# Quickly access your files

Use Quicksilver in place of Finder to compress and email files, and save time when working

**Quicksilver essentials** Part 2/4

**Mac** FORMAT On the DVD

Find *Quicksilver* on the DVD, along with last issue's tutorial

*F*inder has become increasingly unwieldy at navigating the huge number of files we have on our Macs these days. Apple went some way towards addressing this with Spotlight in OS X 10.4 Tiger, for quickly searching your hard drive. However, it's not your only option. *Quicksilver,* a free productivity tool for the Mac, is building up a loyal fan base. It provides superior search functions and the ability to do more with your files than *Finder* can.

Commonly used as a launcher, providing rapid access to files and folders, *Quicksilver* has far more potential. While Spotlight enables you to find a file, *Quicksilver* lets you perform an action on it and provide further clarification regarding the action. For example, you can locate a file and rename it, copy it, move it or email it. Because of how *Quicksilver*'s interface works, several actions can be done in quick succession, without moving from the keyboard. It also reduces clutter: for example, move a file using *Quicksilver* and you needn't open *Finder* windows – everything's done within *Quicksilver*'s interface, which disappears once you're done.

Last issue we introduced you to the *Quicksilver* interface (you'll find the PDF of this article on the DVD, in case you missed last issue). This issue, you'll discover how to manipulate files and
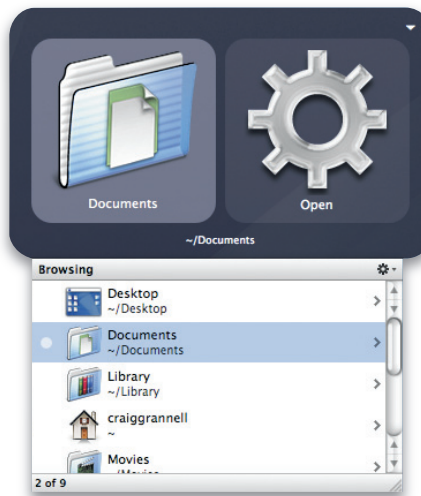
> **"Spend an hour with Quicksilver and you'll find everyday actions take a fraction of the time they did before"**

folders using *Quicksilver*. Although the learning curve is fairly steep (working with *Quicksilver* is largely done via the keyboard), spend an hour with *Quicksilver* and you'll soon find everyday actions taking a fraction of the time they did

before. In the first step by step, you'll learn how to navigate your hard drive, find a document, rename it and move it elsewhere on your Mac. The second step by step shows you how to create a new folder, copy several items from different folders to *Quicksilver*'s drop stack, copy the stack to the new folder and then compress, email and archive it all. (Note: if *Quicksilver* doesn't find *Entourage* contacts, open *Entourage*, then access the **Catalog** in *Quicksilver*'s configuration window. In **Modules** select **Entourage Contacts** and click **Refresh**.)

The final walkthrough shows how *Quicksilver*'s drag-and-drop capabilities can save you time. Before you begin, ensure **Enable advanced features** is checked in *Quicksilver*'s **Preferences**. You need to install plug-ins for your address book (Apple *Address Book* or *Entourage 2004 Module*), email client (modules are available for *Mail*, *Entourage*, *Mailsmith* and Gmail), and *File Compression Module* for compressing files. In **Preferences** (accessed via the app's Dock menu or via ⌘+[,] when *Quicksilver* is invoked), you can set the default email handler via the **Handlers** options. Note that all three step by steps begin with *Quicksilver* invoked, which is done via [control]+[Spacebar] by default, a shortcut that can be changed in the **Command** preferences.
**Craig Grannell**

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**STEP BY STEP** **Navigate your hard drive and manipulate files**



