Desktop Management

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Desktop Management Tools

Mac OS X includes three desktop management tools that you might find helpful to work more efficiently and productively:

◆ **Stacks** puts expandable folders in the Dock. Clicking a folder displays its contents, making it quick and easy to open files you use often.

◆ **Exposé** helps you cope with screen clutter by arranging open windows so you can see their contents or your desktop with a press of a button. Snow Leopard adds Exposé integration to the Dock, making it even more functional.

◆ **Spaces** enables you to organize windows into groups, thus helping you to manage projects or tasks.

In this chapter, I explain how to take advantage of each of these features. I also explain how you can set preferences for them so they work the way you want them to.

Stacks

Mac OS X Stacks feature displays the contents of any folder in the Dock as a fan (**Figure 1**), grid (**Figure 2**), or list (**Figure 3**). Click the folder icon to display the stack. Then click the item in the stack to open it. This makes it easy to organize Dock items and access the applications, folders, and files you use most.

By default, Mac OS X 10.6 is preconfigured with three stacks folders (**Figure 3**):

◆ **Applications** is the computer's Applications folder—default location for installed applications.

◆ **Documents** is your Documents folder—the default location for saved documents.

◆ **Downloads** is your Downloads folder—the default location for files you download from the Internet.

You can add your own stacks to the Dock by simply adding folders.

✔ Tips

■ Whether a stack appears as a fan, grid, or list depends, in part, on settings for the stacks folder or the number of items in the folder. I explain how to set Stacks options for a folder on page 170.

■ A stack's Dock icon appears as a pile (or stack) of icons with the most recently added item on top (**Figure 4**). This helps give you an idea of the folder's contents.

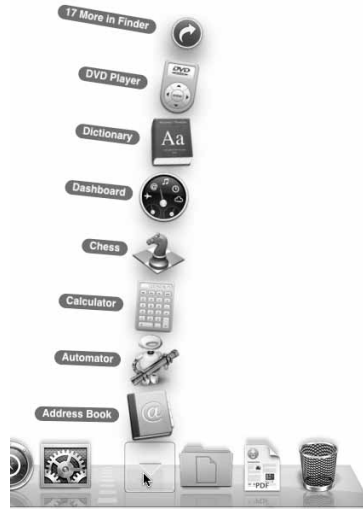■ I explain how to customize the Dock, including how to add and remove Dock items, on page 155.

Figure 1 The Stacks feature displays the contents of a folder in the Dock as a fan...

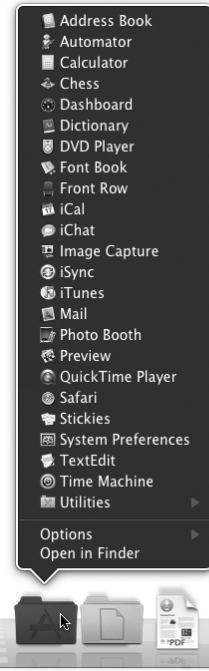**Figure 2** ...a grid, ...

Click here to see more

STACKS

Figure 3 ... or a list.

Figure 4 Here are three stacks folders: Applications, Documents, and Downloads folders.

Figure 5 If there are many items in a grid, you can scroll down within it.

To display a stack

In the Dock, click the icon for the stack folder you want to display.

The contents of the folder appear in a fan (**Figure 1**), grid (**Figure 2**), or list (**Figure 3**).

To hide a stack

Click anywhere other than on a stack item.

Or

Click the stack folder again.

The stack collapses back into the Stack icon in the Dock.

To open an item in a stack

1. Display the stack containing the item you want to open (**Figure 1**, **2**, or **3**).

2. Click the item you want to open.

   The item opens.

To open a stack folder

1. In the Dock, click the folder to open to display its stack (**Figure 1**, **2**, or **3**).

2. Click the appropriate button:

   ▲ For a fan (**Figure 1**), click the Show in Finder or More in Finder button at the top of the fan. The wording of this command varies depending on whether all items are showing.

   ▲ For a grid, click the Open in Finder button at the bottom of the grid. You may have to scroll down in the grid (**Figure 2**)to display this button (**Figure 5**).

