Editing Text With BBEdit

Introduction

This section discusses BBEdit's editing functionality, including:

- Basic Editing
- Window Anatomy
- Cursor Movement and Text Selection
- Text Transformation
- Wrapping
- "Paste File" and "Paste Folder Listing"
- Comparing Text Files

If you're already familiar with another Macintosh text editor or word processor, you can skip the "Basic Editing" section.

Basic Editing

In terms of its basic editing functionality, BBEdit behaves like any other word processor or text editor on the Macintosh: any typed characters are inserted at the **insertion point**; if there is a selection present, the selection is replaced by the first typed character, and the insertion point is placed after the first typed character.

The insertion point is indicated by a blinking vertical bar; the rate at which this bar blinks is the same for all applications and can be set through the "General" control panel.

If there is any text selected, it is highlighted using black (on non-color machines) or the designated selection color:
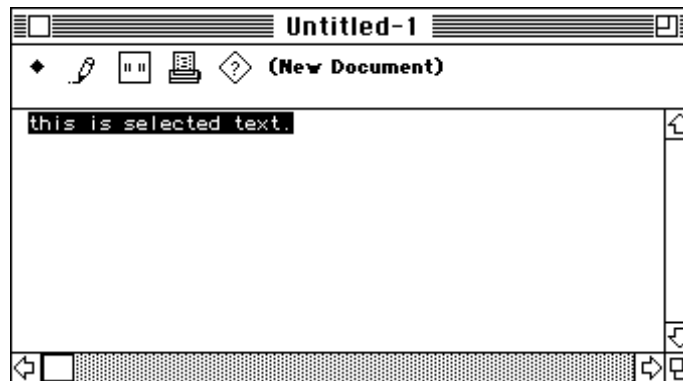
If there is text selected in a window that is inactive (not the front window), it is framed in the highlight color:
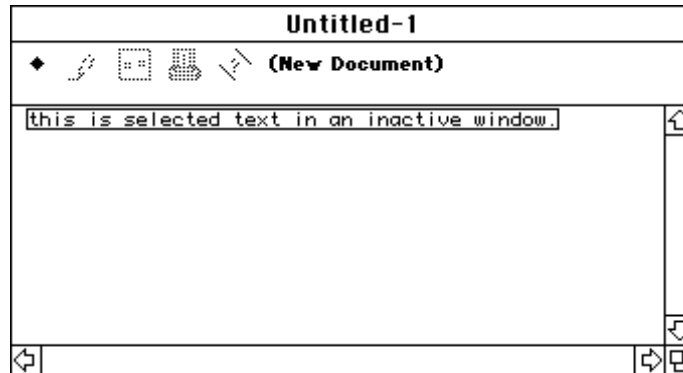
As you type, BBEdit scrolls the window's contents so that the insertion point is visible. Note that since BBEdit doesn't automatically wrap the text as you type, the text may scroll horizontally.

To move text from one place to another, select the text you wish to move, and choose the "Cut" command from the **Edit** menu. The selected text will be deleted, and placed in a special area called the "Clipboard". (The Clipboard always contains the last text that you cut or copied.) You can then use the "Paste" command on the **Edit** menu to place the text elsewhere in the document you're editing, or even in another window altogether. Also, any text that you cut or copy can be pasted into another application. You can place text in the Clipboard without deleting it by choosing "Copy" from the **Edit** menu.

Easter Egg: If you hold down the Option key while choosing "Cut" or "Copy", the selected text is added to anything already in the Clipboard; "Cut" will change to "Cut & Append", and "Copy" will change to "Copy & Append".

When you Paste, the text that's in the Clipboard will replace the current selection (if there is one), or be inserted at the insertion point (if there isn't). Paste doesn't remove text from the Clipboard, so you can Paste as many times as you wish.

To delete selected text, hit the "Delete" key on your keyboard, or choose "Clear" from the **Edit** menu. If you have an Apple Extended Keyboard or other keyboard with a numeric keypad on it, you can hit the "Clear" key on the keypad to delete the selected text.

To select all the text in the front editing window, choose "Select All" from the **Edit** menu. You can then cut, copy, or perform any other action that affects selected text.

Window Anatomy

BBEdit editing windows look like normal Macintosh windows. However, they have additional visual components that are specifically designed to ease the task of working with files and text. These additional components are the status bar, the line number display, and the cursor position display.

Whether each of these additional components is visible depends on the settings in the "Global" section of the Preferences dialog. By default, the setting is so that only the status bar is visible. The line number display and cursor position display can be made visible by checking the "Show Line Numbers" and "Show Cursor Position" check boxes in the Preferences dialog. (The "Preferences" dialog is displayed by choosing "Preferences…" from the **Edit** menu.)

