

Newsletter

Four Ways take a Desktop Screenshot

By Ed, ed@smalldog.com

At least a couple times a month, I hear people ask how to take a screenshot of their Mac's desktop (Geoff...). The ability to easily take desktop screenshots is an "occasionally essential" feature of Mac OS X. Here are four easy, built-in ways to take screenshots on your Mac:

– To take a screenshot of your Mac's entire desktop, hold down Command-Shift-3 all at the same time. This records the entire desktop at full resolution. In Leopard and Tiger, the selection will be saved to your desktop as a PNG file. Panther saves the image as a PDF.

– To capture only a part of your desktop, hold down Command-Shift-4. The cursor will turn into a trigger. Drag the trigger across the part of the screen you want to record and then release the mouse. If your Mac's sound is on, you will hear a snapshot sound. In Leopard and Tiger, the selection will be saved to your desktop as a PNG file. Panther saves the image as a PDF.

– To take a screenshot of an individual application window (say an individual Safari window, or a single email, or single Preview image), hold down Command-Shift-4-spacebar. A camera icon will suddenly appear. You can rotate through application windows with this camera, until you land on the application window you wish to record. In Leopard, the selection will be saved to your desktop as a PNG file. In Leopard and Tiger, the selection will be saved to your desktop as a PNG file. Panther saves the image as a PDF.

All this screenshot fun is powered by the "Grab" application which is stored in your Mac's Utilities folder. Additionally, it does something particularly cool: it allows you to take a timed screenshot.

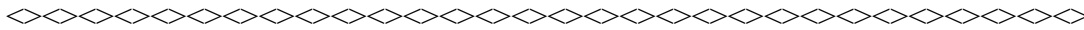
– To take a timed screenshot, browse to your Applications folder, then browse to the Utilities folder contained within. Open the Grab application, then click "Capture" in the menu bar. At the bottom of the list is the option for "Timed Screen." The Timed Screen grab gives you a 10 second count-down to taking a screenshot.

Once a screenshot is saved to your desktop, you can open the PNG file in Preview or any image editing application to shrink its size or perform other edits as needed. You can also drag the screenshot into an email, document, or IM to send to someone else.

Extra credit: Instead of saving files to your desktop, you can save a screenshot to your Mac's clipboard, to be pasted into an application such as Photoshop, Word, or an email. To do this:

- Hold down Command-Control-Shift-3 to take a screenshot of the screen and save it to the clipboard.
- Hold down Command-Control-Shift-4, then select an area, to take a screenshot of that area and save it to the clipboard
- Hold down Command-Control-Shift-4, then space, then click a window to take a screenshot of a specific window and save it to the clipboard

Extra-extra credit: Take screenshots within Preview! To do this, launch Preview, then navigate to File > Grab, where all the screenshot options above are also available by using the Grab submenu in the File menu.



Put 10.5's help windows in the background

by [Rob Griffiths](#), [Macworld.com](#)

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Amongst all the nice changes introduced by the release of OS X 10.5, one of the not-so-nice changes in Leopard is the implementation of the help system. In 10.5, when you call up help (for a program that uses Apple's help system), the help window opens in floating mode—it's always the frontmost window, and covers anything that happens to fall behind it.

If you're luck enough to work on dual 30-inch monitors, this probably isn't a big concern for you...but on my 12-inch PowerBook G4, for instance, with its 1,024x768 screen, the help window becomes pretty much the only thing I can see. Even on a larger screen, having to move the always-floating help window out of the way all the time is a real pain.

Thankfully, Apple included a hidden preference to change this behavior—I don't know if it was in the original 10.5 release, but I know for sure it's in both OS X 10.5.2 and 10.5.3. To set 10.5's help windows to "non floating" mode, open Terminal and enter this command:

```
defaults write com.apple.helpviewer NormalWindow -bool true
```

That's all there is to it—the next time you summon help, the window will switch to the background, just like most any other OS X window. (If, for some reason, you'd ever like to return to the always-floating window, just repeat the above command, but change **true** to **false**.)

You won't, however, be able to use Command-Tab or the dock to bring this window to the foreground; you'll have to click on it. In 10.5, the help program is a faceless background application, so it doesn't appear in either the Dock or Command-Tab program switcher. Hopefully, we'll see a return to the old-fashioned help system, including full Command-Tab and Dock access, in a future OS X update. Until then, though, this fix gets rid of the most annoying "improvement" in the 10.5 help system.

Software Updates

VMware Fusion 1.1

OS 10.5.3

NeoOffice 2.2.3 Patch 5

3G iPhone

NeoOffice 2.2.3 Patch 6

QuickTime 7.5

iDVD 7.0.2

iMovie 7.1.2

NeoOffice - 2.2.4 patch 0

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