Magical Macintosh Key Sequences

This is a collection of the (poorly documented) key-sequences that do things. It's probably possible to find all this information within Apple's Knowledge Base, but it's currently scattered across multiple entries [*update 14 May, 2003: There's a knowledge-base article that lists all the keys supported by Mac OS X that came out last December. I just noticed it now*]. In any case, this came from a number of smart people, but Marc Pawliger started the list and Tim Hume collected the various responses. Miro, Andy, Darin, Chris, Barry, the other Marc, Greg, Jon and Ned offered clarifications. I just turned it into a web-page.

Also, thanks to all the other folks (too numerous to name) who sent in additions after the page initially appeared.

It's pretty sad that there are so many "hidden" things in an OS that's supposed to be so easy to use. I hadn't thought about it before, but the sheer volume of them has surprised me. I knew of the existence of a lot of these shortcuts myself, but I'd never tried to think of them all at once until I started compiling this page. Now that I have many of them in one place (there's more to be added – I think there always will be), I find myself wondering about "ease of use". Anyway, enjoy.

On Boot

Key Combination	Effect
mouse down	Eject removable media (I think Boot ROMs prior to 2.4f1 excluded the CD drive)
opt	Bring up OF system picker on New World machines – boot to 9 on pre-New World machines
cmd-period	When OF system picker is active, open the CD tray
cmd-opt	Hold down until 2nd chime, will boot into Mac OS 9 ?
cmd-x (or just x?)	Will boot into Mac OS X if 9 and X are on the same partition and that's the partition you're booting from.
cmd-opt-shift-delete	Bypass startup drive and boot from external (or CD). This actually forces the system to NOT load the driver for the default volume, which has the side effect mentioned above. For SCSI devices it searches from highest ID to lowest for a partition with a bootable system. Not sure about IDE drives.
cmd-opt-shift-delete-#	Boot from a specific SCSI ID # (# = SCSI ID number)
cmd-opt-p-r	Zap PRAM. Hold down until second chime.
cmd-opt-n-v	Clear NV RAM. Similar to reset-all in Open Firmware.
cmd-opt-o-f	Boot into open firmware
cmd-opt-t-v	Force Quadra AV machines to use TV as a monitor
cmd-opt-x-o	Boot from ROM (Mac Classic only)
cmd-opt-a-v	Force an AV monitor to be recognized as one
c	Boot from CD. If set to boot to X and no CD is present, may boot to 9.
d	Force the internal hard disk to be the startup device
n	Hold down until Mac logo, will attempt to boot from network server (using BOOTP or TFTP)
r	Force PowerBooks to reset the screen
t	Put FireWire machine into FireWire Target Disk mode
z	Attempt to boot using the devalias zip from first bootable partition found
ctl-cmd-shift-power	Reset power manager (with computer off)
shift	(Classic only) Disable Extensions
shift	(OS X, 10.1.3 and later) Disables login items. Also disables non-essential kernel extensions (safe boot mode)
cmd	(Classic only) Boot with Virtual Memory off
space	(Classic only) Trigger extension manager at boot-up
cmd-v	(OS X only) show console messages during boot
cmd-s	(OS X only) boot into single user mode
cmd-opt-c-i	(Mac IIci only) Set date to 20 Sep 1989 to get a graphical easter egg
cmd-opt-f-x	(Mac IIfx only) Set date to 19 Mar 1990 to get a graphical easter egg
cmd-opt-shift-tab-delete	Erase startup disk under 7.1(?)

After display of happy Mac icon

Key Combination	Effect
space	(Classic only) Invoke Extensions Manager
shift	(Classic only) Disable Extensions including MacsBug
shift-opt	(Classic only) Disable exetensions, except MacsBug
ctrl	(Classic only) Break into MacsBug as soon as it is loaded

As Finder Starts

Key Combination	Effect
cmd-opt	(whenever Classic Finder sees a new disk) Rebuild Desktop
opt	(Mac OS 9) Do not open Finder windows
shift	(Mac OS X) Do not open Finder windows when launching Finder. The windows' states aren't changed to closed, as they will be reopened if you reboot again.
shift	(Mac OS 9) Do not launch anything from the "Startup Items" folder.

