

Working in Leopard: The Aqua Interface



Whether you are new to OS X or just new to Leopard, the first step to getting the most out of your computer is to learn a bit about the Aqua interface in Leopard. Apple has designed what many people think is the most attractive, user-friendly interface of any popular computer operating system today; however, if you come to OS X after years of using Windows or some other operating system, you will likely encounter a number of features that are different and perhaps even confusing. Also, even if you are just making the upgrade from Tiger or an earlier Mac OS X version, you will immediately notice a few differences in Leopard. This chapter will go over the interface basics of Leopard and show you how to get the most out of it, specifically:

- The menu bar
- The Finder and the desktop
- The Dock

The Menu Bar

The menu bar may seem like an odd choice as the first topic to cover in this book; however, it is one of the primary user interface (UI) elements for both controlling and getting information in OS X. It is also the UI element that is most unique to OS X (and actually the Mac OS since its inception). The menu bar (shown in Figure 1-1) is divided into three primary areas: the Apple menu, the application menus, and the menu bar extras.



Figure 1-1. The OS X menu bar in Leopard

The Apple Menu

The Apple menu on the far-left side of the menu bar (shown expanded in Figure 1-2) is a special menu containing a number of system-level commands and resources that are particularly handy to have easily accessible. This includes the About This Mac command; shortcuts to software

update; the System Preferences command; shortcuts to Dock preferences; and the Recent Items command (including shortcuts for applications, documents, and servers); the Force Quit command that will allow to immediately quit an application; the various Sleep, Restart, and Shutdown commands; and the Log Out *User* command. Most of these are fairly obvious as to what they do; however, some additional information about some of these items may be helpful.

The About This Mac command opens a window (shown in Figure 1-3) that gives you some fairly self-explanatory information about your computer. Clicking the light gray text under the large “Mac OS X” that reads “Version 10.5” will cycle through additional information, including the exact operating system build number and the computer’s serial number (this is a much easier way to get your serial number than searching around for it on your actual computer). The More Info button in the About This Mac window will launch the System Profiler application that contains all sorts of information about your computer and the software installed on it.

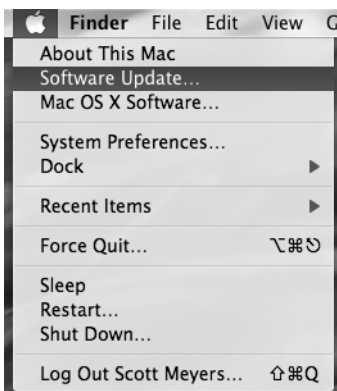


Figure 1-2. The Apple menu



Figure 1-3. About This Mac window

The Recent Items command opens a submenu that by default shows you the last ten applications, documents, or servers you accessed. You can adjust these defaults in the Appearance panel in System Preferences (we’ll talk about System Preferences in depth in Chapter 5). You’ll also see an option here to clear all items if for whatever reason you don’t want that information to display.

The Force Quit command opens a new window that shows all the currently running Aqua applications. From this window you can select any of those applications to quit immediately. By immediately, we mean right away—no saving files or anything. The application will just quit. About the only time you may find yourself needing this is if an application freezes up (or in Apple lingo “stops responding”) or if you need to relaunch the Finder (force quitting the Finder is the easiest way to restart it).

NOTE You may notice that some menu items have an ellipsis (...) after them, and some don’t. According to Apple’s Human Interface Guidelines (<http://developer.apple.com/documentation/UserExperience/Conceptual/OSXHIGuidelines/index.html>), items with the ellipsis will require some additional user interaction to complete a task. In general, this means it will either prompt you or open a window with additional options. Other items common in menus are the sideways triangle on the far right, which indicates the menu item will open a submenu, and of course keyboard shortcuts are viewable for a number of menu items.

Application Menus

Moving just to the right of the Apple menu begins the application menus. This is where people new to Macs tend to get thrown off; you see, in OS X there is only one application menu bar, and this is it. The application menus, however, are dynamic in the sense that the information in one menu bar will reflect the application running in the foreground. So if you are using Microsoft Word, for example, the menu bar will reflect that (Figure 1-4). If you switch to the Finder or another application, the menu bar will change with you.



Figure 1-4. The menu bar's application menu presents Microsoft Word's menus when you're using Microsoft Word. Compare this to the Finder's menus in Figure 1-1.

Many menus are shared from one application to another; additionally, the general arrangement of the menus should be consistent from one application to another. The first menu to the right of the Apple menu will always reflect the name of the current foreground application (sometimes referred to as the application that has *focus*). Almost all proper Aqua applications have at least the following menus: *Application Menu*, File, Edit, Window, and Help. Interface Builder, part of the Xcode tools, by default sets up the following application menus: New Application, File, Edit, Format, View, Window, and Help. Everything between the Edit and Window menus tends to vary from application to application.

NOTE Strangely, though Interface Builder defaults to an order of menus that puts Format before View, many applications (Microsoft Word, and even Apple's own Mail application) tend to switch that order.

The five most common menus tend to serve the following purposes:

Application Menu: This menu identifies the application and usually contains the option to access the application's preferences and other options. This also contains the Services menu item, one of the most overlooked features of OS X.

TIP The Services menu is a powerful way to leverage the power of external services inside any application. By default Apple provides a number of services (Summarize is one of the most interesting). However, many applications also make some of their features available through the Services menu. We encourage you to play around with this, because it's a powerful feature that too few people take advantage of.

File: This is the menu where you generally create new documents or open, save, and print existing application documents.

Edit: The Edit menu contains the standard Copy, Paste, Undo, Find, and Replace commands. By default, it also contains the Spelling and Grammar menu items; however, many applications dispense with these.

Window: The Window menu manages multiple open windows from an application.

Help: The Help menu (Figure 1-5) contains a list of help documentation for the application and OS X in general. The help search feature, new in Leopard, provides an immediate dynamic contextual help system to help you find just the right help or item you need to find.