**01** Typing a file or folder name often loads it in *Quicksilver*'s **objects** pane, but you can navigate your hard drive in a more traditional manner. Type ~ to access your **Home** directory or hold [/] for a second to access your drive's root folder. Press the down arrow key for the results list, which can be navigated using arrow keys.
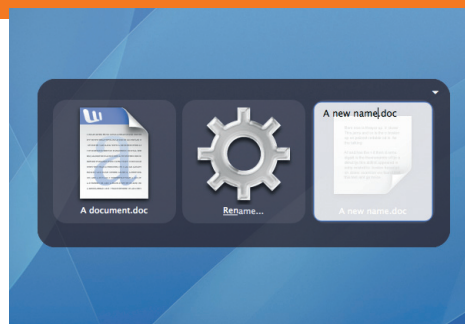


**02** The left and right arrows let you move through your folder hierarchy (accessible items are flagged with a right-facing arrow), as do [/] and ⇧+[/] (to move down and up the hierarchy, respectively). Find an item to rename, tab to the **action** pane, type **REN** to select **Rename…**, tab to the **argument** field and type a new name.
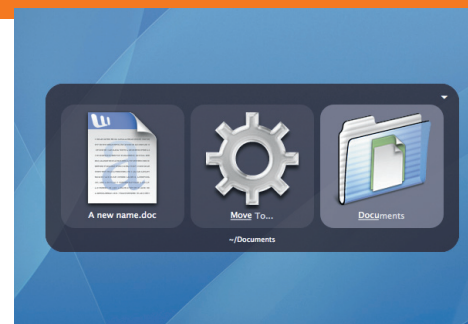


**03** Hit [Enter] to confirm the action and then invoke *Quicksilver*. You should find the renamed item loaded by default. Tab to the **action** pane, select **Move To…** and then tab to the **argument** field to select a target location. Hit [Enter] to move the object. With a little practice, this will take mere seconds – far quicker than using *Finder*. ●

## STEP BY STEP    Collate, compress and email several files – with speed!
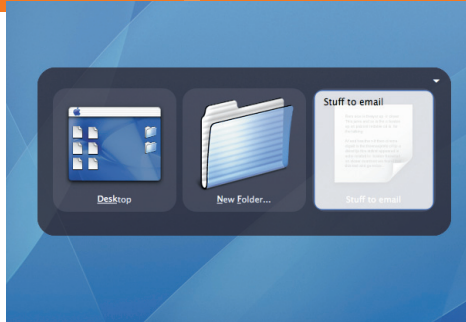
**01** Load **Desktop** in the **object** pane (typing **DE** is enough to do this), tab to the **action** pane and choose **New Folder…** (either from the results list, or by typing **NF**). Tab to the third pane, type a name for the new folder and hit [Enter] – the folder will be created on your Desktop.
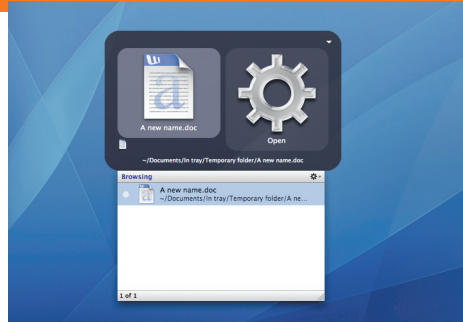
**02** We're now going to use *Quicksilver*'s **drop stack** – a feature for temporarily collecting a group of items to perform actions on. In the standard *Quicksilver* way, find an item on your hard drive, such as a text file. Once it's found, hit the comma key [,] – you'll see a small version of the object's icon copied underneath the **object** pane.
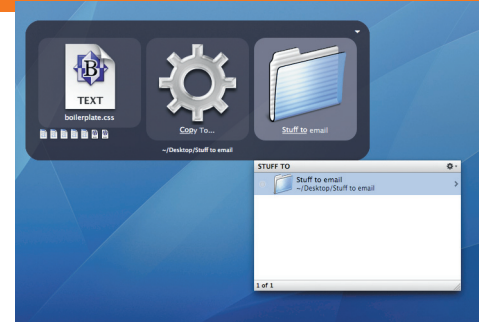
**03** You can now search for another item and add it to the stack by using [,]. Do this with as many items as you wish and then tab to the **action** pane. Choose **Copy To…** and hit [Tab] again. In the **argument** pane, choose the folder created in step 1 and hit [Enter] to copy the contents of the **drop stack** to it.
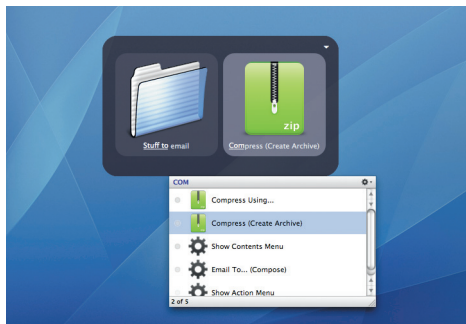
**04** Invoke *Quicksilver*. You'll find the **drop stack** selected, so replace the object in *Quicksilver*'s **object** pane with the folder created in step 1. Tab to the **action** pane and choose **Compress (Create Archive)**. This will then create an archive based on the settings in the **Compression** section of *Quicksilver*'s **Preferences** (.zip by default).

