

# DropPrint

**User's Manual for Version 1.4**  
**By Nick Zitzmann**

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## For Users who Hate Reading Manuals

Just put DropPrint into your Dock, drag some documents or text clippings over DropPrint's icon, and watch them print! If DropPrint isn't running when you drop some files onto it to print, then DropPrint will run, issue the print commands, and then quit after the last file has been processed. If you run DropPrint without dropping anything onto it, then you'll have to manually quit DropPrint when you're done with it.

If you notice only a handful of the documents actually got printed, but not all of them, then you may have to increase the amount of time DropPrint takes to pause between events. (Some applications have a hard time queuing print requests, for some reason.) You can change this value in DropPrint's Preferences window.

## Introduction

Do you remember how you could drag and drop files from the Finder to a printer icon back in Systems 7.5 through 9.x, and they would be printed? Ever wonder where that feature went in Mac OS X?

DropPrint is a small, multi-purpose print tool for Mac OS X. It uses various Macintosh technologies (both Carbon and Cocoa) to implement drag-and-drop, command line, and service-based printing of printable document files (e.g. word processing and spreadsheet files), PostScript files, PDF files, and text clippings. DropPrint makes batch print jobs quick and easy, and allows you to print text in applications that don't even have a Print command, or just print the text from a selection that you want to print.

DropPrint has the following features:

- Files are printed immediately (ie. no Print dialog box) in applications that support this feature, ie. AppleWorks and OS X 10.2's TextEdit
- Can be instructed to print files or open the Print Manager from a Dock sub-menu
- Sends PDF files directly to printers in OS X 10.2 and later; no interpreter required
- Sends PostScript files directly to PostScript printers on TCP/IP and AppleTalk networks
- Supports two byte file names
- Prints documents from the command line
- Prints text clippings, including stylized text
- Adds printing services to your Services menu
- Adds easy printing hotkeys to applications that support services for easy printing of text in many applications

This version of DropPrint currently has these drawbacks:

- If you are using Mac OS X 10.0 or 10.1, DropPrint will not work correctly with files associated with applications that display its Print dialogs as a sheet instead of a window. (This includes TextEdit and Preview.) This issue seems to have been fixed in 10.2.
- DropPrint will not quit applications after they are finished loading and printing.

DropPrint requires Mac OS X 10.0 or later.

DropPrint is \$5 shareware. If you like the product and use it frequently, then you are requested to pay the fee. Please pay via PayPal (you may either use a PayPal account or a credit card) to Nick's E-Mail address: **[dreamless@attbi.com](mailto:dreamless@attbi.com)** and mention that you are paying for DropPrint.

Please register DropPrint if you use it often! When you register, the reminder to register will go away, and you'll be supporting future development. Your support is greatly appreciated! Please note that I process registrations manually, so please allow me some time to process your registration after payment.

### Installing and Removing DropPrint

Just move DropPrint to wherever you want to put it on your hard disk. There is no place where DropPrint must be installed.

**NOTE:** In order for DropPrint’s menu services to show up in your Services menu, you must install DropPrint into either your Mac’s Applications folder, or your personal Applications folder. (Putting it into a subfolder in the Applications folder is fine.) The services menu will not appear if it is installed anywhere else.

To remove DropPrint, just drag its icon over to the trash can and empty it. You may also want to remove its preferences file, “com.attbi.home.dreamless.DropPrint.plist”, from your hard disk (it appears inside the Preferences folder, which is inside the Library folder, of a user’s directory).

### Printing from the Desktop

There are two ways to have DropPrint send the signal to start printing a file:

1. In the Finder, open up DropPrint the usual way. Then, while still in the Finder, click-drag and drop the icons of files you want printed onto DropPrint’s icon in the Dock. You can also add DropPrint to your Dock by dragging its icon into an empty space in your Dock, or loading it and selecting “Keep in Dock” in its Dock menu. In other words, it’s just like using DropStuff™ or StuffIt Expander™.
2. In the application’s File menu, or in its Dock menu (see the questions & answers section below if you’re not sure what I’m talking about), you can select “Open Files for Printing...” and select the file(s) you want to print from there.

