Finder Palette

System 7 File Launch Utility

Version 1.0
February 1992

Introduction

Finder Palette is a file launch and organizational utility. With Finder Palette, you install links to your frequently-used applications, folders, desk accessories, etc., in a special launch palette. You then use the launch palette to launch/open those frequently-used files.

With Finder Palette, you are not required to place your frequently-used files in a special folder (like you are required to do with Apple Menu Items). Since files can be located anywhere on your hard disk, the installation process is simple. And, as you will see, customizing Finder Palette to suit your personal preferences is a breeze.

The launch palette contains an array of 3-dimensional buttons (or cells) that are labeled with the icon of the installed file or folder. Finder Palette supports the new System 7 color icons, including custom icons, and properly hilites them (instead of simply inverting the colors).

Finder Palette's user interface was constructed with navigational speed in mind. All of the functions can be invoked from the either the keyboard or the mouse, eliminating the need to switch back and forth between the two. Even check boxes, radio buttons, and push buttons in dialog windows can be selected from the keyboard. And the launch palette can be accessed almost anytime using user-configurable "hot keys" and/or "hot corners".

Requirements

• Finder Palette requires System 7.0 or later. If you attempt to run the program on an earlier System version, Finder Palette will warn you and then gracefully exit.

• 150K of RAM is required.

• A hard disk is required.

• Finder Palette looks best on color monitors with at least 16 colors (and so do the file icons), but it works quite well on black and white monitors, too.

Features

Finder Palette incorporates some of the more popular features found in other shareware and commercial file launch utilities as well as some features not found elsewhere. This version sports the following features:

• Many Supported File Types:

   - applications
   - desk accessories
   - control panel devices
   - folders
   - system Clipboard file
   - Finder

• System 7 Color Icons, including the new custom icons. In addition, Finder Palette properly hilites the icons; some applications simply invert the colors of the icons, which is not consistent with the hiliting scheme used by the Finder.

• Finder-like Launches. Although Finder Palette is not meant to be a substitute for the Finder, it will attempt to launch applications just like the Finder does in memory-tight situations. For instance, if there isn't enough memory available to launch an application with its preferred memory partition, Finder Palette can attempt to relaunch the application with the application's minimum memory partition (just like the Finder does) if you so desire.

• Auto-open Documents that can be attached to a cell's file to be opened at launch time.

• Intelligent File Searches for files that have been moved on your hard disk. Believe it or not, some commercially-available launch utilities make you completely reconfigure a cell for files that have been moved. Finder Palette allows you to locate the moved file with a standard "open file" dialog. In many cases, Finder Palette can automatically locate the most recent version of a moved or missing file. Incidentally, future versions of Finder Palette may completely eliminate the need to locate moved files.

• Pop-up Launch Menu that can be accessed by holding the mouse down in an active (not empty) cell.   This menu is also available as a submenu of the Launch… command in the Finder Palette menu. The menu can be used to specify the launch options if the file is an application (i.e., the application only, with the attached auto-open document, or with another auto-open document). For non-applications, the menu is just used to open the file. The menu can also be very useful in indentifying files or folders that aren't distinguishable by their icon alone. For instance, you might have several folders installed in the palette, all of which have the same generic folder icon. By using the pop-up menu, you can identify each of the folders by name.

• Direct Access to the Finder "Get Info…" command, eliminating the need to physically locate the file with the Finder and issue a "Get Info…" command.

• "Hot Keys" and "Hot Corners" for easy, quick access to the launch palette.

• User-Configurable Preferences that allow you to customize the Finder Palette functions, including the palette dimensions, the behavior of the launch palette while in the background, what the hot keys and corners are, and more.

• A Flexible User Interface. All of the functions can be invoked from the either the keyboard or the mouse. Even check boxes, radio buttons, and push buttons in dialog windows can be selected from the keyboard!

• Keyboard Shortcuts for "power users"!

• A Functional Edit Menu that allows you to move, copy or clear file links.

• An Online Help Utility that is accessible from the Balloon Help Menu.

