

History of the Desktop Database

In earlier versions of system software, **Finder** information for each volume was stored in the volume's Desktop file, a resource file created and used by the **Finder** and invisible to the user. This strategy meets the needs of a single-user system with reasonably small volumes. The Desktop file is still used on ejectable volumes with a capacity less than 2 MB so that these floppy disks can be shared with Macintosh computers running earlier versions of system software. (Note, however, that resources can not be shared. Since the **Finder** is always running in System 7.0, it keeps each floppy disk's Desktop file open, so your application can not read or write it.)

Because resources can not be shared, a different strategy has been used for AppleShare volumes, which are available to multiple users over a network. The **Desktop Manager** in System 7.0 uses the strategy for large local volumes that AppleShare file servers have previously used for shared volumes. When a volume is first mounted, the **Finder** collects the bundle information from all applications on the disk and builds the desktop database. Whenever an application is added to or removed from the disk, the **Finder** updates the desktop database. Through **Desktop Manager** routines, the database is also accessible to any other application running on the system.