



BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE FINDER

Part 1 - by Steven W. Disbrow

One of the best, and most underrated, programs that is available for the IIGS is the Finder. Sure, it comes free with every new IIGS that is sold, but almost no one uses it! Most of the reasons that I have heard for this are that it is slow, hard to use, and that due to Apple's \$35 to \$50 upgrade charge, most users don't have the most recent manual. This is a reality. Being able to use the IIGS Finder not only familiarizes you with other IIGS specific programs, it gives you experience with the concepts used in almost every other personal computer operating system on the market today. The Macintosh, Microsoft Windows, OS2, the Atari ST and the Amiga (just to name a few) all use the same concepts and methods to handle almost duplicate tasks. Part 1 of this series is intended to give a basic overview of the

Finder and its capabilities to those of you that don't have the manuals or suffer from FinderPhobia.

The Basics...

The operation of the Finder is based on what Apple Computer, Inc. likes to call, "The Desktop Metaphor." The Finder uses your IIGS screen to simulate the appearance and function of an actual desk. (OK. So it's not that good a simulation.... Very few metaphors hold up to close examination.)

In order to pull off this metaphor, the Finder uses pictorial representations, called icons, to represent disks (also called "Volumes"), folders (also called "Directories"), programs (also called "Applications"), data files (also called "Documents"), devices (such as a Hard Disk, Scanner or CD-ROM player), and other items that appear on the Finder's desktop. The contents of disks and folders are displayed in windows. These windows help to logically group the icons representing the

Meeting Notice

The next meeting is
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The topic is still open
for suggestions

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WAC Journal Editor
Neal Layton

Willamette Apple Connection, Inc.
P.O. Box 7252
Salem, Oregon 97303-0053
Voice phone 836-5870
WAC BBS 353-0861

Board of Directors:

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P.O. Box 18436
Salem, Oregon 97305

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contents of the disk or folder that you are currently examining. You work with the items on the Finder's desktop by selecting them with the mouse and then choosing one of the actions available to you from the Finder's menu bar. That action is then carried out against the item or items that you have selected. For example, when you insert a disk in the disk drive, its icon will appear on the Finder's desktop. If you then select the disk (by clicking the mouse on it) and pick the "Open" item from the "File" menu, a window that shows the contents of the disk will open on the Finder's desktop.

So What Does it DO?

The Finder is a program that can perform a great many tasks. It contains a number of disk utilities that allow you to perform some of the most common disk maintenance tasks: formatting disks, erasing disks, duplicating files, deleting files, etc. However, the Finder is most commonly put to use as a Disk Navigator and Program Launcher. That is to say, the Finder is used to organize and examine the contents of your disks and run, or launch, any programs on your disks. When you quit the program you have run, you are automatically returned to the Finder. Since all programs that are run from the Finder automatically return to it, the Finder is an ideal program to start your IIGS with.

The Menus

Now that we've gone over the basic concepts and uses of the Finder, let's take a brief look at what is available in the Finder's menu bar.

In the Apple menu, you will find a minimum of two items. The first, "About the Finder...", will give you some information about the boys and girls that wrote the Finder. If you are using version 1.3 of the Finder, hold down the <shift> and <option> keys before you click on the Apple, and this item changes into "About the System...". The second item in this menu is "Help...". Selecting this item brings up a dialog box that gives you help with

some of the Finder's less well-known features. Click on the particular item you want help with and then click the "OK" button. When you are finished helping yourself, click on the "Cancel" button. In addition to these two items, the Apple menu will also contain the names of any New Desk Accessories that you have installed on your start up disk. To run one of these NDA's, simply select it from the Apple menu.

The File menu contains eight items that are used to manipulate the files and windows on the Finder's desktop. Moving down the File menu, the items are:

New Folder - Selecting this item will create a new folder with the name "Untitled" in the currently active window. The currently active window is the one that is visible above all of the other windows on the Finder's desktop. If there are no windows open, this item can not be selected.

Open - Selecting this item will open the currently selected item(s). If the item is a disk, folder or the Trash Can, a window showing the contents of the item will open. If the item is an application, that application will be started.

Print - You must have a document icon selected to pick this item. If the application that created the document has been programmed to work with this feature, the Finder will start up the application and the application will then try to print the document. At present, very few applications support this feature of the Finder.

Close - Selecting this item will close the currently active window.

Close All - Selecting this item will close all open windows, whether they are active or not.

Duplicate... - When you select this item, the Finder will attempt to make a copy of all of the items that you have selected.

Put Away - Select this item when you want to retrieve

a selected icon from the Trash Can or remove it from your desktop. The selected item will be returned to its proper disk or folder.