The Status Bar

The status bar appears at the top of each editing window; it provides basic information about the text in the window, and about the file representing the document (if the file has been saved to disk).
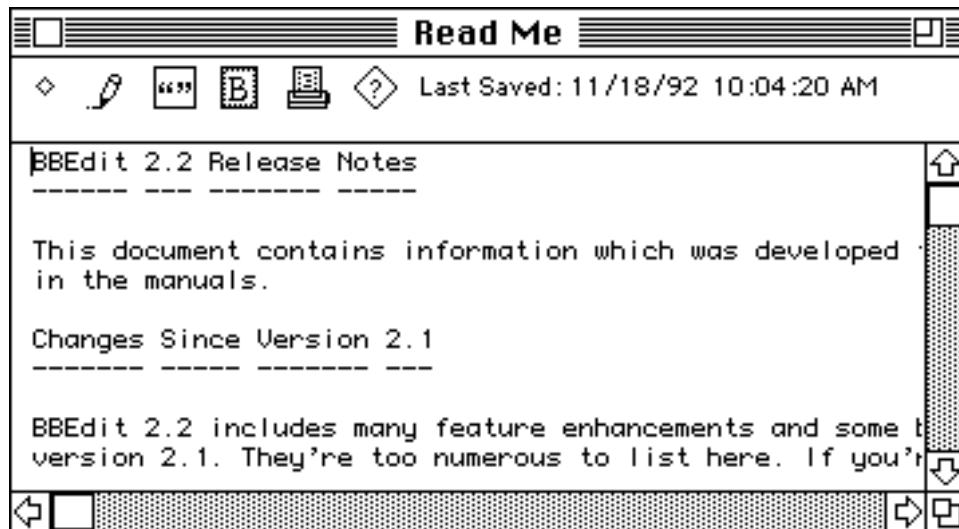

From left to right, the indicators in the status bar are:

- **The Diamond**. If there is a diamond visible, the document has been modified in some way. If the diamond is hollow, then some aspect of the document's saved state (window position, selection range, and so forth) has been changed. If the diamond is black, then the text itself has been changed.

- **The Pencil**. The pencil is an indicator of whether the file is modifiable. If the pencil has a slash across it, then the document is read-only, and its contents cannot be changed in any substantive way. This will be the case if the file is locked, if the file was opened from a locked disk, a folder on an AppleShare volume to which you don't have privileges to Make Changes, if the file is checked out read-only from a Projector project, or if the "Open Read Only" check box in the Open… or Open Several… dialog has been checked.

If the Open Read Only check box was checked, or the file was checked out read-only from a Projector project, you can make the file modifiable by clicking on the pencil. If a file is modifiable, you can make it read-only by clicking on the pencil.

• **The SmartQuotes**. If the SmartQuotes icon has straight quotes in it, then single and double quotes are kept straight; this is desirable for programmers. If the SmartQuotes icon has curly quotes in it, then single and double quotes are made curly in a "smart" fashion; quotes typed after a space or other "quote-breaking" character become opening quotes; all others become closing quotes.

• **The State Icon**. The State Icon indicates which type of saved state is stored in the document. The State Icon is the same as the icon that appears next to the name of the saved state in the "Options…" dialog in the Save As… dialog.

• **The Printer Icon**. Click on this icon to print the document. This is a shortcut for choosing "Print…" from the **File** menu. Hold down the Shift key and click the Printer icon to bring up the "Page Setup…" dialog.

• **The Get Info Icon**. If you click on this icon, BBEdit displays a dialog that contains information about the document:
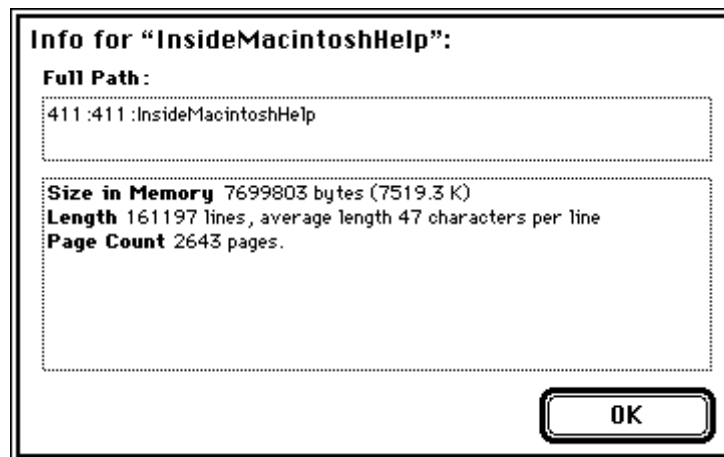

• **The Date Last Saved**. This is simply the date and time the file was last saved to disk.

