

What's In the Script Menu

You don't have to *create* AppleScripts to get mileage out of this technology. Mac OS X comes with several dozen prewritten scripts that are genuinely useful—and all you have to do is choose their names from a menu. “Playing back” an AppleScript in this way requires about as much technical skill as pressing an elevator button.

To sample some of these cool starter scripts, you should first add the Script menu to your menu bar (see Figure 1). To do that, open the AppleScript Editor program (in your Utilities folder). Choose AppleScript Editor→Preferences, and turn on “Show Script menu in menu bar.”

The Script Menu provides 16 premade categories, which incorporate over 100 scripts; just choose a script's name to make it run. Here's a summary of the most useful and fun scripts.

Tip: If you press the Shift key as you choose a script's name from the Script menu, Mac OS X takes you directly to that script's location in the Finder (for example, your Home→Library→Scripts folder). Better yet, if you press *Option* as you choose its name, you open the script in AppleScript Editor for inspection or editing.

Address Book Scripts

In this submenu, you'll find **Import Addresses**, which is designed to move your names and addresses into Mac OS X's Address Book program from Entourage, Outlook Express, Palm Desktop, Eudora, Claris E-mailer, or Netscape. If you've got a lot of friends, use this script; you'll be glad that you won't have to re-enter all their names, phone numbers, and email addresses. (The accompanying Address Importers subfolder offers scripts to import from three specific programs.)

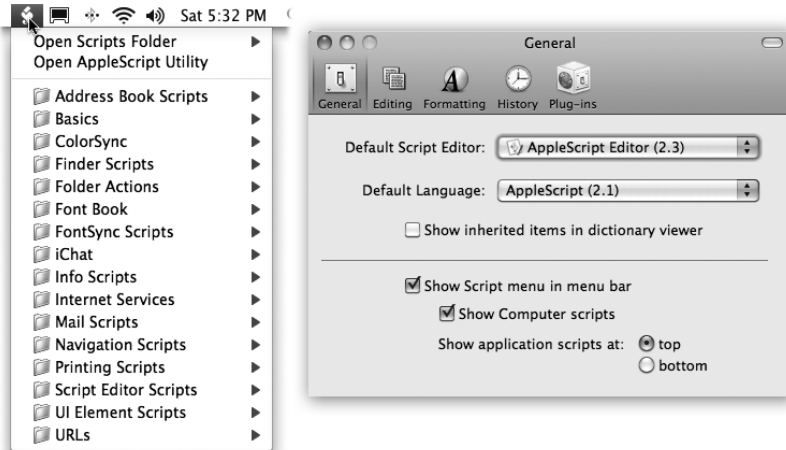
Basics

This submenu offers three small, handy scripts related to AppleScript: **AppleScript Help** (which opens the Help Viewer and searches for the word *AppleScript*); **AppleScript Web site** (which opens the AppleScript Web page in your Web browser); and **Open AppleScript Editor** (opens the AppleScript Editor program, the program you use to read and write AppleScripts).

Figure 1:

Left: Snow Leopard's starter scripts appear in categories.

Right: You make the Script menu appear using the Preferences command in AppleScript Editor.



ColorSync

In this folder, you'll find a bunch of ColorSync script *droplets* (scripts that run when you drop something on their icons) primarily designed for graphic artists, Web site designers, publishers, and so on.

In some cases, choosing a script's name from the menu produces a terse help message, and then an Open dialog box for choosing the graphics file you want to process.

Others have an immediate effect. The "Mimic PC monitor" script, for example, adjusts the colors of your screen so they closely resemble the slightly different hues of a Windows PC monitor. That's a blessing if you're working on a photo or Web page, and you want to preview how it will look to the unwashed masses. (To restore the original colors, visit the Color tab of the Displays pane of System Preferences.)

Finder Scripts

All of these scripts have to do with the Finder: manipulating files and windows, for example. A few of the most useful:

- **Add to File Names, Add to Folder Names.** These scripts tack on a prefix or suffix to the name of every file or folder in the frontmost Finder window (or, if no windows

are open, on the desktop). You could use this script to add the word *draft* or *final* or *old* to all of the files in a certain folder.

- **Replace Text in Item Names** lets you do a search-and-replace of text bits inside file names, folder names, or both. When one publisher rejects your 45-chapter book proposal, you could use this script to change all 45 chapter files from, for example, “A History of Mouse Pads—A Proposal for Random House, Chapter 1” to “A History of Mouse Pads—A Proposal for Simon & Schuster, Chapter 1.”
- **Trim File Names, Trim Folder Names.** If you made a mistake in using the Add to File Names script, you can always use the Trim File Names script to undo the damage. This one *removes* file extensions, suffixes, or prefixes of your choosing.

For example, suppose you’ve just made a lot of new folders at once. Mac OS X calls them “untitled folder,” “untitled folder 2,” and so on. But what if you’d rather have them just called “folder 1,” “folder 2,” and so on? Run the Trim Folder Names script; when the dialog box asks you what you want trimmed, type *untitled* and click OK.

Folder Actions

You probably won’t use these scripts much, since Control-clicking a folder (or inside its window) offers the same access to *folder actions*.

Font Book

These scripts are intended to be demonstrations of how you might automate certain font-oriented tasks.

FontSync Scripts

FontSync is a noble Apple attempt to solve an old problem for desktop publishers. You finish designing some beautiful newsletter, take it to the local printing shop for printing on a high-quality press, and then have to throw out the entire batch—all because the fonts didn’t come out right. The printing shop didn’t have exactly the same fonts you had when you prepared the document. Or, worse, it did have the same font—but from a different font company, with the same name but slightly different type characteristics.

