

How and why you should use text clippings on your Mac

Macs have supported text clippings for years. What are they? Why do you need them? How do you use them? - ComputerWorld



Mac users have been able to create and use text clippings since the last century and Mac OS 9, but the feature remains relatively underexploited — despite being such a great way to boost productivity.

What are text clippings?

Text clippings are small chunks of text on your Mac. Easy to create, they are also easy to use: To add the text to anything you write in any application, you just need to drag & drop the clipping to the document and the words in the clipping will be added to that document. The text can be long, short, or medium, and it can contain HTML links.

How do you create a text clipping?

Creating a text clipping is very easy. If you ever select text to copy & paste it, then you're almost there. Here's the fastest way to make a text clipping:

- Select some text
- With the text selected, drag & drop the text to your Mac Desktop or Finder window.
- “Boom” -- You'll see a little text clipping appear.
- By default the clip will name itself using the first few words of the text, but you can change this.

Tip: If you are going to create multiple clippings to help you automate various tasks, you may want to create a new Folder called Clippings on your Mac. Pop them all in there.

Text clippings retain the rich text formatting of the original text – bold, underlines, italics, even web links are respected.

How to use a text clipping

You can create text clippings from almost any app that contains text just by dragging & dropping selected text to the Desktop or a Finder window.

Once created, you can use that clipping to automatically place text in almost any kind of document. They work with Pages, Mail, Word, and more. You can even drop the clipping into a search engine so long as you have that service open in your browser (you can't drop them into the Safari search bar).

You don't need to open the clipping, select and copy and paste anything; just drag the clipping, and drop it into the appropriate place in your document.

Why is using text clippings a good thing?

If you regularly write similar text as part of your job, you'll want to use text clippings to automate that drudgery.

You may want to create text clippings for standard opening paragraphs for job applications or business-related letters or emails. You might want to create signatures. You may need to regularly place specific paragraphs in your work. You may even just want to create a social media pester message like the one I place at the end of my stories (which I use text clippings for).

Mac users often use clippings for:

- Name and address
- Multiple signatures (e.g., business and personal)
- Letter templates
- Email templates
- Regularly used code snippets
- Anything else they find they must write in the same way every day

This handy little feature can save you from the burden of repeated tasks, enabling you to focus on the more interesting elements of what you do.

Think about it: The few minutes you squander on such repeated tasks quickly becomes a big chunk of time. If you spend five minutes every day writing the same text, that's 25 minutes a week, almost two hours each month and *just short of one full 24-hour day wasted each year*.

I am certain you'd be better off doing something else.

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