

In System 6, the Control Panel was a single window with several buttons, each controlling one Mac function. By the time of System 7.5, however, more than 40 control panels came nestled in the Control Panels folder, each panel a tiny double-clickable program unto itself.

The overall look of the Finder and Desktop, the feel of the mouse, the sound your Mac makes when it wants your attention — all these elements are managed by the control panels included with your System software.

Usually, you access these little self-contained programs by choosing Control Panels (actually an alias of the Control Panels folder) from the Apple menu. The Control Panels window opens so that you can double-click the specific control panel you need .

Here's a guide to all the little goodies that you'll find crammed into the Control Panels folder — and those that you can ditch to save space.

A panel-free Mac

There are two kinds of control panels: those that need to be in your System Folder when the Mac starts up and those that don't. Those that do are said to contain init code; they're essentially system extensions with a few settings that you can change. Apple Menu Options and your fax software are a couple of examples — they're useless unless they were in your System Folder when the Mac started up.

Most Apple control panels, however, are required only when you want to change your preferences; they don't, in fact, do anything when the Mac is turned on. The preferences are stored in your Mac's PRAM (a tiny piece of memory permanently sustained by your Mac's built-in lithium battery), not in the control panel itself. After you pick a Desktop pattern, decide how fast you like to double-click your mouse, choose a color for highlighted text, pick an alert sound, or whatever, you won't need those control panels again until you want to change that setting.

Therefore, if disk space is at a premium for you, back up those Apple control panels and then throw away the ones in your System Folder. You'll reclaim several hundred K. If you need to change any of your preferences later, just insert the backup disk and open the appropriate control panel — there's no need to install it, copy it to your hard drive, or restart the machine.

Apple CD Speed Switch

This little panel used to come with Apple's dual-speed CD-ROM drives. It turned the double-speed feature on or (for old, incompatible CDs) off. If you have the AppleCD Audio Player in your Apple menu (described earlier in this chapter), you don't need this control panel.

Apple Menu Options

As you'll find out in Chapter 6, what makes System 7.5 System 7.5 is its large assortment of extra extensions and control panels, many of which began life as shareware programs. Apple Menu Options is no exception: it is, in fact, a polished-up version of MenuChoice, a shareware program. It adds two extremely useful functions to the Apple menu. First, it adds a submenu to any folder listed in the Apple menu (such as Control Panels), listing that folder's contents. Choose a submenu item to open it.

Second, the Recent Items control adds three new folders to the Apple menu: Recent Applications, Recent Documents, and Recent Servers (i.e., networked disks). The control panel keeps track of the last few items you worked on and lists them in these submenus. It does so by putting an alias of each item you open into the Recent Documents folder (or other appropriate Recent folder). We mention this fact so that when you fear that the boss might be walking by your desk soon, you can open your System Folder, open the Apple Menu Options folder, open your Recent Applications folder, and throw away the Super Mario Tetris Plus! Pro alias. Nobody will suspect what you've really been doing...recently.

Apple Menu Options Secrets

Turn off those recent items

So you're not on a network. Are you forced to put up with a pointless Recent Servers command in your Apple menu?

No. Open the Apple Menu Options control panel. Change the number of Recent Servers to zero; that item will no longer appear in your Apple menu. Do the same for Recent Documents and Recent Applications, if you wish.

Add your own submenus

When you first install it, Apple Menu Options makes a submenu spring out of four Apple menu commands: Control Panels, plus those three Recent items. It's worth knowing, though, that any folder you put into the Apple Menu Items folder (inside your System Folder) will automatically sprout submenus. And any folders inside those folders will sprout submenus, too...and so on, up to five nested folders deep.

In other words, your Apple menu can become a powerful navigation tool indeed. Stick an alias of your hard drive into your Apple Menu Items folder, for example, and suddenly you can open any item in any folder on your drive. If you're on a network, make aliases of the hard drives you frequently log onto; put them into a Frequently Used Servers folder in your Apple Menu Items folder. From then on, mounting one of those disks is only an Apple-menu choice away.