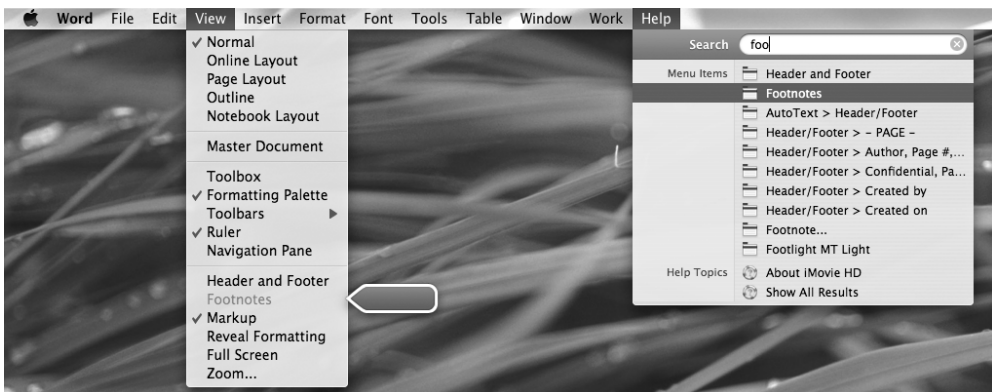


Figure 1-5. Leopard's improved help system can even help find hidden menu items.

NOTE One unique feature of OS X applications that relates to the menu bar is that since the menu bar is separate from the application window, the application can (and usually does) run even if no windows are open. This is one of those big WTF (Wow That's Fascinating) moments that people have when coming to the Mac from Microsoft Windows. With Windows, when you close a window (usually by clicking the X button on the far-right side of the title bar), the application closes along with the window. This is not so for document-based applications in OS X. In OS X if you close the document (usually by clicking the X button on the far-left side of the title bar), then the document closes, but the application itself is probably still running. To actually close an application in Leopard, you generally must explicitly quit it from the application menu (or by using the Cmd+Q keyboard shortcut or contextual menu from the Dock).

NOTE Contrary to the previous note, sometimes applications do quit when you close the window. This is one of those further head-scratching moments in OS X. The reason is that in OS X there are different application types. There are *document-based applications*, which usually follow the previous rules, and then there are other *applications* that don't (always). The general rule is that if you can have multiple windows, then you can have none (that is, document-based applications), even while the application is running. However, if your application provides only a single window, then when that window is closed, the application quits. Examples of default Apple applications that quit when the windows are closed are System Preferences, Dictionary, and Font Book.

Menu Bar Extras

On the far right of the menu bar is where you will find a number of menu bar extras. These are special menus that are available at all times that can provide information as well as quick access to certain functions. The magnifying glass icon on the far right is the Spotlight icon where you can access the Spotlight search feature of Leopard (covered in depth in Chapter 4); this icon is ever present and immovable. You can move the other menu extras around by Command-clicking them and then dragging them. If you drag them out of the menu bar, they will be removed from it. Most of the menu item extras that are available by default in Leopard are tied to System Preferences, so if you accidentally remove one, you can usually add it again in the appropriate System Preferences panel.

Besides the menu bar extras available from System Preferences, some additional extra menus are available. A couple of examples are the Script menu that can be added from within the AppleScript Utility and an iChat menu available from the iChat preferences.

NOTE The Script menu makes a large number of useful prewritten AppleScripts available from the menu bar (and of course you can add your own AppleScripts to the menu). This is a wonderful menu to include if you use even a few AppleScripts on a frequent basis.

Finally, a number of third-party applications provide menu bar extras. Most add information and access to specific features of specific applications; however, some are specific menu bar extra applications that can be configured to make various customizable things always available from the menu bar.

The Finder (and the Desktop)

The Finder is an application that makes all other applications and files findable. It's designed to allow you to find whatever you are looking for on your Mac and then get out of your way so you can work (or play, create, or whatever you do on your computer). Most of the work done with the Finder is done in the Finder window, shown in Figure 1-6.



Figure 1-6. The Finder window showing a typical home directory

As you can see, the Finder window is divided into three areas: the toolbar on top, the sidebar along the left of the window, and main viewing area that takes up most of the window.

The Finder's Toolbar

The toolbar (Figure 1-7) provides some buttons and a search field for working in the Finder. The arrows on the far left move you forward and backward through your Finder history in the same way as in most web browsers. The four buttons grouped together alter how the Finder displays items. The button with the eye icon will open the selected Finder item in Quick Look. The button with the gear icon will open a menu with some Finder options in it, and all the way on the right side is a search box that will help you find any item on any connected hard drive (using Spotlight). We'll talk about the different Finder views and Quick Look later in this chapter.



Figure 1-7. The Finder's default toolbar

NOTE Like most toolbars in Aqua applications, the Finder's toolbar can be customized by right-clicking (or Control-clicking) the toolbar and selecting Customize Toolbar from the pop-up menu.

The Finder's Sidebar

The sidebar in the Finder window (Figure 1-8) is divided into four areas:

Devices: This is where any attached file systems will show up. This includes connected disk volumes, your iDisk, and any attached network volumes.

Shared: This is where any shared network files or devices will appear.

Places: By default this contains a list of your personal directories. You can add or remove any files or folders here that you want.

Search For: New for Leopard, this area contains saved Spotlight searches. Saved searches in the Finder are similar to smart folders; however, rather than the folder showing up in the file system, the saved searches show up only in this part of the Finder sidebar.

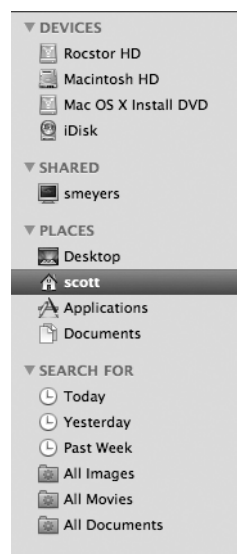


Figure 1-8.
The Finder's sidebar

The Finder's Views

The most important part of the Finder window is the viewing area; it is here that you actually access what you want to find. Depending on your needs, the Finder has four ways to view the items available to your computer: as icons, as a list, in columns, and, new for Leopard, in Cover Flow view.

Using the Finder's Icon View

Icon view is the more traditional Mac OS view of folders, files, and applications. This view shows the contents of one folder at a time, allowing you to transverse into other folders by double-clicking them (or selecting them and using the Open command or Cmd+O keyboard shortcut). To move up the directory path in Icon view, you can use the Go ► Enclosing Folder command (or the much easier to use Cmd+up arrow keyboard shortcut). The Icon view defaults are generally fine for most things; however, like many other views, this view can be tweaked to look or behave differently using the view options presented when you select Show View Options from the View menu or contextual menu (or when you press the Cmd+J keyboard shortcut). Figure 1-9 shows the Finder's Icon view along with the view's Options window open beside it.