Quick Start

This section describes how to use Finder Palette for the first time. We're assuming you've already copied the Finder Palette application to your hard disk, and that you've launched the copy that now resides on your hard disk. The first time you launch Finder Palette, you will be presented with a launch palette (window) with 20 empty cells.

• Step 1. Quickly browse through the online help manual by selecting the "Finder Palette Help…" command in the Apple Help menu.

• Step 2. Once you're ready to begin installing files and folders into the launch palette, select a cell by clicking in it with the mouse, or by using the arrow, tab, home, or end keys.

• Step 3. Install an application, desk accessory, folder, etc., by double-clicking in the empty cell, or by selecting the Install… command in the Finder Palette menu. Use the standard "open file" dialog to locate the file or folder that you wish to install.

• Step 4. Now, try the launch features of Finder Palette by double-clicking the cell that you just installed a file or folder in.

• Step 5. Return to Finder Palette and install some more files or folders by repeating Steps 2 and 3 above.

• Step 6. Now might be a good time to customize Finder Palette. Select the Preferences… command in the Finder Palette menu. Experiment with the options a little bit to see how they work. Decide which of them you would like to use.

• Step 7. You may also want to change the configuration of the launch palette itself (dimensions, location of drag bar, etc.). If so, select the Configure… command in the Finder Palette menu.

• Step 8. Save the settings, either by selecting the Save Settings command in the File menu, or simply by quitting the program.

Reminder: Keyboard shortcuts are available for all of Finder Palette's functions. See the Keyboard Shortcuts section below for more information.

Menus

Finder Palette displays 4 pull-down menus in the menu bar: Apple, File, Edit, and Finder Palette. An additional pop-up menu is available by clicking and holding the mouse in an active (i.e., non-empty) button in the launch palette (the pop-up menu is also available as a submenu of the Finder Palette menu). The "Finder Palette Help" command is available from the Apple Help menu.

The following sections briefly explain the choices available in the Finder Palette menus.

• Apple Menu

```
 _____
|  ⌘        |
|_____|_____
| About Finder Palette...  ⌘` |
|_____|
```

• About Finder Palette… (Command-tilde).

This command displays the Finder Palette about… box.

• File Menu

```
 _____
| File |
|_____|_____
| Open Window    ⌘O   |
| Close Window   ⌘W   |
|.....................|
| Save Settings  ⌘S   |
|.....................|
| Quit           ⌘Q   |
|_____|
```

• Open Window (Command-O).

This command makes the launch palette (window) visible. If the palette is already visible, this command is dimmed.

• Close Window (Command-W).

This command hides the launch palette (window). If the palette is already hidden, this command is dimmed.

• Save Settings (Command-S).

This command saves the current settings by writing the appropriate information to the "Finder Palette Settings" file. The file will be located in the system Preferences folder (which is located in the System Folder).

• Quit (Command-Q).

This command quits Finder Palette. If changes have been made to the Finder Palette settings, you will be asked whether or not you want to save the changes.

• Edit Menu

```
 Edit
  Undo    ⌘Z
 ┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈
  Cut     ⌘H
  Copy    ⌘C
  Paste   ⌘U
  Clear   ⌘B
```

• Undo (Command-Z).

This command reverses the last Cut or Paste command. You can't undo a Clear or Copy command.

• Cut (Command-X).

This commands removes all of the information about the selected cell and places a copy of

that information in the clipboard. Use this command if you want to move the contents of a cell to a different location in the launch palette. If the selected cell is empty, this command is not available, and will be dimmed.

• Copy (Command-C).

This command places a copy of the information about the selected cell in the clipboard. If the selected cell is empty, this command is not available, and will be dimmed.

• Paste (Command-V).

This command copies the information stored in the clipboard into the selected cell. This command is only available if the selected cell is empty.

• Clear (Command-B).

This command clears all of the information from the selected cell. It does not place a copy of the cell's information in the clipboard, so the effect will not be reversible. Therefore, a confirmation dialog will be displayed whenever this command is issued. If the selected cell is empty, this command is not available, and will be dimmed.