In Finder

Key Combination	Effect
opt-click close box (or cmd-opt-w)	Close all open finder windows (except popup windows)
cmd-shift-opt-w	Close all open finder windows (including popup windows)
cmd-right arrow	Open folder when in list view
cmd-opt-right arrow	Recursively open folder and nested folders when in list view
cmd-left arrow	Close folder when in list view
cmd-opt-left arrow	Recursively close folder and nested folders when in list view
cmd-up arrow	Open parent folder. On Mac OS X, when nothing is selected and no windows are open, open User directory
cmd-opt-up arrow	Open parent folder, closing current folder
cmd-opt-shift-up arrow	Make desktop the active window, select parent volume
cmd-down arrow	Open selected item. On Mac OS X, when nothing is selected and no windows are open, open the desktop folder
cmd-opt-down arrow	Open selected item, closing current folder
opt-click	(In disclosure triangle) expand or collapse all folders within that window
tab	select next icon alphabetically
shift-tab	select previous item alphabetically
cmd-delete	move selection to trash
cmd-shift-delete	empty trash
space	while navigating, opens folder under mouse immediately (with spring-loaded folders enabled)

In Finder Window Menu

Key Combination	Effect
cmd-select	Close window
cmd-shift-select	Put away popup window
cmd-opt-select	Expand selected window and close all others
ctl-select	Expand selected window and collapse all others
ctl-opt-select	Activate selected window and expand all others

On disk mount

Key Combination	Effect
cmd-opt	(whenever Classic Finder sees a new disk) Rebuild Desktop
opt	(Mac OS 9) Add session numbers (;1, ;2, etc) to ISO-9660 CD filenames
opt	(Mac OS X) Show each session on an ISO-9660 CD as a volume
cmd-opt-i	Force-mount ISO-9660 partition of a CD, rather than a Mac partition

After startup

Key Combination	Effect
On machines with a power key	
power	Bring up dialog for shutdown, sleep or restart (see next table)
cmd-ctrl-power	Unconditionally reboot (sometimes referred to as "control flower power" to easily remember) (dirty reboot – may corrupt disk)
ctrl-cmd-opt-power	Fast shutdown
cmd-power	Bring up debugger (if debugger installed). Really old macs (mac ii era) needed Paul Mercer's debugger init to do this, then it got folded into the firmware, around 040 timeframe.
cmd-opt-power	Put late model PowerBooks & Desktops to sleep
cmd-opt-ctrl-power	(PowerBook 500) Reset Power Manager
shift-fn-ctrl-power	(PowerBook G3, G4) Reset Power Manager
On machines without a power key	
ctrl-eject	Bring up dialog for shutdown, sleep or restart (see next table)
cmd-ctrl-eject	Unconditionally reboot
ctrl-cmd-opt-eject	Fast shutdown
cmd-eject	Bring up debugger (if debugger installed). Really old macs (mac ii era) needed Paul Mercer's debugger init to do this, then it got folded into the firmware, around 040 timeframe.
cmd-opt-eject	Put late model PowerBooks & Desktops to sleep
On all machines	
cmd-opt-esc	Force quit current app
cmd-shift-0	Put late model PowerBooks & Desktops to sleep No longer work in OS X. On Macs with three floppy drives (Mac SE) they eject the third floppy disk.
cmd-shift-1 or 2	Eject internal or external floppy. Not sure which is which on dual floppy machines (Mac SE, Mac II, etc.)
cmd-shift-3	Screen shot
cmd-shift-4	Abstract user defined area screen shot (hold control while selecting to direct it to the clipboard on Mac OS 9)
cmd-shift-capslock-4	(Classic only) User selectable window screen shot
cmd-ctl-shift-3	Screen shot to clipboard
cmd-ctl-shift-4	Abstract user defined area screen shot to clipboard
cmd-ctl-shift-capslock-4	(Classic only) User selectable window screen shot to clipboard (classic only)
cmd-tab	Switch apps (possible to change key in Mac OS 8-9)
cmd-shift-tab	Switch apps in reverse order
cmd-space	Switch keyboards/script systems (if more than one is installed)
opt-f3, opt-f4 or opt-f5	bring up the system preferences (Mac OS X only – maybe powerbooks only? only if system preferences isn't already running)
cmd-f1	toggle between video mirroring and extended desktop mode (works on Ti Powerbooks)
cmd-f2	auto-detect a newly-connected display (works on Ti Powerbooks)
f12	Eject CD/DVD (must be held down on 10.1.2 or later). If the device can be dismounted, it is. If not, nothing happens.
f14	dim display (cubes/g4 iMacs/others?)
f15	brighten display (cubes/g4 iMacs/others?)
cmd-ctl-shift-0	Spin down HD (when possible) on machines running OS 9
cmd-`	cycle through current application's windows (Mac OS X 10.2 only?)