Newly created windows are very much the same; however, since the documents they represent don't exist on disk, the State Icon is not present, and instead of the Date Last Saved, BBEdit places the indication **(New Document)** in the status bar.
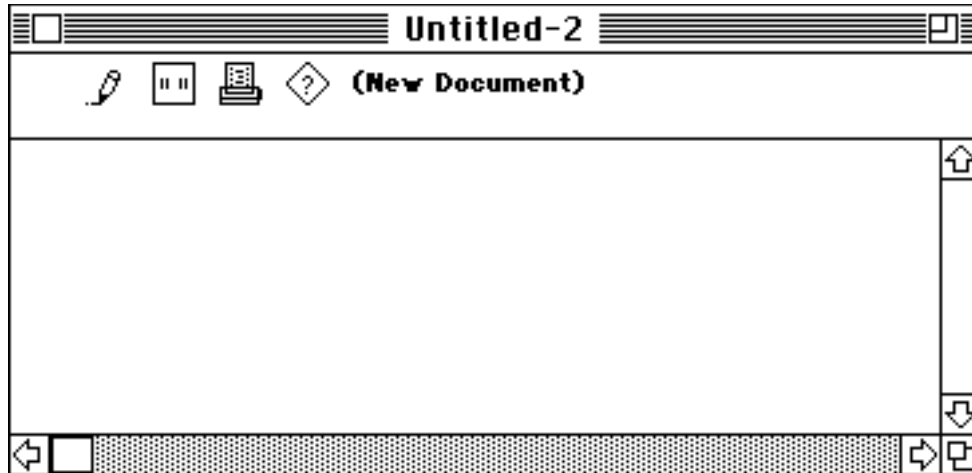
The Line Number Display

The line number display appears at the left-hand edge of every editing window when the "Show Line Numbers" check box is checked in the Preferences dialog. It simply shows the line numbers for the lines visible in the window. As you scroll, the line number display is updated.
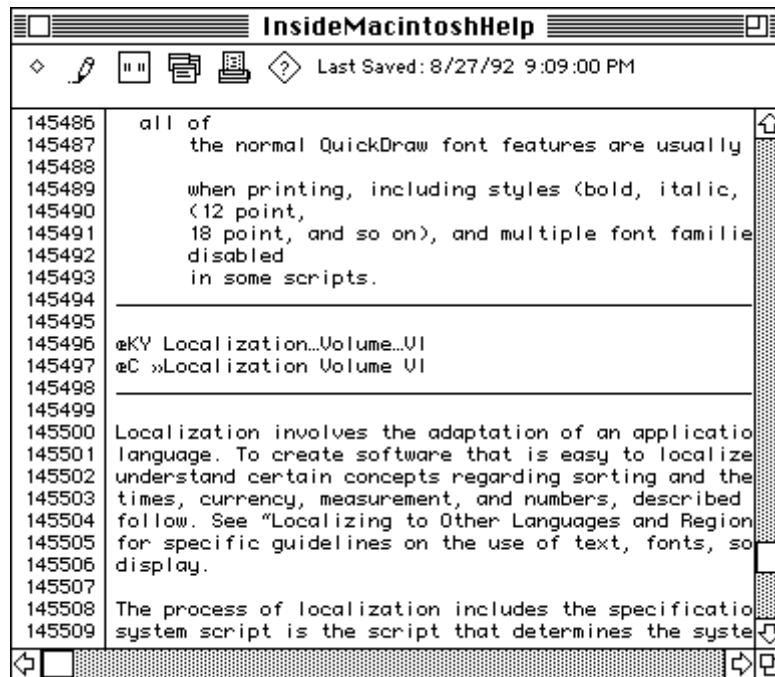
The Cursor Position Display

The cursor position display appears at the lower left-hand corner of every editing window when the "Show Cursor Position" check box is checked in the Preferences dialog. It shows the line number and column position of the insertion point, or of the last-changed end of the selection range. The display is updated as the selection changes or as the insertion point moves.
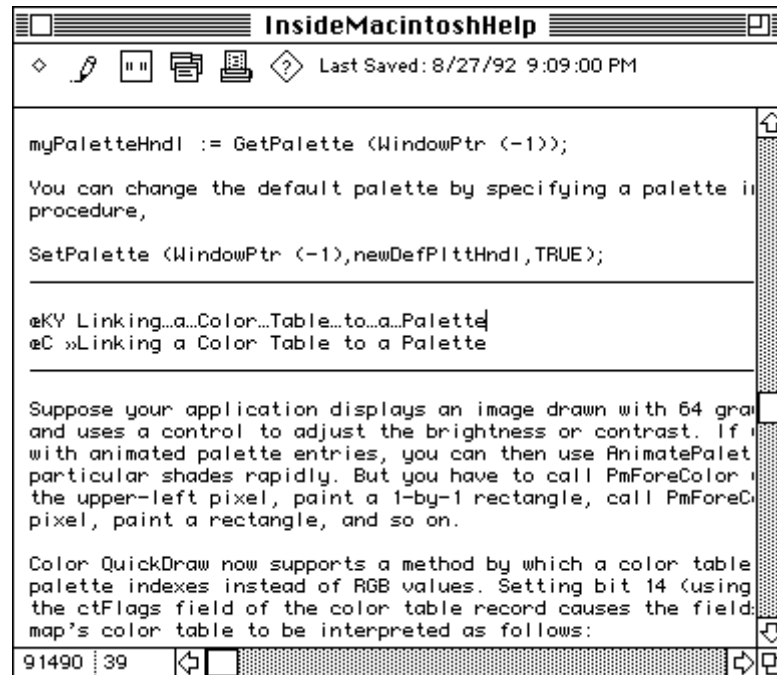
Cursor Movement and Text Selection

