

How to show hidden files and folders in Mac OS X Finder

How to reveal secret hidden files on the Mac OS X desktop: this Mac Finder trick displays hidden files and folders.

by Lou Hattersley | 22 May 14

X

Email this to a friend

Friend's email/s (comma :

Your Name

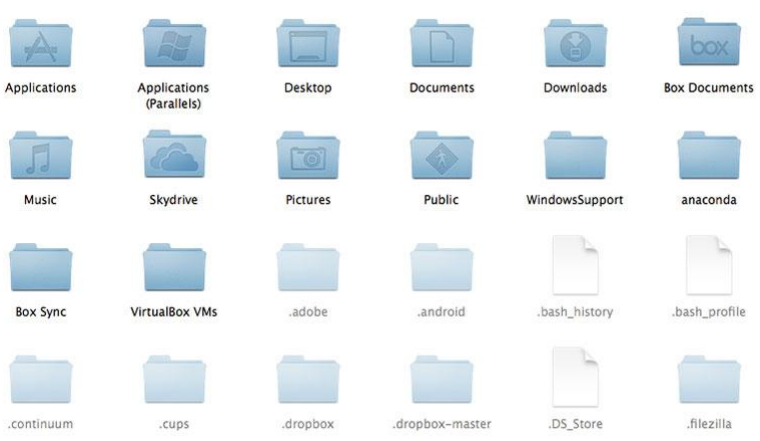
Your email

Hi. I saw this on

Macworld UK and

Characters remaining: 336

Send email



Display hidden [files](#) in Mac OS X Finder using these simple Terminal commands
 How do I reveal hidden files on my Mac? This [tutorial](#) shows you how to reveal hidden files in Mac OS X Finder.

Some people do not even realise that there are a huge range of hidden files, and folders, in Mac OS X. Apple likes to keep things simple for its users, and keeps many files and folders hidden away from prying eyes. The Mac's hidden file structure ensures that Mac newcomers do not interfere with the inner workings of a Mac. However, keeping files hidden is tedious for more experienced Mac users looking to

tweak and fine-tune Mac OS X. This trick is also ideal for Mac OS X aficionados who just want to become more intimate with their Apple machine.

How to show hidden files using Mac Terminal

The Terminal [application](#) is the best way to display hidden files in Mac OS X. The Terminal app enables you to control Mac OS X using the command line to enter Unix commands. We like to think of Terminal as the hood of a car; it allows you to open Mac OS X up and look inside.

Here is how to use Mac Terminal to show hidden files:

Open Terminal ([click](#) Go > Utilities and double-click the Terminal app)

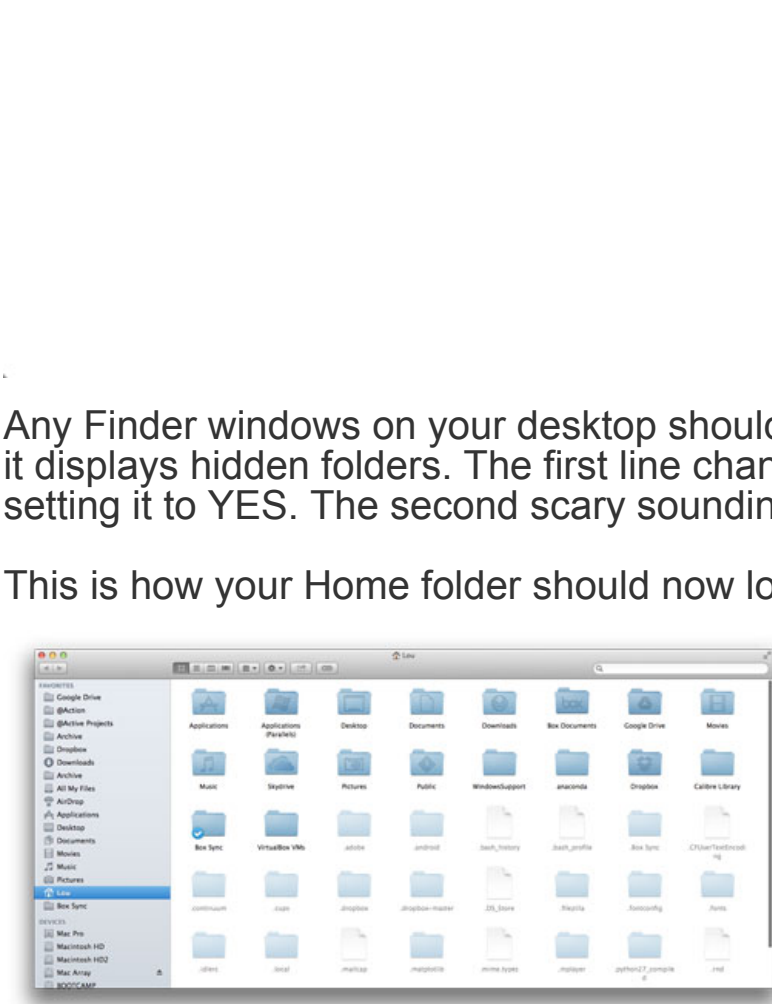
Now copy and paste both lines listed below into Terminal one at a time, and press Return after each line:

defaults write com.apple.finder AppleShowAllFiles YES

killall Finder

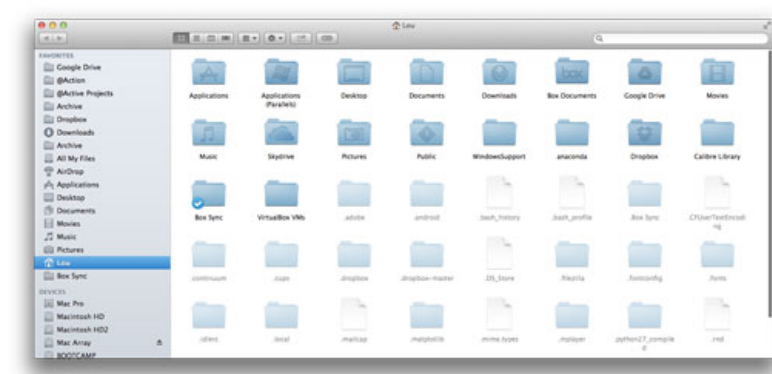
Your Terminal window should look like this:

```
Last login: Sun May 18 20:36:22 on console
Mac-Pro:~ Lou$ defaults write com.apple.Finder AppleShowAllFiles YES
Mac-Pro:~ Lou$ killall Finder
Mac-Pro:~ Lou$
```



Any Finder windows on your desktop should disappear, and then reappear. When the Finder relaunches, it displays hidden folders. The first line changes a setting inside the AppleShowAllFiles preferences; setting it to YES. The second scary sounding "killall" line quits and relaunches the Finder.

This is how your Home folder should now look in the Finder window.



You can also restart the Finder by holding down Option+Control and clicking the Finder [icon](#) in the Dock, then choose Relaunch.

How to hide hidden files again in Mac using Terminal

Returning files to their native 'hidden' state using Terminal is just as easy. You use the same command but write NO at the end (matching the case is important). Cut and paste these two commands into Terminal:

defaults write com.apple.finder AppleShowAllFiles NO

killall Finder

Mac OS X Finder's hidden files vanish again. If you find yourself accessing hidden files on a regular basis,

there are a few [shareware](#) apps that automate the process for you. Most are free or request a donation if you find them useful. We found this Gotoes app performs this function perfectly well.

Read more OS X tutorials

- How to select and copy text from Quick Look previews
- How to show hidden files and folders in Mac OS X Finder
- Tips for Mavericks Finder
- Tips for using System Preferences in Mac OS X Mavericks
- How to set up Back To My Mac in Mac OS X Mavericks
- Find Desktop and Screen Saver images in Mac OS X Mavericks
- 12 Mac OS X Dock tricks
- How to defrag and speed up your Mac

Tags:

- Mac Software,
- OS X

Share this article

X


Email this to a friend

Friend's email/s (comma :

Your Name

Your email

Hi. I saw this on



Macworld UK and



Characters remaining:

Send email

VIDEO: The Sauber F1 Team: Innovation at 200 Miles per Hour



NetApp storage efficiency and high availability help the Sauber F1 Team gain a competitive edge.

Sponsored by NetApp

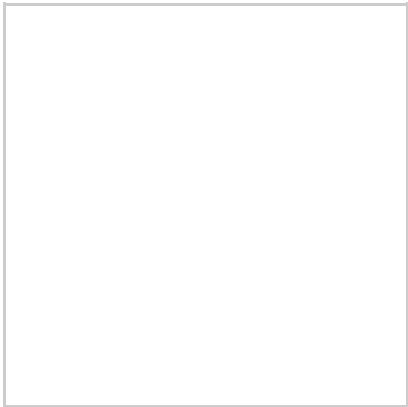
VIDEO: Technology and Water: Two Key Drivers for California



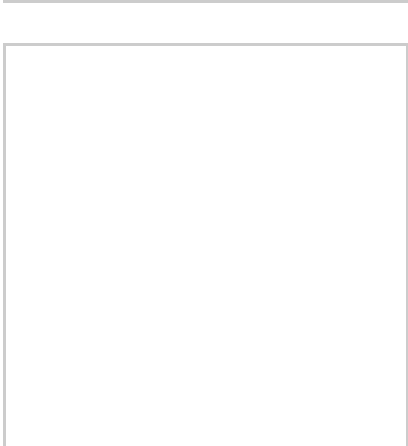
The state of California developed a massive private cloud to support high-performance computing, big data analytics, and mobile strategies.

