

What is Alias Module?

Have you ever created an alias to go in the Apple Menu Items folder? Did you wonder, as you created the alias, opened the folder, dragged the alias across and tidied up, "There must be a faster way to do this"? If so, then Alias Module is for you. Alias Module is a drag-and-drop aware module for Extensions Strip which simplifies alias creation. To use it, you must have a folder in your System folder entitled 'Alias Module Items'. In this folder, you can put aliases to the folders where you most commonly put new aliases (such as your Applications folder, for example). If you then drag some icons from the Finder onto Alias Module, a menu will pop up. Drag until your desired destination is highlighted and then let go. A miracle will then occur; Alias Module will create aliases to your dragged items in the destination folder. If you choose the 'Other...' item, a standard directory dialogue box will appear, allowing you to choose a destination for your new aliases that does not appear in the menu.

If you hold down the shift key while you are dragging the items, then they will be moved to the destination folder. If you hold down the option key, then they will be copied. If you hold down the command (⌘) key while clicking on Alias Module, the pop-up menu of folder aliases will appear, instead of the 'About Alias Module...' item. Choosing one of the items in the menu will open that folder on the desktop. The command key is ignored during a drag from the desktop. You cannot select the 'Other...' item unless the Finder is currently frontmost.

If the Alias Module Items folder does not exist, then the first time something is dragged onto Alias Module, it will be created. It will be empty of course, and therefore fairly useless until you put some folder aliases in it.

A couple of things to remember: the contents of the Alias Module Items folder should be aliases to the target folders, not the folders themselves. Anything that isn't an alias to a folder will not show up in the menu, but finding this out will slow Alias Module down. Aliases to disks are counted, but if the disk is removable and it isn't currently mounted, it will not show up in the menu. Alias Module will slowway down if it's an alias to an unmounted floppy. To speed creation of a valid item in the Alias Module Items folder, keep an alias of it inside the folder. Then you can just drag your target folder onto the item in the menu that says "Alias Module Items" and the next time you drag an item, the new target folder will be in the menu. Finally, chains of aliases are resolved, but only up to a certain maximum.

It wouldn't happen to be free, by any chance?

Sadly, no. Alias Module is distributed under the shareware system, which means that if you like it and you want to use it, you have to pay me. I've put a lot of work into writing it, and although financial reward was not uppermost in my mind when I was hacking away, it would be nice to get paid for something I like doing. And £5 is really cheap - the price of a couple of pints and a cheese sandwich! So go on, you'll feel really virtuous.

Will it run on my other Mac?

Alias Module requires System 7.5 or higher, plus Ammon Skidmore's Extensions Strip. This is because (a) it requires the services of the Scriptable Finder, and the Finder only got true scripting support with 7.5, and (b) Apple's Control Strip just isn't capable of doing the things Alias Module needs to work its magic. Neither, sadly, is Mice&Men's Desktop Strip (although it is otherwise a fine product). Extensions Strip is the "gold-plated" replacement for the Control Strip. It's very stable, and has vastly more capability than the Control Strip. The fact that you are reading this indicates you are running it, so if you haven't installed it on all your machines, do it now !

OK, where do I sign?

Just send £5 Sterling, or US\$10 outside the UK, or the nearest equivalent to US\$10 in your local currency (if you live in Albania, just send me a postcard). Please don't send any coins, as I can't change them. I can accept Uniform Eurocheques, drawn for £5, and Traveller's Cheques (American Express, please, if possible). In the UK, and certain UK Dependencies/Protectorates and former colonies, Postal Orders will work. Just make sure the Postal Order is in Pounds Sterling. Or you can go to your bank and buy a Banker's Draft (Cashier's Check in the US) drawn on a British bank for the exact amount in Pounds Sterling. Make cheques payable to "David Gillies".

My address is:

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I can also be contacted via the Internet for comments and suggestions (polite ones please!) at the address:

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Note that all currency, cheques etc. are sent at your own risk. Don't forget to give me an address at which you can be contacted so that I can send you an acknowledgement when I receive your payment.

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Technical Stuff

Alias Module will run on any Mac with the 128K ROMS or later, running System 7.5 or later,

and Ammon Skidmore's Extensions Strip. It is written in plain vanilla 68000 code, but it will work fine on a PowerMac. If I get a few shareware fees then I'll be able to buy a PowerMac, and I can then produce a native version.

Other amazing shareware and freeware I have written...

If you like Alias Module, you might want to check out Alias Dæmon. This is a little Extension that pops up a dialogue box when you hold down the option key and choose 'Make Alias'. You can then choose the destination folder, just as in Alias Module. Why would you want both? Well, maybe you're a gadget freak like me, with four rows of startup icons...

If you find you are always having to move Finder windows around to get at the icons of disks so you can open them, then try the Open Disks Control Strip module. This shows a pop-up menu of all the currently mounted disks, including floppies, CDROMs and Syquests. Just choose one from the menu, and its root folder will be brought to the front.

If, like me, you often open several related documents one after the other (like a Quark XPress document along with the Adobe Illustrator artwork) then you should find QuickLaunch helpful. QuickLaunch allows you to gather references to several documents and applications together in one tiny double-clickable application (called a Launcher) which will launch all the documents simultaneously. You can even put a Launcher in the Startup Items folder to have a set of applications up and running when you turn on.

If you want to securely encrypt thigs like email messages or sensitive files, but don't want the hassle of a commercial disk encryption package, then try Tiny Cipher. Tiny Cipher is based on the TEA algorithm, which is much faster than the DES algorithm, and has very good cryptographic properties (better than many commercial systems).

All these should be available on the usual Mac archive sites or via anonymous ftp from <ftp://vader.brad.ac.uk>.