Options dialog box).

Mac OS X to the Max: Finder Window Keyboard Shortcuts

Table 3.3 lists keyboard shortcuts for working with Finder windows.

Table 3.3 Keyboard Shortcuts for Finder Windows

Action	Keyboard Shortcut
Close all open Finder windows	Option+click the Close button
Close Finder Window	Command+W
Go to Folder	Shift+Command+G
Hide Finder	Command+H
Hide/Show Toolbar	Command+B
Minimize Window	Command+M
Move to the	Option+Command+A

Applications directory	
Move to the Computer directory	Option+Command+C
Move to the Favorites directory	Option+Command+F
Move to the Home directory	Option+Command+H
Move to the iDisk directory	Option+Command+I
New Finder Window	Command+N
New Folder	Shift+Command+N
Open New Finder Window in a Separate Window	Command+double-click (a folder icon)
Open Window	Command+O
Show View Options	Command+J

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