

The nShell™ Environment

The nShell™ system is structured much like other Macintosh applications. The user may open one or more documents and develop a body of work within each. The key difference between the nShell and a word processor is that the nShell provides active documents.

In these active documents, part of the text is provided by the user, and part is produced by the computer. When the user issues commands to change directories or list directory contents, the computer responds by updating the contents of the shell.

Like other Macintosh documents, nShell documents may be saved at any time. The full shell context is saved in the nShell document. The user's current working directory and any shell variables are recorded.

When the user opens an nShell document, that shell is opened and the user may continue with a task started minutes or days earlier.

The File Menu

The file menu may be used to open and close shell windows. When the user selects "New", a shell is created and initialized. This new shell contains default values for the working directory and the standard shell variables.

At any time, the user may choose to "Save" the shell using the file menu. "Save" takes a snapshot of the shell and saves it to disk.

The "Open" option on the file menu may be used to read in a previously saved shell. The previous values for the shell's working directory and variables are restored. The user may then continue where he or she left off.

The "Close" option may be used to close a shell. If the shell has been modified, the user will be prompted to save the new data to disk.

The Edit Menu

The edit menu offers the standard text functions of "cut", "copy", "paste" and "clear". The user may "copy" from any part of the shell transcript. The result may be pasted into another application or into the input portion of the shell (at the bottom of the transcript).

If the cursor is not in the input portion of the transcript when "pasting", it is "jumped" to the end of the input line. This provides a shortcut to repeat previous commands:

1. Highlight the desired command within the shell transcript.
2. Select "copy" from the edit menu (or press command-c).
3. Select "paste" from the edit menu (or press command-v).

The highlighted text will be copied to the input line. The user may edit that line or type a "return" key to execute the command.

The Search Menu

The search menu allows the user to search through a shell transcript for a word or phrase. Text may be entered directly into the search window using the "Find" option, or transferred from the shell transcript using "Enter Selection". The user may choose to search the transcript in either direction - if either search fails, it "wraps around" to search the full window.