OtherMenu is an extension that creates a system-wide hierarchical menu somewhat similar to the Apple menu.   You can use it to launch applications and documents, perform various utility functions, and execute FKEYs.   In standard directory dialogs (Open and Save dialogs) you can use it to select files and folders.   It requires System 7, and is accelerated for PowerPC.

The first time you start your Mac with OtherMenu installed, OtherMenu creates a folder named OtherMenu Folder inside your System Folder.   You will see a menu whose title is a round icon near the help menu.   Initially, the menu will contain items named "Recent applications", "Recent documents", and "Recent folders", an item for each disk on the desktop, a dividing line, and finally "OtherMenu".   The last item has a submenu with three items: "Manual", which displays this documentation, "Preferences", which displays a dialog in which you can change various settings, and "Memory Usage", which displays a dialog showing how much memory OtherMenu is using.

Operation

Release the mouse button over any menu item.   In most cases, the result is the same as if you had double-clicked the item in the Finder.   The exceptions are FKEYs, compiled AppleScript files, KeyQuencer macro files, and OtherMenu externals.   Finder doesn't know how to run these items, but OtherMenu does.

If you hold the option key as you release the mouse button over a menu item representing a folder, then the folder will not be opened, but it will be added to the "Recent folders" submenu. This can be used to get temporary convenient access to a deeply nested folder.

As you are mousing through the menu, you can press and hold a certain key to get some information about an item.   I call this the "instant info" feature.   (Initially the key will be "i", but you can change it using the Preferences dialog.)   A little window pops up, showing the icon, type, creator, size, modification date, and path.   If the item is an alias, the information window displays information about the target of the alias, unless the alias points to something on a disk that is not mounted, or the alias cannot be resolved for some other reason.

Configuring the Menu

The contents of OtherMenu's menu is determined by the contents of the OtherMenu Folder, just as the contents of the Apple menu is determined by the contents of the Apple Menu Items folder. All files and aliases placed in the OtherMenu Folder become OtherMenu menu items.   And unlike the Apple menu, you can insert folders, and aliases of folders and volumes, to create submenus up to 5 levels deep.

You can modify the order of menu items by adding special characters to the beginnings of their names.   The first ordinary character in the Macintosh character set, the space, is particularly useful.   I also like ◊, or shift-option-v, which comes very late in the order.   Do not begin a file name with a period.   To make a dividing line in the menu, create a folder with any name ending in "-***".

OtherMenu's menu will appear just as the contents of the OtherMenu Folder appear in "Name" view in Finder, alphabetically, by level.   For example, if the contents of the OtherMenu Folder look like this,

hen the menu will look like this:

he Preferences Dialog

If you select "Preferences" from the "OtherMenu" submenu, you will see a dialog that controls several settings.   Radio buttons near the right-hand side select five groups of settings, called "General", "Menu", "Volumes", "Recent", and "Font".

General Preferences

The "Show startup icon" checkbox determines whether OtherMenu displays an icon during the startup process.

The "Off when At Ease but not Finder is running" option disables OtherMenu when At Ease is running (even in the background) but Finder is not running.

The "Warn on launch in tight memory" option shows a warning dialog if you launch an application when there is not enough memory to give the application its preferred amount.   If this is not checked, the application may be launched in its minimum amount of memory without warning.

To set the key that triggers the "instant info" feature, click on the rectangle to the right of "Instant info key:" and, while holding the mouse button, press a key.   You can use either a character key like "i" or a modifier key like control.   However, it would not be a good idea to use the command or shift key for this purpose.

Menu Preferences

The "Menus cached" control determines how many submenus will be cached; higher values get you speedier response at the expense of some system memory.   If you check the option to "update cache in background", then OtherMenu (with the help of OtherMenu AE Helper) will periodically make sure that the main menu and first level of submenus are up to date.   You may not want to use this feature if you have a hard disk driver that spins down the disk when inactive.

But in the case of a PowerBook, OtherMenu AE Helper ensures that the interval between updates is greater than the spin-down time.

The three radio buttons determine where the menu will appear: to the left of the help menu, just left of the application menu, or to the right of the application menu.   If you have other extensions that install system menus, their relative positions may depend upon the order in which the extensions load at startup time.

If you uncheck "Menu title is an icon" then the menu title becomes "Other".   Changing this setting when the menu is at far right may cause some misalignment problems in the menu bar, which will be corrected by a restart.

By the way, if you would like the menu title to be a different icon, you can arrange that simply by giving OtherMenu a custom icon using the Finder.   The new icon will appear on the menu bar after restart.

The delay settings affect the behavior of submenus, and affect all software, not just OtherMenu. The "appearance delay" allows you to drag down a menu without submenus appearing and disappearing as you go past them.   The "disappearance delay" helps you drag diagonally from a menu item that owns a submenu to an item within the submenu, without the submenu disappearing.   These parameters are also affected by Carlos Weber's MenuTuner control panel, but OtherMenu maintains the new values actively instead of changing the standard values in PRAM.   The numbers are in units of   approximately 1/60 seconds.   Note that since the change takes effect immediately, you can try it out on the menu before dismissing the dialog.

