

X-Assist

What is X-Assist?

X-Assist was created to assist in the much loved but missing features of OS 9 in OSX. Specifically:

- Application Switcher Menu (top right corner of screen)
X-Assist has a similar implementation.
- More than a 5 item "Recent Applications" menu.
X-Assist has no "limit".
- The ability to add personal hierarchies of items in an OS9-like "apple"

menu.

X-Assist allows users to add any hierarchy into a "Shortcuts"

submenu.

- An extensible "Control Strip" like plugin architecture.
X-Assist supports Objective-C (NSBundle) plugins.
They are easy to write, and examples "SetVolume" and

"MP3 Player"

plugins are provided in this distribution.

- OS 9 window behavior - when you switch applications by clicking in a window, all windows for that application are shown. This behavior has changed in OSX and can be a bit annoying.

also

X-Assist brings back the OS9 windowing functionality and allows you to toggle between modes.

Who Should Use X-Assist?

Anyone who believes that these features from OS 9 would improve their everyday affairs when working under OS X.

For those who love OS X as it is, you don't have to use X-Assist.

Screen Shots:

pastedGraphic.tiff "

Figure 1: Display of custom items to appear in X-Assist Shortcuts submenu. This screenshot is a window from NetFinder browsing a local disk, not OSX's Finder.

1_#\$_!@%#!#_pastedGraphic.tiff "

Figure 2: X-Assist menu hierarchy.

How much does it cost?

Its FREE!

Check out the following Shareware application which may also interest you:

NetFinder is a FTP/HTTP/FILE browsing application that looks like the Finder (OS 9). It supports viewing remote servers and local files in a hierarchy, plus much more. A fully functional installer can be downloaded from:

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~pli/netfinder/>

Some features of NetFinder:

- As Finder-like as you can imagine when browsing. (see
- resume FTP/HTTP
- Drag and Drop everywhere.
- Its Local File Browsing mode allows you to view, sort and

Figure 1)

change Label's tool!

Try it and you will be hooked.

Installation Instructions:

- (1) Copy items in the "Put into Favorites Folder" folder named "X-Assist Items" and "X-Assist Plugins" into your "Favorites" folder (ie in your Home directory -> Library -> Favorites, or click on the Heart icon). Please see the NetFinder window in Figure 1 showing your local disk layout of where items should be placed.
- (2) Copy the X-Assist application anywhere on your local disk. Or even better, copy the whole X-Assist disk image to your disk, so you can easily refer to this README.
- (3) Double-Click on the X-Assist application to run it.

Since X-Assist is a background application, you will not see it in the Applications menu nor the Dock. To Quit X-Assist, you will have to select the "Edit X-Assist Preferences..." item from the Shortcuts submenu (See Figure 2). Once the Preference window appears, click on the Quit button.

Customizing X-Assist:

To customize X-Assist:

- (1) Select the "Edit X-Assist Preferences..." item from the Shortcuts submenu (See Figure 2).
- (2) Change the settings you wish to alter.
- (3) Click the Quit button.
- (4) Restart the X-Assist application.

(future versions will allow you to skip steps 3 and 4)

Tips and Tricks:

To customize the Shortcuts menu, you may add items into the "X-Assist Items" folder you placed in your "Favorites" folder. See Figure 1.

You may also add plugins to the "X-Assist Plugins" folder you placed in your "Favorites" folder (See Figure 1) to extend the functionality of the application. The X-Assist distribution has included two plugins for you to play with. One is a volume controller, and another is a simple MP3 player. In the future other developers may create plugins for X-Assist. When they do we will have a link on our web site.

Advanced User Information:

Are you a Programmer? Want to write your own plugins? Look inside the "X-Assist Plugin SDK" folder of the X-Assist distribution to see some sample plugins.

Known Issues and Limitations:

- Clicking outside the menus does not get rid of the menus. This can be good or bad.
- Recent Applications are not remembered between launches. This will be resolved in a future release.
- setting preferences are not very dynamic, you have to restart the application. This will be attended to in the future.
- The application icon is missing - care to donate one?

Copying and Distribution:

You may copy and distribute this package provided everything is kept intact and unaltered.

If you distribute this on a commercial CD-ROM, I (Peter) would like to be notified of such

an event.

Contacts:

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You can email any of us for suggestions.

Version History

v0.5 [21st May 2001]

- added icon for Menu Resizer.
- added support for using Shift key to temporarily invert the current Windowing mode. (defaulted off).
- improved the display of Control Panel name (internal name and localized).
- integrated a few localizations (some incomplete), Japanese, German, French
- re-arranged preference pane and added two new prefs.

v0.4 [1st May 2001]

- added support for remembering recent applications.
- added ability to hide icons for everything but the Application Menu.
- added support for hiding other apps when switching - for those who asked for it.
- added Control-ESC hotkey to toggle on/off OS9 windowing mode.
- added more prefs.
- improved handling of "non-standard" filenames causing X-Assist to quit.
- adopted application icon. Thanks to Mike Meacham.
- updated SetVolume plugin to support setting Alert and System volume.
- fixed bug in SetVolume causing one channel to be set to Zero volume. Doh!

v0.3 [23rd April 2001]

- fixed a bug in the application menu causing icons to not draw properly.
- fixed cause of occasional sudden quitting of app.
- added "Control Panel" submenu to Shortcuts submenu for easy access to Prefs.
- added alias resolving of folders in the "X-Assist Items" folder. So you can now add an alias to the Applications folder.

- menu resizer now updates correctly. Sweet!!
- added more prefs.

v0.2 [19th April 2001]

- added support for showing the application menu on the right of the Clock.
- added current running process tickmark in application menu.
- added support for option-select new process to hide current process then switch.
- added Hide (app name), Hide Others and Show All - for all those that asked for it.
- added more preferences to configure the app:
 - the location of the application menu.
 - the ability to hide the application name, ie only show icon.
 - enable the resizer, allowing for a one click hide/show app menu names.
This pref is defaulted off as it causes a few drawing glitches.
 - enable/disable "X-Assist Items" loading
 - enable/disable "Recent Applications" feature.
- relocated the Toggle Window Mode item and moved the "Edit Preferences" to a submenu.
- added a checkmark next to Toggle Window Mode to indicate the current state.
- x-assist is now a fully background application.
- re-arranged preferences window to include access to what used to be in the apps menus.
- improved internal handling of OSX applications.
- application menu items now sorted in alphabetical order.
- fixed a bad resource in the about box text... oops.
- improved documentation.

v0.1 [Initial Release]

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