You can change the placement of the insertion point and the range of the selection by clicking and dragging with the mouse in normal Macintosh fashion. You can also change the insertion point or selection range by using various keys on the keyboard.

Arrow Keys

The arrow keys, which are present on all Macintosh keyboards except the original 128K and 512K keyboards, are particularly useful for changing the location of the insertion point:

Key	Action	with Command key	with Option key
Up Arrow	moves up a line	moves up a screenful	moves to start of document
Down Arrow	moves down a line	moves down a screenful	moves to end of document
Left Arrow	moves left one character	moves to start of line	moves left one word
Right Arrow	moves right one character	moves to end of line	moves right one word

When the Shift key is held down, the arrow keys behave as described in the table above, except that the selection range is extended to include the new placement of the insertion point. (This is the same effect as typing the arrow-key combination, and then holding down the Shift key and clicking at the original placement of the insertion point, or at the end of the original selection range.)

In the "Editing" section of the Preferences, there is a setting called "Exchange Command and Option". When this option is turned on, the behavior of the left and right arrow keys when Command and Option are held down reverses:

Key	with Command key	with Option key
Left Arrow	moves left one word	moves to start of line
Right Arrow	moves right one word	moves to end of line

This option is mostly for people who are used to this behavior in the THINK C editor.

The Numeric Keypad

Most Macintosh keyboards have a numeric keypad on the right side of the keyboard. Normally, these keys behave the same as their counterparts on the main part of the keyboard; however, by means of a preference, you can utilize the numeric keypad for cursor control, just as in Microsoft Word. This preference is in the "Editing" section, and is called "Use Numeric Keypad for Cursor Control". When this option is turned on, the numeric keypad behaves as follows:

- The "1" and "7" keys move to the beginning and end of line, respectively.
- The "3" and "9" keys move to the beginning and end of the document, respectively.
- The "8", "2", "4", and "6" keys behave the same as up, down, left, and right arrow keys, respectively.
- The "5" key makes the current selection range visible, as does the Enter key.
- The "." key deletes the character to the right of the insertion point.

When using any of the number keys on the numeric keypad, you can use the Shift key as described above to extend the selection range. When using the 8, 2, 4, and 6 keys, their behavior is the same as described for the up, down, left, and right arrow keys above.

To change the behavior of the numeric keypad, hold down the Option key and hit the "Clear" key at the upper left-hand corner of the numeric keypad. (This key is also labeled "num lock" on the Apple Extended Keyboard.)

Special Keys

The Apple Extended Keyboard has additional function keys on it, which are usable within BBEdit:

Key	Action	with Command key	with Option key
F1	Undo	(no change)	(no change)
F2	Cut	(no change)	Cut & Append
F3	Copy	(no change)	Copy & Append
F4	Paste	(no change)	(no change)
"del"	Forward Delete	(no change)	(no change)
Home	scroll to start of document	(no change)	move insertion point to start of doc
End	scroll to end of document	(no change)	move insertion point to end of doc
Page Up	scroll up a page	(no change)	(no change)
Page Down	scroll down a page	(no change)	(no change)

Clicking

You can select text in an editing window in the normal Macintosh fashion, by clicking and dragging.

When in BBEdit, use of the Command and Shift keys when clicking, and clicking multiple times will yield different results:

Action	Result	with Command key	with Shift key
Click	moves insertion point	(no change)	Extends selection
Double-Click	selects word	selects matching braces	Extends selection to word
Triple-Click	selects line	selects paragraph	(no change)

Command-Double-Click is the same as clicking once to place the insertion point and then choosing the "Balance" command; it selects the nearest pair of matching parentheses, braces, or brackets which encloses the insertion point.

Triple-Click is the same as clicking once to place the insertion point and then choosing the "Select Line" command from the **Edit** menu. Command-Triple-Click is the same as choosing the "Select Paragraph" command from the **Edit** menu (hold down the Option key while pulling down the Edit menu).

