Frequently Asked Questions

TinkerTool is so small. How can it have all these features?

TinkerTool doesn't implement any features of its own. It just unlocks hidden features that Apple has built into the applications that are part of Mac OS X. The Finder, the Dock, Terminal, and the Cocoa system frameworks are implementing all the functions that TinkerTool is offering.

Can you change the font in the menu bar?

No, the menu bar is controlled by the Dock and the loginwindow application. There is no official or undocumented way known yet to change the font of the menu bar without directly reprogramming the Dock / loginwindow applications or its resources.

How can I control smoothing of fonts?

In Mac OS X, font smoothing (anti-aliasing of fonts) is enabled in most cases so that text is displayed in very high quality. However, many users with analog low-resolution monitors report a poor, unsatisfactory rendering of text. For that reason, fine-tuning of font rendering was one of the most often requested features that users wanted to see integrated in TinkerTool. Beginning with version 1.3, TinkerTool allows to control font-smoothing with Mac OS X. You can set individual limits (in points) where font-smoothing should start. Fonts with a size equal or greater than the specified size will be smoothed, smaller fonts will not be smoothed. Using TinkerTool, you can set individual thresholds for the following groups of fonts or applications:

*   Fonts displayed by Cocoa applications
*   Fixed-width fonts displayed by Cocoa applications (partially overrides the first setting)

*   Fonts displayed by applications using QuickDraw

The first "general" Cocoa setting applies both to variable and fixed-width fonts. The second value overrides the first
one for fonts of fixed width (e.g. Courier), if you specify a threshold that is *greater* than the first value. For example, if you specify 0 points for both values, all fonts in Cocoa applications will be smoothed. If you specify 4 pt as the first and 16 pt as the second value, all variable-width fonts with a size greater or equal than 4 points will be smoothed, but for fixed-width fonts, smoothing will begin at a size of 16 points.

By default, Mac OS X Cocoa uses the values 0 and 11, respectively. So the fixed-width font "Monaco 10" that is typically used in Terminal, Console, ProjectBuilder or Mail's plain text mode is already displayed without smoothing. If you want to enable anti-aliasing for those applications, use a smaller value than 11. The default threshold for QuickDraw applications is 12.

Some high-end applications (like OmniWeb) are able to control font-smoothing themselves. TinkerTool will not override any settings of those applications, so you can still define individual smoothing parameters in such programs. See the respective manuals for more information.

Beginning with version 1.4, TinkerTool can additionally disable font smoothing at the CoreGraphics level. If you set the respective checkmark, font-smoothing in almost every Aqua user interface element and in all Cocoa applications will be switched off.

Isn't there a difference between anti-aliasing and smoothing?

No, font smoothing and anti-aliasing of fonts are the same, anti-aliasing is just a more technical term. In signal theory, aliasing means that high frequencies of a given signal become distorted when being sampled with low frequencies. In the case of computer graphics, or font rendering in particular, the limited resolution (low frequency) of the screen causes "jaggies" to appear along not exactly vertical or not

exactly horizontal parts of the characters' contours. Every technique that tries to counteract this problem is called anti-aliasing. By adding levels of gray along oblique or round edges, your eyes get tricked into perceiving smoother countours. Font-smoothing is part of Mac OS since version 8.5. In Classic Mac OS, font-smoothing is controlled by settings in the Appearance control panel:

pastedGraphic.tiff ¨

However, font smoothing of Cocoa and font smoothing of QuickDraw (used by Carbon applications) behave very differently. QuickDraw uses simple 4-times oversampling (in each dimension) to compute the gray-level pixmaps for anti-aliased text. The fonts are virtually rendered with a resolution of 288 dpi. This is four times the resolution that is needed to display the fonts on a 72 dpi screen. Conceptually, each screen pixel is replaced by a square of 4x4 sub pixels. By counting the number of black sub pixels (a number between 0 and 16) of each "real" pixel, a gray level is computed that is used for display on screen. Cocoa directly uses Quartz to render fonts. Here, the much more sophisticated anti-aliasing technologies of PDF / PostScript are used for screen display as well as for printing. As you can see in these samples, the results are much better than those of QuickDraw:

1__#$!@%!#__pastedGraphic.tiff ¨
Verdana, 16 pt, rendered with the mentioned technologies, shown in original size

2__#$!@%!#__pastedGraphic.tiff ¨

Three-times enlarged detail of the word "Font"

When I double-click the Trash on the Desktop, the Finder displays the Computer folder instead of the Trash contents. Can you correct this bug?

No, this is a bug of version 10.0 of the Finder. TinkerTool cannot change this behavior.

I'm using a Scandinavian version of Mac OS X. When I start TinkerTool, it uses a language I don't understand. How can I enable TinkerTool to use English?

There isn't really a Scandinavian version of Mac OS X. The operating system always supports several languages simultaneously. Because there are no Scandinavian language packages for TinkerTool yet, the operating system will automatically select an alternative language. This selection is based on a language priority that can be set by the user. To change that priority, start "System Preferences" and click on "International". Select the "Language" pane and use the mouse to drag the languages into the preferred order. Restart TinkerTool and it will now use the language you prefer.

I used TinkerTool for a while, then I deleted it. But all of its settings are still effective, what should I do?

As mentioned above, TinkerTool unlocks settings in other applications. The applications will respect their settings no matter if TinkerTool is installed or not. If you want to reset your configuration to the state it was before you used TinkerTool, start TinkerTool, then select the menu item "Reset - Reset Everything to defaults...". This function was introduced in release 1.3.

I downloaded the latest version of TinkerTool, but I'm missing some of the features that were built into the 1.1 release.

Some features of TinkerTool were taken out during the update from 1.1 to the 1.2 version. The features have been removed because either Apple disabled the required functionality when going from Public Beta to 10.0, or there is now an official interface to control the affected preference values. TinkerTool should not reimplement features that are already built into the base system to guarantee a consistent user experience. The following settings are affected:

*   **Finder Option: Show hard disks and network mounts on the desktop:** This feature is now controlled directly by the Finder. Select the menu item "Finder - Preferences" and look for the checkmark "Disks".

*   **Finder Option: Open new window when double-clicking folder:** The Finder does no longer support this feature. This option has been removed.

*   **Appearance: User Interface Style:** Apple has taken out the functionality to display the user interface in NEXTSTEP or MS-Windows style. This option has been removed.

*   **Appearance: Double-click in title-bar minimizes windows:** This feature is always switched on in Mac OS X 10.0 and cannot be disabled. The option checkmark has been removed.

*   **Display Settings and Gamma Calibration:** There is now an official interface to change these settings. Open "System Preferences" and select the "Displays" control. Select the "Color" pane, choose a display profile to begin with and press the "Calibrate" button.