
Introduction

Keys Off was designed with one premise in mind: to protect your Macintosh from any unwanted modifications. Credit for the original concept is due to my son - he could reach my keyboard no matter where I put it. It didn't take many days of finding my system folder in the trash, and many of my documents renamed something like "nnnnlkmIn" before I decided that I needed a simple but effective safety tool. Enter Keys Off.

Keys Off provides a quick and easy way to disable user input. Simply indicate which of the following items you want disabled: keyboard input, menu bar selections, mouse clicks, disk insertions, or the keyboard power key. Then, press a single hot-key to have Keys Off disable them all. To turn everything back on, type in your password. It's that simple.

Although it was originally designed to protect your Macintosh from young users, Keys Off is a perfect solution in many situations: salespeople who want to prevent tampering with their demonstration Macs, Mac owners with pets that like walking on their keyboard, teachers who need a Macintosh turned on without students being able to modify it, PowerBook users who don't want their machines unprotected, and many others.

Design Principles

Keys Off was designed to be small, to be simple to use, and to create no conflicts with existing software. To help achieve this, Keys Off patches no traps (for the curious, it does install a jGNE filter however). This means it should operate properly with almost any other control panel or extension you have in your system.

Unfortunately, although Keys Off has been thoroughly tested, it is impossible to verify every software configuration in use. If you encounter a software incompatibility that you believe involves Keys Off, please let me know exactly what's in your system folder and what you were doing when the problem arose. I'll do my best to respond quickly.

Shareware

Keys Off is distributed as shareware. This allows you to try Keys Off for fourteen days before deciding if you want to purchase it. If after the fourteen

days, you decide to continue using Keys Off, you must register your copy. A single-user license is only \$10 and is payable through Kagi Shareware. See the document titled "How to register Keys Off" for more information on registering Keys Off.

Installation

The installer is the best way to re-install Keys Off. If you want to install things manually however, the Keys Off Init should be placed in your Extensions folder and the Keys Off Settings program should be placed anywhere it is convenient.

Configuring Keys Off

Keys Off is as easy to configure as it is to use. Start up the Keys Off Settings application, and select the options you desire. The Keys Off Settings program has full balloon help and is fairly self-explanatory. However, here's a brief explanation of each item in the Keys Off Settings interface.

Items in the Keys Off Settings Window

1)

Activate at Startup

When this box is checked, Keys Off will turn itself on everytime your Mac starts up. If you turn this feature on, Keys Off will ask you to confirm that you know your deactivation password before letting you quit Keys Off Settings.

2)

Reset State After Reboot

When this box is checked, and your computer is restarted, Keys Off will reset

itself to whatever mode it was in before restarting. For example, if Keys Off is active and someone presses the reset switch, Keys Off will still be active upon restart. But, if Keys Off was inactive and the machine was restarted, Keys Off will stay inactive after startup. If you turn this feature on, Keys Off will ask you to confirm that you know your deactivation password before letting you quit Keys Off Settings.

3)

Turn On After ?? Minutes of Inactivity

If this box is checked, Keys Off will activate itself when your machine has been idle for the specified number of minutes. Specify the number of minutes you want Keys Off to wait using the up-arrow and down-arrow buttons.

4)

Hot Key

This box displays the Hot Key that you use to activate Keys Off.

5)

Change Hot Key...

To change the Hot Key used to activate Keys Off, press this button. A dialog box will be displayed, requesting the new keyboard combination. Press the Hot Key you desire, and then click the OK or Cancel button to continue. When picking a keyboard combination, make sure you choose something that isn't already in use by some other program or utility.

6)

Deactivation Password

Type into this box the password you want to use to deactivate Keys Off. Try to choose a password that is unlikely to be typed by accident by someone playing at your keyboard.

DO NOT FORGET THIS PASSWORD. If you forget this password while Keys Off is active, you may have to boot your Mac from another drive in order to disable Keys Off.

7)

Disable Power Key

When this box is checked, Keys Off will disable the power key on your keyboard whenever Keys Off is active.