Figure 1-9. The Finder's Icon view with the view's Options window open beside it

The options available to tweak the Icon view include the following:

Always open in Icon View: This causes the folder to always open in Icon view, overriding any system-wide defaults.

Icon size: This makes the icons in the view bigger or smaller.

Grid spacing: This adjusts the amount of space between the icons.

Text size: This adjusts the font size of the label text.

Label position: This moves the label text either below or to the right of the icons.

Show Item Info: This toggles extra information about items (that is, how many items are in folders, how much space is available on a storage system, how big an image file is in pixels, and so on).

Show icon preview: This toggles whether to show a thumbnail of certain files or to use the generic icon for the recommended application.

Arrange by: This selects how items are arranged in the view; Name is the default and will arrange item alphabetically, but at times other options may be preferable. (Date Modified, Date Created, Size, Kind, and Label are other options.)

Background: This allows you to change the view's background to a different color or even an image file.

Use as Defaults: This final option becomes available if you make any changes. Clicking this button will effectively make the changes carry over to all noncustomized folders; otherwise, the changes you make will be reflected only in the current folder.

Using the Finder's List View

The next view in the Finder is List view (Figure 1-10). This view has a number of advantages over the standard Icon view in that it presents more information about each Finder item, and it allows you to expand folders to see their contents without leaving the current folder. You do this by clicking the sideways-triangle symbol to the left of a folder item.



Figure 1-10. The Finder's List view with the view's Options window beside it

The view options for List view differ somewhat from the options in Icon view; the different options available in List view are as follows:

Always open in List View: This causes this folder to always open in List view.

Icon size: Rather than scaling the icons as in Icon view, in List view you can choose only Large or Small.

Show Columns: This allows you to choose which columns should be shown.

Use relative dates: When selected, the date columns can use terms such as “Today” and “Yesterday” rather than the actual date all the time.

Calculate all sizes: This causes the computer to calculate the sizes of all items, even other folders (by adding up all its contents). In many cases this can be a time-consuming process.

TIP To sort the Finder items in List view, you can click any column header, and the column will determine the sort order. For example, to sort items by the date they were last modified, just click the column header Date Modified.

Using the Finder's Column View

The third view is Column view. This view was introduced in the first version of OS X and is based on the File Viewer from NeXTSTEP and later OPENSTEP (from which OS X descends). Column view (Figure 1-11) is nice in that it reveals the whole file system path that leads to the Finder item you are viewing. Additionally, when you select a nonfolder item in Column view, the last column will reveal a preview of the selected item along with some general information about it.

The view options for Column view are fairly limited, and the only new option is Show Preview Column, which, when checked, shows the last preview column.

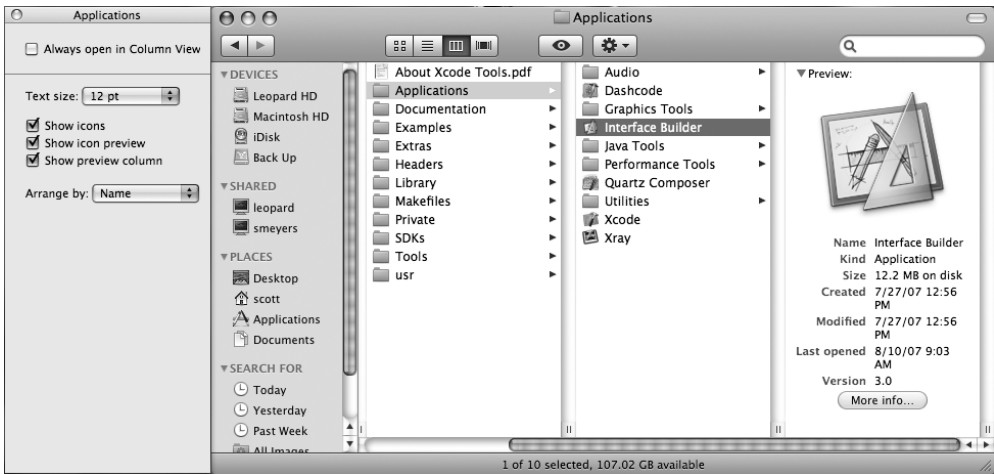


Figure 1-11. The Finder's Column view with the view's Options window beside it

Using the Finder's Cover Flow

The final Finder view is the new Cover Flow view. Cover Flow view (Figure 1-12) is essentially a split window with a standard column view on the bottom; the top, however, provides a scrollable display that allows you to “flip through” previews of all the items shown in the column view below. Sometimes, when dealing with a large number of files, this is a helpful tool for visually identifying the file you want to find.

The Cover Flow view options mimic the options presented in List view since that is the view provided beneath the Cover Flow view area.



Figure 1-12. This is Cover Flow view in the Finder; most of the view options are the same here as in List view.

Common Finder Tasks

Although the Finder is a great tool for browsing around your computer, to be a useful file management tool in a modern operating system, the Finder needs to perform a number of additional tasks. Luckily, the Finder in Leopard performs all the basic tasks necessary plus a few handy extras.

NOTE Many of the relevant commands in the Finder's application menu are available from a contextual menu that pops up when you right-click (Control-click) a Finder item or Finder window. The contextual menus will present different options depending on what options are available for any given item you right-click. This includes most of the relevant menu commands, as well as some special commands that may not be available from the Finder's menu, because some applications install a special "contextual menu item" that allows special features of that application to become available in contextual menus. Using contextual pop-ups should be very familiar to users of Microsoft Windows.

Viewing and Opening Documents and Applications

Double-clicking any item icon (or using the Cmd+O keyboard shortcut) in the Finder will open it. If the item is a folder, the Finder will open that folder in the current Finder window. If the item is an application, then that application will launch. If the item is a document, then the Finder will open that document with its preferred application.

TIP If you want to open a folder in a new Finder window, you can hold Command while double-clicking the folder.

The preferred application with a document is usually the application that created the document. If the creating application is unknown or not present on your computer, then the Finder will make a guess based on the type of document it is. Occasionally you may want to open the document in an application other than the one the Finder thinks is best, and you can do this in numerous ways:

- Open the document from within the desired application.
- Drag the document on the desired application icon in the Finder or on the Dock.
- Right-click the document to open the pop-up contextual menu, and choose an alternate application from the Open With menu.

