


KITP - Top Tips for Mac OS X

1. Terminology

- The *Dock* is equivalent to the taskbar in Windows or Linux.
- The *Apple* menu is the menu with the Apple logo at the top left. It is used for system wide settings and presents the same options regardless of which program is in the foreground.
- The command key is the one with the cloverleaf  logo on it and behaves similarly to the control key on Windows or Linux.
- The *System Preferences* (under the *Apple* menu) are the Mac OS X equivalent of *Control Panels*.
- A single menu bar along the top of the screen displays menus for the program currently in the foreground. The name of the frontmost program is displayed in the first menu to the right of the *Apple* menu.
- *Aliases* are the equivalent of *shortcuts* in Windows.
- **For additional information**, go to the *Finder* by clicking on your desktop (it should say *Finder* in the menu bar at the top left) and choose *Mac Help* from the *Help* menu. Click on the *New to Mac OS X* help option and then on *For Windows Switchers* in the left pane.



2. Using the Dock



The dock shows currently running programs with a triangle under them, allows you to switch between programs, and provides a quick and easy way to get to frequently used programs, files, and folders. Programs live on the left while folders/files/minimized windows live on the right.

- Click and drag on the divider bar in the dock near the trash can to resize the dock. Choose *Dock* from the *Apple* menu to customize position and behavior such as auto-hiding.
- **Place Frequently Used Items in Dock**
 - Drag programs, folders, or files which you use frequently to the dock and arrange them in an appropriate manner by dragging. Remove infrequently used items from the dock by dragging them out of it.
 - You can control-click on a folder placed in the dock to get a list of all the items in it.
 - Note that the dock uses *aliases*; dragging an item into or out of the dock won't remove the original.

3. The Finder

- The *Finder* is used to manage your files and folders; the *desktop* is part of the *Finder*.
- Windows in the *Finder* behave like web browser windows; several can point to the same place. To create a new *Finder* window, choose *New Finder Window* from the *File* menu when in *Finder*. Drag folders or files you frequently use into the sidebar on the left. Also try the *Go* menu to jump to your Applications.
- The easiest way to get to a file or program is often to create a new *Finder* window and navigate from there.



4. Window and Program Management

• Quick Program Switching

Press **⌘-tab** to switch between currently running programs. To cycle between them, you have three options: hit the tab key repeatedly, use the arrow keys on your keyboard, or move the mouse over the icon. You can also click on the program's icon in the dock to switch to it.

• Managing Open Windows

- Pressing **⌘-~** (tilde) cycles between open windows in the front program.
- To minimize a single window, type **⌘-M**, or click the orange button at the top left of the window.
- To hide all windows in a given program, choose *Hide* from the program's main menu directly to the right of the *Apple* menu. To get the windows back, click on the program's icon in the dock or use **⌘-tab**.
- Exposé is a quick and easy way to find an open window or reveal your desktop. Press **F9** to show all open windows in all programs, **F10** to show open windows in the frontmost program, and **F11** to reveal your desktop. You can drag files from your desktop while it is exposed and press **F11** again while still dragging to bring your windows back to the front for easy drag and drop.



5. Terminal vs X11 for Command Line Access

- Mac OS X is a BSD unix based operating system, and full access to the command-line is available via the *Terminal* or *X11* applications. Terminal is for text based unix programs only - if you want to use graphical unix programs, launch X11 from your dock or */Applications/Utilities/X11*.
- The OS X *Terminal* program is very customizable - try setting the font size larger in the *Window Settings* under the *Terminal* menu. You can also choose color schemes which are nicer on your eyes, or set a slight transparency to the window (under the *Preferences* menu option).
- Dragging a file or folder from *Finder* to a *Terminal* (not X11) window will enter the complete path to the file.



6. Web Browsing with Style

- The default Mac OS X browser is called *Safari* and features tabbed browsing and popup window blocking. These options may not be enabled by default, so turn on the popup window blocking under the *Safari* menu and enable tabbed browsing in the *Preferences* also under the *Safari* menu.