Note: In a word processor, a "paragraph" is a stream of characters with a carriage return at the end, wrapped into lines automatically. Because lines in plain text are separated by carriage returns, BBEdit defines a paragraph to be a collection of lines of text, with blank lines on either end of the text. (Paragraphs also occur at the very beginning and very end of the document, even though there are no blank lines there.)

Text Transformation

BBEdit provides an assortment of facilities for transforming text in various ways. The commands to transform text are all found under the **Text** menu:

Balance locates the pair of parentheses, braces, or brackets which encloses the current selection range or insertion point. If there are unmatched parentheses, braces, or brackets, BBEdit will beep.

Twiddle transposes two characters according to the following rules:

- If the selection range is of zero length (an insertion point), and not at the beginning or end of a line or document, the characters on either side of the insertion point will be transposed.

- If the insertion point is at the beginning of the line or document, the two characters **following** the insertion point will be transposed.

- If the insertion point is at the end of a line or document, the two characters **preceding** the insertion point will be transposed.

- If the selection range is of nonzero length, the characters at either end of the range will be transposed, regardless of where the selection range begins and ends.

If you hold down the Option key, **Twiddle** becomes **Twiddle Words**. Twiddle Words behaves in similar fashion to Twiddle, except that it acts on entire words, rather than individual characters.

Raise Case and **Lower Case** make the selected text all upper case or all lower case, respectively.

Shift Left and **Shift Right** indent the selected text by one tab stop (in the case of Shift Left), or outdent by one tab stop (for Shift Right). If you hold down the Shift key while choosing one of these commands, the selected text will be indented or outdented by one space instead of one tab stop.

The **Wrap…** command is used for wrapping long lines and filling paragraphs; it will be discussed in the next section.

Zap Gremlins… is useful for finding and altering non-printing characters in your text files. When you choose this command, the following dialog is presented:
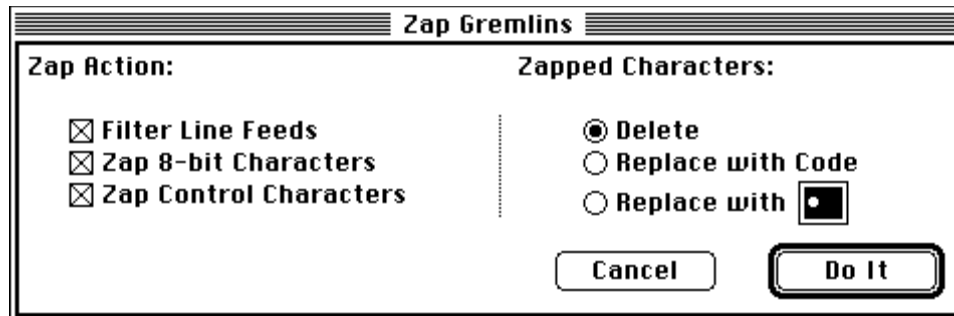
The check boxes in the left half of the dialog control what action the Zap Gremlins command will take:

•   **Filter Line Feeds**, if checked, will cause Zap Gremlins to convert line feeds or carriage return/line feed pairs to carriage returns, in the same fashion that "LF Translation" does when opening files.

•   **Zap 8-bit Characters** zaps special Macintosh characters, which are usually created by typing a letter or number with the Option and/or Shift key held down. The bullet (•) and curly quotes (" and ", ' and ') are examples of eight-bit characters, though there are many more.

•   **Zap Control Characters** zaps invisible ASCII characters, known as "Control Characters" because they were historically used to "control" the actions of terminals and printers. Control characters can cause compilers and other text-processing utilities to malfunction, and are therefore undesirable.

The radio buttons in the right half of the dialog determine what Zap Gremlins does to "zap" the offending characters. These actions only control the behavior of "Zap 8-bit Characters" and "Zap Control Characters", and do not affect "Filter Line Feeds".

•   **Delete** removes the zapped character completely from the text. This option is useful if you are only interested in destroying gremlins, and you don't care about where they were in the text.

•   **Replace with Code** replaces the gremlin character with an escaped hexadecimal (base 16) code. The escape code is in the convention used by the C programming language and Apple's "Rez" resource-description language, namely "\0x" followed by the character code in hex. This option is useful to identify both the value and location of gremlin characters; once you've done a Zap Gremlins, you can search for occurrences of \0x to locate the converted characters.

•   **Replace with** (followed by an entry field) replaces the gremlin character with the character you type in the edit field next to the radio button. This option is useful for identifying the location of gremlins, but not their value.

Easter Egg: If you hold down the Option key when pulling down the **Text** menu, "Zap Gremlins…" becomes "Zap Gremlins", and if you choose this command, BBEdit will zap gremlin characters and convert line feeds according to the current settings in the Zap Gremlins dialog box, without bringing up the dialog.

Entab converts runs of spaces into tabs, according to the current setting in the "Font and Tabs…" dialog. This transformation is useful when downloading text from a mainframe computer or on-line service which uses spaces to line up columns of text; when displaying the text in a monospaced font, columns will usually not line up unless you Entab the text.

