Out To Launch!™

version 1.2.5-
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Overview

Out To Launch!™ is an application launching facility consisting of an FKey and an application. You use the FKey to:

*   create and edit a list of applications and Load Sets (more about those later)
*   launch applications and Load Sets
*   set up "Pinch Launch" applications (also explained below)

It is easy and quick to use. To launch an application/Load Set you simply activate the FKey (Command-Shift-<number>), select the application/LS you want to launch (using the Mouse, typing the application/load-set name or using the up/down arrow keys) and press return. You can also just double-click the one you want.

Load Sets are files you can create (using the FKey) to group an application with a set of documents. If you launch a Load Set using either the FKey or the Finder, the OTL application will launch the application, passing it the set of documents to open. Unlike the Finder, the documents do NOT have to be in the same folder, or on the same volume for that matter. Load Sets are pretty handy if you find yourself always opening up a group of documents in a single application. You can also use them as "Alias" files with an application but no documents selected (works over networks too!)

"Pinch Launch" applications give you the ability to launch documents from the Finder for which you do not have the application. For example, if you have a MacWrite file, but not the MacWrite application, you can designate that whenever a MacWrite file is double clicked, FullWrite Professional will be launched with the document. You can designate any application to launch any other application's documents.

Changes from previous versions

Fixes

- Repair a bug which prevented correct operation under Mac OS version 7.0.

- Since the "Set default folder" feature does not work yet under 7.0, OTL disables the button when it detects that System 7.0 is running.

Enhancements/changes

- There is now a built-in installer into the Out To Launch!™ application to ease the installation (and removal) of the Out To Launch!™ FKey into the System file or the "suitcase" file of your choice. The installer will also automatically copy OTL support files to their designated positions.

- Preferences are now kept in the Preferences sub-folder of the System folder. The FKey will automagically move existing OTL prefs files from the System folder into the Preferences folder, if it happens to find any (although it will not overwrite existing OTL prefs files in the Preferences folders, if any).

- OTL now has its own cursor rather than the "blobby plus" cursor. In case you can't figure it out, OTL's cursor is supposed to be a lit match (my artistic ability is only slightly worse than my singing and dancing ability, which , in turn, are only slightly worse than my ability to spit a watermelon seed completely across the Atlantic Ocean).

Stuff You Should Know

First some quasi-legal crud.

This package in this form is FreeWare for personal, individual use only. You can use it for free on your Mac (or compatible) and pass it to your friends **PROVIDING** that you provide the whole package, as is, without modifying the application, FKey or this document in **ANY** way and do **NOT** charge for it. It **MAY NOT** be sold or included in any software collection for sale without my specific written consent.

WARNING: Although great care has been taken in the design and construction of this package, it may contain errors or may interact with other software or hardware on your computer which may cause operational failures (crashes). The effects of such crashes may cause damage (direct, indirect, etc). A CONDITION FOR USE OF THIS PRODUCT EXISTS: IF YOU USE THIS SOFTWARE you agree that you will not hold either me (Mike Throckmorton) nor the person you got the package from responsible for such damage. YOU USE THE SOFTWARE at YOUR OWN RISK. Have a nice day!