   ▲ For a list (**Figure 3**), click the Open in Finder button at the bottom of the list.

   The stacks folder opens in its own Finder window.

WORKING WITH STACKS

To navigate folders within a stack grid

1. Display the stack grid you want to navigate and, if necessary, scroll to display the folder you want to open (**Figure 5**).

2. To open a folder in the grid, click it. The grid displays the contents of the folder you clicked. **Figure 6** shows what the Applications stack might look like after clicking the Utilities folder within it.

3. To back out of a folder, click the name of the parent folder in the upper left corner of the grid stack (**Figure 6**).

✔ Tips

■ You can repeat step 2 as desired to dig deeply into the file hierarchy.

■ Stacks navigation as discussed here is brand new in Snow Leopard.

To navigate folders within a stack list

1. Display the stack list you want to navigate (**Figure 3**).

2. To open a folder in the list, point to it. The list turns into a hierarchical menu with the folder's contents displayed in a submenu (**Figure 7**).

✔ Tips

■ You can repeat step 2 as desired to open multiple submenus for deeply nested folders.

■ This is a great way to organize the files and folders you need to access using the stacks feature.

Click the name of the parent folder to view the contents of that folder again.

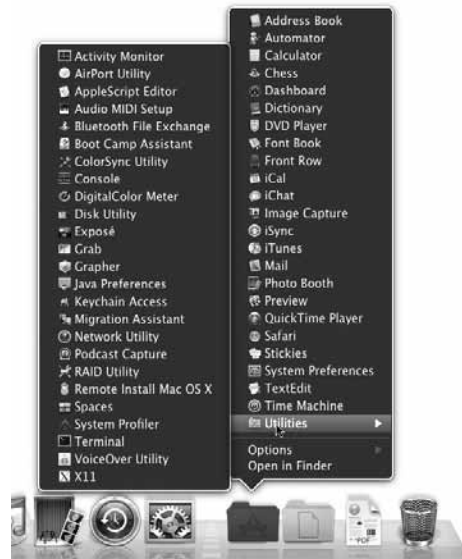**Figure 6** Clicking a folder in a grid displays the contents of that folder in the grid.

Figure 7 When viewing a stack as a list, point to the name of a folder to display its contents in a subfolder.
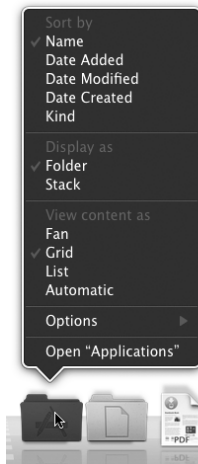
Figure 8
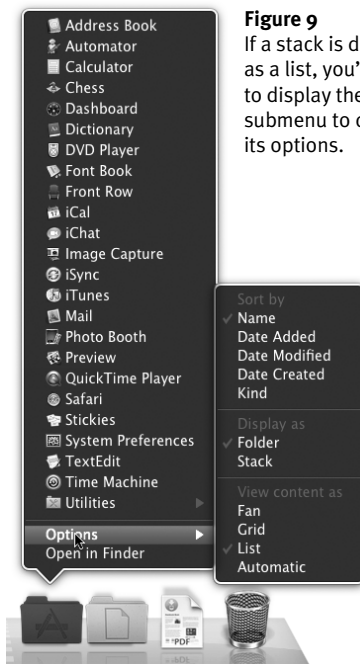You can display a menu of options for a stack.

Figure 9
If a stack is displayed as a list, you'll need to display the Options submenu to change its options.

Figure 10 In this example, I've changed the Display as option for the Applications and Documents folder from Folder to Stack.

To customize the display of a stack folder

1. In the Dock, point to the folder you want to set options for.

2. Do one of the following to display a menu of options (**Figure 6**):

    ▲ Hold down Control and click.

    ▲ Right-click or, on a buttonless track-pad, click with two fingers.

    ▲ If the stack is set to display as a list, click to display the list and then choose Options to display the Options submenu (**Figure 9**).

3. To change the sort order of items in the stack, choose a Sort by option.

4. To set the appearance for the the stack's icon on the dock, choose a Display as option:

    ▲ **Folder** displays the stack's icon using the same icon as its source folder.