• Finder Palette Menu

The appearance and functionality of the Finder Palette Menu changes somewhat, depending on the state of the selected cell. If the selected cell is empty, the menu will appear like the one below:

```
 Finder Palette 
 Install...              ⌘N
 Attach Document...      ⌘A
 Get Info...             ⌘I
 ..............................
 Move Palette to Corner  ⌘M
 Configure Palette...    ⌘G
 Preferences...          ⌘P
```

If the selected cell is not empty (i.e., a file or folder has already been installed there), the menu will appear like this:

```
╔══════════════════════════════╗
║ Finder Palette               ║
╟──────────────────────────────╢
║ Launch                    ▶  ║
║ Detach Document...       ⌘D  ║
║ Get Info...              ⌘I  ║
║ ............................ ║
║ Move Palette to Corner   ⌘M  ║
║ Configure Palette...     ⌘G  ║
║ Preferences...           ⌘P  ║
╚══════════════════════════════╝
```

• Install… (Command-N) or Launch.

The Install… command is used to install a file or folder to an empty cell. Obviously, this command is only available when the selected cell is empty. If the selected cell is not empty, the menu item text changes to "Launch".

The Launch command displays the Launch submenu, which is explained in the Launch Popup Menu section below. If the selected cell is empty, the menu item text changes to "Install…".

• Attach Document… (Command-A) or Detach Document… (Command-D).
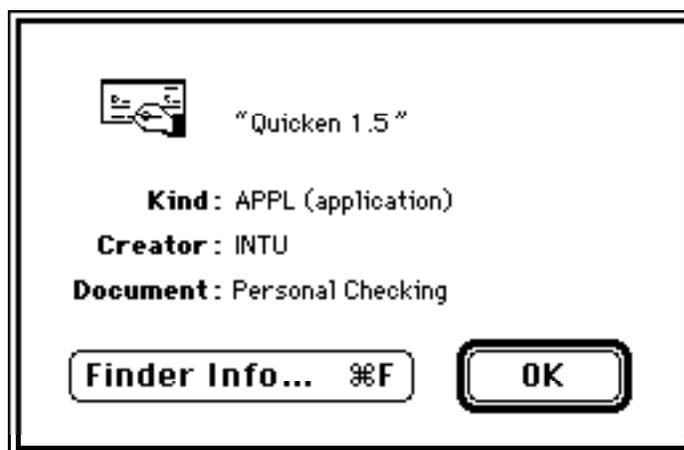
This command is used to attach/detach an auto-open document to/from the selected cell of the cell's file is an application. Each time Finder Palette launches that application, the document will be automatically opened (unless you override this feature using the Launch pop-up menu....more on this below). If the selected cell does not contain an application this command is not available, and the item is dimmed.

Note: Not all applications provide the functionality to open documents. Attaching an auto-open document to those types of applications is meaningless. For example, it doesn't make sense to attach a document to the PrintMonitor application, since it doesn't open documents in the first place.

• Get Info… (Command-I).

This command displays information about the selected cell (see below). If the selected cell is

empty, this command is not available, and the item is dimmed.

This example indicates that the selected cell contains an application named "Quicken 1.5", and that an auto-open document named "Personal Checking" has been attached to this cell.

If you wish to view the Finder Information about the selected cell, select the Finder Info… button in this dialog.

• Move Palette to Corner (Command-M).

This command moves the palette to the lower left corner of the main screen. You can also issue this command by double-clicking the mouse in the drag bar of the launch palette.

• Configure Palette… (Command-G).

This command allows you to change the palette dimensions, and the location and presence of the drag bar.

• Preferences… (Command-P).

This command allows you to customize the following Finder Palette functions:
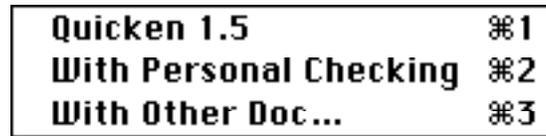
  - The settings for the "hot key" and "hot corners"
  - Whether or not to display the "Getting Icon Information" progress bar
  - How Finder Palette should behave when in the background

• Launch Pop-Up Menu

The Launch menu can be accessed either as a submenu of the Launch command in the Finder Palette menu, or as a pop-up menu by clicking and holding the mouse in an active (i.e., non-empty) cell. The function of the menu is the same in either case.

