

fontcachecleaner.png " FontFinagler05.png "

Version 0.5 November 5, 2004
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Product Requirements:

- Mac OS X 10.2 or greater

What's new in this version:

- Rewritten from the ground up in Objective-C and C. (Good riddance AppleScript! :-D).
- I've changed the name from Font Cache Cleaner to "Font Finagler", to better reflect where I hope to take the application in the future, namely, a general font utility/font management tool.
- Added a table view which lists the font cache files which were found, which will be deleted when using the "Clean" feature (so you know what's going to be deleted before deleting it).
- The Font Cache Cleaner feature now uses the standard OS X authentication dialog obtained through the use of the Authorization Services framework.
- Added the ability for Font Cache Cleaner to be run from a non-administrator account by typing an administrator name and password.
- Added the ability for Font Cache Cleaner to be run from a non-administrator account without requiring an administrator password for each subsequent use. (This feature is intended for design firms where the normal artist lacks administrator privileges. It works by allowing a system administrator to come to their machine once, and, from within the non-admin user's account, enter their administrator password to enable Font Cache Cleaner to work in "Administrator-Free" mode from then on.)
- Added a feature that shows the number of active fonts and the number of cached fonts.
- Added the ability to choose between a Shutdown or a Restart.

TO DO:

- Add "About Font Caching in OS X" which provides additional documentation on some of the possible underlying reasons for the use of font cache files, how the font caching mechanism works, and how Font Finagler fits into this picture.

Product Description:

If you're having problems like in the image below, it could be caused by corrupt font cache files. What appears to be happening is that incorrect or corrupted encoding vector information is being used when mapping the character codes as input by your keyboard to the glyphs they represent in the problematically cached font.

garbled.png "

You can use Font Finagler's Font Cache Cleaner feature to purge these cache files in an attempt to restore normal behavior, and to help rule out a font cache corruption as the sole cause of the problem. If, however, you use Font Cache Cleaner but the problem remains, then it could be caused by a font conflict, by a corrupt or less-than-ideal-quality font, or by an underlying OS X font-handling bug. Try removing fonts to isolate the problematic fonts that are causing this behavior.

Directions for use:

The image below shows the main Font Finagler window, including the toolbar. Currently, there are two features: Font Cache Cleaner, and Administrator-Free Font Cache Cleaner. Since they essentially perform the exact same function, under most circumstances you'll simply use one or the other. Which one you use depends on what type of control you have over your computer. By default, when you set up your Mac, the account that's created has administrator privileges, which allows you to do such things as install software, etc. This is the type of account you'll need to be able to use the normal Font Cache Cleaner function, which requires administrator privileges. To use the regular Font Cache Cleaner feature, this is the type of account you'll need, where you have total control over your computer. (If you like, you can remove the Admin-Free Font Cache Cleaner toolbar item by customizing the toolbar: choose View > Customize Toolbar... or hold down the Command-Option keys and click on the oval toggle toolbar button in the upper right-hand corner of the title bar). If, on the other hand, you have a network administrator or another person who oversees your computer, and you're a "non-administrator" user, you'll need to have that person enable the Admin-Free Font Cache Cleaner feature for you to use. That will allow you to clean the font cache files without requiring you to know an administrator password.

interface2.png "

Font Cache Cleaner:

Click the "Inspect Font Cache Files" button to search for and locate the font cache files on your hard drive, which Font Cache Cleaner will display in the table view. The "fontTablesAnnex" font cache file, which is the primary cache file, will be analyzed to determine the number of cached fonts on your system. To reveal any of these font cache files in the Finder, either choose "Show Font Cache File" from the File menu, or double-click a row in the table view to show the corresponding cache file. Click the "Clean Font Cache Files" button to execute the cleaning. Note that because several of the font cache files reside in the System Domain (/System/ folder), an administrator password is required to execute the cleaning procedure. After the cleaning is complete, a restart dialog will appear, where you can choose to either restart or to shut down. (See the "Restart Required" section below for more information on why a restart is necessary).

Administrator-Free Font Cache Cleaner:

The Admin-Free Font Cache Cleaner works the same way that the normal Font Cache Cleaner feature works, only administrator-level authorization is not required. Click the "Inspect Font Cache Files" button to search for and locate the font cache files on your

hard drive, which will be displayed in the table view. The "fontTablesAnnex" font cache file, which is the primary cache file, will be analyzed to determine the number of cached fonts on your system. To reveal any of these font cache files in the Finder, either choose "Show Font Cache File" from the File menu, or double-click a row in the table view to show the corresponding cache file. Click the "Clean Font Cache Files" button to execute the cleaning. After the cleaning is complete, a restart dialog will appear, where you can choose to either restart or to shut down. (See the "Restart Required" section below for more information on why a restart is necessary).

Restart Required:

Since releasing version 1.0 of Font Cache Cleaner, I've looked into the possibility of removing the requirement for an immediate restart, as I thought it may have been overkill. After doing some further testing, however, I've decided to continue to keep it as a requirement. While deleting the font cache files doesn't seem to cause any immediate harmful effects, I don't think the ATSServer appreciates it too much, as afterwards, no new cache files are created like they are when you restart. Further research has also suggested that a log out and log back in isn't sufficient either; rather, a restart is a must.

License:

I've changed the license of Font Finagler (formerly Font Cache Cleaner) from freeware to \$10 shareware. Your support will help ensure that I'm able to continue development of Font Finagler full-time.

Support:

If you have a question or concern regarding Font Finagler, feel free to instant message me at AIM buddy name MarkDouma46 (MarkDouma46 for Jaguar people, in case that link doesn't show up) or to email me at mdouma46@mac.com (mdouma46@mac.com for Jaguar people).

If you could instant message me, that would be preferred, as it's much more conducive to troubleshooting. If you've never used iChat or AIM before, then don't worry about it, email is fine.

NOTE: If your question or concern is not directly related to this or another of my applications, or is of a more general nature, I can't necessarily guarantee a response. In a case like this, I'd recommend posting your question in Apple Discussions (<http://discussions.info.apple.com/webx?13@197.f8loapUeirY.20@.599b236d>) where you have a community of 1000's of users that are ready and waiting to help you.

Disclaimer and Limitation of Warranty:

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Font Finagler is "shareware", meaning that it is freely available over the internet or under other conditions described above, subject to certain restrictions of functionality and/or a periodic reminder to pay the "shareware fee". Should the user wish to remove these restrictions or reminder, the "shareware fee" may be charged under the conditions indicated above, in exchange for a "serial number" transmitted to the user. The user must treat this "serial number" as confidential and not sell, transmit, or reveal it to any other party. This fee may be refunded only if the user demonstrates, to my satisfaction, that entering the "serial number" into the latest version of Font Finagler, as published on my website, does not remove the restrictions. I reserve the right to disable, without notice, any "serial number" published on a website or otherwise made available to anyone but the original user.

Version History:

Font Finagler, version 0.5 November 5, 2004

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- Added the ability to choose between a Shutdown or a Restart.

Font Cache Cleaner, version 1.0 March 15, 2004

- Initial public release