### Printing Text Clippings, Dragged and Dropped Text, and the Clipboard

Starting in version 1.2 of DropPrint, DropPrint can print text clippings dropped onto its icon! Simply take any text clipping in the Finder and drop it onto DropPrint’s icon to begin the process.

**NOTE:** This feature is known to work on disks that use either the HFS (“Mac OS Standard”) or HFS+ (“Mac OS Extended”) filesystem format. It should work with other filesystem formats (ie. UFS), but it has not been tested.

If you’ve got a clipping of text in a window, or a clipping of text in your clipboard, that you would like to print, and don’t want to be bothered by creating a text clipping file, then don’t worry, you don’t have to. Instead, select “Open Quick Print Text Window” in either DropPrint’s File or Dock menus, and drag and drop your text into the text section of the window. (You’ll see a border appear around the section if it accepts your text.) You can also drag and drop text clippings into this window if you wish.

To print what's in your clipboard, select "Open Quick Print Text Window," and click on the "Paste Clipboard" button.

By default, DropPrint will format the text clipping page to your system's default paper size. Unless you have changed this in your OS, then this will use US Letter size paper. In OS X 10.0 and 10.1, changing the default paper size is something of a hack, and the process is beyond the scope of this manual. If you need to change the default, then try visiting one of the major Mac Web sites and look for information there. This issue should be fixed in OS X 10.2 and later.

### PDF Forwarding

Starting in version 1.3, DropPrint can print PDF files from the desktop without using Acrobat Reader or a different PDF interpreter. This feature requires Mac OS X 10.2 or later and it can be turned on and off from the Preferences menu. (See Customizing DropPrint below.)

With PDF Forwarding on, when you drag a PDF file onto DropPrint's icon, DropPrint will forward the PDF file directly to your default printer, and then open Print Center so you can watch it print.

### For PostScript Printer Owners: PostScript Forwarding

If you have a printer that uses PostScript as its language, and you use this printer over a TCP/IP or AppleTalk network, then you can set up DropPrint to directly forward PostScript files to your PostScript printer. This option also works with plotter (PLT) files if you have a plotter on your AppleTalk or TCP/IP network.

To do this, you must first turn on PostScript Forwarding. (See Customizing DropPrint below.) Then, whenever you drag and drop a PostScript file with the extension ".ps" onto DropPrint, instead of trying to "print" the PostScript file, DropPrint will try and send the PostScript file directly to your printer.

No PPD files are necessary for this feature to work.

**Caution!** If you do not have a PostScript printer, or a plotter, then this feature is not for you. Do not turn it on if you don't have a PostScript printer or plotter. If you are not sure whether or not you have a PostScript printer, then consult your printer's documentation. Not all laser printers use PostScript.

## Printing from Other Applications

In applications that support OS X services, you can print text using DropPrint from your Services menu. Just select the text you want to print, and either press *Command-Shift-T* or choose “Print This Text” from the DropPrint menu inside the Services menu. (The Services menu is always located inside the application’s menu.)

In file browsers that support services, such as the Finder in OS X 10.2 or later, you can also print files from the Services menu. Select the file and press *Command-Shift-P* or select “Print This File” from the DropPrint menu inside the Services menu. If you are using OS X 10.0 or 10.1, then you must use a third party file browser, such as RBrowser.

**NOTE:** Not all applications support services. In applications that do not support services, DropPrint’s services will always be unavailable, even if something is selected. See the Q & A below for more information.

## Printing from the Command Line (for experts)

Yes, you can also use DropPrint to print files from the command line. This is an especially useful feature if you’ve got an AppleWorks document (or a document belonging to some other application that will print without displaying a Print dialog window) you need printed in a remote place, but all you have is an SSH or Telnet connection to the other computer.

