
Desk Accessories

System 7.0 no longer employs the Font/DA Mover. Desk accessories are now represented by icons, and users install desk accessories by dragging their icons to the System Folder icon. The **Finder** then moves them to the Apple Menu Items folder. (**The System Folder and Its Related Directories** describes the new organization of the System Folder.) From the user's point of view, there is little or no distinction between desk accessories and applications in System 7.0.

Desk accessories now behave more like applications. When a desk accessory is open, its name appears in the Application menu. A desk accessory can have its own About command in the Apple menu, and it can be brought to the foreground and sent to background independently of other desk accessories. As described in Icon resources, you can design a family of icons for your desk accessory and include all the icons used by applications: large, small, black-and-white, 4-bit color, and 8-bit color icons. If you do not provide icon resources, the **Finder** displays your desk accessory icon by using a mirror image of the default application icon, as shown in the first figure in Icon resources.

Users do not even need to store desk accessories in the Apple Menu Items folder. Instead, users can store them as they store applications—that is, anywhere in the file system. Users can open desk accessories from the **Finder** in the same way they open applications: by double-clicking their icons or by selecting them and choosing Open from the File menu.

In previous versions of system software, the File menu for desk accessories included two commands, Close and Quit. The user chose Close to close and quit the active desk accessory. The user chose Quit to quit all desk accessories. In System 7.0, the Close command closes the active window and the desk accessory remains open. The Quit command now terminates the active desk accessory only. Close and Quit have keyboard equivalents of Command-W and Command-Q, respectively.

Users of previous versions of system software are accustomed to opening their desk accessories from the Apple menu. Users of System 7.0 can use this convenient method to open any of their applications. Any application or alias to an application that users drag to the Apple Menu Items folder appears in the Apple menu. Choosing a name from the Apple menu, of course, opens the application.

These similarities in installation, user access, and capability make desk accessories and applications more consistent in their appearance and behavior. There are no compelling reasons to create desk accessories for System 7.0. Instead, if you wish to develop a desk accessory-like tool, it's a better idea to write a small application, because desk accessories are generally more difficult to write and less powerful than applications.

You may decide to upgrade your existing desk accessory instead of rewriting it as an application, or you may wish to write a desk accessory because you want it to run in previous versions of system software where **MultiFinder** is optional. If you create a desk accessory, in your documentation you should instruct users of System 7.0 that if they want the desk accessory to appear in the Apple menu, they should install it by dragging its icon to the System Folder icon. A dialog box appears asking the user to verify that the desk accessory should be installed in the Apple Menu Items folder. The user clicks OK to accept

this installation. The user also has the option to click Cancel to prevent the installation.

Note: If users drag a desk accessory icon to the open System Folder window instead of to the System Folder icon, the **Finder** copies or moves the desk accessory into the System Folder directory instead of installing it in the Apple Menu Items directory.

You can also provide a message for your desk accessory that appears in an alert box when the user chooses the About command from the Apple menu in System 7.0. To provide this message, create a resource called 'dast' as an owned resource with a sub ID of 0. For example, the 'dast' resource with a sub ID of 0 for a desk accessory with a 'DRVr' ID of 12 (also called the owner ID in ResEdit) gets a resource ID of -16000. Your 'dast' resource must contain a Pascal string only. When the user chooses the About command for your desk accessory, this string appears in an alert box along with the icon you provide for your desk accessory.

As described in Balloon Help for Icons, you can also provide a custom help balloon message for your desk accessory icon that overrides the **Finder's** default help balloon for desk accessory icons.