    ▲ **Stack** displays the stack's icon as a stack of icons (**Figure 10**).

5. To set the appearance for the folder's open stack, choose a View content as option:

    ▲ **Fan** always displays the stack as a fan (**Figure 1**).

    ▲ **Grid** always displays the stack as a grid (**Figure 2**).

    ▲ **List** always displays the stack as a list (**Figure 3**).

    ▲ **Automatic** displays the stack as a fan (**Figure 1**) unless there are too many items in the folder to fit—then it displays them as a grid (**Figure 2**).

CUSTOMIZING STACK APPEARANCE

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Exposé

If you're like most Mac OS X users, you probably have multiple applications and windows open at the same time while you work. The result can be a cluttered screen, with many layers of windows hiding other windows and the desktop.

Exposé helps solve the problem of screen clutter by making it easy to see all open windows in all applications (**Figure 11**), all open windows in a single application (**Figure 12**), or the entire desktop (**Figure 16**) at once. Simply press one of Exposé's shortcut keys (**Table 1**) to see what you need to see.

Mac OS X 10.6 adds Exposé integration with the Dock. Now you can view all open windows in a specific application by simply clicking that application's icon in the Dock (**Figure 13**). And when windows are displayed in Exposé, they now appear in a neat grid, making them even easier to see and access.

✔ Tips

■ If you're using a laptop Macintosh, such as a MacBook or MacBook Pro, you may need to hold down the [Fn] key while pressing the appropriate key in **Table 1** to activate Exposé.

■ You can customize Exposé's shortcut keys or add additional Exposé triggers. I explain how on page 174.

■ You can use Exposé while copying or moving items. Begin dragging the item you want to move or copy, use the appropriate Exposé keystroke for the view you need, and complete the drag and drop while Exposé is active.

Table 1

Standard Shortcut Keys for Exposé	
Key	**Description**
[F9]	Displays all open windows at once.
[F10]	Displays all open windows for the current application at once.
[F11]	Displays the desktop.

EXPOSÉ

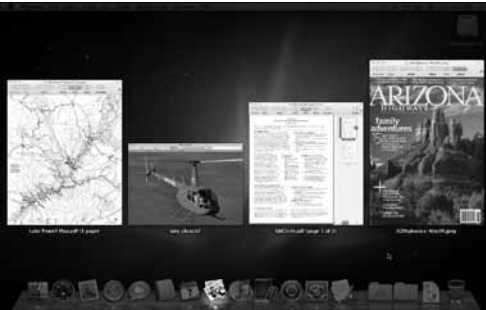**Figure 11** Pressing [F9] displays all open windows.

Figure 12 Pressing [F10] displays all of the windows in the currently active application—in this case, Preview.
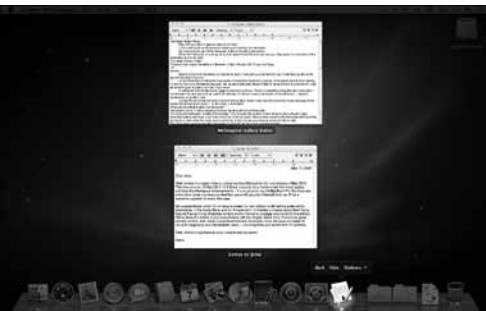

Figure 13 Clicking an icon in the Dock displays the open windows for that application, as well as a small menu of options.

Figure 14
Exposé also gives you access to a menu of options for an application.

To see all open windows at once

Press [F9].

All open windows resize and arrange themselves into a grid so you can see into each one (**Figure 11**).

✔ Tip

■ Another way to open Exposé is to open the Exposé icon in the Utilities folder inside your Applications folder. This is not exactly as easy as pressing a single key, but you could add the Exposé icon to the Dock, making it accessible with just a click.

To see all open windows in the active application

Press [F10].

All open windows in the active application resize and arrange themselves into a grid while other windows simply disappear (**Figure 12**).

To see all open windows in a specific application

1. Press [F9] or [F10] to activate Exposé (**Figure 11** or **12**).

2. Click the Dock icon for the application windows you want to view. Exposé displays only the windows for that application (**Figure 13**).