If you'd like to permanently change the default application for a specific file or all files of a specific type, select the file (or a file of the desired type), and select Get Info from the Finder menu, the Action toolbar item, or the pop-up contextual menu by right-clicking the document. This will open the Info window (Figure 1-13), and from

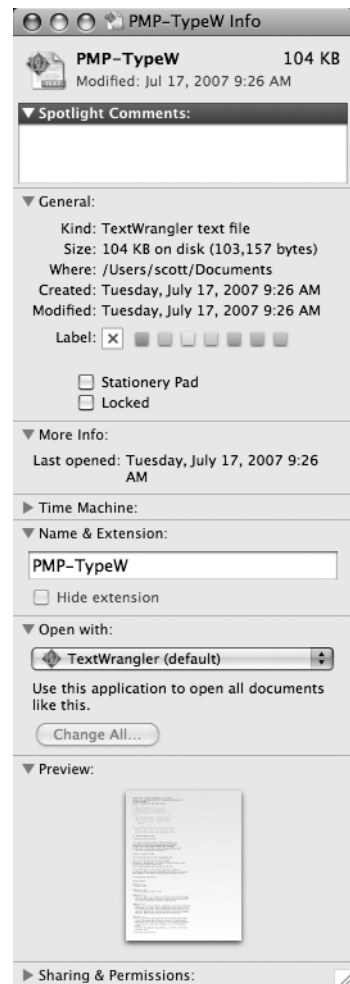


Figure 1-13. The Info window, opened by selecting Get Info from a menu

there you can select the desired application from the Open With drop-down menu. If you'd like to make all files of the same type open in this alternate application, click the Change All button.

Sometimes you might just want to preview a document, without opening any application. Leopard adds a new feature called Quick Look that allows you to do just that. To activate Quick Look, just select the desired document in the Finder, and hit the spacebar (or click the Quick Look button in the Finder's toolbar or press Cmd+Y). This will immediately open any supported document type in a hovering window for your viewing pleasure. You can even select a full-screen view (Figure 1-14) that will cause the document to fill the screen for distraction-free viewing.

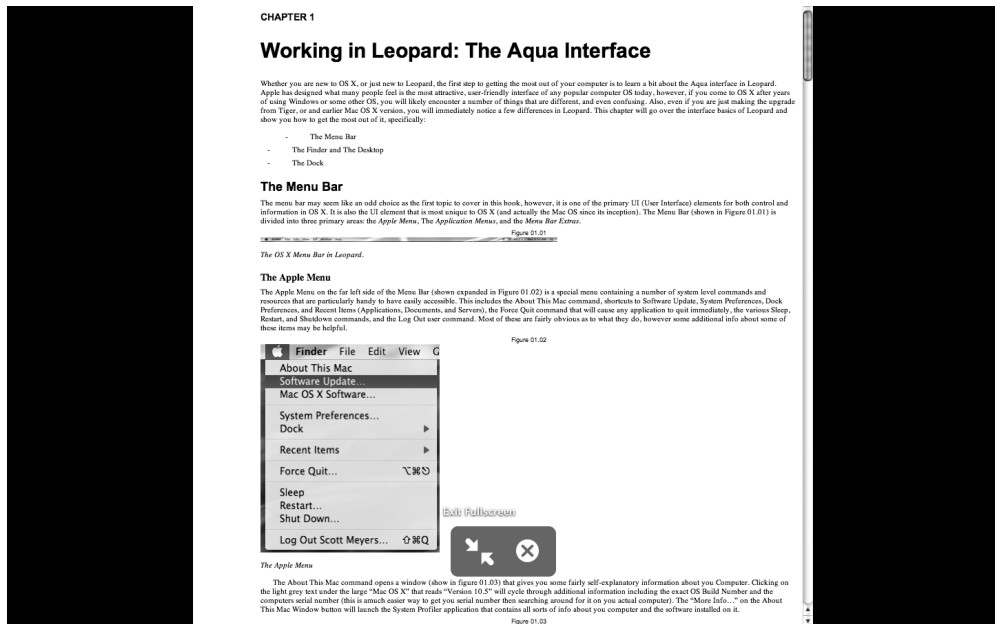


Figure 1-14. Quick Look's full-screen viewing

NOTE The previewed document is not actually opened in the creating application but rather in a separate preview generator; therefore, occasionally you'll see some differences between the Quick Look preview and how the document will appear when opened in its actual application.

Moving, Copying, and Creating Aliases of Finder Items

Besides opening and viewing files, the Finder is also used for managing your documents and applications. Management is done in the Finder by simply dragging and dropping items around where you want them.

CAUTION One issue that may occur when you move an application from its original, installed location is that occasionally it's expected to be there. This is especially true with (but not limited to) Apple's own applications that occasionally won't update correctly if they are not located in the same folder in which they were installed. This doesn't mean you can't organize your applications into subfolders in the application folder; however, if you notice issues with an application that you've moved around, then you may want to move it back. Also, it's best to leave Apple applications where they are.

If rather than just moving a file you want to make a copy of the file, you can do this by holding the Option key while you drag the item. (You should notice a green button with a plus sign appear while you are dragging to indicate you are making a copy.) Holding Cmd+Opt while you drag will create an alias of the Finder item you are dragging.

NOTE If you are moving a file from one volume to another, the Finder will, by default, automatically create a copy rather than simply moving the file. You can override this behavior by holding the Command key while moving the item.

If you want to create a copy of an item in the same folder as the original, you can use the File ► Duplicate command from the Finder's menus or use the Cmd+D keyboard shortcut (or select Duplicate from the item's contextual menu). You may also create aliases by selecting File ► Make Alias or pressing the Cmd+L keyboard shortcut. One final way to create a copy of a Finder item is to use a standard copy-paste operation; select Edit ► Copy (or press Cmd+C) to copy an item, and select Edit ► Paste (or press Cmd+V) to paste it wherever you want.

NOTE Aliases are the OS X equivalent of shortcuts in Microsoft Windows. Rather than creating a copy of an item, OS X creates a link that points to the original Finder item. This is used when you want to keep one original Finder item yet you want to access it from different places in the file system.

