About the Finder Interface

The Finder is an application that works with the system software to manage the user's desktop display.

The **Finder Interface** allows you to:

- set up the resources the **Finder** needs to display and start up your application
- make your application compatible with the new interface features of the **Finder**
- use the new organization of the System Folder and its related directories
- check or change **Finder**-related information stored in a volume's catalog
- read a volume's database of icons, applications, and comments

To use the **Finder Interface**, you should already be familiar with resources. Resources are collections of data-such as menus, icons, and dialog box messages-and the code used by an application or by the system software.

The **Finder Interface** sections do not explain how to use Apple events to communicate with the **Finder**. When a user opens or prints a file from the **Finder**, the **Finder** sends your application information so that your application can open or print the file. In System 7.0, applications that support high-level events receive this information through the required Apple events.

Refer to the **Apple Event Manager** for instructions on how your applica-tion should respond to the required Apple events: Open Application, Open Documents, Print Documents, and Quit Application. By supporting these Apple events, your application can take advantage of the more reliable launch and termination mechanisms built into System 7.0. In addition, your application can use another set of Apple events-called **Finder** events-to request services from the **Finder**. For example, your application can ask the **Finder** to perform such operations as launching another application on your behalf. See the *Apple Event Registry* (a book published by APDA) for the definitions of **Finder** events that your application may wish to support.

The **Finder** is an application that manages the user's desktop interface. It displays icons representing your application and the documents it creates, and it tracks user activity on the desktop. When appropriate, the **Finder** starts up your application and tells it what documents to open or print. To perform these tasks, the **Finder** relies on information you provide through resources. When the user creates or installs a file, the **File Manager** initially stores some of this information in the volume catalog; the **Finder** extracts this information from the catalog and builds a desktop database for quick access to your resource information. The **Finder Interface** describes how to create the resources the **Finder** needs to build its desktop database, and how to gain access to relevant data in the catalog and the desktop database. It also discusses other **Finder**-related information that could be of interest to you.

Like the rest of the Macintosh computer's system software, the **Finder** has

become both more powerful and more complicated since it was first released. The **Finder** includes a number of new user interface features that have a small impact on applications.

The original desktop display was designed for a black-and-white monitor. In System 7.0, you can provide the **Finder** with color versions of your icons. You can also define what the small versions of your icons should look like. (Before version 7.0, the **Finder** scaled icons to half size.)

If your application supports the new stationery pad, **Edition Manager**, or **Data Access Manager** features, you can create icons that distinguish the stationery pads, editions, or query documents that users create with your application. You might also like your application to take advantage of customized document icons. If, instead of producing an application, you produce and distribute information documents (such as database files, stationery pads, query documents, clip art libraries, or dictionaries) to be used by other applications, you can also provide icons that distinguish your documents.

To take advantage of the new stationery pad feature when opening a document from the **Standard File Package**, your application should check a **Finder** flag for the document to determine if the document is stationery.
If your application bypasses the **Finder** or the **Standard File Package** when opening files of any type, it should use the **ResolveAliasFile** function to open the correct file.

Users of System 7.0 no longer utilize the Font/DA Mover for installing fonts, desk accessories, or other system resources. If you're thinking about producing desk accessories, you should probably create small applications instead because there will be little distinction to users between desk accessories and applications. If you plan to produce fonts, sounds, keyboard layouts, or script system resource collections, you need to provide them to users as movable resource files; users of System 7.0 can install them by dragging their icons to the System Folder icon instead of using the Font/DA Mover.

Users of System 7.0 have access to on-line assistance in the form of help balloons. You can customize the help balloon that system software displays for your application icon.

In System 7.0, the System Folder contains a set of folders for storing related files. If your application needs to store a file in the System Folder, put it in one of the new directories described in **The System Folder and its Related Directories**. The Toolbox provides a new function, **FindFolder**, to help your application utilize this new organization.

For each volume, the system software has always maintained a central database of information used by the **Finder**. In System 7.0 , that database is available to your application through a set of **Desktop Manager** routines.

An important function of the **Finder** is to start up your application whenever the user opens it from the **Finder** and whenever the user asks to open or print a document that has been created by your application. The section, **Messages When the Finder Can not Find Your Application** describes what happens when the **Finder** can not find your application.

Macintosh system software originally ran only one application at a time. System 7.0 lets users run multiple applications simultaneously. (In previous versions of system software, the MultiFinder option provided this feature.) Your application is now expected to provide the **Finder** with the information it needs to manage your application in a shared-memory environment, as explained in the **Compatibility Guidelines** and **Event Manager** descriptions.

To help you make the best use of the **Finder**, the sections detailing the **Finder Interface**

- describe the resources that the **Finder** uses to extract information about your application and documents (Generally, all applications should provide these resources for their files.) See the section, **Finder-Related Resources**.

- introduce the new **Finder** features that might affect your application (Generally, most applications should take advantage of some or all of these new features.) See, **Stationery Pads**, **Edition Icons**, **Customized Icons**, **Desk Accessories**, and **Balloon Help for Icons**.

- detail the **Finder** information structure stored in a volume's catalog (Generally, most applications need to determine-and many might wish to set-information in the catalog.)
  See **Finder Information in the Volume Catalog**.

- describe the new directories typically located in the System Folder and tells you how to access them (Generally, many applications will want to access these new folders.)
  See **The System Folder and its Related Directories**.

- explainhow to gain access to a volume's database of icons, applications, and comments (Generally, very few applications need to access this information because the **Finder** maintains and displays it.) See the related sections, **History of the Desktop Database**, **The Desktop Database**, and **Using the Desktop Database**.