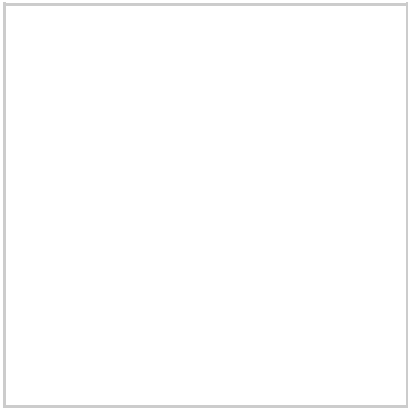
Sponsored by NetApp

Trending Stories



Which Mac to buy: best Mac buying guide





Apple Watch preorders begin: 5 reasons to splurge, 5 reasons to skip

Read More

6 Comments

Macworld UK

Login

Recommend

Share

Sort by Best



Join the discussion...



Pirate48 · 10 months ago

You can also use a simple free third-party app [Funter](#) . It saves much time and is very useful for developers.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Kirk McElhearn · a year ago

You are brutal and insensitive. You recommend that people kill the Finder, and imagine how the Finder feels about that? And you don't want them to just kill one finder, but all of them! You're bloodthirsty and have no consideration for poor Finders...

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Lucy Hattersley → Kirk McElhearn · a year ago

I don't just recommend people kill the Finder. I recommend people KillALL the Finders. Like the Macapocalypse...

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Macworld UK Mod → Kirk McElhearn · a year ago

Everyone knows that Finders don't have feelings, Kirk. They're like oysters, or MEPs.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Kirk McElhearn → Macworld UK · a year ago

You're wrong. The Finder Protection Society did a study recently where they

you're wrong. The Finder Protection Society did a study recently where they found that Finders do suffer, not only from killals, but also from force quits:

[Read the study](#)

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



tim smith · a month ago

Thank You, this problem has been bugging me for weeks and you have solved my problem. Sometimes it's difficult to express how wonderful it is to feel helped.

Have a good day.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

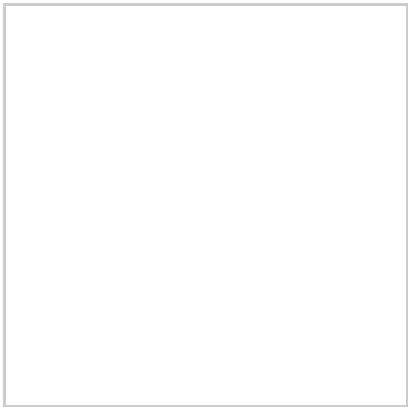
[Subscribe](#)

[Add Disqus to your site](#)

[Privacy](#)

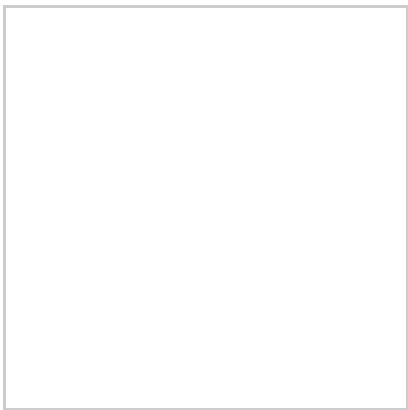
DISQUS

Latest Stories



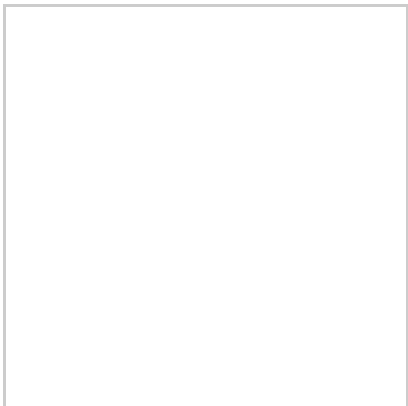
How to make Apple Watch battery last longer