Renaming Finder Items

To rename a Finder item, you need to first select the item and then click the name of the Finder item. If you do this too quickly, though, the system may recognize this as a double-click and open the item. Once the item is selected for editing (the name will become highlighted in a rectangular edit field), you can edit the text as desired. Alternately, you can just select a Finder item and then hit the Return key; this will toggle the name for editing without the need to time your second click.

CAUTION When the name is selected for editing, the entire name minus the file extension is selected, so any typing will immediately overwrite the original name. If you want to just tweak the name, you can use the arrow keys or your mouse to position the cursor where you want to insert or delete text without overwriting the whole name.

You can also rename Finder items in the Info window (which we talk about later in this chapter).

CAUTION Certain Finder items, such as applications and default system folders, should not be renamed. Renaming the default folders can cause all sorts of unexpected and undesirable results, and renaming applications can cause them to stop working correctly. As a general rule, you can rename any of your documents and any folders you create, but you may want to think twice about renaming other items. If you do happen to make a mistake, you can use the Undo command (Command+Z) to reset the name to its previous state.

Creating New Folders and New Smart Folders

Sooner or later it's likely you'll want to create new folders to help organize your documents or other Finder items. The easiest way to create a new folder is to select File ► New Folder from the Finder's menu or use the Shift+Cmd+N keyboard shortcut (or the contextual menu item). This creates a new folder with a rather generic name, so you'll probably want to rename it right away, and then it's ready to go.

To create a smart folder, select **File** ► **New Smart Folder** from the Finder's menu, or use the **Opt+Cmd+N** keyboard shortcut. This will open a New Smart Folder window (Figure 1-15) that allows you to set the search parameters for your smart folder using steps similar to defining mail rules. The process of creating a smart folder is a subset of the Spotlight feature, so we'll cover this in more detail in Chapter 3 where we cover Spotlight.

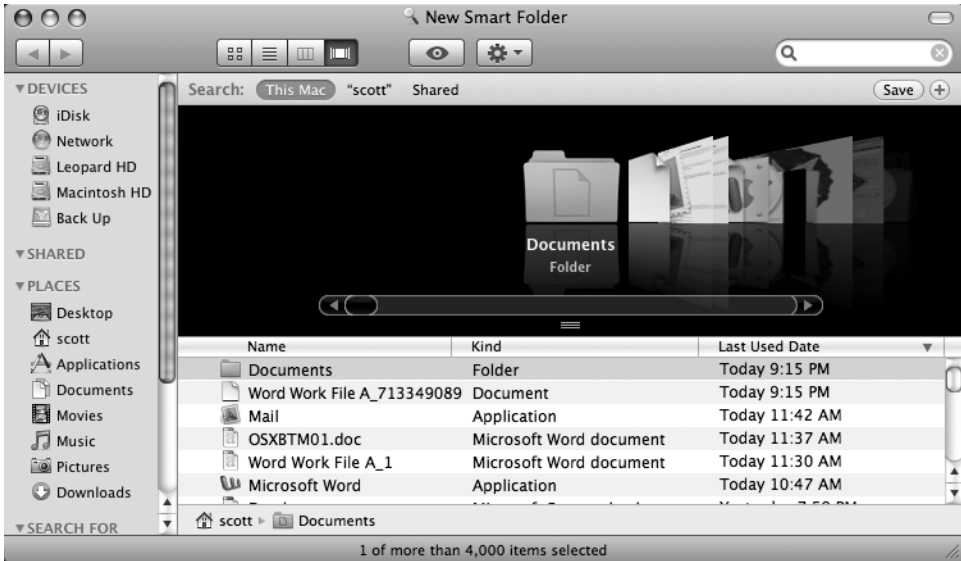


Figure 1-15. The New Smart Folder window

Getting (and Altering) Information About Finder Items

If you want to get more information about a particular Finder item, then the Info window (shown in Figure 1-13 earlier in the chapter) is the place to go. The Info window allows you not only to view information about a Finder item, but it will also allow you to add or alter information and attributes about the item. To open the Info window, select an item in the Finder, and then select **File** ► **Get Info** from the Finder menu (use the **Cmd+I** keystroke or the contextual menu item). At the top of the Info window, the name, size, icon, and last modified date for the item appear. Table 1-1 describes the basic structure of the Info window.

Table 1-1. Sections of the Get Info Window

Section	Description
Spotlight Comments	This is a text field that allows you to add any comments about the item. These comments are searchable in Spotlight.
Kind	This tells the item's type: Folder, Application (for applications, it will let you know whether the application is universal or PowerPC), or Document.
Size	This gives the size of the item (including the number of items in folders).
Location	This gives the directory path of the item's location (including the original location for aliases).

Continued

Table 1-1. Continued

Section	Description
Created	This is the date when the item was created.
Modified	This is the date when the item was last modified.
Label	This shows the item's label, which is editable, allowing you to set or alter the item's label.
Share Folder	This check box allows you to share a folder and its contents with other users of your computer and network (appears only if Kind is Folder).
Stationary Pad	This check box for documents causes a selected document to always open as a copy of itself. This essentially sets up the document as a template.
Open using Rosetta	This check box allows you to run universal applications in PowerPC emulation mode if you are using an Intel-based computer.
Locked	This check box locks a file so it cannot be modified in any way as long as it remains locked.
Time Machine	If you have Time Machine set up, this shows the last time Time Machine backed up the file; this includes a Back Up This Item check box that causes the item to be backed up even if the item is otherwise excluded from Time Machine.
Name & Extension	This is an editable text field that shows the item's full name (including the extension), which is immediately editable. OS X uses the file's extension as one way to choose what application can open a file, so changing the extension may change how a document is opened (possible making it unreadable). A check box allows you to choose to show or hide the file extension in the Finder.
Open With	Discussed earlier in the chapter, this allows you to change the ownership of a document from one application to another application.
Preview	This shows a preview of the item (this will play back supported audio and video files).
Languages	For applications, this shows what localizations (that is, languages) the application can run in.
Sharing & Permissions	This allows you to view and alter the abilities of any users and groups to access the item. The ability to view and alter this information depends on the permissions you have. In general, you must be the file's owner or an administrator to edit this information.

TIP If you want to replace the icon of any Finder item, you can do this by selecting the icon at the top of the Info window and then pasting the new icon over it. Should you ever change your mind, you can delete the custom icon, which will cause the item to return to its default icon.