I've tested under Apple Macintosh OS release 6.0.4, 6.0.5, 6.0.7 and 7.0 running on a Mac IIci and a Mac+. I have tested with many common applications with no problems. The FKey and application both use the "launch" trap and several "low-memory globals". Apple Computer says, every now and then, that applications should not normally launch other applications (ignoring the fact that this capability is accepted as a minimum function for operating systems to support and has been for decades) and also that applications which access low-memory globals (although they have been working at it, they still give developers little alternative to accessing these memory locations) may break in future operating system releases. I am really careful with what I have done with Out To Launch!™ and have, in fact, not added a few niceties supported by other, commercially available, launching packages in a vain attempt to be more resistant to the effects of MacOS enhancement. I could certainly have implemented a little jobby-do up in the menu bar which could be used to pull down the list of applications and Load Sets, but I didn't because I would have had to be really invasive (and I don't want to be). Apple SHOULD provide SAFE mechanisms for developers to extend their Mac operating environment, rather than insisting that the Finder is enough. Hopefully, they will use Apple Events as a mechanism to achieve this end (among others).
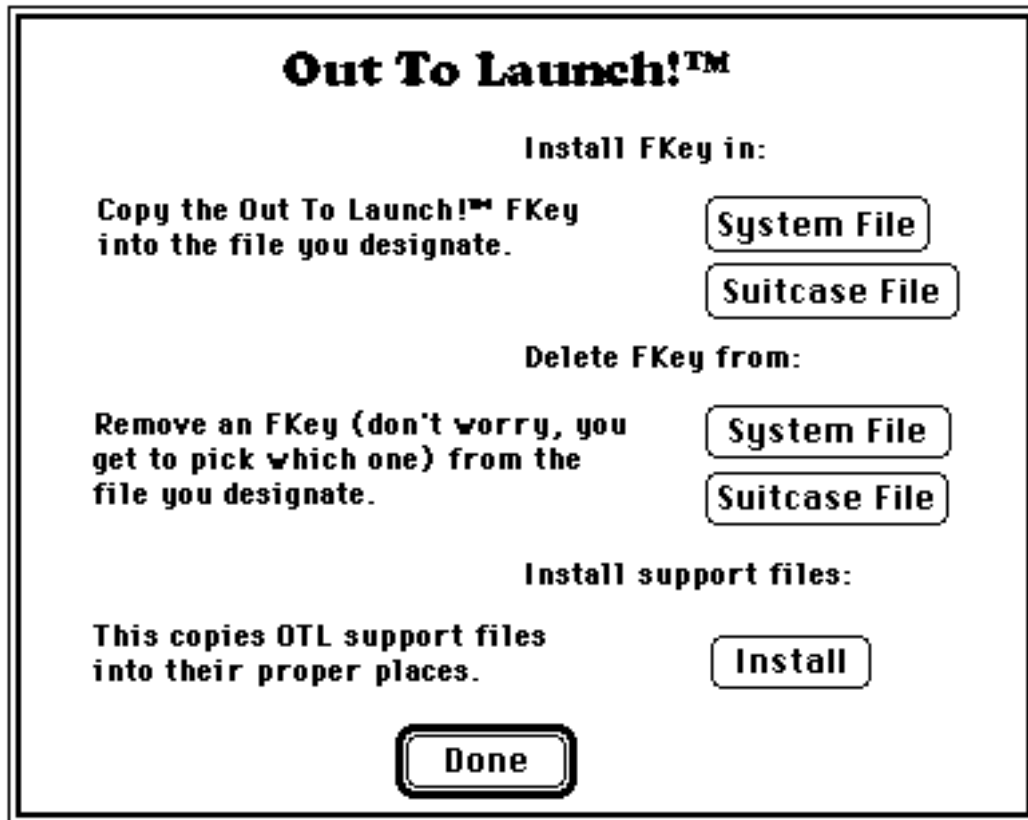
One further comment: I doubt that Out To Launch!™ is significant enough to become Shareware or a product some day, but I won't swear it, so don't get mad if it happens (you can still use this release for free until Apple makes it break by changing the Mac OS).
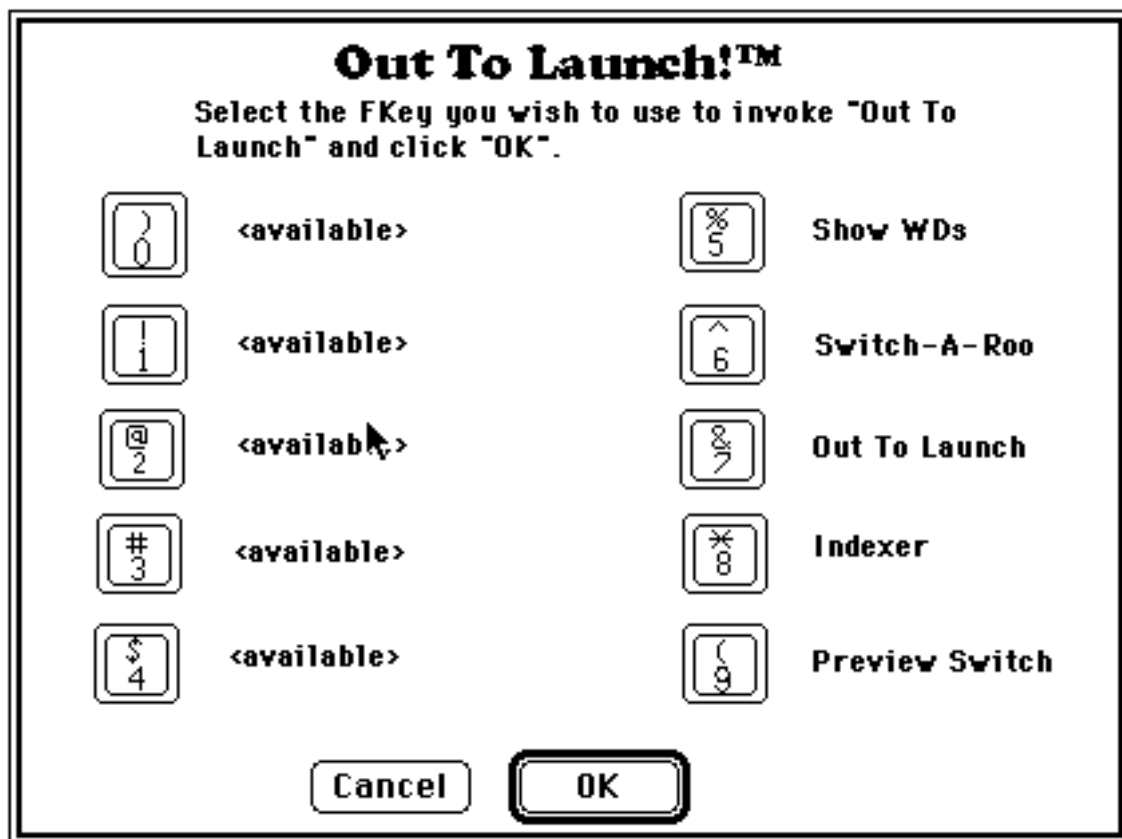
Installation

