

Mouse Times

Organize your Macintosh

On the SBMUG email list, Bill Wellman wrote: "Having converted to OSX only this year, after decades with OS6-7-8-9 experience, I'd like a tutorial on how OSX files should be organized. Currently, I have some folders at the hard disk level, and some others in the "users" folder, and I'd like to get the mess straightened out. Also, how about some comments on where internet bookmarks, email addresses, etc. lurk -- I lost some of those recently when I installed a new and bigger hard drive, and foolishly eliminated files that seemed redundant."

Mail, Apple's default e-mail client application, retrieves e-mail addresses and names from the Address Book application. Address book entries, saved as v-card formatted files, are found here:

```
/Users/yourhomedirectory/Library/Caches/com.apple.AddressBook/MetaData/
```

Replace "yourhomedirectory" with the actual name of your user account's home directory. The files have strange names, but you can double-click on them to find which person they represent. Don't move them around, or change the names. Edit your addresses in the Address Book application, instead. It's good to know where they are, if you want to back up your files. Note that they are backed up if you backup your user account's home directory, as they are in a sub-folder.

Safari's bookmarks are stored here: `/Users/yourhomedirectory/Library/Caches/Metadata/Safari/` (with the same restrictions. Edit the bookmarks in the Safari application, not in the Finder.)

Organizing the files on your Macintosh is a matter of personal preference. There is no right answer because there are many reasonable options. I shall discuss some techniques that you may want to adapt to your own style, and may help you find files and folders faster.

The Obvious: Some suggestions seem pretty obvious. Applications should be store in the Applications folder. That folder is a special location to the Finder and from the Finder you can hold down the shift and command keys and press the "A" key and The front window will display the contents of the Applications folder. Shift-command-U reveals the contents of the Utilities folder. Under most circumstances you should not place your data files in the top-level folder titled "System," as that is devoted to the OS X operating system. There is no reason to place any new Folders or data files at the top-level (or the root level) or your hard drive. That's not as obvious a hint but I think it is good advice. Almost everything should go in your home directory to make backups simpler.

Aliases: You should be aware of aliases, since they've been around since System 7.0, and are a good way of accessing folders from other folders. Aliases are tiny files that represent a file or folder in another location. One way to create an alias in the Finder is to select a file and choose "make alias" from the File menu. Drag the alias to another folder, the Dock, or the Desktop. Then you can always open that alias to open your hidden file or folder (even if it was moved), or drag files to it, or anything else you would do with the actual file or folder.

Patrick Marr wrote: "One of the things that I do is make use of aliases in the Dock to create shortcuts to frequently used items:

"In my documents folder, I have a folder called Pat's Super Folder. In the super folder, I have aliases to all my most frequently used documents, like my Quicken file, another folder containing aliases of my most frequently used applications (so I don't have to dig through the entire list of all the applications in the Applications Folder), a similar folder of aliases to frequently used utilities, etc. I then dragged the Super Folder to the Dock, so that I have quick access to its contents. I dragged the Super Folder to the Finder window Sidebar, so I have access to it from any open Finder window."

Two other ways to create aliases is to drag a file or folder to the sidebar of a Finder window, or (Tiger only) drag an item to the Toolbar of the window. I usually keep utilities, such as Disk Utility, in the window toolbar. I also

keep shell scripts, AppleScripts and certain Unix Terminal window aliases there, since I'm a programmer, and want to access that stuff from the Finder. Place any file's alias there, as long as it makes sense to you to have it there. Or drag folders, files, or applications in the left sidebar of a Finder's window (creates alias). It makes sense to place often-accessed folders there that are deep within your home directory, that require more than two mouse clicks to reach. Patrick Marr said, "I find it handy to drag Stuffit Expander to the Sidebar, so that I can quickly drag and drop decompress stuffed files from any Finder window."

The Dock: Most users, including experts, like to drag a hundred icons onto the Dock. I think it's more difficult to find the item you want if there are a lot of items there. I place only the most-used applications on the Dock, ranked from left to right in importance (my Dock is at the bottom of the screen, but you can move it to the left or right sides). So my e-mail client is the leftmost icon, just to the right of the Finder icon. My Safari browser icon is right of that, then iChat, etc. I open some applications only by opening a document that belongs to it, so I leave them off the dock. In order to lessen the number of Dock icons, you could drag the Applications folder, or drag a folder full of aliases (as Patrick did), to the Dock, next to the Trash. When you click and hold the mouse on that Dock item, the pop-up menu displays all of the contents of that folder.

Home Directory: The home directories for all user accounts are found in the Users folder of your hard drive. Certainly you can create any number of sub-folders in your home directory, or any of its folders. Most of your data files will probably be stored in the Documents folder, but you may not want that to get too cluttered. Patrick Marr wrote: "To eliminate the clutter within my Documents folder, where many applications dump miscellaneous files, I have a folder within the Documents Folder called Pat's Documents. I store all my files within Pat's Documents folder, so that I don't have the face the clutter of the real Documents Folder when searching for something."

| SBMUG Meeting Schedule (at Goleta Library) | | |
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| <i>Date</i> | <i>Time</i> | <i>Presentation</i> |
| September 21 (Wednesday!) | 6 PM | New Hardware <i>raffle an iPod Nano</i> |
| October 12 (Wednesday!) | 6 PM | Digital Photography Composition & Edit |
| November 17 | 6 PM | Filemaker Pro 8 |
| December 14 (Wednesday!) | 6 PM | TBD |

SANTA BARBARA MACINTOSH USERS' GROUP

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Check the mailing label above for your membership renewal date.
 Please help us by renewing your membership. We sincerely appreciate your support!