Volume Items Preferences

OtherMenu can maintain menu items for volumes (floppies, CD-ROMs, hard disks, etc.) that are mounted on the desktop by creating and deleting aliases to each volume.   This feature may be turned on and off with the "Maintain volume items" checkbox.

Below the label "Volume items folder:", in smaller type, you should see either the path to a folder, or the words "(This folder has not been defined)".   Use the "Set Folder" button to respecify this folder.   If you set this folder to be the OtherMenu Folder, then volumes items will appear in OtherMenu's main menu, as shown below.

o make a submenu of volumes, choose a subfolder of the OtherMenu Folder, like so:

ou can specify a prefix of up to 4 characters that will be added to the names of all volume menu items, in order to group and position them in the menu.

Finally, there are checkboxes by which you can specify that volume items should be accumulated, rather than being automatically deleted when the volumes are unmounted.   (If there is an individual item that you wish to protect from automatic deletion, you can simply lock that alias using Finder or the File Info external.)

Recent Items Preferences

OtherMenu can maintain folders of aliases to recently used applications, folders, and documents. This feature may be turned on and off with the "Maintain recent items" checkbox.

More precisely, the recent applications folder records applications and desk accessories.   The recent documents folder records other files that have been opened using OtherMenu, or by double-clicking in the Finder, or by selection in a directory dialog.   A folder is recorded as a recent folder if you opened it using OtherMenu or if you selected a file inside it using a directory dialog.

Among the things not recorded as recent items are folders opened in the Finder, control panels opened in the Finder, applications in the Startup Items folder, and documents double-clicked in a THINK C or Metrowerks C project file.

You specify the names and locations of these folders using "Set Folder" buttons, as in the case of the the volume items folder described above.   Unlike the volume items folder, you should not set the recent items folders equal to the OtherMenu Folder.   This is because recent items have no prefix to identify them.

Items chosen from OtherMenu's main menu will not be recent menu items because they are readily accessible.   You can choose the number of items you would like OtherMenu to maintain in each recent items folder with the "Maximum recent items" control; up to 50 are allowed. You can have OtherMenu automatically delete all items from previous sessions with the "Clear recent items at startup" checkbox.

If you use System 7.5, you may prefer to turn off OtherMenu's Recent Items feature and use the Recent Applications and Recent Documents folders supplied by Apple's software.   But note that you can put aliases to these folders into your Other menu, and then you can use these recent items within directory dialogs.

Menu Font Preferences

Using these pop-up menus, you can set the font used in OtherMenu's menu.   The size setting 0 means the standard size for the system font.   In U.S. systems, the system font is Chicago 12.

You can also assign a style, or combination of styles, to folders, aliases, or other files.   Note that an alias to a folder or disk counts as an alias, not as a folder.

OtherMenu Externals

OtherMenu has code modules, similar to FKEYs, of file type '*Cmd', '*CMD', or '*Sub'.   They use system memory and can be placed in the menu and executed with less overhead than applications.   '*Sub's have their own submenus, while the other types do not.   You need not install the full set of externals.   If you hold the shift key while selecting an external, it will display an About box, which can allow for adjustment of settings, or might just show the version number.   If you are a programmer, you can write your own externals.   Sample code is available as a separate "OtherMenu Developer Kit" from some of the same sources as OtherMenu, such as CompuServe and America Online.

See the Externals Manual for information on individual externals.

About FKEYs

An FKEY is a small program without a full user interface that performs a simple task and quits. When you press command-shift-3 to take a screen snapshot, you are executing an FKEY installed in the System file.   You can place FKEY files, and aliases to FKEY files, in the OtherMenu Folder, and use the menu to execute them.   Such files should have file type 'FKEY', and contain exactly one resource of type 'FKEY', plus possibly resources of other types.

AppleScript, KeyQuencer, and QuicKeys

OtherMenu can be used to run compiled AppleScript documents, assuming that you have AppleScript installed.   If you hold down the shift key while selecting such a file, then it will be opened in the Script Editor instead.

OtherMenu can also run a KeyQuencer macro file, assuming you have KeyQuencer installed. (When I say KeyQuencer macro file, I mean a text file created by the Macro Editor, not a macro file created by exporting macros from the KeyQuencer control panel.)   If you hold the shift key down while selecting such a file, it will be just as if you had double-clicked the file in the Finder: The macro Editor will open and run the macro.   Finally, if you hold the shift and command keys, the Macro Editor will open the file but not run it.

Conversely, one can use AppleScript to invoke OtherMenu, like so:

```
tell application "OtherMenu AE Helper"
   Open alias "Main:System Folder:OtherMenu Folder:Externals:Memory Map"
end tell
```

For this to work, OtherMenu AE Helper must be installed and running.

Similarly QuicKeys can send AppleEvents to OtherMenu AE Helper to tell OtherMenu to open an external or something else.   You may need to increase OtherMenu AE Helper's memory allocation with File Info to make this work.

It is also possible to use KeyQuencer to run OtherMenu externals, using the OMOpen extension that comes with KeyQuencer (versions 1.2 and later.)