2 hours ago



How to use System Preferences in Mac OS X Yosemite

10 hours ago

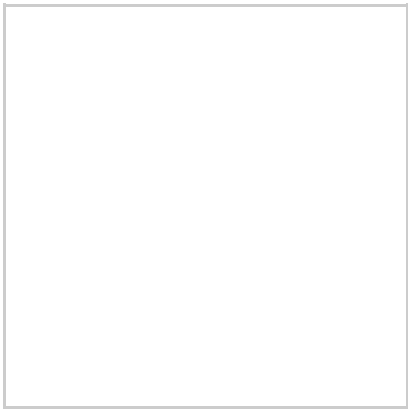


How to buy or pre-order the Apple Watch in the UK

09 Apr 15

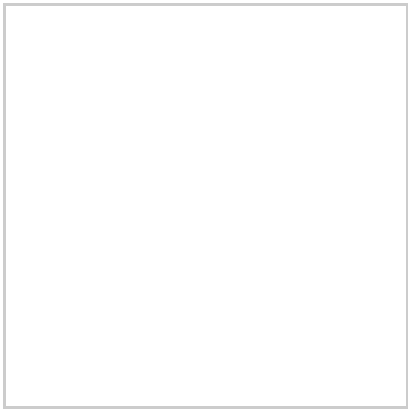
[Read More](#)

Latest Apple Rumours



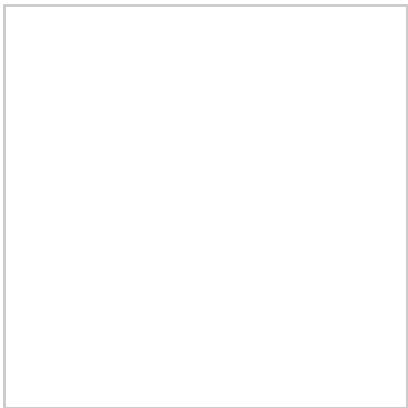
#Crescentgate plagues iPhone 6 users

04 Dec 14



iPad Air 3 release date rumours

15 Dec 14

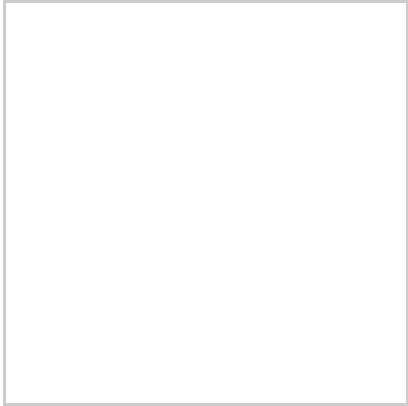


New Retina MacBook release date, specs & UK pricing

09 Apr 15

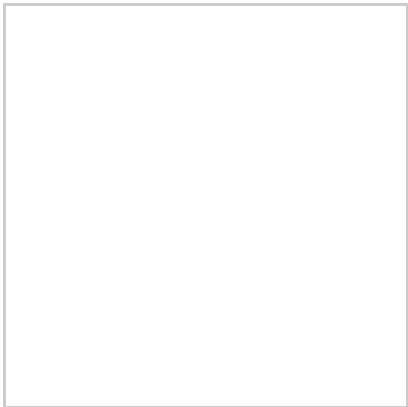
[Read More](#)

Latest Apple Reviews



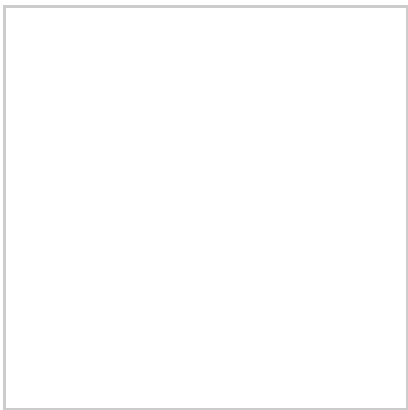
New 12-inch MacBook (early 2015) hands-on review

6 hours ago



Apple Watch review

9 hours ago



13-inch MacBook Air (early 2015) review

09 Apr 15

[Read More Apple Reviews](#)

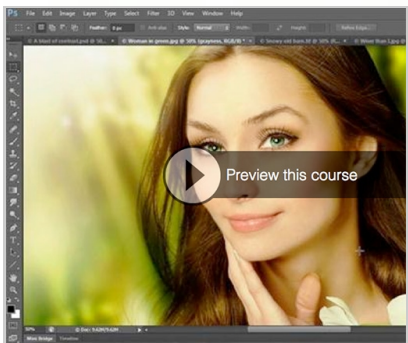




Samsung Galaxy S6 review: The best Android phone of 2015. The S6 is Samsung's best-looking Galaxy...



Why Internet of Things Day isn't a thing, and mainstream politics doesn't get the internet



LinkedIn buys training site Lynda.com



Complete guide to Apple Watch: How to buy or pre-order each Apple Watch model, UK prices, launch...