The downside of Apple Menu Options

Version 1.0 of Apple Menu Options had some rough edges; in particular, it could crash your Mac if — of all things — you had collapsed some of your Stickies. Apple's System 7.5 Update 1.0 replaced this control panel with a debugged version.

Even the latest versions, however, can slow down your system, especially on PowerBooks.

AppleTalk

You only have this if you have Open Transport (that is, System 7.5.3 or a PCI Power Mac). See Chapter 32.

At Ease Setup

This control panel, which comes with Performas (but can be purchased for all Macs), allows you to control which jumbo icons appear on the At Ease screen. See Chapter 15 for details.

ATM GX

ATM GX is a specially modified version of Adobe Type Manager (see Chapter 24) — specially modified, that is, to work with QuickDraw GX (see Chapter 25). ATM GX comes with System 7.5 and gives you smooth type on-screen for PostScript fonts.

Auto Power On/Off

The name says it all: this control panel allows you to specify times at which you want your Mac to turn itself on or off.

Actually, there's one thing that the name doesn't say: Auto Power On/Off works with only a few Mac models, such as the 840AV or certain Power Macs. If you double-click its icon and get an error message, trash this control panel.

AutoRemounter

Not many people use AutoRemounter, we're guessing. In fact, it's only for people with PowerBooks and another Mac, too (such as a network at the office).

Suppose you're using your PowerBook. Using your office's network (see Chapter 32), you bring the hard drive of some other Mac (or two) to your

PowerBook Desktop so you can transfer files. AutoRemounter's job is to bring the other Macs' icons back to your PowerBook's screen after it's been off or asleep.

AutoRemounter has another handy side effect: it lets you put the PowerBook to sleep without encountering that annoying "you're about to lose network services" alert message.

If you're not on a network, though, we recommend trashing this control panel. Also, we've heard that early versions of AutoRemounter caused crashes and slowdowns on Ethernet networks.

Brightness

All Mac models except the black-and-white Classics have brightness and contrast dials right on the monitor. If you have a Classic, use this control panel to dim your screen; otherwise, this control panel doesn't even open. Get rid of it.

Button Disabler (or just Buttons)

For LC or Performa 500-something models only, and for System 7.5 (and later) only. This doodad disables the volume and brightness buttons on the front panels of those 500-series models (presumably to prevent tampering in school situations). If you have any other model, trash it.

Cache Switch

The Cache Switch is used exclusively on Macs whose brain is the Motorola 68040 chip, such as the Quadra and Centris models. If you have any other model, throw out this control panel.

Cache Switch offers an On/Off switch for your processor chip's caches — one for data and one for program instructions — which are a speed enhancement on the '040 Macs. If you click Off, you avoid using those internal caches, thus slowing your computer to about half its usual processing speed, but permitting compatibility with a few old game programs that aren't compatible with the '040 chip.

Cache Switch Secrets

On and off without restarting

Normally, you're directed to restart the Mac after turning the Cache Switch on or off. If you Option-click the On or Off radio button, however, you switch the cache instantly and save yourself a restart. (We're

told not to pull this stunt if you have a Quadra 700 on a network, however.)

Hidden message

“Wink, Wink!” That’s what you’ll be told if you turn on Balloon Help and point to the version number. This Secret, and \$1.25, will take you anywhere you want to ride on the New York City subway system.

Roll credits

When the Cache Switch control panel is open, press Option and click the version number to see the programmer’s credit.

Close View

Close View is designed to help the visually impaired. It magnifies a portion of the screen, making the screen image 2 to 16 times larger. Most people wind up tossing this one.

After you install Close View (using the Custom Install option of your Installer — it may also be in your Apple Extras folder, if you have one), you can switch it on and off by pressing Command-Option-O . To increase or decrease the degree of magnification, hold down Command and Option, and press the up- or down-arrow key. The enlarged screen view follows the insertion point — an arrangement that takes some getting used to. In addition to providing screen magnification, Close View allows you to reverse your monitor’s display so that black becomes white and white becomes black. Some people find this inverted-video setup easier on the eyes for long-term Mac work. (On color monitors, all the colors are inverted.)