Compressing (Zipping) Finder Items

Often, especially when you want to send files via e-mail to someone else, you may want to compress or archive a file. OS X allows you to create .zip files from within the Finder. You can do this easily by selecting the item (or items) you want to compress and selecting **File** ► **Compress**

from the Finder's menu or using the Compress contextual menu item. If you want to create an archive of multiple items to be zipped into a single .zip file, just create a folder containing all the desired files and then compress the folder.

NOTE These days, many files and media formats are already compressed, so compressing, say, a single .jpg or .mp3 file won't cut down on the file size much, if any (in fact, some will actually be a tad larger). Still, if you are sending lots of files, even if they are compressed, it's a good idea to compress them together anyway since, even though the total file size might not decrease much, it may leave more free space on your computer because of the nuances of how files are stored on your disk.

By double-clicking a .zip file, the Finder will automatically expand the compressed item.

NOTE By default the Finder uses the included Archive Utility to create and open compressed items. By default Leopard can handle many types of compressed items via Archive Utility; however, there are some compression and encoding types that require third-party software to open. This includes the SIT format, which was once the most popular compression format for Macintosh systems prior to OS X Tiger. .sit files will require Stuffit expander available at <http://www.stuffit.com/mac/index.html> or some other third-party compression application (including many decent free applications).

Backing Up and Burning Items to a Disc

We can't overemphasize the importance of backing up the data on your computer. The one truth of all storage devices is that someday they will fail, and when they do, they will likely take all the data stored on them along with them. Backing up data can be a bothersome task; however, Leopard introduces Time Machine, which makes the whole process easier (almost pain free), provided you have an extra hard drive to which to back up your data. Still, sometimes you may want to burn some or all of your data to a CD or DVD for a more permanent "offline" backup.

NOTE Chapter 7 is devoted to backing up and syncing data. There we will cover Time Machine in depth as well as other backup strategies.

You can create backup data discs in the Finder in a few ways. First, you could simply select the data you want to back up in the Finder and select File ► Burn Items to Disc from the Finder menu. This will prompt you to insert a disc and upon doing so will open a burn disc window (Figure 1-16) to allow you to name the disc and set the burn speed. Then, simply clicking the Burn button will start the process.

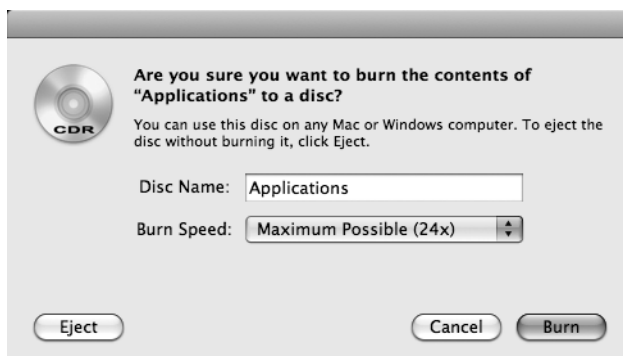


Figure 1-16. The burn disc window

NOTE If you select more data than will fit on the disc you insert, you will get a warning telling you that the data is “too large to fit on the disc.” OS X will ask you then to remove some data and try again. You may need to use a larger disc (if you are using a CD-R try using a DVD-R instead), or you may need to select less data at a time and make multiple burns.

Two other similar ways to burn data to a disc are to create a burn folder and to just insert a blank, writable disc into the computer and select Open Finder in the Action drop-down menu (Figure 1-17). You can create a burn folder by selecting File ► New Burn Folder from the Finder menu or from the contextual menu. Then you can drag any files you want to burn into this folder (which will automatically create an alias to the original). If you inserted a writable disc and selected the Open Finder action, the disc will mount, and you can then drag any items you want to burn on it onto the disc icon on the desktop. Either way, when you are done, you can click the special burn button from either of these locations to start the burning process (see Figure 1-18).

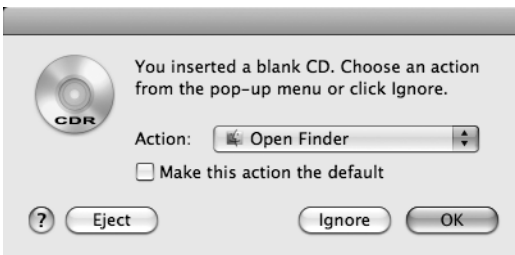


Figure 1-17. Pop-up window asking what action should occur when you open a blank, writable disc



Figure 1-18. The burn button is in the upper-left corner of the Finder window. The information bar at the bottom keeps track of how much space you will need on the disc to burn the items.

Labeling Finder Items

For many years Mac OS has had the ability to label Finder items, and that tradition continues. Labels allow you to colorize Finder items as a way to sort them in the Finder; additionally, labels can have names associated with them (setting the names is covered later in this chapter). To label a Finder item, you can select it in the Finder and then select the appropriate label from the File ► Label item in the Finder menu.

In Icon and Column views, the label color will highlight the item's name with the selected color; in List view, it will highlight the item's entire row. Items in the Finder can then be sorted by label, and labels are an additional search parameter for smart folders and Spotlight.

NOTE When sorting items by label in the Finder, the sort order is determined alphabetically by the label name, not by the color. This may be something to keep in mind when naming labels.

Choosing the Go to Folder Command

If you ever need to go directly to a specific folder in the Finder, you can use the Go ► Go to Folder item in the Finder menu, which will open a dialog box prompting you for a directory path. Although sometimes it may be easier to navigate there through the Finder, this option can come in handy if you know where you want to go.

NOTE As you will learn later in the book, many folders are usually hidden in the Finder. If you know about these folders, you can use the Go to Folder to take you to these hidden directories.

Choosing the Connect to Server Command

The Go ► Connect to Server selection in the Finder menu is similar to the Go to Folder command, but instead of opening a folder on your computer, it can open network resources using a variety of protocols including FTP, HTTP, NSF, SMB, CIFS, AFP, or others (including a user's iDisk). To connect, just enter the network resource's URL into the dialog box, and it will connect. If the resource requires login credentials (name, password, and so on), you will be prompted for that information.

The Desktop

The desktop (shown in Figure 1-19) is the main backdrop for Leopard. Although it has some unique options, it works the same as any Finder window in Icon view. The items on it are in fact located in the Desktop folder in your home directory. Some of what makes the desktop unique is that the items placed on it are always there for easy access, and it can automatically display connected items such as hard drives, removable media, and even network resources on it. The view options available for the desktop are the same as those available to a Finder window in Icon view with the exception of selecting a desktop background. Setting the desktop background is handled through System Preferences, which will be covered in Chapter 4.

