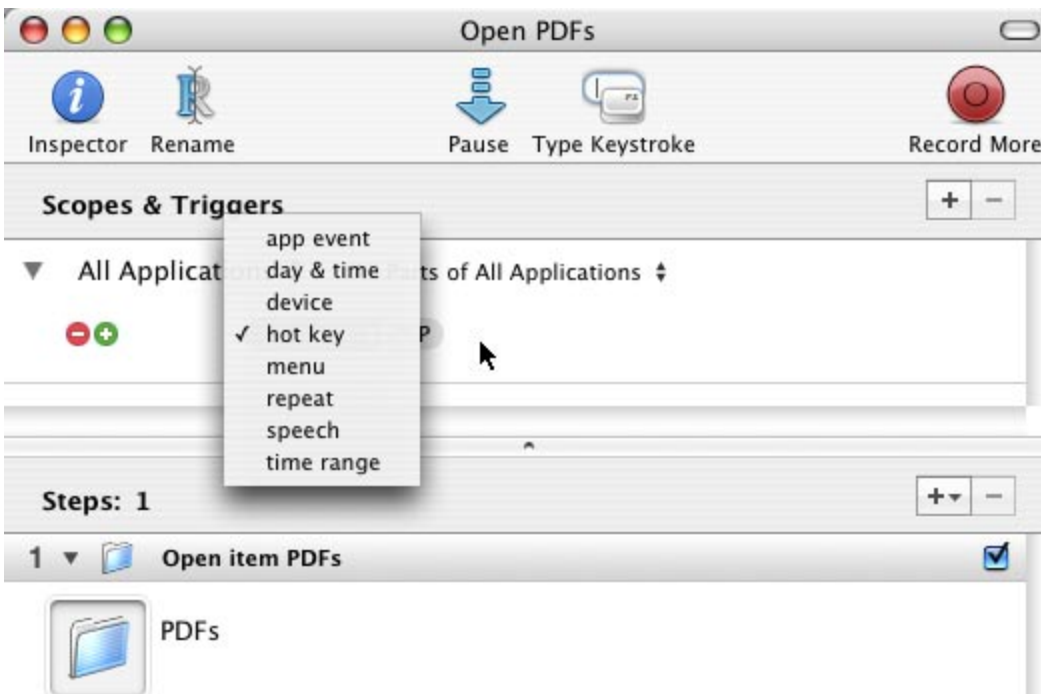


QuicKeys X3

by Linda Cameron,
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Have you ever wished there was a quicker way to perform repetitive tasks on your Mac? Or maybe you frequently use a particular menu item in a program which has no shortcut and you think it should have. For years, I have used QuicKeys to make my own custom shortcuts to suit my personal needs.

QuicKeys X3 installs several default shortcuts already available. They can be used as is, edited



Triggers can be assigned in many ways.

or deleted. To use your shortcuts from previous versions, you first would have to export them from the previous version, so don't install the new version until you export the shortcuts you have already defined.

When I think of creating a shortcut to use on my Mac, I usually think of "Hot Key" shortcuts where I assign keyboard combinations (like, say Command-Shift-D or Control-P) to trigger it. The problem with that—after I get so many shortcuts—I need a photographic memory to recall all those keyboard combinations. The ones I remember are the ones I use frequently. Also, applications have their own hot key shortcuts and it is easy to override an application's shortcut by creating a QuicKeys shortcut using the same sequence of keys. Fortunately, QuicKeys has

several ways you can create shortcuts and many of them do not need to be remembered. For example, you can set up an App Event shortcut which will automatically trigger something you have set up each time you open a particular application or if you prefer, each time that application comes to the fore. To illustrate—you could have a particular folder open each time you opened a certain application. I included an extra step that opens my InDesign Library each time I open InDesign.

Another way to trigger a shortcut is by configuring it to automatically happen at a particular day and time. An example—I have certain folders set up to back-up daily, and others weekly at particular times. I have more than one internal hard drive so I duplicate the folder from one drive to the other drive. It usually takes place in the background without my even being aware of it.

Shortcuts can be assigned to devices such as buttons on a USB mouse, joystick or keys on your keyboard. In fact, if you have a trackball or fancy mouse with lots of buttons, you really should use QuicKeys to get the

most out of it.

QuicKeys has its own menu available within all applications (unless it gets crowded out by other menus). From there you can access the Toolbars you have created and any shortcuts you have added to that menu. Again, if you are not using some of your shortcuts frequently, it is handy to have them in the QuicKeys menu.

If you use your Speech Recognition software on the Mac, you can trigger shortcuts by teaching the Mac to recognize words. I played with the Speech Recognition for a while but in my house, the quieter the computer is, the better. Still, it would be pretty impressive for your PC friends to see you command your Mac to open up your web browser and go to a certain site and it does it!

