STREAMLINING THE HOME STUDIO

QuicKeys saves one-person graphic design shop time and money

Time is money, money is time. Cliché as the old saying sounds, it rings true on a daily basis for graphic designer Evan Deerfield. "This business is crazy. The pace keeps getting worse, and clients expect more and more all the time."

Cobalt Blue is the one-person design shop that Deerfield runs from the would-be dining room of his San Francisco apartment. Clients like Living Books, MacPeople and the University of California-Berkeley Extension value the individual attention they get from Cobalt Blue. That's because, as his own boss and his own worst critic, Deerfield oversees every aspect of his business, from brainstorming to billing. To help juggle multiple jobs for multiple clients with sanity and order intact, Deerfield uses QuicKeys, CE Software's time-saving utility for the Macintosh.

QuicKeys automates design and production

QuicKeys is a macro-editor that allows you to set up hotkey or toolbar triggers for all the complex, multi-step tasks you perform on your Mac. Shortcuts can be created on the fly, in any application. Best of all, you don't have to know scripting commands or programming language.

Building sequences is as easy as telling QuicKeys to "record" your actions once and then play them back on demand. Plus, a powerful batch processor lets you run your shortcuts on an unlimited number of files automatically with a keystroke. Let QuicKeys do all that repetitive, wrist-wrenching mouse work for you and free up your creative side.

"I've been using QuicKeys for years," says Deerfield. "What I love about version 3.5 is the batch processor. There are so many times when I have to perform the same series of actions on multiple documents, like resizing a bunch of scanned photos in Photoshop. Trying to do everything by hand gets really frustrating, especially since I know that the time I spend tweaking dozens of the same thing is time lost designing a brochure for a cause I care about. This is where the batch processor is a godsend."

Make your system work the way you do

QuicKeys 3.5 ships with keysets for Illustrator, PageMaker, Photoshop and other graphic design software, giving you instant functionality as soon as you install. Toolbars and floating palettes put your customized commands at your fingertips, and new click-and-go palettes appear with a keystroke to perform certain tasks and then disappear, saving screen real estate.

Plus, you can make the same hotkey trigger the same action across all your applications. In other words, using QuicKeys command-W could close any window, whether it be in Photoshop, Illustrator, PageMaker, whatever. In a nutshell, QuicKeys gives you the power to make your computer behave exactly as you want it to.
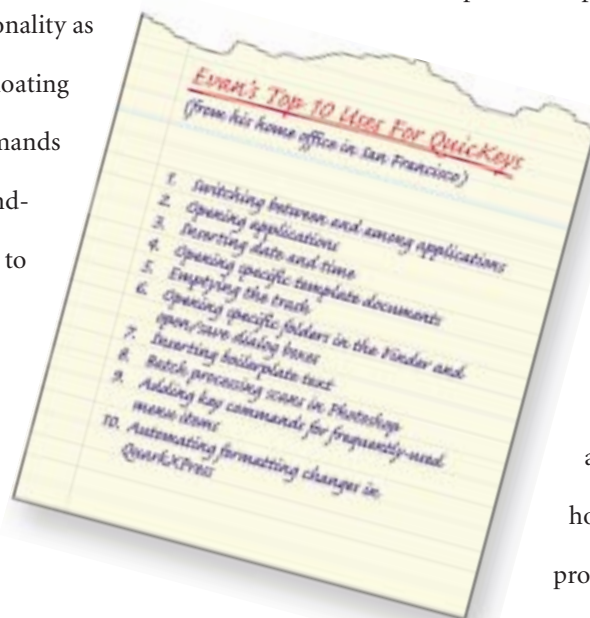
Good help is hard to find

While most of Deerfield's design day is spent in Photoshop, Illustrator and QuarkXPress, where QuicKeys sequences automate his every move, he has also turned QuicKeys into a trusty administrative assistant. Hotkey triggers bring up fax cover sheets pre-addressed to different clients and stamped

with boilerplate text. Like a good secretary, QuicKeys always knows where to find the right file. QuicKeys sequences launch specific templates and documents customized for different clients, saving a lot of time spent digging around in dialog boxes. QuicKeys even automates Deerfield's billing system. Using QuicKeys in conjunction with FileMaker Pro, Deerfield is able to automatically record date and time, how long he worked on a particular project and the total billable hours.

"QuicKeys does just about everything around here except run to the fridge for another can of Coke," Deerfield jokes. "Seriously, it's not an application that I would want to try to live without. With it, I'm more productive, more organized and more profitable."

Find out more

For more information on how QuicKeys automates the graphic design and production worlds, call CE Software at 800-523-7638 or visit us on the World Wide Web at http://www.cesoft.com.

Evan's Top 10 Uses For QuicKeys
(from his home office in San Francisco)

1. Switching between and among applications
2. Opening applications
3. Inserting date and time
4. Opening specific template documents
5. Emptying the trash
6. Opening specific folders in the Finder and open/save dialog boxes
7. Inserting boilerplate text
8. Batch processing scans in Photoshop
9. Adding key commands for frequently-used menu items
10. Automating formatting changes in QuarkXPress

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