Close View doesn’t work on Power Macs. It also doesn’t work with virtual memory.

Color

With this control panel, you can change the color of text highlighting and the tint of windows in the Finder. If you have a black-and-white monitor, toss this.

The first pop-up menu gives you a choice of ten highlight colors. If none of those colors pleases you, choose Other from the menu to open the standard Macintosh Color Picker. Click a new color and then click OK . You can set the highlight to almost any color, but dark, heavily saturated colors are bad choices; they make it too hard to see the highlighted characters.

We’ve discovered some interesting quirks. If you choose pure white (the spot at the center of the color wheel), you’ll end up with solid black highlighting! Furthermore, highlighted text will invert to white, exactly as

though you were using a black-and-white Mac. Apple obviously hopes to protect you from yourself; if you truly chose white as the highlight color, you'd never be able to tell whether something was highlighted!

You can see how awful white highlighting is in only one place: the Color Picker itself. For kicks, set the highlight color to pure white. Then try to drag through the numbers at the left side of the Color Picker. Weird — it looks as though nothing's being highlighted.

If you choose a color that is very close to white, but not white itself, the results are even stranger. You'll see black highlighting on black text, obliterating whatever you select. To view this effect (shown in Figure 4-6), change the numbers in the top three Color Picker text boxes to 3357, 4145, and 65535.

or Finder windows, you have to choose one of the nine color options provided in the second pop-up menu. The standard window color is light purple; the eight other options include regular black-and-white, in which windows lose their 3-D appearance. Unlike the highlight color, there's no Other option for windows.

The color you select appears in the outline of window title bars, scroll arrows, and scroll sliders.

Color control panel Secrets

Roll credits!

Click the words Sample Text, and the text is replaced with the words by Dean Yu. Click again, and you see the name of Dean's collaborator, Vincent Lo.

Secret messages for programmers

We always knew programmers were weird, but this one takes the cake.

Using ResEdit (included with Mac SECRETS; see Chapter 34), open the Color control panel. Double-click the icon called STR and then open the ones numbered -4042, -4041, and -4040. Those text strings contain the meaningful phrases doodle doodle dee, wubba wubba wubba, and & Don Louv, respectively. If you're out there, Don — what were you thinking?

ColorSync System Profile

As you'll find out in Chapter 25, ColorSync is Apple's solution to the age-old problem of printed colors that don't match the colors on-screen. Each piece of color equipment — scanner, monitor, printer — is supposed to have its own ColorSync Profile file that identifies its peculiar color quirks.

Unfortunately, profiles for non-Apple equipment may be hard to find. (The profile documents, by the way, get stored inside their own ColorSync™ Profiles folder, which lives within the Preferences folder in the System Folder.)

In any case, this control panel gets installed with System 7.5, or QuickDraw GX, or the software for some monitors. You use this control panel's sole pop-up menu to select the kind of monitor you're using — Apple 16-inch, Performa Color Display, and so on — so that the behind-the-scenes software will know how to keep colors consistent on other color units.

The important thing to remember is that ColorSync is absolutely useless unless you have exactly the right profiles installed for your specific monitor and printer. If you have a Radius 20-inch monitor, don't use the profile for the Apple 20-inch monitor. Close isn't good enough in the world of ColorSync. Profiles must match exactly for the system to work. In fact, if you use the wrong profile, your color matching might even get worse with ColorSync.

Control Strip

The Control Strip was originally designed only for PowerBooks, but it was such a hit that it now comes with some Power Mac desktop models, and it can be modified to work on any System 7.5 Mac.

