

Software Instructions - MacFlash Quizzer

The quizzer can be started by dragging one or more MacFlash decks onto the program, double-clicking on one or more MacFlash decks, or by opening the program and using the Open command to load a deck in the quizzer. Once a deck is opened, the program will display the Description of the deck. Also along with the description is a short list of the options that have been enabled for this deck. These options will override any that you have set in your quizzing preferences. At any time, you can review the descriptions with the Deck/View Descriptions command. When you close the description dialog, you will be asked if you would like to start quizzing immediately (unless this option is selected in your preferences). If you don't start quizzing, you'll have the option to adjust the quizzing parameters for the program.

MacFlash supports the quizzing of several decks at the same time. This means that you can create several small decks in the editor, and then quiz on one large deck made up of a selected set of decks. As stated above, you can either double-click or drag all the decks that you want to load onto the MacFlash icon, or, while in the quizzer, you can repeatedly use the Open command to load up each deck. The description box will have arrows that you can use to scan through the descriptions and the scoring details. The answer checking preferences that are stored with each deck are kept; that is, a card will remember which deck it came from, and will use that deck's checking preferences to check the answer.

Once you begin quizzing with the Deck/Start Deck command, you will then be displayed with a card, as shown below.

answer the question by typing the answer into the edit field below the card, and, depending on the current preferences, either press return or click on the 'Submit' button to see if you are correct. If you are, the status line (below the edit field) will tell you so, otherwise, it will display the right answer. Also, a small icon next to the edit field will appear, either a checkmark for being correct, or an 'X' for being wrong. In either case, press return or click on the 'Next Card' button to go on to the next card. Continue like this until you have exhausted the deck (based on the number of tries each card is set at, as well as other preferences), at which point a scoring dialog will come up and give you your performance for that session. From this dialog, you can save the missed cards as a different deck, or in a text file for review later. You can also save the scoring information out to a text file as well. You can then retry the same deck, or load a new deck at this point.

If, for some reason, you need to stop quizzing while still in mid-deck, you can use the Deck/Stop Quizzing command. This will immediately end your quizzing session, and will bring up the statistics for the cards that you have already seen before stopping the session.

Some cards may have an associated multimedia object associated with them; when you encounter these cards while quizzing, the quizzer will inform you that the object exists. To play the object, use the Deck/Play command (shortcut is command-P). There is no limit as to how many times you can play an object. Currently, the only card type that supports this is the Sound card; this may change in the future.

There are several preferences which you can set. Under the Edit/Quizzing Preferences... command, a dialog will come up, as shown below.

From this dialog, you can set the following preferences:

Override Set Number Of Tries : turn this option on to override the number of tries as defined by each card within the deck. You can then set the Maximum Number Of Tries Per Card in the following field.

Never Immediately Repeat : This will prevent you from seeing the same card twice in a row. This also means that if there is only 1 card left on the deck, and you miss it, the deck will automatically end.

Randomize Deck : Displays the cards in a random order if selected. Otherwise, the order will be the same as defined by the deck.

Accept Answers with 'Return' : If on, you can press 'Return' (or 'Enter') to submit your answer instead of having to press the "Submit" button in the quizzer window.

Number of Lines in Answer Box : Adjust this value to change the number of lines that you are given in the Answer edit field on the main window. If you are dealing with longer answers, you may wish to display more lines to see your entire answer.

Scoring Methods : There are several options for scoring your performance. Constant scoring means that the point value of each card will not change throughout the quizzing. Linear, Decrement By scoring will cause the value of the card to drop by the amount specified in the edit field after each wrong guess. Linear, Final Value of scoring will lower the card's value by a calculated amount such that on the last possible try for that card, it will be worth the value specified in the edit field. Halve Each Try scoring will halve the value of the card after each wrong guess, with a minimum of 1 point.

Reverse Questions And Answers : If the type of card allows you to reverse the question and answer in a logical sense, then you can set how the quizzer presents cards to you with these options. Never will never switch the question and answer, and will quiz as normal. Whenever Possible will switch the question and answer whenever it can, and Random Whenever Possible will switch with a 50% probability. Note that currently, only the Plain Text cards will be reversed.

The next 3 options can be set by the deck, and thus, may be overridden when you are quizzing. Consult the Deck's description to discover which options are fixed for the deck.

Case Insensitive : If on, your answers will not be checked for proper case.

Strip Diacritics : If on, ignores any diacritics (eg accented characters such as ç) in checking your answer

Strip Trailing Spaces : If on, removes any trailing spaces from your answer

If you change any of these preferences in this dialog, you will need to restart the deck.

You can also change the way the Quizzer presents the cards and other info to you, using the Edit/Display Preferences...command. This brings up the following dialog:

Each item affects the display of the Quizzer as follows:

Question Display Items

Font: Changes the font the question is displayed in.

Size: Changes the size of the font that the question is displayed in. Numbers that are outlined in this menu indicate font sizes that are 'preferred' by the system, and will not appear choppy.

Foreground Color: Changes the color that the text of the cards are displayed in

Background Color: Changes the background of the area where the cards are displayed in.

Notecard Look: Adds faint blue and red lines to the card view area to make it look like a 3"x5" notecard.

Entry Display Items:

Font and Size are the same as for the Question Display, but affect the entry fields parameter only.

Number of Lines in Answer Box: Determines how many visible lines of text will be shown in the answer box. Note that you can scroll the answer box if necessary.

Accept Answers with 'Return': If on, then you can use the return or enter key to submit your answer, or to continue to the next answer. If off, you will need to use the Submit/Next card button to continue.

Other Items:

Immediately Start Quiz After Opening: With this option checked, you will immediately begin quizzing after you open a deck, bypass the dialog box that gives you this option.

Status Display: Determines what information is shown in the bottom right field of the Quizzer window.

Changing any of these items does not affect the quizzing state, and can be performed mid-quiz without problems.

A final element of the interface is the status indicator, the LED-like object in the lower left part of the window. When this is red, you cannot quiz because no deck is loaded up. If it is yellow, then a deck has been successfully loaded, and you can begin quizzing. If it is green, then you are in the middle of a quiz.