✔ Tip

■ As shown in **Figures 13** and **14** clicking a Dock icon while Expose is active displays a menu of options for an active application.

USING EXPOSÉ

To activate a specific window

1. With Exposé active, point to the window you want to activate. A blue border appears around it (**Figure 15**).

2. Click the window. Exposé is released and the window comes to the front.

To see the desktop

◆ Press F11.

All open windows shift to the edges of the screen so you can see the desktop (**Figure 16**).

To switch from one Exposé view to another

Press the shortcut key for the other view.

To release Exposé

Press Esc.

Figure 15 When you point to a window while Exposé is active, a dark blue border appears around it. (It's times like these when I wish they'd let me do color books.)

Figure 16 Exposé also enables you to display just the desktop. You might find this handy if you keep a lot of icons on your desktop, like I do on my main production Mac.

USING EXPOSÉ
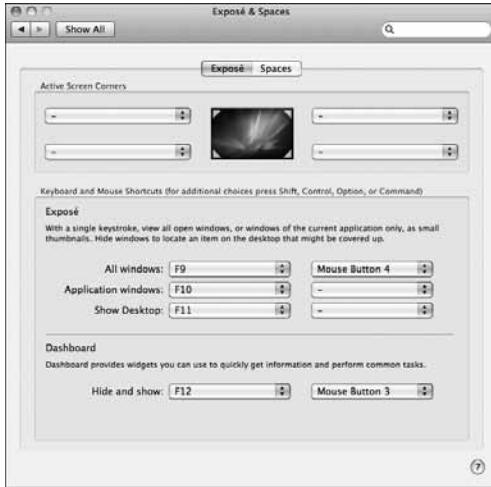
Figure 17 Use the Exposé panel of the Exposé & Spaces preferences pane to set hot corners, shortcut keys, and mouse buttons for Exposé functions.
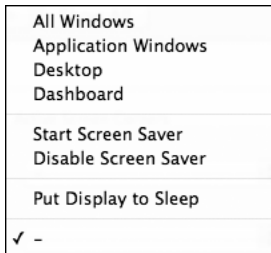
Figure 18
Use pop-up menus like this one to set up hot corners for Exposé and other Mac OS X features.

To set Exposé preferences

1. Choose Apple > System Preferences, or click the System Preferences icon in the Dock.

2. In the System Preferences window that appears, click the Exposé & Spaces icon.

3. If necessary, click the Exposé button to display Exposé configuration options (**Figure 17**).

4. To set "hot corners" to activate Exposé, choose an option from the appropriate pop-up menu in the Active Screen Corners area. Each menu is the same (**Figure 18**) and corresponds to a specific corner of the screen. The Exposé options are:

   ▲ **All Windows** uses Exposé to display all open windows **(Figure 8)**. This is the same as pressing F9 with default Exposé settings.

   ▲ **Application Windows** uses Exposé to display all windows for the active application (**Figure 10**). This is the same as pressing F10 with default Exposé settings.

   ▲ **Desktop** uses Exposé to move all windows aside so you can see the Desktop **(Figure 12)**. This is the same as pressing F11 with default Exposé settings.

5. To set shortcut keys and mouse buttons for Exposé functions, choose options from the pop-up menus in the Exposé area (**Figures 15** and **16**).

6. When you're finished setting options, click the Exposé & Spaces preferences pane's close button to save your settings and dismiss the window.

Continued on next page...

Setting Exposé Preferences

Continued from previous page.

✔ Tips

- When you position the pointer in a "hot corner" of the screen, your computer performs the task you assigned to it with the corresponding Active Screen Corners pop-up menu (**Figure 18**).

- The Active Screen Corners pop-up menus (**Figure 18**) enable you to set corners for Dashboard activation (page 312), screen saver (page 164), and display sleep (page 539).

- Right and Left on the keyboard shortcuts pop-up menu (**Figure 19**) refer to the → and ← keys.

- Shift, Control, Option, and Command on the keyboard shortcuts pop-up menu (**Figure 19**) refer to the Shift, Control, Option, and ⌘ keys.

- If you hold down the Shift, Control, Option, or ⌘ key while displaying the keyboard shortcuts or mouse button pop-up menu, the menu changes to reflect the key(s) being held. **Figure 21** shows an example with the Shift and Option keys held down.