It's a rack of control tiles, as shown in Figure 4-7, that float in a handy strip above whatever other windows are open. Each tile actually is a tiny pop-up menu. Hold the mouse button down steadily on a tile, and then slide up or down to the command you want.

he original tiles provided for PowerBooks include the following:

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AppleTalk on/off switch (much quicker than opening the Chooser)

*

Battery/recharging gauge (the pop-up menu allows you to hide the power graph)

*

File Sharing on/off switch (and indicator), for when you're working on a network

*

A power-conserving Spin Down Internal Hard Disk command (and a spinning/not spinning indicator)

*

A tile for adjusting the overall power conservation/speed balance of your laptop's screen, disk, and system sleep functions

*

A tile with an instant-sleep command (easier than switching back to the Finder to use the Sleep command)

*

A handy sound-level slider (easier than opening the Sound control panel)

*

A Video Mirroring control, which appears only when your PowerBook is hooked up to an external monitor or projector

Control Strip Secrets

Move it, baby

The Control Strip is much more flexible than it looks. For example, you can shrink it to any length by

tugging its little end tab. If you simply click the tab, in fact, the Strip collapses so that only the tab appears, at the very edge of your screen — waiting for another click to expand again.

Furthermore, if you press Option, you can drag the entire strip up or down the side of your PowerBook screen — or sideways, to the opposite edge. You can't drag the Strip to the middle of the screen, however: it must hug the right or left side.

Permanently rearrange, add, or remove tiles

The Option key has another handy effect on the Control Strip: if you drag one of the little tiles while pressing Option, you can slide the tile horizontally to a new position. (Combine this feature with the drag-to-stretch feature in the preceding Secret, and you can customize the Strip to show only the tiles that you find useful.)

One of the great aspects of the Control Strip, however, is its modular construction. Open your System Folder; inside, open your Control Strip Modules folder. Simply remove any modules whose tiles you don't want to include in your Strip. By the same token, you can add new modules as they're written by shareware (or commercial-ware) authors simply by adding them to this folder.

Download additional modules

From America Online or another online service, you can download new modules; put them into your Control Strip Modules folder (in the System Folder) to install them into your Strip. Some of our favorites are Control Strip Terminator (lets you quickly quit all your programs or just the background ones or even the Finder), Monitors (lets you switch your screen's color settings), and Bunch-O-Apps (serves as a quick launching list for your favorite programs).

Roll credits!

So far, we haven't mentioned the control panel itself — only the Strip that it creates. The actual icon inside your Control Panels folder is pretty tame; it has only two buttons (for showing and hiding the entire strip).

If you Option-click the version number, however, you'll discover that the author of this glorious tool is Steve Christensen, who wrote the classic SuperClock! control panel (which also was adopted by Apple and made part of System 7.5).

CPU Energy Saver (and Energy Saver)

This control panel is part of Apple's multipronged effort to conserve electricity (and to qualify its Macs for the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star seal of approval). CPU Energy Saver offers controls for turning the Mac off automatically — 15 minutes after the last time you actually work, for example, or every night at midnight. You get this control panel with System 7.5 or certain recent Macintosh models; it works with any Mac that turns off completely when you choose Shut Down. (That rules out the Quadra 610 and Power Mac 6100, for example, which require a physical switch to be turned off.) If the monitor's power cord is plugged into the Mac, the monitor shuts off, too.

The Options button gives you access to this panel's additional intelligence — you can instruct it not to shut down while the modem or printer ports are being used, for example. You'd be forgiven if you confused this control panel

with Auto Power On/Off, a control panel with nearly identical functions.

In any case, when the Mac's time comes, you'll think that the world is ending. With a sound like an air-raid siren, and with an enormous bright-red full-screen countdown, the Mac gives you 30 seconds of shrill notice before it actually turns off .

Incidentally, CPU Energy Saver isn't to be confused with the control panel called simply Energy Saver; the latter is a monitor-only version, and it works only with specific, recent Apple-brand monitors.

CPU Energy Saver Secrets

Use it on your Mac II

CPU Energy Saver only works on Quadras or Power Macs — at least, as it comes from Apple. Using ResEdit, included with Mac SECRETS, however, you can make it run on any Mac II that can be turned on from the keyboard.

Launch ResEdit; open CPU Energy Saver. Click the icon called mach, and chose Cut from the Edit menu. Save your work and quit ResEdit; the deed is done! (See Chapter 21 for details and cautions on ResEdit.)