The Launch Popup Menu will consist of either 1 or 3 items, depending on whether or not the selected cell contains an application. Applications will have 3 items in the Launch Popup Menu; all other file types will only have 1 item.

In the example below, the Launch Popup Menu indicates that the attached file is named "Quicken 1.5" and an attached document named "Personal Checking". The function of the 3 menu items is explained below.

```
Quicken 1.5            ⌘1
With Personal Checking ⌘2
With Other Doc...      ⌘3
```

In the next example, the selected cell is linked to a control panel device named "Sound". Since "Sound" is not an application, the menu only contains 1 item.

```
Sound  ⌘1
```

• File Name (Command-1).

This command provides 2 functions. First of all, the menu item text indicates the name of the attached file or folder. Secondly, the command is used to launch/open the file. No auto-open documents will be opened if this command is selected, if any were attached in the first place.

Note: The next 2 menu items are only available for cells with applications installed.

• With Document Name (Command-2).

This command launches the application in the selected cell and sends the application a message to auto-open the attached document. If no auto-open document has been attached to this cell, or if the application has already been launched by Finder Palette, this menu item will
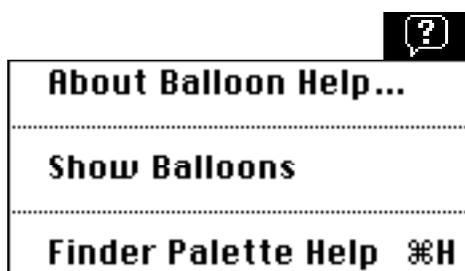
be dimmed.

• With Other Doc… (Command-3).

This command can be used to select a document that is to be opened by the application at launch time. The document specified with this command supercedes the attached document, if one exists. If the application has already been launched by Finder Palette, this menu item will be dimmed.

Note: The document you specify with this command will only be opened by the application if it supports that type of document.

• Help Menu

• Finder Palette Help (Command-H).

This command displays the Finder Palette online help dialog.

Tips

This section offers a few tips that you might find useful when using Finder Palette.

• Install the Finder in one of the Finder Palette cells. For a variety of reasons, the Finder may quit just like any other application. Having the Finder installed in one of the Finder Palette cells would allow you to relaunch the Finder instead of having to reboot your Mac (and potentially lose information contained in any currently open documents).

• The "hot corners" feature seems to respond quicker than the "hot key" feature. If you still prefer using the "hot key" feature, choose the "hot key" carefully to avoid conflicts with other programs that use hot keys. Nothing harmful should occur as the result of the conflict, but the conflicting program's hot key may be given priority over the Finder Palette one.

• Avoid the use of generic icons for the applications you install in the launch palette. Use the custom icon feature available in System 7 to personalize each application, desk accessory, folder, etc. You'll be glad you did.

Keyboard Shortcuts

In addition to using Finder Palette's menu and button commands, you can activate many of its features directly from the keyboard. This section summarizes the keyboard shortcuts you can use with Finder Palette.

• When the launch palette is the front window

arrow keys   Select the cell above, below, to the left, or to the
          right of the currently selected cell.
tab   Selects the next cell in the palette.
shift-tab   Selects the previous cell in the palette.
home key   Selects the first cell in the palette.
end key   Selects the last cell in the palette.
esc key   Unselects the currently selected cell.

F1-F4 keys   Issues Undo, Cut, Copy, or Paste edit commands.
clear key   Issues the Clear edit command.
delete key   Issues the Clear edit command.
enter key   Issues the Launch or Install… command.
return key   Issues the Launch or Install… command.

help key   Brings up the Finder Palette online help manual.

Also, a double-click in the drag bar of the launch palette will issue
a "Move Palette to Corner" command.

• When an alert or dialog box is the front window

esc key   Cancels out of the dialog. This provides an "easy out"
          of all of the Finder Palette dialog boxes.