Customizing the Finder

Besides altering the view options for each of the Finder's views, you can apply a number of additional preferences that affect the Finder as the whole. The Finder preferences (like most application preferences) are in the main application menu. In the case of the Finder, that's Finder ► Preferences (the default keyboard shortcut to open the preferences of any application is the Cmd+, shortcut). The Finder's preferences are divided into four sections, as covered next.



Figure 1-19. Leopard’s default desktop with the Dock at the bottom and the menu bar at the top

Setting General Options

Table 1-2 describes the Finder’s General preferences (shown in Figure 1-20), which cover a few general Finder behaviors.

Table 1-2. Finder General Preferences

Preference	Description
Show these items on the Desktop	This offers three check boxes to determine what sort of devices will automatically show up on the Desktop.
New Finder windows open	This is a drop-down list that determines where a newly opened Finder window will start by default (this is where you begin when you open a new Finder window from the Finder’s File menu or when you click the Finder icon in the Dock).
Always open folders in a new window	This check box, if checked, will cause all folders clicked in the Finder to open a new window rather than to open the contents of the folder in the existing window.
Spring-loaded folder and windows	This is a nice feature in OS X that helps in moving Finder items. When activated, if you drag and hold a Finder item over a folder for a period of time, that folder will spring open to reveal its contents. This way, you can move an item into a deep folder structure without first having to open the destination folder beforehand. The Delay bar indicates how long it takes for the folder to spring open.



Figure 1-20. Finder general preferences

Customizing Labels

The Labels tab in the Finder preferences (Figure 1-21) allows you to customize the names of the various colored labels. To change a label's name, just edit it in the text field next to appropriate color.

Customizing the Sidebar

The Sidebar preference tab (Figure 1-22) allows you to select what items automatically show up in the Finder's sidebar. Since you can drag in or drag out various folders anyway, most of these options include more dynamic, nonfolder items.

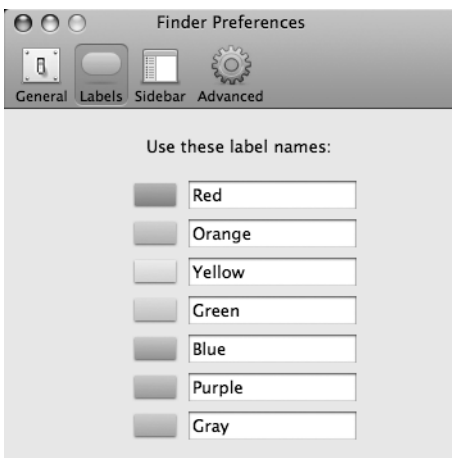


Figure 1-21. The Labels settings in the Finder preferences



Figure 1-22. Finder preferences, Sidebar options

The final Finder preferences tab are advanced options (Figure 1-23) of which there are four fairly self-explanatory check boxes:

-
- Finder Preferences
- General Labels Sidebar **Advanced**
- ☐ Show all file extensions
 - ☒ Show warning before changing an extension
 - ☒ Show warning before emptying the Trash
 - ☐ Empty Trash securely

NOTE The “Empty Trash securely” option actually writes over the disk space where the Trash items are located, making it nearly impossible to recover the items once they are deleted. This differs from a normal Trash empty procedure, which just lets the computer know that the space where the file exists is available for writing over, so until something overwrites that same area on your disk, that data could be recovered with the right software. The “Empty Trash securely” option takes more time to complete, especially if you are deleting a large amount of data.

The final interface element we'll look at in this chapter is the Dock (shown in Figure 1-24). The Dock application allows you to keep your favorite applications a click away, manages the applications you have running, provides a place to access your favorite folders and documents, and also holds your Trash can for deleting Finder items you are done with.



The items on the Dock are completely customizable; the only two elements that are bound to the Dock are the Finder item and the Trash item (Figure 1-25). The Dock is divided between application icons and other items by a faint dashed line resembling a crosswalk (called the *abbey road graphic*). We cover the types of items on the Dock in the next sections.

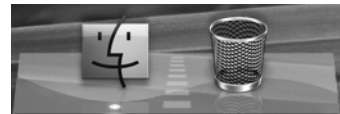


Figure 1-25. Minimal Dock with all optional items removed

Beginning on the far left of the Dock are the application icons. The first one on the far left is always the Finder icon, but the ones that follow are entirely customizable. To add one of your favorite applications to the Dock, just select the application in the Finder, and then drag the icon onto the Dock where you'd like it to be. You can also click and drag any icon already on the Dock to another location on the Dock or off the Dock entirely. To launch any of the applications on the Dock, just click them. Right-clicking (Control-clicking, or clicking and holding for those still using one-button mice) any Dock icon will open a contextual menu that varies on the application, whether it's running or not.

Applications that are open have a little bright blip under the icon (like a light shining up on the icon).

NOTE You can't remove the icon of a running application from the Dock; if you try, it will spring back to the Dock. This, however, will cause the item to leave the Dock when the application quits.

Open Applications

Anytime you open an Aqua application, the icon for that application will be added to the Dock just to the right of your other docked applications (provided that it isn't in the Dock already). By clicking any open application icon on the Dock, you will make that the active application. Additionally, if that application has no open windows, then usually a new window will open when you make that application active. Upon closing any application not normally found in the Dock, the icon on the Dock will disappear.

Folders and Stacks

In previous versions of OS X, you could add folders to the Dock so that its contents were easily available. In Leopard, you can still add folders to the Dock; however, the behavior has changed, since the folders on the Dock are now turned into stacks.

Stacks are a new feature of Leopard that allow you to group a collection of Finder items and place them all together on the Dock for easy access. To create a stack, just select two or more files from the Finder, and drag them into the area between your application icons and the Trash (being careful not to actually drag them into the Trash). Those files will appear as a stack of single icons on the Dock. Clicking the stack in the Dock will expand the stack, making all the items accessible to you. Depending on the number of items in the stack, the stack will either expand to a single column of items (Figure 1-26) or expand to a row of items (Figure 1-27). Right-clicking a stack will allow you to rename it. To add an item to a stack, just drag the Finder icon onto the stack to which you want to add it. To remove an item from a stack, just expand the stack, select the item, and drag it out of the stack.