**05** Hit [Enter] and *Quicksilver* archives the file and loads the result, enabling you to perform an action on it. Tab to the **action** pane and select **Email To… (Compose)**. Tab to the **argument** field, choose a recipient and hit [Enter]. A new message will appear in your email client, with the archive as an attachment and the **To** field filled in.
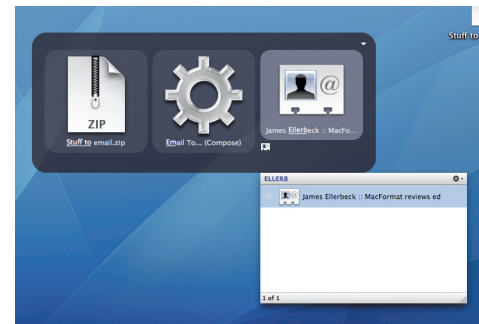
**06** If you'd like to send an object to multiple recipients, use the **drop stack** tip (in steps 2 and 3) in the **argument** (third) pane during step 5. Each contact in the **drop stack** will be added to the **To** field when [Enter] is hit. (This highlights *Quicksilver*'s modular nature – concepts generally work in multiple circumstances.) ●

## STEP BY STEP    Use drag-and-drop to save time

**01** If you want to tidy a Desktop item away, you probably usually open a *Finder* window, navigate to the relevant folder and then drag your item into it. To save time, invoke *Quicksilver*, load your chosen target into the **object** pane, and then drag the item to it from *Finder* – *Quicksilver* will automate a **Move To…** action for you!
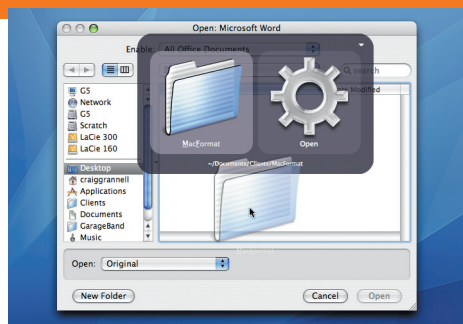
**02** Do you spend time navigating **Open** and **Save** dialogs? *Quicksilver* can make it easy to find target folders. While in the **Open/Save** dialog, invoke *Quicksilver* and load your target folder in the **object** pane. Next, drag the folder from the **object** pane to the dialog box – the dialog directory will 'snap' to the folder shown in *Quicksilver*! ●

## TOOL SCHOOL
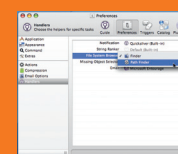
**If you're a *Path Finder* user, install the relevant module and set Cocoatech's application as your default file-system browser via *Quicksilver*'s Handlers preferences.**

## EXPERT TIP
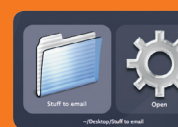
**If you already have an item selected in *Finder*, you can invoke *Quicksilver* and load your item into the object pane via the shortcut ⌘+[G].**