Detab converts tabs into runs of spaces, according to the current setting in the "Font and Tabs…" dialog. This is useful when uploading text to a mainframe or on-line service which has no concept of tabs as column separators.

Wrapping

BBEdit offers the capability to wrap text in a variety of ways. This wrapping is not the "live" word wrapping that word-processors provide; instead, it is useful when importing text files from word processors or other programs that do not use carriage returns to break lines on the screen. When opened, such files appear to have only a few lines in them, and these lines run far past the right-hand edge of the window.

To wrap text in the current document window, choose "Wrap…" from the **Text** menu. BBEdit presents the following dialog box:
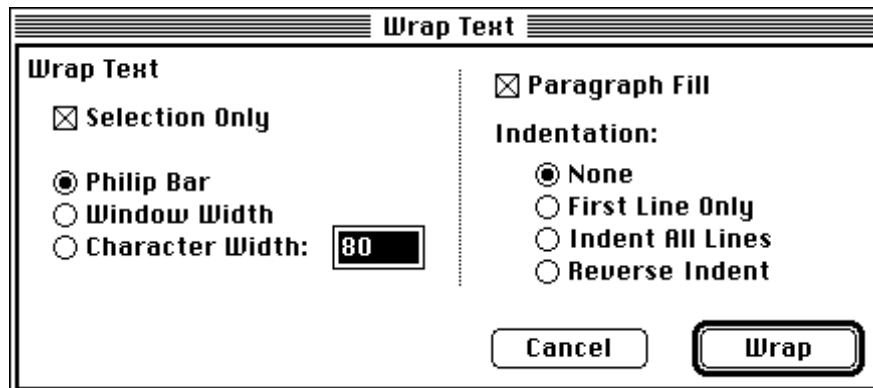
The controls on the left half of the dialog control how much of the text is wrapped, and the maximum length of the lines after wrapping:

- The "Selection Only" check box controls how much of the document's text will be wrapped. If there is a selection range in the window, then the "Selection Only" check box will be enabled. If this check box is checked, only the selected lines are affected. Otherwise, BBEdit will wrap all of the text in the front document.

The group of radio buttons controls the length of lines after they have been wrapped.

- The "Philip Bar" button will break lines of text at the philip bar. (To see the location of the philip bar, turn on "Show Philip Bar" in the Global section of the Preferences dialog.) The philip bar indicates the maximum usable width of a document window when the window is zoomed to full size on a nine-inch "classic" Macintosh screen. For this reason, you're guaranteed that text wrapped to the philip bar will be readable without horizontal scrolling by anyone on any Macintosh.

- If "Window Width" is selected, no wrapped line will be longer than the current width of the window. This option is useful if you'd like the lines to be a little longer or a little shorter than is provided for by the philip bar; just size the window appropriately and wrap.

- If "Character Width" is selected, the number in the text field designates the maximum number of characters allowed on any line; a line that exceeds this number of characters in length will be wrapped. The "Character Width" setting is useful for preparing postings to on-line services, which can break lines in an unattractive fashion if they're longer than a fixed number of characters (usually 80).

The controls on the right half of the dialog control paragraph wrapping. If the "Paragraph Fill" check box is turned off, long lines will be wrapped. Short lines will be left untouched. The results would look something like this:

Before Wrapping:

```
This is a short line.
This is a very long line of text, which is preceded by a much shorter line of
text.
```

After Wrapping, Paragraph Fill Off:

```
This is a short line.
This is a very long line of text, which is
preceded by a much shorter
line of text.
```

With Paragraph Fill turned on, short lines are integrated smoothly into the rest of the paragraph.

After Wrapping, Paragraph Fill On:

```
This is a short line. This is a very
long line of text, which is preceded
by a much shorter line of text.
```

The radio buttons under "Indentation:" control the manner in which paragraphs are indented after they're wrapped:

- **None** places the text in the paragraph flush against the left edge of the window.

- **First Line Only** indents the first line by one tab stop, and place the rest of the paragraph flush against the left edge of the window.

- **Indent All Lines** indents all lines in the paragraph by one tab stop.

- **Reverse Indent** places the first line in the paragraph flush against the left edge of the window, and will indent all other lines in the paragraph by one tab stop.

Note: If you hold down the Option key while choosing "Wrap…", the dialog will not be presented, and the text will be wrapped according to the current settings in the dialog. If you've never chosen "Wrap…", the text will be wrapped according to the settings in the "Wrapping" section of the Preferences dialog. It's handy to set the preference so that "Selection Only" is turned on; this allows you to simply triple-click to select a long unwrapped line, or command-triple-click to select a paragraph, and then type Command-Option-Return. You can also perform the whole maneuver without lifting your hands from the keyboard, by using Command-L to select a line, and Command-Option-L to select a paragraph, then typing Command-Option-Return.

