

How To

by "Cajun" David Richard

Shortcut Switching with ColorSwitch Pro

Boy, what a crazy month. Not only is it crazy here at Ambrosia with ColorSwitch Pro being released,

Manse and Delver getting ready for beta, new people and new animals (I got a dog :), but the Rochester

weather has us all confused. You see, last Friday it was over 80 degrees here on the North Coast, but today as I write this, it may get above freezing. Soon, we ride with mittens...

But enough about me and my hatred for the weather up here, I'm sure you don't want to hear anything about that. You are probably more interested in the "special" features in our new product, ColorSwitch Pro. Yes, I knew you were.

If you haven't seen it yet, stop reading this right now and go download CSP from: <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/Products/CSP.html>. This article can wait, you getting CSP can not. CSP is a handy and incredibly cool program for those of you who play games (and others, of course), and who would like to automate your Mac. This article describes using CSP to its fullest potential.

Savvy Switching

The two major features to ColorSwitch Pro that we will be looking at today are the ability to control monitor resolution, and the ability to create groups of settings for your system. We call these groups "Shortcuts" (rather creative of us, eh?).

If you're like me, you have a 6400/200 with only 1mb of VRAM running a 17" monitor (you are also freezing because you really don't like cold weather). Also, if you are like me, you have to beta test our new game Manse (OK, just pretend you are like me ;). You see, the problem here is not that it's 20 degrees outside, the problem is that the 2mb of VRAM is not enough to display more than 256 colors at high resolutions. Manse, because of its killer 3D engine, needs the monitor displaying Thousands of colors to run. I need to switch the resolution of the monitor to the rather obscure 800x600 at 60Hz in order to display this higher color depth.

It is just this situation in which ColorSwitch Pro shines. If you haven't seen it yet, I'll include a picture (it'll save me a thousand words). ColorSwitch Pro allows me to switch to this rather obscure resolution AND switch the color depth to thousands in one mouse click. If only my job was this easy.

uperior Shortcuts

Contrary to what you may think, and as easy as this "one step" method may sound, I simply don't like it! I mean, who needs to go to the CSP menu to change the monitor's resolution or color depth, or even the system's volume. The answer: NOBODY!

Please allow me to present the "No Step" switching feature of ColorSwitch Pro. Yes, you can switch your monitor's resolution, color depth, and system volume in absolutely 0 steps. Yes, that is a ZERO, none, nil. No steps necessary. This is the way I like it!

Of course, you're probably saying, "What's wrong with Cajun? His brain must be frozen!" Well, that may be the case, but ColorSwitch Pro can handle this even in warm weather! No menus to choose from, no precise trackball-ing, and best of all NO THINKING!

Just set up the settings in ColorSwitch Pro's handy Shortcut Settings dialog box, attach a few applications and you are in business. Thanks to revolutionary "space-age" technology, the next time one of your pre-selected applications is launched from the Finder, CSP jumps in and makes the necessary changes before the loading process of the program. Now that's progress!

Application Switching Antics

Some have said to me, "Hey Cajun, you should wear a hat in cold weather." How was I to know that 90% of your body's heat escapes from your head. What the heck is your hair for? People have also asked me what happens when you switch between applications running on your machine. Well I'm here to tell ya. There are three things you can have ColorSwitch Pro do when switching applications: Make No Change, Restore Previous Settings, or Reapply Shortcut Settings.

In an effort to get the most difficult setting out of the way, we will look at "Make No Change" first. The best way to explain this is to say that switching from an application whose shortcut is set to "Make No Change" will cause ColorSwitch Pro to make no change. Think of it as nothing happening. The shortcut settings remain and nothing changes. Folks who want nothing to happen when they switch out of an application will like this setting. Everyone clear?

The other two settings can be thought of as opposites. The "Reapply Shortcut Settings" option will simply reapply the shortcut settings when you switch back into the application. This could be thought of as rather rude, but sometimes it is necessary.

The remaining setting (and I apologize for going through these out of order, I know it's taboo), "Restore Previous Settings," is actually rather cool and quite handy. By using this setting, you can launch an application and have the shortcut settings applied, and then you can make changes to the settings without affecting the shortcut. What's cool about this is that ColorSwitch Pro will remember your settings when you switch out of the application. When you switch back in, the previous settings are applied. This is for those of you who play games late at night and need to turn the volume down ;) All of these settings are available from the popup menu in the Application dialog box that can be reached through the Edit Shortcut dialog box (just in case you didn't read the manual).

And Finally...

That last thing I would like to tell you about is the Default Shortcut. You are probably wondering what happens when you quit these Shortcut havin' applications. Well, by appointing a shortcut as the Default Shortcut, you tell ColorSwitch Pro what settings should be used to switch back to when you are finished in an application. In my case, when I quit Manse my monitor automatically switches back to the very big 1024x768 at 256 colors. And the one thing I haven't done through all of this? Think...

All kidding aside, we do hope you enjoy ColorSwitch Pro and hope that it makes your life on your Mac much easier than before. In the future, look for third party plug-in modules to control, well, anything that can be controlled. The CD Player module is the first example of this.

As always, any questions and comments can be directed to help@AmbrosiaSW.com. Stay warm!

Ed Note -- One day on a bicycle and Cajun thinks it's Summer. What he doesn't reveal in this article is that he is actually thankful for the colder weather. That one day on the bike made his

butt so sore that he couldn't ride for a week anyway.