- To assign mouse buttons to Exposé functions with the mouse button pop-up menu (**Figure 19**), it's best to have a multibutton mouse. I tell you more about Mac OS-compatible mice on page 12 and how to set mouse options on page 550.
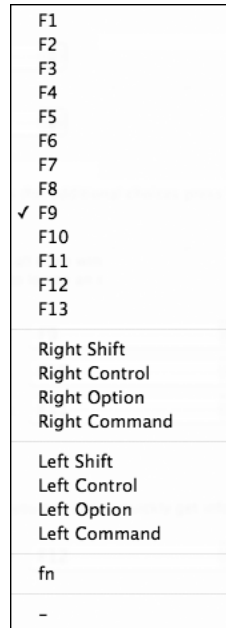
Figure 19
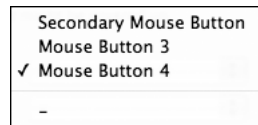Use this pop-up menu to choose a keystroke to assign to one of the Exposé functions.

```
  F1
  F2
  F3
  F4
  F5
  F6
  F7
  F8
✓ F9
  F10
  F11
  F12
  F13

  Right Shift
  Right Control
  Right Option
  Right Command

  Left Shift
  Left Control
  Left Option
  Left Command

  fn

  –
```


Figure 20
If you have a multi-button mouse, you can configure its buttons for Exposé functions, too.

```
  Secondary Mouse Button
  Mouse Button 3
✓ Mouse Button 4

  –
```
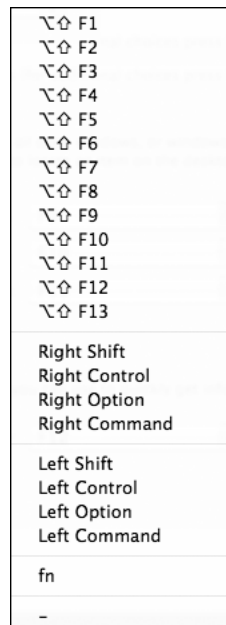

Figure 21
Holding down modifier keys—such as Option and Shift in this example—enables you to choose a keyboard shortcut with the modifier keys you pressed.

```
  ⌥⇧ F1
  ⌥⇧ F2
  ⌥⇧ F3
  ⌥⇧ F4
  ⌥⇧ F5
  ⌥⇧ F6
  ⌥⇧ F7
  ⌥⇧ F8
  ⌥⇧ F9
  ⌥⇧ F10
  ⌥⇧ F11
  ⌥⇧ F12
  ⌥⇧ F13

  Right Shift
  Right Control
  Right Option
  Right Command

  Left Shift
  Left Control
  Left Option
  Left Command

  fn

  –
```

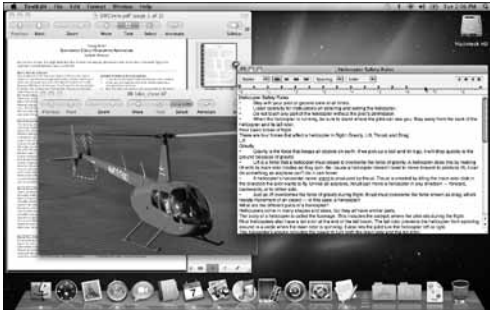**Figure 22** In this example, I've created four different spaces.

Figure 23 When you switch to a space, only its windows appear.

Spaces

Mac OS X's Spaces feature enables you to organize groups of windows into multiple spaces (**Figure 22**). Then, when you work in a space, only the windows that are part of that space appear onscreen (**Figure 23**).

For example, while working on a chapter of this book, I might have a space that includes my InDesign chapter document, Photoshop (which I use to edit screenshots), and the three Finder windows that I use for the chapter's documents. I might also have another space set up with Mail, iChat, and Safari. I can then quickly switch from my work space to my communication space when I need to check e-mail or track down someone for a chat. When I want to return to work without distractions from those other applications, I can quickly switch back to my work space.