The package consists of this document, the OTL application and the "OTL Pinch Apper" application. You can stick the "Out To Launch!™" application anywhere that's convenient for you, but the "OTL Pinch Apper" application must be tucked into the Preferences Folder inside of the System Folder (sorry about that). The FKey must either be installed in your System file or into a "suitcase" file which may be opened using SuitCase™ or Master Juggler™ or the like. The "Out To Launch!™" application contains an installer which allows you to put the FKey where you want and to automatically copy the "OTL Pinch Apper" application into the Preferences folder.

The Steps:

• Make sure that the "Out To Launch!™" application and the "OTL Pinch Apper" application are in the same folder.

• Double-click the "Out To Launch!™" application to get the installer dialog, which looks like this:

- The FKey installation buttons allow you to either copy the FKey (a copy of which is kept in the "Out To Launch!™" application) into the System file or an existing "suitcase" file of your choice. So, click the install FKey button of your choice. If you are copying into a suitcase you will get a standard file selection dialog which you use in the normal way to "open" the suitcase file. In either case, you will get a dialog which lets you select the FKey number you wish to use for "Out To Launch!™" by clicking on the appropriate key cap icon and clicking the "OK" button. You can install into any FKey position, whether or not it is already occupied by another FKey (the previous FKey will be overlayed). A typical FKey selection dialog looks like this:

Out To Launch!™

Select the FKey you wish to use to invoke "Out To Launch" and click "OK".