NOTE: disabling the power key requires System 7.5.3 or later. If you aren't running system 7.5.3 or later, and you still want to disable your power key, the extension "NoPowerOffKey" is available from Apple. Although "NoPowerOffKey" can disable the power key on any version of system 7, it does so by patching the system - something I chose to avoid when creating Keys Off.

8)

...at all times

When this box is checked the power key is disabled at all times, and not only when Keys Off is active.

9)

Disable Keyboard

If you check this box the keyboard will be disabled when Keys Off is active.

10)

Disable Menubar

When this box is checked the menubar will not operate when Keys Off is active.

11)

Disable Mouse Clicks

When this box is checked the mouse will be disabled when Keys Off is active.

12)

Disable Disk Insertions

If this box is checked your Mac will automatically eject any inserted disks while Keys Off is active. This includes all floppy drives, CD-ROMs, ZIP drives, Syquests, etc.

13)

Beep When Disabled

When this box is checked, and Keys Off is active, your Mac will beep whenever a disabled event occurs (such as a click in the menu bar). This serves two purposes: first, it reminds you when Keys Off is active, and second, it alerts you when someone starts playing with your Macintosh. It may also entertain a young child if you choose to let them sit at your Mac and bang at the keyboard.

Items In the Keys Off File Menu

1)

Disable Shift Key at Startup

If this menu item is checked Keys Off will disable the shift key during startup. This will prevent anyone from attempting to disable Keys Off by holding down the shift key when they start up your Mac. If you combine this feature with the "Activate At Startup" option, you will have quite a robust security system. If someone wanted to tamper with your Mac under this arrangement they would have to boot it from a completely different drive.

2)

Register Key Off

Select this item once you have registered Keys Off and received your registration code. If you enter your code correctly, Keys Off will disable its shareware reminder messages.

Please Note: when you quit Keys Off Settings, all changes are updated immediately, i.e., you don't have to restart the computer for changes to take effect.

A Note About Preference Files

Keys Off stores all its settings in the Keys Off Prefs file in your Preferences folder. If this file is ever removed, Keys Off will create a new file with default settings. Whenever this happens, there are two important things to keep in mind:

- You Deactivation Password becomes the letter 'a' (without the quotes).
- If you had previously registered Keys Off, you will have to re-enter your registration code.

Users of Keys Off 1.0 will be asked to remove their Keys Off 1.0 preference file the first time they run Keys Off 1.1. This is due to a new preferences file format adopted for version 1.1. This is the only version of Keys Off that will require this. All future versions will be able to convert old preferences files automatically. Sorry for the inconvenience.

A Note About Hot Keys

Keys Off allows you to choose the Hot Key used to disable your keyboard. Although Hot Key selection is quite flexible there are certain restrictions you should be aware of:

1) A Hot Key cannot consist of any number from 1 through 9 plus the [Shift] and [Command] keys. These combinations are reserved by the Macintosh for use as F-Keys. For example, [Shift]+[Command]+3 takes a picture of your screen.

2) Some programs don't detect Hot Keys properly. In these situations, you can run into problems with Hot Keys that "overlap". For example, Macintosh Easy Access uses [Shift]+[Command]+[Clear] to activate itself. Unfortunately, if you were to try using [Shift]+[Command]+[Option]+[Clear] as a Keys Off Hot Key, it is detected by Macintosh Easy Access first, and ends up activating Easy Access and not Keys Off. If this happens it is a bug in the conflicting program, not in Keys Off, and all you can do is pick a different Hot Key.

3) The default Hot Key for Keys Off is [Option]+[Command]+[K].