Setting up Spaces is pretty straightforward. After enabling the feature and specifying the number and layout of spaces that you want, simply switch to a space and start filling it with windows. You can also assign applications to specific spaces, ensuring that they open in the space you plan to use them in. You can have up to 16 spaces and access them several ways, including clicking, shortcut keys, or the Spaces menu.

In this part of the chapter, I explain how to set up and use the Spaces feature.

SPACES

To enable & configure Spaces

1. Choose Apple > System Preferences or click the System Preferences icon in the Dock.

2. In the System Preferences window that appears, click the Exposé & Spaces icon.

3. If necessary, click the Spaces button to display Spaces configuration options (**Figure 24**).

4. Turn on the Enable Spaces check box.

5. To display a Spaces menu in the menu bar (**Figures 25** and **26**), turn on the Show Spaces in menu bar check box.

6. Set the number of spaces in the black box. To add a row or column, click the **+** button beside Rows or Columns.

7. To always switch to a space with open windows for an application you switch to, turn on the check box at the bottom of the Spaces pane. This keeps all of an application's open windows in the same space.

8. Click the Exposé & Spaces preferences pane's close button to save your settings and dismiss the window.

✔ Tips

■ You can configure Mac OS to have from 2 to 16 spaces.

■ To change the number of spaces, you can repeat these steps and click the **+** or **–** button beside Rows or Columns to add or remove spaces.

■ The Spaces menu displays the number of the currently displayed space as its menu bar icon (**Figures 25** and **26**).
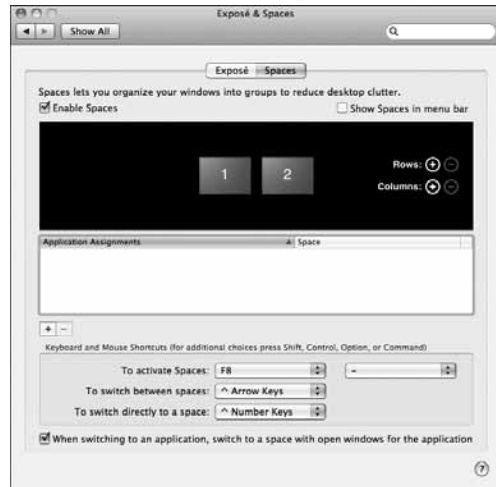

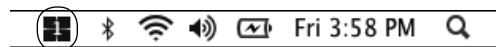**Figure 24** The Spaces panel of the Exposé & Spaces preferences pane.

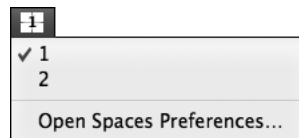**Figure 25** You can add a Spaces menu to the menu bar.

Figure 26 The Spaces menu makes it easy to switch from one space to another.
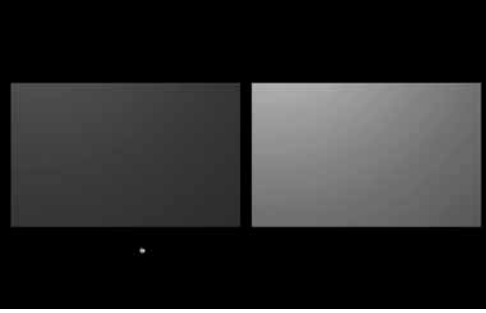
Figure 27 In this very simple example, I've created two spaces and I haven't added any windows to either one.

Figure 28 Adding windows to a space is as simple as opening the windows you want to add.

To switch from one space to another

1. Press F8 (or Fn F8 on a laptop, such as a MacBook or MacBook Pro) or click the Spaces icon in the Dock.

   The screen goes black and rectangles representing each space appear (**Figures 22** and **27**).

2. Click the space you want to view.

Or

If the Spaces menu is enabled (**Figure 25**), choose the space you want from the menu (**Figure 26**).

Or

Press Control ← or Control → to cycle through all spaces, one at a time.

Or

Press Control with the number key corresponding to the space you want to view. For example, Control 2 displays space No. 2.

To add windows to a space

1. Switch to the space you want to add windows to.

2. Open the windows you want to add. Those windows become part of that space (**Figure 28**).

✔ Tip

■ If a window belongs to an application that is associated with a specific space, that window will only open in that space. For example, if you set Preview to open in space No. 2, when you open a Preview document, it appears in space No. 2, no matter which space was open when you opened the document. I explain how to associate applications with spaces next.

