

6 Mac tips that will make you more productive

Apple designs its products so users can be productive from the moment they power their hardware up. These six handy Mac hints will let you do even more.-ComputerWorld

Apple's entire user interface paradigm can be summed up as "reveal as required." You can use its products productively from the moment you power them up out of the box, but as you become more familiar with its systems you can achieve much more. These six handy Mac tips will help you get things done faster and more effectively.

Command-Space

My favorite Mac shortcut, *Command-Space*, opens Spotlight search. Use this when looking for a document, an image, a website, contact, folder, app or almost anything else – just start typing the first few letters of the name and hit *Return* when the correct item is found.

If you don't use this yet, you should. Here are [18 more keyboard tips](#).

System Preferences

Perhaps a little niche, but if you're forever flicking between different screen resolutions (as some graphics and video professionals do), you can also use Command-Space to get to System Preferences fast. Just begin typing the word Displays and you should see the setting appear. Tap it to go there.

Need to change another System Preference now that you're in there? Just option-click in the Back button (it looks like three rows of four dots) to reach a drop-down list of other preferences and select the one you need.

Say what you want

Not many Mac users know about this one. You can dictate text, copy, emails and so much more to your Mac (so long as you've already enabled Dictation in *System Preferences>Keyboard>Dictation*). It's super-easy. Just press the *function (fn)* key twice and you should see a small, grey microphone icon appear beside the document you are in. Now you can dictate what you want to say – slowly and clearly – tap *Done*, and the writing is done for you.

The feature also understands commands like new paragraph, full stop, and so on.

Make a keyboard shortcut

Every Mac application makes its own useful shortcuts available to you in the application Menu. But there isn't necessarily a keyboard shortcut for all the commands you may frequently need to use (*Print to PDF*, for example).

Here's how to create one:

- Tap *Command-Space* and type "*Keyboard*" until you can choose *Keyboard System Preferences*.
- Now choose the *Shortcuts* pane and select *App Shortcuts*.
- Click the *Plus* button and choose '*All Applications*' (if you want to create a System-wide shortcut) or a specific application name to create a shortcut specifically for that app.
- In the *Menu* title type the exact name of the Menu command you want to add.
- In the *Keyboard Shortcut* box type the shortcut you want to use when initiating that function (be sure to create one that *doesn't conflict with an existing shortcut*).

Action for accents

Looking for accented letters, perhaps when you are writing French (Français)?

The easiest way to find accented characters isn't to laboriously explore Font Book, or copy and paste an accented character from another document: Just *hold the*

letter you need to accent down on the keyboard. After a short delay a menu showing all the available accented characters appears, each one paired with a number. Tap the number that corresponds to the accented character you want to use and it will be typed for you.

Wikipedia as a Service

Do you use the Services menu? If you do, you'll know that you can select any text in any Mac app and Control-Click it to access a direct Google search from within the Services menu. But perhaps you'd like to create a similar Service for Wikipedia?

Here's how it's done:

- Open Automator (*Command-H type automator*) and tap the *Service* item.
- Drag *Run AppleScript* from the menu to the left of the new window.
- You'll see the phrase *Your script goes here*. Below this you'll see the word 'return,' after which you should type the following exactly as here, being careful to match spaces.
- ["https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/"](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/) & (input as string)
- Now drag the *Display Webpages* item over to below your new service.
- In the *File* menu choose *Save* and name this item *Search with Wikipedia*.

In the future, you will be able to search for more information about any selected text in almost any app on your Mac from the Services menu.

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