"Paste File" and "Paste Folder Listing"

Paste File is a convenient way to insert the contents of a specified text file into a document that you're editing. When you choose "Paste File" from the **Edit** menu, BBEdit puts up a file-selection dialog so that you can choose the file to be inserted:
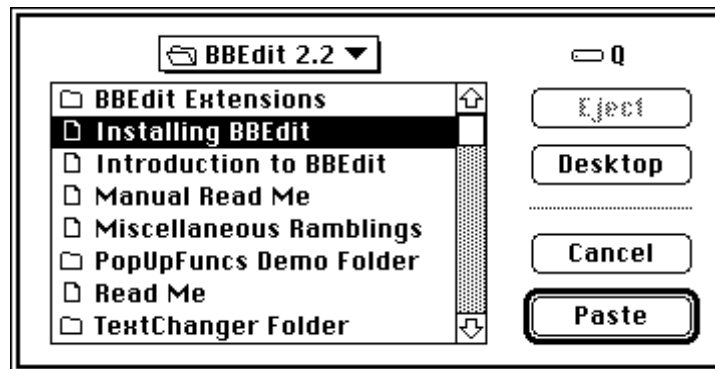

Once you choose a file, its contents will replace the selection range (if there is one) or be inserted at the insertion point (if there isn't).

Paste Folder Listing is used for generating a textual listing of a given folder hierarchy. To insert a folder listing in a document, choose "Paste Folder Listing" from the **Edit** menu:
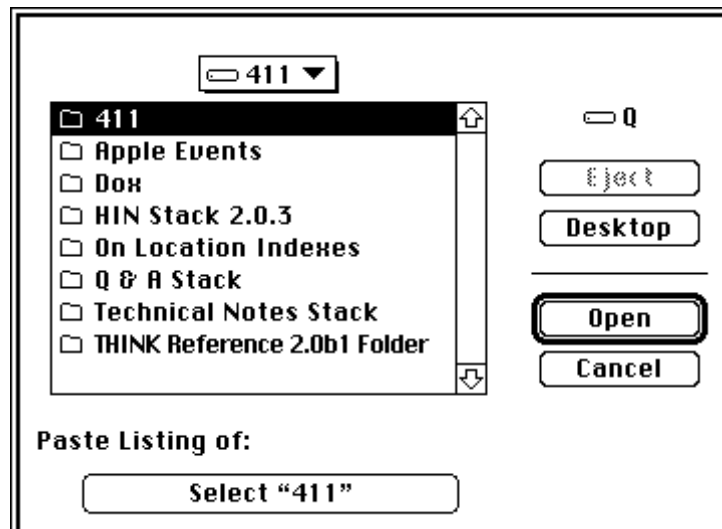
Click the large button at the bottom of the dialog to choose the folder. BBEdit scans the folder and generates a text listing of its contents. This listing replaces the selection range (if there is one), or is inserted at the insertion point (if there isn't).
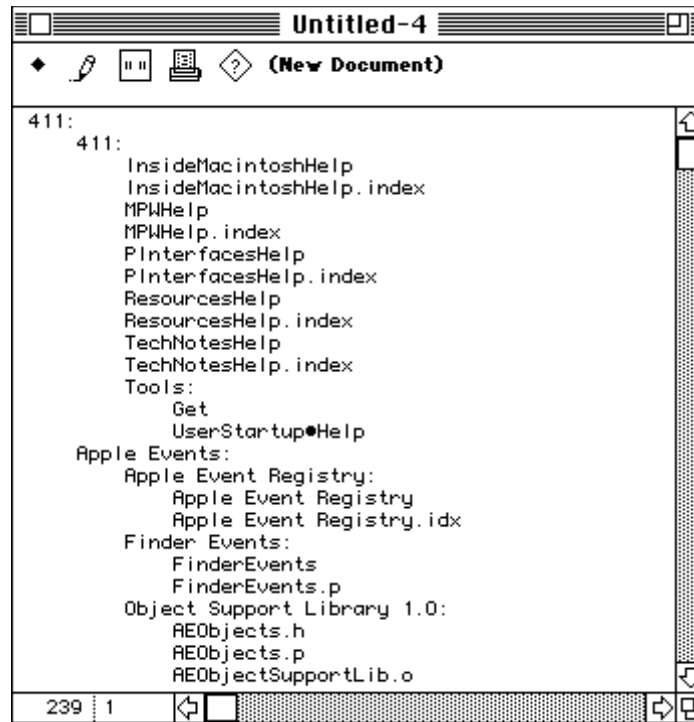
Note: The folder listing will include invisible files, such as the desktop database files. Also, if you paste a listing of an AppleShare volume that you don't have total access to, some folders can't be scanned. These folders will have "(access denied)" under their names in the listing.