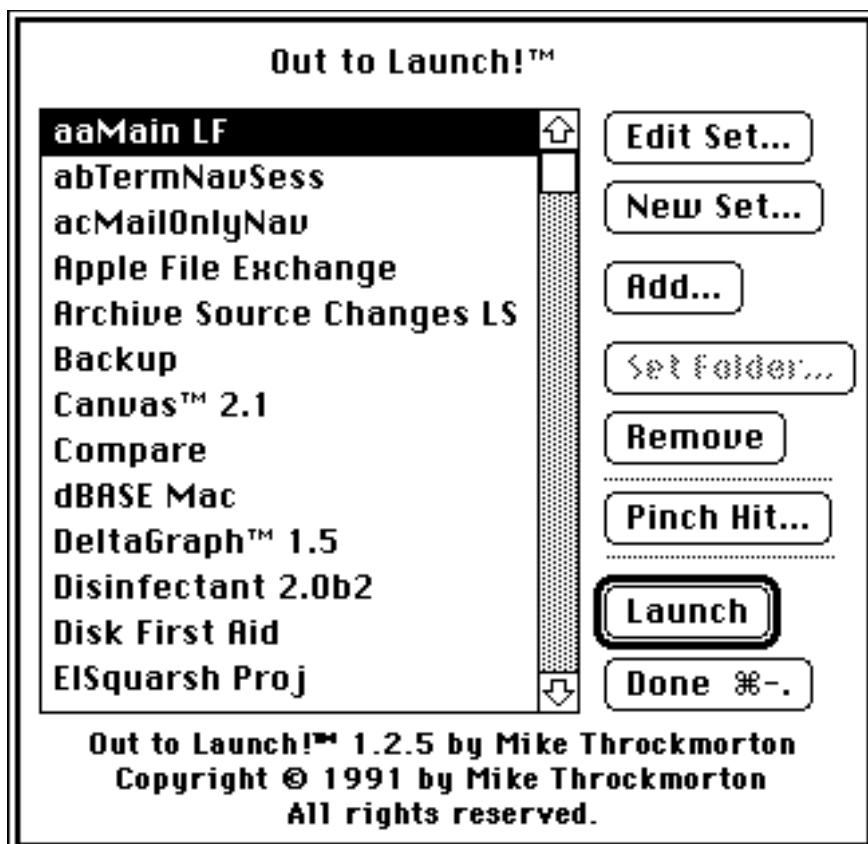| Key	Assignment	Key	Assignment
⅓ 0	<available>	% 5	Show WDs
! 1	<available>	^ 6	Switch-A-Roo
@ 2	<available>	& 7	Out To Launch
# 3	<available>	* 8	Indexer
$ 4	<available>	(9	Preview Switch

(Cancel)   (**OK**)

- To install Out To Launch!™ support files (which is to say, copy the "OTL Pinch Apper" application into the Preferences folder), click the "Install" button.

- Out To Launch!™ is now installed!

How to Use the Dang Thing

Well, take a look at the screen shot below:

I'll run through it from top to bottom,

- "Edit Set" lets you edit (which is to say modify, change, alter) a Load Set you've already created and is in your list. It pops up the "Edit Load Set" dialog described below.

- The "New Set" button lets you create a new set. It will pop up a standard file dialog (for you programmers that's Standard File Dialog) asking you to name the new set. The usual stuff happens if the file already exists EXCEPT that I don't actually overwrite the file...it will pop up with its previous contents (if any). It's not a bug, since I did it on purpose, but it *is* kind of weird.

After you've named the Load Set, you get an edit dialog which allows you to set the Load Set application (the one you want launched) and the documents you want the launched application to open for you. If you just poke the "Add Doc" button, it shows you a standard file selection dialog displaying those documents which were created by the application you selected. If you hold down the "Command" key before, during and while you poke "Add Doc" it will show you *all* files, including applications.
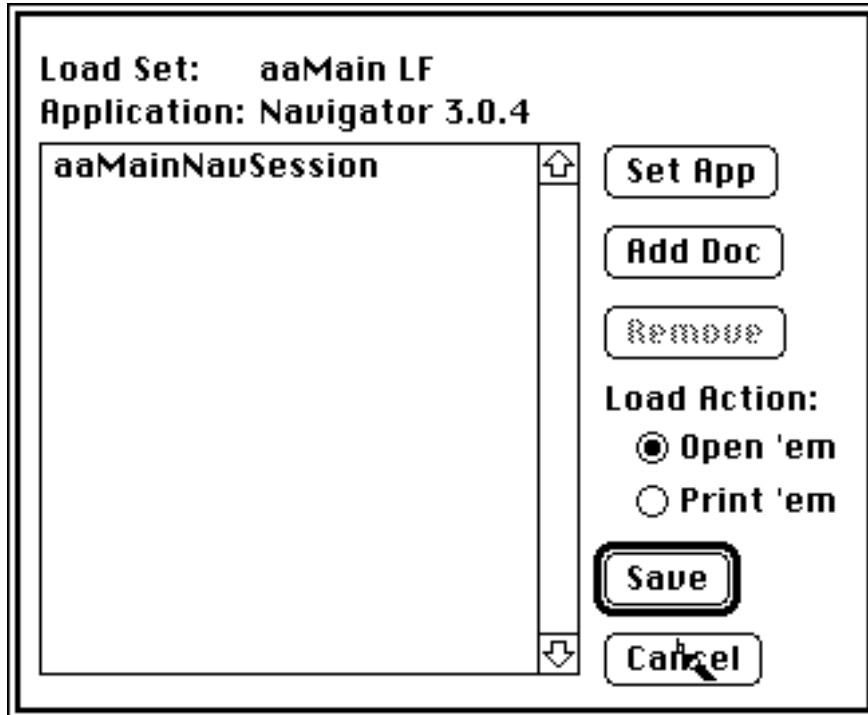
- The "Add" button lets you add an application, or an existing (but not in your list) Load Set. Give it a poke, and it displays the file selection dialog, showing you all applications and Load Sets. Double-click on the one you want or select it and click the "Open" button.