FontSync can give you early warning for such disasters. When you run the Create FontSync Profile script, several minutes elapse—and then the Mac generates a Font-

POWER USERS’ CLINIC

Secrets of the Script Menu

The Script menu reflects the contents of two different Scripts folders: the one in your Home→Library Scripts folder, and the one in your main Library folder. The ones in your Home folder are listed below the second line in the Script menu.

These scripts aren’t just for running. They’re also ideal for

opening up in AppleScript Editor (just by double-clicking) and analyzing line by line, to learn how they work. Once you understand the syntax, you can then copy bits of the code to modify and use in your own scripts. (AppleScript Editor is a program in your Applications→AppleScript folder; you can use it to type up your own scripts.)

Sync Profile document. This file contains staggering amounts of information about the design, spacing, and curlicues of every font installed in your system. When you hand that profile over to your print shop, they can drop it onto the accompanying script, called Match FontSync Profile. It tells them precisely what fonts are different on their Macs and yours.

The wishful-thinking aspect of this technology is, of course, that it assumes a lot: that your print shop uses a Mac; that the print shop knows how to use FontSync; and that you remember to create the profile and submit it.

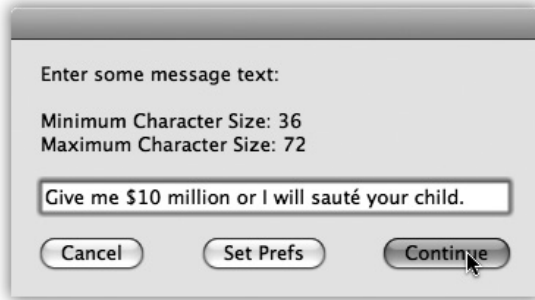
iChat

iChat back in 10.5 was given a major overhaul, and Apple added tons of fun (if not always *useful*) features. Among them: You can run AppleScripts as Alerts when a

Figure 7-17:

Top: Enter your text in the Crazy Message Text dialog box. You can customize the range of font sizes in the message by clicking Set Prefs.

Bottom: Once you click Continue, you end up with a randomly-formatted jumble of text, perfect for avoiding handwriting detection. This script offers a great way to send electronic greeting cards, birthday wishes, or ransom notes.



certain buddy Event takes place. For example, you can auto-accept chat invitations from certain buddies, or even auto-answer them with a canned greeting. You can even control one Mac's music playback by typing commands into the iChat window of another one, elsewhere in the house.

Info Scripts

These two scripts offer minor usefulness. **Current Date & Time** displays the current date and time in a dialog box, complete with a Clipboard button that copies the information, ready for pasting. **Font Sampler** creates a handy printable cheat sheet, suitable for posting on your wall, that includes every one of your fonts illustrated in a sentence. (It's less useful now that Font Book has similar printout-generating commands built right in.)

Internet Services

Two scripts in this submenu merit special mention. **Current Temperature by Zipcode** gives you the temperature outside your house—in Fahrenheit *and* Celsius. It's just one more reason to stay inside all day.

Stock Quote fetches a 20-minute delayed stock quote for the company of your choice. It's not as good as getting real-time quotes, but hey, it's free.

Mail Scripts

Most of the scripts in this submenu do nuts-and-bolts things like counting messages in your mailboxes or setting up a new email account. The one that's the most fun, though, is **Crazy Message Text** (Figure 2).

Navigation Scripts

This subfolder's scripts let you jump to special folders in the Finder, right from the menu bar within any program. If the folder you want to open doesn't have its own dedicated script, choose from the listing in **Open Special Folder**.

Tip: If you're game to edit this script in AppleScript Editor, you can modify it to let you choose and open more than one folder simultaneously (by **⌘**-clicking them, for example). Just type *multiple selections allowed true* right after the text *Choose folder to open:* (which appears at the end of a line about a third of the way down the script). Save your changes.

Printing Scripts

These scripts are designed to illustrate the power of AppleScript when it comes to printing and generating PostScript or PDF documents.

One of them, **Print Window**, plugs a long-standing hole in Mac OS X. It's designed to print a textual list of what's in any folder you choose. (It's a tad buggy, however.)

AppleScript Editor Scripts

As the **About these scripts** command tells you, these 48 canned scripts can help you write faster and more accurate scripts, because the code chunks are free of typos and

syntax errors. As you progress, you can add your *own* code-building scripts here, customized for the kind of scripts you like to build, to make you even more productive. (While writing your script in AppleScript Editor, you insert one of these code chunks by Control-clicking and choosing from the shortcut menu.)

UI Element Scripts

Much of the time, scripts perform their magic quietly in the background, out of sight. But if you're trying to automate a program that doesn't respond to the usual AppleScript commands, your scripts can now "operate" them manually by making your Mac think you've clicked menu commands, clicked buttons, and so on.

Note: This feature, called UI (user-interface) scripting, doesn't work until you first open the Universal Access panel of System Preferences and make sure that "Enable access for assistive devices" is turned on.

You wouldn't want to run the scripts in the UI Element Scripts folder just as they are; they're simply samples that show you the correct syntax.

URLs

This final set of scripts provides quick links to common Web sites. All, that is, except **Download Weather Map**, which fetches an up-to-the-minute weather map of the continental United States, saves it on your desktop as *weathermap.jpg*, and then opens it in Preview for your inspection.

Tip: You can add scripts, files, and even Internet location files (page 694) to the Script Menu, so you can easily launch them all from the menu bar. Anything you drop into the Library→Scripts folder automatically shows up in the Script menu.

On the other hand, if you start adding a lot of your own stuff to the Script menu, you might wish that all Apple's own sample scripts *didn't* appear there. No problem. Open AppleScript Editor and turn off "Show Computer scripts."