Comparing Text Files

The "Compare Files…" command is used to determine the nature of the differences between two text files. To compare any two files files, choose "Compare Files…" from the **Edit** menu:
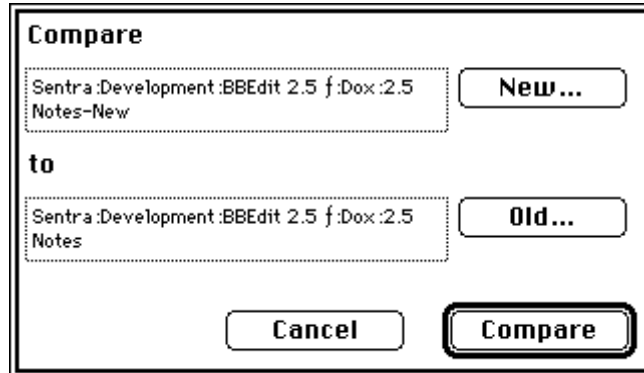
Click the "New…" button to choose the newer of the two files, and "Old…" to choose the older. When you've chosen both files to compare, click the "Compare" button to compare the two files.

Note: It doesn't actually matter which files you specify with "New…" and "Old…", but it's a bit easier to view the differences if you select the newer file with "New…".

If the files are different, BBEdit opens the two files, and tiles them side-by-side, with the Compare Results window beneath them.
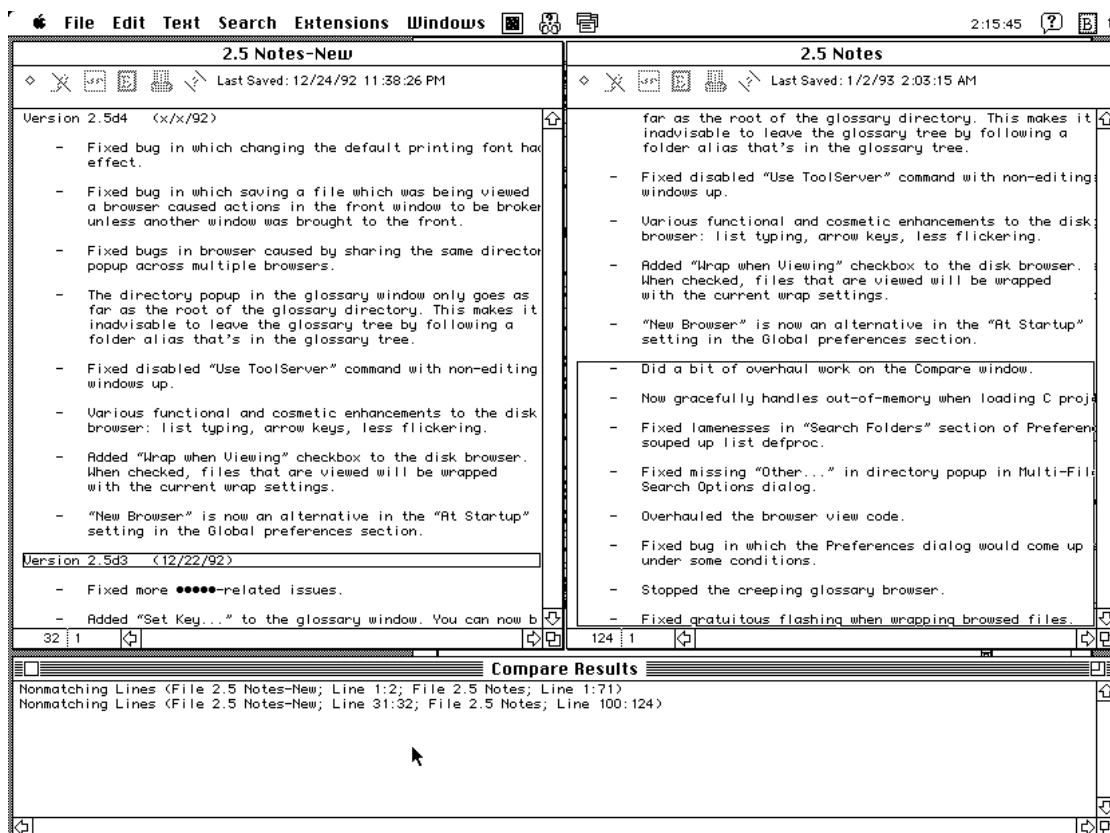
To view a particular difference, double-click on a line in the Compare Results window.

Note: To avoid the possibility of modifying the files while you're trying to view the differences between them, BBEdit opens both files read-only. If you wish to edit either file, click on the pencil icon in the status bar.

If you re-arrange windows so that the Compare Results window gets hidden, chooser "Show Compare Results" from the **Edit** menu to bring the Compare Results window to the front.