

Newsletter

[Overview of the Application Switcher](#)

Written by: Caroline Merchiers on Monday February 25th 2008, 1:01 am

Filed under: [Finder](#), [OS X 10.5](#)

We are taking a one day break on the Safari tutorials. Don't worry, we will be back on schedule tomorrow.

I find the Application Switcher to be a pretty handy tool of OS X, which I use now without even thinking about it. It's not a complex application, but it can make navigating your computer a breeze.

The Application Switcher allows you to easily toggle through all programs you have open, hidden or not, in a clear and rapid manner. For instance, you are copying and pasting from your email program into Word. Instead of using your mouse to move between the two, which can take time, especially on a laptop, a simple keyboard command will bring the other program up in a flash.

By pressing Command + tab, a translucent window appears in the middle of your screen displaying the icons of the applications that are currently running. You will notice the icon of the last application you used will be highlighted and have a white box around it.



The icon of the application you are currently using will appear first, the next icon will be of the application used just before that, and so on. So as you use different applications, the order will then be rearranged.

There are several ways to move through the applications. The one I use, and in my opinion, the easiest, is to continue pressing the tab key while holding down the

Command key. You will see it move to the right and then wrap around back to the beginning.

Simply letting go of the tab key while the desired application is highlighted will bring that application to the front.

If you are only toggling between two applications, which is where I find the Application Switcher most helpful, simply pressing Command + tab once, will bring the other application to the front.

There are a couple other ways to move between the applications. I don't find myself using them, but I will mention them because you may find one you like better depending on your computer setup.

To move through the applications in the reverse order, is to hold down Command + shift and press the tab key. Or by pressing Command + back tick (button above the tab key) will do the same thing.

Another way to toggle through applications is by using the scroll wheel or trackball on your mouse, or the track pad on your laptop. You can also simply use your mouse to click on the desired application. You may even use the left and right arrows on your keyboard. Give each method of toggling a try and stick with whatever feels most comfortable to you.

If you are in the Application Switcher and want to escape without choosing an application, you simply press the Esc key, or the period key, while holding down Command, and the Application Switcher will disappear.

A couple extra features to the Application Switcher are that you can quit and hide programs. To quit a program you simply toggle to the desired application and press "Q". If you'd like to hide an application, press "H".

One last feature I would like to point out is the drag and drop feature. You can drag an item from your desktop, say a text document, and while dragging with your mouse, open the Application Switcher and drop the document onto a program like TextEdit or Word. Simply release the mouse while the desired application is highlighted and your document will open in that program.

I tend to use the dock for something like this, since the program I need may not be open, but the Application Switcher is capable of doing this as well, just as long as the program is open.

Play around with the different ways of toggling through programs and see what feels most comfortable to you. I think you'll find that once you get used to it, it's quite a quick and convenient way to move around.

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Software Updates

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Apple iPhoto 7.1.3

Garage Band - 4.1.2

Pacifist 2.5.2

NeoOffice 2.2.3

Safari 3.1 - Leopard and Tiger 10.4.11 and up

Apple Security Update 2008-002

Notebook 2.1 V265

Next Meeting: February 21, 2008

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