A folder dragged onto the Dock looks and behaves very much like a stack, with a few important exceptions. First, while stacks sort items manually (generally newest items appear

first, but they can be moved around in the stack), folders sort items based on the Name, Date Added, Date Modified, Date Created, Kind, or Label items (selectable from contextual menu). Second, if you select a folder in a stack, that folder will open in a new Finder window; if you click a subfolder in a folder, the content of the subfolder will appear in the Dock rather than a separate Finder window (allowing you to navigate to subfolders from the Dock). If you want to view the folder in a Finder window, there is a special item in the Dock folder items called *Show in Finder* (shown earlier in Figure 1-26). Finally, although you can manipulate the item of a stack from the stack, folders are protected and can be modified only from within the Finder.

By default, OS X starts you out with the Download folder placed on your Dock.

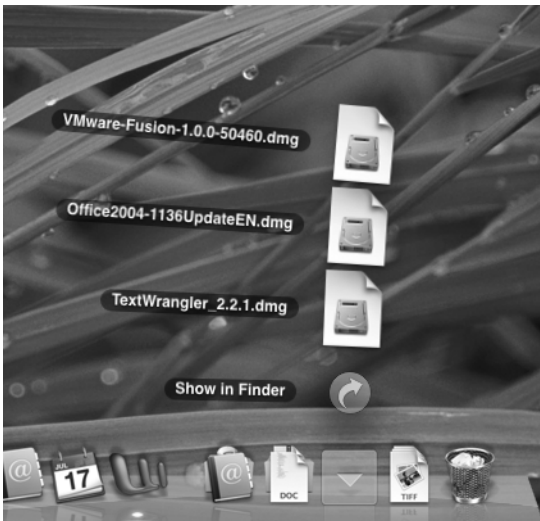


Figure 1-26. A folder with a few items



Figure 1-27. A stack with many items

Minimized Windows

Occasionally you may have what seems to be too many application windows on your screen at one time. By clicking the Minimize button in the upper-left corner of any window, the window will shrink down into the Dock and out of the way. (By default, that's the yellow button that will reveal a – when you mouse over it; these three buttons are commonly called the *window widgets*.) Clicking the minimized window in the Dock will expand the window to its previous size and position on the screen.

The Trash

The final item on the Dock is the Trash. Rather than immediately deleting Finder items, in OS X you generally move an item to the Trash when you are done with it. Then when you are ready, you empty the Trash to permanently delete items. This two-step process adds a fail-safe to keep you from permanently deleting a file accidentally. You can drag any item into the Trash (or use Cmd+Delete), where it will remain until you empty the Trash. To empty the Trash, you can right-click (or Control-click) the Trash and select Empty Trash from the menu, or in the Finder you can select Finder ► Empty Trash from the application menu.

One advantage of emptying the Trash from the Finder's menu is that it also gives you the option to securely empty the Trash, which makes the items you delete nearly impossible to ever recover, even with the most sophisticated utilities.

One other, strange ability of the Trash is that if you drag any removable media, external hard drives, or network resources on to it, rather than delete those items, it will actually eject, unmount, or disconnect the resource. This is actually the traditional way to do this, though it's especially odd for people new to Macs.

Dock Preferences

The Dock preferences affect the Dock's behavior. The Dock's settings are located in System Preferences (Dock panel) but are directly accessible from the Apple menu by selecting Dock ► Dock Preferences. Table 1-3 describes the preferences available for the Dock (Figure 1-28).

Table 1-3. Dock System Preferences

Preference	Effect
Size	This affects how big the Dock icons and the Dock will be.
Magnification	If selected, this affects how big Dock items will magnify when the cursor moves over them. This is useful if you have many small items in the Dock.
Position on Screen	This allows you to position the Dock on either side or the bottom of the screen.
Minimize using	This allows you to choose between two different effects, the Genie Effect and the Scale Effect, when you minimize items onto the Dock. This really has no effect on anything practical and is purely an aesthetic thing.
Animate opening applications	When selected, the application icons will bounce up and down in the Dock while the application is starting up. (Some people count the bounces as a metric as to how fast an application launches.)
Automatically hide and show the Dock	When selected, this will cause the Dock to disappear and remain hidden until you move the mouse down to the area of the screen where the Dock would normally appear at which time it will slide back into view to perform any regular Dock functions. This is nice in certain applications where you want to use the entire screen for the application and the Dock would normally get in the way.

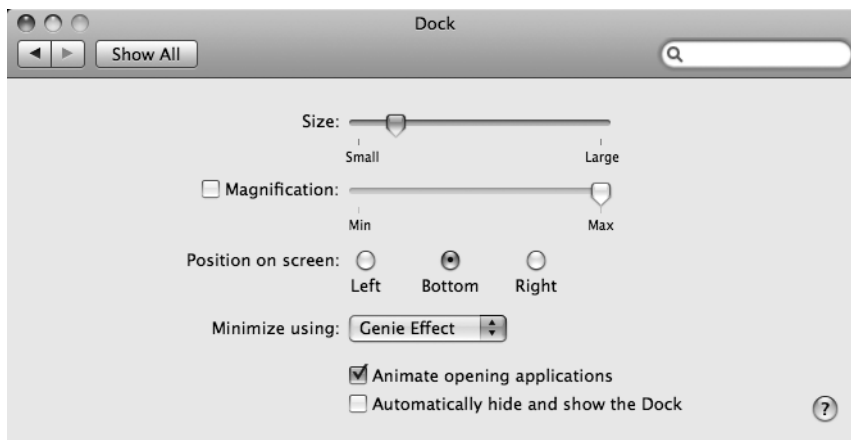


Figure 1-28. The Dock System Preferences

NOTE Many of these Dock preferences are selectable by choosing the Dock item in the Apple menu, by right-clicking the space just to the right of the application icons on the Dock, or by clicking and dragging on the Dock itself.

Summary

This chapter explained all of the basics you need in order to work inside the Aqua interface. Even if at first it seems strange (and there are certainly parts of it that are), as you get used to it, you will find that it in fact serves its purpose extraordinarily well (more so in most cases than any alternatives). Coupled with some of the other features that will be revealed as the book progresses, you'll find the Aqua interface to be a great foundation for a fun and productive computing environment.

Next, we'll cover the file system and explain where everything is.