7. Printing to PDF is Convenient

- Any Mac OS X application (except X11 apps) which allows you to print should allow you to *Save As PDF*; this comes in handy for emailing attachments and saving records digitally rather than on paper. Choose *Print* from the *File* menu as usual and then click on the *Save As PDF* option instead of *Print*. If you ever decide to print it later, you can print the PDF instead of the original file and it will look the same as if you had printed it to paper in the first place.



8. System Preferences

- Customize your System Preferences by choosing *System Preferences...* under the *Apple* menu. You may want to change settings for the date/time format, numerical format, dock, desktop picture, sound, appearance, default language (under *International*), etc.
- Adjust the keyboard repeat rate and delay in the *Keyboard* System Preference pane. If you're a fast typist, you'll find that this will make it much easier to type - it also speeds up tasks like holding down the delete key to delete a series of characters.
- If you frequently use the same programs after logging in, you can set OS X to launch them automatically for you. Go to the *Accounts* pane in the *System Preferences* and click on the *Startup Items* tab. Add any programs or files you frequently use.



9. Customizing Toolbars

- Many Mac OS X windows contain *toolbars* at the top, but it's up to you to customize them. Choose *Customize Toolbar...* from the *View* menu or control-click on a toolbar and choose *Customize Toolbar* to set it up. For an example, try customizing the toolbar in Finder and Mail.



10. Force Quit for Stuck Programs

- If a program times out and shows the 'spinning beach ball' for too long, you may need to force it to quit. To do this, control-click on its dock icon, hold down the option key, and choose the *Force Quit* option. You can also type **⌘-option-escape**, or choose *Force Quit* from the *Apple* menu.



11. Drag & Drop

- The Mac OS X user interface makes extensive use of dragging and dropping files, folders, pictures, text, etc. If you become more familiar with drag and drop, you'll have an easier time using OS X.
- For example, to add an attachment to an email, just drag the file into an email that you are composing. To open a file with a particular program, drag the file onto that program's icon. To move text from one program to another, select the text and drag it between them (it helps to pause for a fraction of a second before dragging). To save a picture from Safari to the desktop, drag it to the desktop. You get the idea.

12. Right Clicks are Useful

- On a one button mouse, hold down the control key and click to simulate a right-click. Right clicking brings up a *contextual menu* which shows *context sensitive information* based upon where you click - try it on a dock icon, file, or folder for an example. We can provide a two button mouse if desired.



13. Screen Capture

- Press **⌘-shift-3** to capture the entire screen, **⌘-shift-4** and drag to capture a portion of it, or **⌘-shift-4** followed by space bar and clicking on a window to capture a single window. Captures will be saved on your desktop as PDF files. Try the *Grab* program in your *Utilities* folder for more capture options.



14. Text Editing is Fast and Easy

- For files which don't need complicated formatting, *TextEdit* (in your *Applications* folder) is easier and quicker to use than more fully featured word processors. It's handy for taking quick notes and supports *live spell checking*, speech, rulers, and many other options. *TextEdit* can open most Word files and the RTF files it creates will open in Word so you can send them to others.
- For non formatted text editing (such as source code editing), try SubEthaEdit or TextWrangler, both of which have a command line equivalent and feature syntax hi-lighting. (located in */Network/Applications*)
- In almost all text fields, the following shortcuts come in handy. The commands **⌘-→**, **⌘-←**, **⌘-↑**, **⌘-↓** go to the far right hand side of a line, left hand side, top of a page, and bottom of a page, respectively. This is similar to using the home and end keys on a Windows or Linux computer.



15. Keychain Stores Passwords

- Mac OS X has a built in *keychain* program which can store passwords to file servers, web pages, email accounts, wireless access points and others for you. To manage your keychain settings, open the *Keychain Access* program in your *Utilities* folder (located in the *Applications*) folder.



16. Additional Tips

- Visit <http://www.apple.com/macosx/overview> or the KITP computing page for additional tips and information.
- For personal assistance with your setup, send email to help@kitp.ucsb.edu.