cmd-~	cycle through current application's windows (reverse order) (Mac OS X 10.2 only?)
opt-"Empty Trash"	Emptry trash without locked file or contents summary alert. Empties locked items, as well
cmd-opt-D	(Mac OS X only) toggle dock
cmd-opt (when opening chooser)	(Mac OS 9 only) rebuild chooser cache of printer driver information

(See Universal Access System Preference for more on following)

cmd-opt-ctl-8	(Mac OS X, 10.2 or later) Turn on "Inverse Mode" via accessbility.
cmd-opt-8	(Mac OS X, 10.2 or later) Turn on "Zoom Mode" via accessbility.
cmd-opt-plus	(Mac OS X, 10.2 or later) Zoom In via accessbility.
cmd-opt-minus	(Mac OS X, 10.2 or later) Zoom Out via accessbility.

In the sleep/restart dialog

Key Combination	Effect
Key	Effect
S	Sleep
R	Restart
esc	cancel
cmd-. (period)	cancel
Return or Enter	Shut Down
Power	Cancel (9.2.x only?)

In other dialogs

Key Combination	Effect
esc	Cancel
command-. (period)	Cancel
enter	Default button
return	Default button (if there are no text fields that use return
cmd-d	Don't save (in save/cancel/don't save dialog)
cmd-r	Replace (in "Do you want to replace this file" dialog, Mac OS X only)

On keyboards with a function key

Key Combination	Effect
fn-backspace	forward delete
fn-left arrow	home
fn-right arrow	end
fn-up arrow	page up
fn-down arrow	page down

Clicks

Click/modifier	Effect
option-click in another application	Switch to that application and hide previous app
cmd-drag (window)	Drag window without bringing it to front (requires application support to work behind dialogs)
cmd-drag (window background)	Pan contents of window with hand (Finder)
cmd-drag (Mac OS X)	Rearrange menu extras
opt-drag (file)	Copy file
cmd-opt-drag (file)	Make alias of file
cmd-click window title	Pop-up menu showing path to current folder/document (in some applications)
option-windowshade	Windowshade all windows of application (classic only)
option-zoom	Zoom window to full-screen
option-yellow	Dock all windows of application (Mac OS X only)
option-green	Zoom window to fill screen (in some applications)

Mac OS X only – items in dock

Click/modifier	Effect
cmd-click	Reveal in Finder
cmd-opt-click	Activate app and hide other apps
ctl-click (or click and hold)	contextual menu
cmd-drag into dock	Freeze current dock items from moving so icon can be dropped onto an app
cmd-opt-drag into dock	Force application you're dropping onto to open dropped item

Control Strip

Click/modifier	Effect
opt-drag control strip	Move control strip
opt-drag CS module within strip	reorders CS modules
opt-drag CS module to trash	uninstalls a module
opt-drag CS module elsewhere	whatever dragging the module file itself would do

http://davespicks.com/writing/programming/mackeys.html#boot