Typing the first letter of the text associated with radio buttons,
check boxes, and push buttons will select that control. For instance,
typing the letter "L" will select the radio button labeled "Left" in
the Configure dialog.

• When the Finder Palette Help dialog is the front window

```
esc key          Cancels out of the dialog (i.e., "Done").
up arrow         Scrolls the help text up one line.
down arrow        Scrolls the help text down one line.
page up key      Scrolls the help text up one page.
page down key     Scrolls the help text down one page.
home key          Scrolls the help text to the top.
end key          Scrolls the help text to the bottom.
cmd-up arrow      Same as home key.
cmd-down arrow     Same as end key.
```

Future Enhancements

Here are some potential improvements being considered for Finder Palette (in random order):

• Add an "Autoposition Palette…" command to improve the positioning of the launch palette. Currently, there is a single option to move the palette to the lower left hand corner of the main screen.

• Iconify Finder Palette in background.

• Add balloon help (if enough users think it would be worth the additional program size).

• Commands to compress/clean-up empty cells in the palette.

• Better launching of documents when an application is already running.

• Ability to select cells by typing special keystrokes assigned to the cell.

• Ability to hide other applications when launching a new application.

• Fix the "Undo…" command after attaching a new file. The command doesn't work very intuitively right now.

• Fix the incompatibility with 24-bit monitor settings.

Credits

Many thanks to the Finder Palette beta testers—Randy DeRuiter, John Champion, Brian Leach, Jeff Wingard, Wes Peirce, and perhaps others. Special thanks to Randy DeRuiter for running Finder Palette "through the mill", and for providing a lot of constructive criticism. John Champion helped create the routines to plot the new System 7 color icons. Thanks, John.

The online Finder Palette Help interface is based on public domain source code written by James W. Walker (University of South Carolina). The code was modified somewhat to provide a consistent Finder Palette user interface.

Registration Info

Finder Palette is being released as shareware (i.e., try before you buy). Try it for 15 days. If you like it and decide to keep it, please purchase a registered copy of the program by sending check, cash, or money order, in the amount of $20 U.S. to:

   Anchor Beech Software
   8131 Fairwood Circle
   Anchorage, AK 99518

Please make checks payable to Anchor Beech Software. We appreciate your honesty in registering a licensed copy of Finder Palette. Include an address (U.S. mail and/or e-mail...CompuServe, America Online, or Internet) where you can be contacted for upgrade information (see below).

In return, registered owners of Finder Palette will receive the following:

(1) A printed copy of the Finder Palette User's Guide containing more detail than the online help utility contains.

(2) A floppy disk containing over 100 of my favorite custom folder and file icons (in living System 7 color!). The custom folder icons are especially useful if you plan to install several folders onto the launch palette (i.e., you can customize the individual folder icons so that you can tell them apart).

(3) One (1) major program upgrade (an example of a major upgrade would be from Version 1.0 to Version 2.0).

(4) Notices of significant program upgrades. We will notify you via e-mail (CompuServe, America Online, or the Internet), or U.S. mail, or both, depending on your preference.

Macintosh users who do not have access to electronic bulletin boards and online services that distribute shareware software may obtain a copy of Finder Palette by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope and an 800K floppy disk to the U.S. Mail addressed listed in the Correspondence section below. People outside the U.S. should send an international postal reply coupon instead of U.S. stamps (available from any post office). Please use sturdy envelopes, preferably cardboard disk mailers.

Correspondence

The author welcomes suggestions for improving Finder Palette, including reports of potential software bugs. The author can be reached at any of the following addresses:

```
America Online:  RBeecher
CompuServe:     70031,2461
Internet:        70031.2461@compuserve.com

U.S. Mail       Anchor Beech Software
                8131 Fairwood Circle
                Anchorage, AK 99518
```

Incompatibilities

As of this release, the only know incompatibility with Finder Palette is that it doesn't draw color icons properly on monitors in 24-bit color mode. This incompatibility will be fixed in a future version of the program. Since most of us can't afford the luxury of 24-bit video, I am assuming that this shortcoming won't impact many users.

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