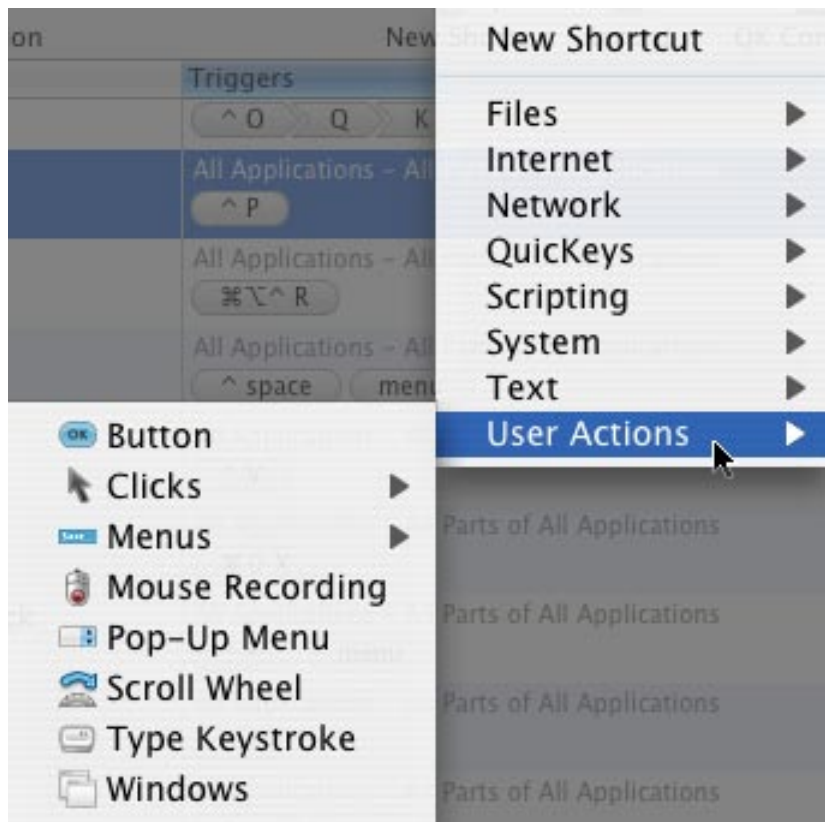
I mentioned custom Toolbars—this is not new in QuickKeys X3, but it is a pretty cool feature. Within QuickKeys, you create a new Toolbar which is always available no matter what you are doing on the Mac. If you don't want it in your way, you can click to close it. Then when you want it again, just open it from the QuickKeys menu which is always available. The Toolbars can have as many items as you like and can be grouped by Tabs. Grouping them is good because it keeps the Toolbar from growing too large and it can be handy keeping similar items together which makes it easier to find.

When setting up a shortcut in QuickKeys, you can have the shortcut only work with a specific application, or specific applications, or all applications. When I had a small keyboard that didn't have an End key for instantly going to the bottom of a page, I set up a QuickKeys shortcut (Command and Arrow Down) to perform the same thing. It worked in all applications.

The QuickKeys Editor is where you set up all your shortcuts. They can be edited or deleted any time you want. The manual I got is electronic and over 200 pages. It is full of ways to use QuickKeys and doesn't even cover every possibility. The shortcuts you create can be simple or very complex. If you can't find a way to create the shortcut you want, you can even record your clicks and keystrokes to create one. If you like to use AppleScripts, you can easily assign a keystroke to one. A favorite AppleScript lets me batch-rename photos in iPhoto and thanks to QuickKeys, I just select the photos in iPhoto, use a Hot Key shortcut and the AppleScript starts working.

Dragging and dropping a selection of text into the QuickKeys Editor will create a new Type Text shortcut which contains the selected text. I use the Type Text shortcuts for automatically entering my credit card numbers and library card number when I need them on the web. It may sound like I am not very protective of my credit card numbers, but the shortcut doesn't have to say it is a credit card number. It can be named whatever I want to name it. Besides, I am the only one using my computer, except for my husband. Perhaps a future update to QuickKeys could add the option to require a password before certain shortcuts could be used.

QuickKeys is an application. If you want it to always be open, then you add it to the Accounts/Startup items in System Preferences or else just remember to manually open it yourself each time you reboot.



Every time I have had a question (by E-mail) for Tech Support, I have received prompt personal replies that actually answered my questions—not just a canned response. In some cases, the reply email came with an attached Shortcut already custom-made, so I didn't even have to create it myself. There are other Support options that you pay for, but the email option is free. Startly also has a web forum and Knowledge Base online that can be of help.

If there was one thing I wish Startly would do to make QuickKeys easier for new users, it would be to have more tutorials. It would be especially nice if one could go to <http://startly.com/> and see some QuickTime videos that show how to set up various shortcuts.

By the way, people who are still using OS 9 can also buy QuickKeys. The OS 9 version still has a few features not found in the OSX versions.

QuickKeys X3 System Requirements: Mac OS X v10.3 or later; 128MB of RAM; 20MB of free disk space; Certain features require an Internet connection

Startly Software (formerly CE Software); price: \$100

There are dozens of ways to create shortcuts with QuickKeys



Create your own custom Toolbars for any application.