OtherMenu AE Helper

OtherMenu AE Helper is a background-only application that serves several purposes: It helps OtherMenu record double-clicked files as recent documents, it signals OtherMenu periodically when you turn on the option to update menus in the background, it talks to the Finder on behalf of the Finder Folders external, and it makes it possible to control OtherMenu with AppleScript. Although it looks like an extension, lives in your Extensions folder, and does not appear in your application menu, it really is an application.   You can see its memory partition with the Memory Map external, and if necessary quit it with Memory Map or launch it with OtherMenu.

If you do not care about the functions mentioned above, you need not install OtherMenu AE Helper.   However, it uses only about 20K of RAM, and negligable execution time.

Modal Dialogs

Usually, you don't have much freedom of action when the front window is a modal dialog.   You know, the kind of window that has a border like this:

ou can't switch to another application, and you can't even switch to another window within the same application.   Yet, you can use OtherMenu to execute externals and FKEYs while a modal dialog is showing.   This freedom entails some risk, because the programmers who wrote your applications and other extensions probably didn't anticipate that you could do such a thing.   In fact my own programs Open-wide and Dialog View were only recently made compatible with showing a directory dialog on top of another directory dialog.

Certain externals (currently QuickAlias and QuickTrash) take control of the Other menu, so that you can't invoke other externals when they are running.

Directory Dialogs

Directory dialogs (Open and Save dialogs) are a special kind of modal dialog, and as such the previous section applies to them.   However, OtherMenu has another use within these dialogs: You can use OtherMenu to select a folder to be displayed in the directory dialog, simply by pulling down the menu and releasing the mouse over the name of a folder.   In the case of Open dialogs, you can select a file (other than an external or FKEY) to make that file become selected in the Open dialog.   If OtherMenu fails to select the file you asked it to select, it will beep. This can happen if you select a file that is not the right type for that Open dialog, or if the folder contains many files that start with the same letter.   The "rebound" feature in Super Boomerang or similar utilities may interfere with file selection, but not folder selection.

Tips For Running OtherMenu

In some cases, there may not be enough room on the menu bar for all of an application's menus plus the system menus.   If you have selected the "menu at left" setting, OtherMenu will be the first to disappear.   You may want to use a utility such as MICN or Cram Bar (freeware) or

Menuette (shareware) to lessen menu-bar crowding.

OtherMenu launches most documents (i.e., items other than applications, desk accessories, FKEYs, and OtherMenu externals) by telling Finder to open the file.   When this happens, Finder will momentarily come to the foreground.   If there is not enough memory to open the file, Finder will display an alert box telling you about the problem.

Many of the functions of OtherMenu and its externals require that Finder be running. OtherMenu can launch applications (including Finder itself), but not documents, when Finder is not running.

Occasionally it may be convenient for your menu to contain an alias to a folder or volume (perhaps a server) but not have a submenu hanging from it.   You can get this effect by changing the file type of the alias to something generic like '????'.   The File Info external could be used to do this.

Compatibility problems have been reported with CP TrashBack, SpeedyFinder 1.5.4 (later versions may be OK), Menu Enabler 1.0, Escapade, and CD-ROM Toolkit.

Shareware Fee

The shareware registration fee for OtherMenu is US$10 per user.   This software comes with a registration form and a registration application, each of which allows several forms of payment.

CompuServe users can register online.   GO SWREG; the ID is 1208.

The more payments I receive, the more likely I am to make further enhancements to OtherMenu. If you have any feature requests, I will be much more likely to listen to you if you have paid.

James W. Walker
3200 Heyward Street
Columbia, SC 29205   USA

Distribution

OtherMenu may not be sold or offered for sale, or included with another software product offered for sale, except with the express written permission of the author.   The author's failure to give permission promptly should not be taken as consent.   Companies that distribute public domain/freeware/shareware software for profit are expressly prohibited from distributing OtherMenu.   This restriction does not apply to bulletin boards, commercial on-line services such as America Online, CompuServe and GEnie, and nonprofit Macintosh user groups which hold regularly scheduled public meetings.   However, OtherMenu must be distributed in full, as I

released it, with no documentation or software missing.

No warranty

OtherMenu uses some undocumented techniques.   Use it at your own risk.   I will attempt to fix any bug that I can duplicate on my own machines, but will not buy other people's software for compatibility testing.

Author's address

I can be reached by e-mail at the following addresses.   For a regular mail address, see the Shareware section above.

CompuServe: 76367,2271
America Online: JWWalker
Internet: walkerj@math.scarolina.edu
eWorld: JWWalker

ther software by this author

Shareware:

• Dialog View, which enhances the appearance of directory dialogs (size, font, icons)
• Carpetbag, which opens fonts, sounds, FKEYs, etc.

Freeware:

• Text Capture FKEY, which lets you copy otherwise uncopyable text to the clipboard
• Text Editor Patches, which can add various features to applications
• PrintAid, next best thing to a spooling printer driver
• Alias Dragon, restore drag-and-drop function to cross-volume application aliases
• Reference Link, hot-links most any editor to THINK Reference

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