Validate - This item tells the Finder to check all of the selected icons for errors. If the Finder finds any errors it will present you with a list of the items that caused the errors.

The Edit menu contains seven items, only two of which are actually used by the Finder. The items "Undo", "Cut", "Copy", "Paste", and "Clear" are present only so that New Desk Accessories may use them. The other two items are:

Select All - Picking this item causes the Finder to select all icons in the currently active window. If no windows are open, the Finder selects all of the icons that are on the desktop.

Show Clipboard - Picking this item opens a window that shows the current contents of the system Clipboard. The Clipboard is a temporary holding area that is used to help move data from one program to another via the Edit menu.

The View menu contains six different options that let you decide how you wish the contents of the currently active window to be displayed. If no windows are open, none of the six options can be selected. The first two options, "by icon" and "by Small icon" give you an unsorted view of the windows contents. The last four options sort the contents of the window by name, date, size, or kind.

The Disk menu allows you to perform one of the following actions on the disk that you currently have selected:

Initialize... - Pick this item only when you want to completely lose, for all time, the contents of the currently selected disk. When you first insert a new (unformatted) disk into the disk drive, the Finder automatically invokes this option so that it may format the disk for use.

Erase... - This option will also erase, for all time, the contents of the currently selected disk. However, this option only works with disks that have already been initialized.

Verify - This option checks the currently selected disk(s) for errors.

Eject - If the currently selected disk is a 3.5" disk, selecting this option will eject it from the drive it is in.

The Special menu contains all of the Finder options that just don't logically fit into any of the other menus. These five items are:

Clean Up - Selecting this option causes the Finder to arrange the contents of the currently active window along an invisible grid. This gives the windows contents a nice, orderly appearance.

Empty Trash - Picking this item tells the Finder to go ahead and actually delete all of the items that are in the Trash Can.

Preferences... - When you chose this item, you are presented with a dialog box that lets you tell the Finder how you want it to handle certain events.

Icon Info - Choose this item and the Finder will open up an information window for each icon that you have selected. The information contained in this window will be different depending on the kind of icon that the information is for. However, the information window will always contain the name of the icon that it is for. If the icon is a disk or a folder, there will also be a calculator icon in the information window. If you click on the calculator icon, the Finder will calculate the size of the contents of the disk or folder.

Shut Down... - Select this item when you are finished using the Finder and want to restart or power down your IGS or you want to return to the program that you ran the Finder from.

The Color menu is used to set the color of the icon(s) that you have selected. Simply select the icons you want to color and then choose the color you want from the Color menu.

Not Quite The End...

That about covers the bare-bones basics of using the IIGS Finder. If all you need to do is run programs and perform simple disk maintenance, the above information should hold you until next issue when we get into some of the more complex capabilities of the Finder. If you want to, go ahead and explore on your own. After all, that's the best way to learn any program!

[Sidebar]

Keyboard Shortcuts

You may have noticed that several of the items in the Finder menus are followed by a small apple symbol and a letter. This tells you that there is a Keyboard Shortcut for that menu item. To activate the keyboard shortcut for a particular item, you simply hold down the Open-Apple key (also known as the Command key) and press the indicated character key. For example, instead of pulling down the File menu and selecting the New Folder item with the mouse, you could simply press the Open-Apple and 'N' keys. Almost every IIGS and Macintosh program makes extensive use of keyboard shortcuts so be sure to check for them whenever you start using a new program.

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BBS News

By Neal Layton

Well it seems as if last months demo was a bust. For those of you that missed it or wondered what was going on, I couldn't get the modem that I borrowed from 'the computer store' to connect with the BBS modem. It connected once and then never again. I would never say anything bad about a certain modem company but I've had problems with them before. I've never tried a Supra modem on my GS but every time I've tried them on the //c+ they seem to have problems. Maybe there is a problem with the //c+ communications port, in the fact that it can't handle high speeds well. Who knows maybe it was just the way I had the software configured. In any case maybe we could sweet talk Steve into letting us use a MAC with working modem installed to do some type of demo.

BBS Stats:

4429 Calls Average 3-5 per Day

Tops in all Categories:

Calls -- Frans Geerlings 534

Bulletins -- David Ritchey 44

Uploads -- Roger Hanthorn 118

Downloads -- Roger Hanthorn 21

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Willamette Apple Connection, Inc.
P.O.Box 7252
Salem, OR 97303-0053



SALEM OR 97301 2050 11/15/93 MAIL EARLY

TO:

Lawrence Tucker
P.O. Box 8
Monmouth, OR 97361-0008