Known Limitations

There are certain situations in which Keys Off cannot prevent user input. The three I am aware of are:

- 1) When a desk accessory is the frontmost window, Keys Off cannot prevent mouse clicks and keystrokes from reaching it. However, desk accessories are becoming more rare all the time, so this will likely affect very few people.
- 2) Even when Keys Off has disabled mouse-clicks, a fast double-click in a background application's window may bring that application to the front. However, Keys Off will still prevent any disabled actions from reaching that application. As a result, this limitation is a cosmetic problem rather than a security problem.
- 3) Keys Off may be unable to prevent input from reaching an application if that application has installed its own 'jGNE' filter. One example of such a program is "HoverBar". Fortunately, the number of programs that do this is very small.

There is a way to overcome these limitations, but it involves patching traps. I want to avoid this because it can create compatibility problems with other extensions. If either of these limitations is a serious concern for you, please let me know, and I'll see what can be done.

Contacting Blue Globe Software

If you have any questions, bug reports, or feature requests for Keys Off, please contact me at any of the following addresses (in order of preference):

INTERNET: cliffmcc@BlueGlobe.com

INTERNET: cliffmcc@kagi.com

The latest version of Keys Off, along with information about Blue Globe Software's other products, is always available on our web page at:

<<http://www.blueglobe.com/~cliffmcc>>

If you want to contact Blue Globe Software by regular mail, our address is:

Blue Globe Software

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Distributing Keys Off

Keys Off may be distributed under the following conditions:

- 1)
All accompanying documents, including this Read Me document, the "How to register Keys Off" document, and the "Register" application, are ALWAYS distributed together with Keys Off.
- 2)
It is distributed free of charge, except for media costs where necessary.
- 3)
It may not be distributed with other programs or products that are sold for profit, excluding books or CD-ROM collections (see point 5), without the consent of Blue Globe Software.
- 4)
Neither Keys Off, nor any accompanying document or program files, may be altered, reverse engineered, decompiled, or modified in any way.
- 5)
If you wish to include Keys Off in any commercial shareware compilations (such as CD-ROMs or Books) you must first inform Blue Globe Software of

your intention. It is also preferred, though NOT required, that you either send a free copy of the item in question to Blue Globe Software, or provide Blue Globe Software with the opportunity to purchase the item at a discounted price.

Other than these few restrictions, feel free to give Keys Off to whomever (or whatever) you choose.

Thanks For The Help

I would like to thank the following people for testing, debugging, and suggesting improvements during Keys Off's development: Deanna McCollum, Zachary McCollum, Tom Masters, Hendrik Zimmerman, Patrick Mead-Robins, Owen Mead-Robins, Ron Nye, and Ivan Good.

In addition, I want to offer my extra special thanks to all the great people who have registered their copy of Keys Off 1.0. You are the reason I created this new version!

Legal Stuff

"KEYSOFF" COMES WITH ABSOLUTELY NO WARRANTY OF ANY KIND. BY USING "KEYSOFF" YOU ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL DAMAGES INCURRED THROUGH ITS USE OR MISUSE, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, LOSS OF DATA, TIME, INCOME, OR PROFITS. BY USING KEYSOFF YOU AGREE TO NOT HOLD BLUEGLOBE SOFTWARE, OR ANY OF ITS EMPLOYEES, OWNERS, OR DISTRIBUTORS, RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGES OR LOSSES RESULTING FROM THE USE OF "KEYS OFF".

Although we have thoroughly tested Keys Off, and don't feel it poses any threat to your computing experience, we're sure you can appreciate the unfortunate need for statements like the one above.

Modification History

1.1 - Second Public Release, Sep 14, 1996

1.1b6 - Four 1.1 test release, Sep 10, 1996

- Minor changes to BNDL resource and ALRT positions.

1.1b5 - Third 1.1 test release, Sep 9, 1996

- Complete rewrite of password code. Definitely no more garbage characters or crashes.

1.1b4 - Second 1.1 test release, Sep 3, 1996

- Idle timeout values larger than a single digit are now recorded properly

- Password verification dialog should no longer display garbage characters.

1.1b3 - First 1.1 test release, Aug 24, 1996

1.0 - First Public Release, May 22, 1996.

1.0b2 - Second 1.0 test release, May 20, 1996.

1.0b1

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First 1.0 test release, May 11, 1996.