- "Set Folder..." lets you specify, using a Standard File selection dialog, the "default folder" for the currently selected application or load set. Once you have done this, whenever you launch the application or load set using Out To Launch!™, the initial folder presented to you by the Standard File selection dialog the next time it is used will be the "default folder" you have set. I think that's fairly clear. Just try it, you'll see what I mean.

- The "Remove" button lets you delete the currently selected item from the list. If the item happens to be a Load Set, OTL will show you a dialog which lets you either remove the Load Set entry and the Load Set file (the "Remove" button), just the Load Set entry (the "Don't" button), or cancel the remove operation entirely (the "Cancel" button).

- The "Pinch Hit" button invokes the "Pinch Application Lineup" management dialog which lets you create, remove or change "Pinch" application associations (this dialog is explained below, somewhere).

- "Launch" (which will not be enabled until you've got something selected) will launch the application or Load Set currently selected. If you are running under MultiFinder, the application you are launching from will remain running and will not be disturbed in any way (unless I've missed a bug or too, nervous chuckle). If you are not running under Finder, I don't let you launch from an application, you can only launch from Finder.

- "Done" simply returns you to your regularly scheduled application (the one you were in when you activated the FKey).

Load Sets

The load set edit dialog let's you set or change the application, documents and load "action" for a load set.

This is what the dialog looks like:

The "Set App" and "Add Doc" buttons display Standard File selection dialogs to let you specify the application to launch and the documents to "load", respectively. "Remove" lets you delete a document from the list. You can add and delete documents and change the application as you please.

The "Load Action" radio button selectors let you specify what the application should do with the documents when it is launched. "Open 'em" is the default action and the application will simply open the documents and do whatever it does with them. "Print 'em" will ask the application to simply print the documents and quit (or, more precisely, to do whatever the application decides it wants to do when it sees that you want to print the documents). If you periodically print a set of reports contained in several documents (for the same application), you could build a load set specifying the application and those documents and selecting "Print 'em". When you launch this load set, either using Out To Launch!™ or the Finder (by double-clicking the load set file), the application will launch, print the documents (reports) and quit. Might be handy, on occasion.
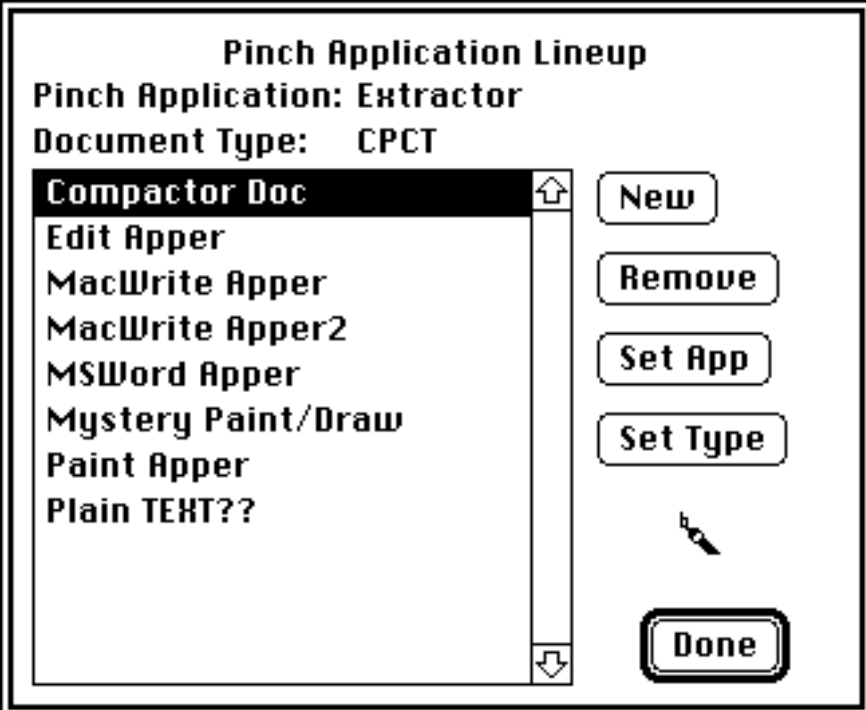
Pinch Launching

"Pinch Launching", as you may have gathered, is the ability to launch documents from the Finder for which you do not have the application. For example, if you have a MacWrite file, but not the MacWrite application, you can designate that whenever a MacWrite file is double clicked, FullWrite Professional will be launched with the document. You can designate any application to launch any other application's documents.