SWITCHING SPACES, ADDING WINDOWS

To associate an application with a specific space

1. Follow steps 1 through 3 under "To enable & configure Spaces" on page 178 to open the Spaces preferences panel (**Figure 24**).

   or

   Choose Open Spaces Preferences from the Spaces menu (**Figure 26**).

2. Under Application Assignments, click **+** to display a menu like the one in **Figure 29**.

3. Choose an open application's name to add it to the Application Assignments list (**Figure 31**).

   or

   Choose Other to display dialog like the one in **Figure 30**. Use the dialog to locate and select the application you want to assign to a specific space. Then click Add to add it to the Application Assignments list (**Figure 31**).

4. In the Space column of the application's line in the Application Assignments list, use the pop-up menu (**Figure 32**) to choose the space you want to assign the application to.

5. Repeat steps 2 through 4 for each application you want to add.

✔ Tips

■ In step 4, the Every Space option (**Figure 32**) allows the application to display in any space.

■ When you associate an application with a specific space, that application and its document windows will only open in that space. If you want an application to open in any space, choose Every Space in step 4 or simply do not add the application to the Application Assignments list.
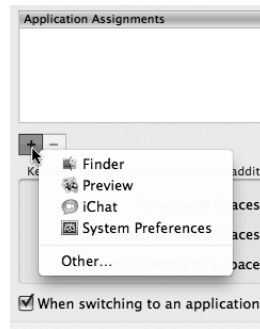
Figure 29 When you click the + button, a menu of open applications appears.

Figure 30 Use this dialog to add an application to the Application Assignments list.

Figure 31 The item you added appears in the list.

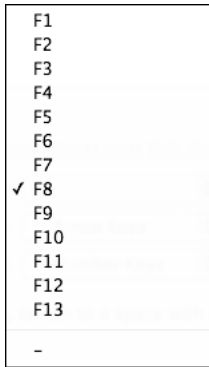**Figure 32** Choose a space assignment from the pop-up menu in the Space column.

F1
F2
F3
F4
F5
F6
F7
✓ F8
F9
F10
F11
F12
F13

–

Figure 33
Use this pop-up menu to choose a shortcut key for invoking the Spaces feature.

✓ Secondary Mouse Button
Mouse Button 3
Mouse Button 4

–
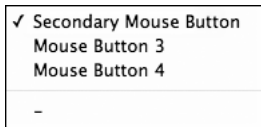
Figure 34
If you have a multi-button mouse, you can choose a button to invoke Spaces.

✓ ^ Arrow Keys
⌘ Arrow Keys
⌥ Arrow Keys

–
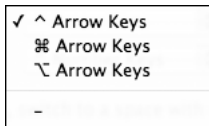
Figure 35
You can also set a shortcut key to cycle through all spaces...
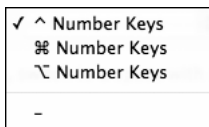
✓ ^ Number Keys
⌘ Number Keys
⌥ Number Keys

–

Figure 36
...and to go directly to a specific space.

To set Spaces shortcuts

1. Follow steps 1 through 3 under "To enable & configure Spaces" on page 178 to open the Spaces preferences panel (**Figure 24**).

    or

    Choose Open Spaces Preferences from the Spaces menu (**Figure 26**).

2. Choose options from the pop-up menus at the bottom of the Spaces panel (**Figure 24**):

    ▲ **To activate Spaces** enables you to choose a shortcut key (**Figure 33**) and mouse button (**Figure 34**) to display the spaces panes (**Figures 22** and **27**).

    ▲ **To switch between spaces** enables you to choose a shortcut key combination (**Figure 35**) to cycle through all spaces.

    ▲ **To switch directly to a space** enables you to choose a shortcut key combination (**Figure 36**) to switch directly to a specific space.

✔ Tip

■ If you hold down the (Shift), (Control), (Option), or ⌘ key while displaying any of the pop-up menus, the menu changes to reflect the key(s) being held, thus offering additional shortcut key options.

SETTING SPACES SHORTCUTS