Note that the responsibility for converting and understanding the document lies with the "Pinch" application (the application being launched in place of the absent one). In the example above, FullWrite Professional understands MacWrite documents and automatically converts them during its initialization. As a counter-example, WriteNow does not automatically convert and will simply terminate without any diagnostic to explain its actions.

You will need to be careful not to designate two different applications to open the same document type, as the Finder can get somewhat confused about which application it should launch.

If you poke, punch, click or otherwise antagonize the "Pinch Hit" button on the main OTL FKey dialog with your mouse, you will get the following dialog:

This dialog shows you each of the associations you have set up (if any) and, above the list box, the Pinch application and the document type of the currently selected association.

Taking the buttons in order:

• The "New" button lets you make a new application/document type association. When you click it, you will be asked to name the new association and locate the folder where you wish the association (or "Pinch") file (which is really a little application, itself) to be kept. When you've named and located a folder (and clicked "Ok") the FKey will make a "blank" association file. The top of the dialog will show that the Pinch application and document type have not yet been set by displaying "<NOT SET!>" for each.

• "Remove lets you delete an association from the list (as well as the Pinch file). Deleting an association removes the association from your system.

• The "Set App" button lets you choose, for the currently selected association in the list, the application which you wish to be run in place of the application you don't have (got that?). So, for example, after clicking "Set App", you will get a standard file selection dialog which you might use to locate and select the Full Impact™ spreadsheet application.

• The "Set Type" button lets you specify, for the currently selected association in the list, the type of document for which you want the Pinch application (which you chose using the "Set App" button) to be launched.

For example, if you were setting up a Pinch application for Excel (™, I shouldn't wonder) documents, you would poke this button, find an Excel file using the file selection dialog and double-click it. You would then have created an association between the application you have chosen and any Excel documents you might have on your disk(s). Now, whenever you double-click a Mac Excel Write document from the Finder, the application you've set for the association will be launched and passed the Excel document you double-clicked.

- "Done" terminates the Pinch Application Lineup list maintenance dialog.

To summarize the steps needed to create a Pinch Launch association: click "New" to name and locate the association (the "Pinch" file), click "Set App" to designate the application you want to be launched, click "Set Type" to specify the document type for which the application is to be launched.

The process is fairly simple, the only complication (ahhhh, isn't there always a complication?) is due to the "magic" process the Finder uses to figure out which document goes with which application. Chances are fairly good that after you create an association using the Pinch Launch dialog, double-clicking a document of the right type will not yet cause the Finder to launch the application. I have found that you must, at least, use the Finder to open and close the folder in which you've located the "Pinch" file (you named and placed this file using the "New" button in the Pinch Application dialog). This causes the Finder to notice that the association exists.

If, after you do this, the Finder *still* can't find the association, try dragging the Pinch file out of the folder into another folder and then dragging it back into the original folder. If *that* doesn't work, then you need to ask the Finder to rebuild its database of application and document information (the "desktop" file). You do this by restarting your Mac and holding down the "option" and "command" keys simultaneously as your Mac is restarting until you get a little dialog box asking you if you truly want to rebuild your desktop file. Click the "Ok" button and have a cup of coffee.

I doubt you'll have any trouble with the above unless you accidentally make two different associations for the same document type. Also, if you eventually acquire an application for which you have set up a Pinch association, you should delete the association from the Pinch Application Lineup to reduce the chances of Finder getting confused.

Some Pinch Nuances

- You can change the application (using the "Set App" button) associated with a document type as you please (10 times/day if you like) .

- It IS possible to get the right document and application ICONs to show up on the desktop for Pinched applications but it is too difficult to document (run ResEdit 2.0xxx and copy the BNDL, FREF and ICON resources from the missing application into the association application file).

Wrapping it all up

I hope you find this package useful. Please let me know if you like it (also, if you don't, but have constructive criticism).

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