CD over to DropPrint’s directory, and then type:

```
DropPrint.app/Contents/MacOS/DropPrint /Path/To/The/File/You/Want/To/Print
```

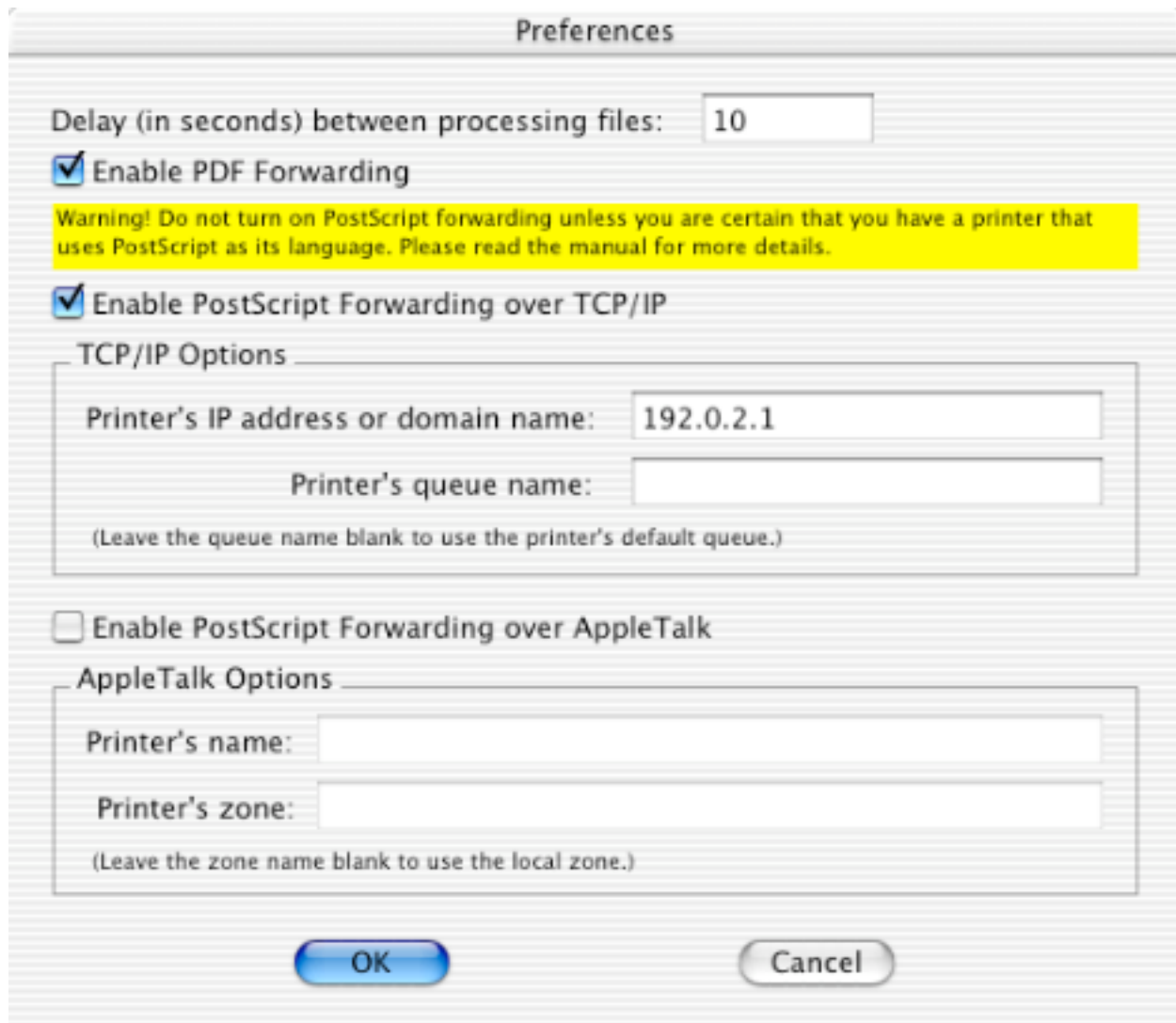
For example, if you’ve got a document in your Documents directory called “Recipes” that you want to print, you would CD over to the place where you installed DropPrint, and type:

```
DropPrint.app/Contents/MacOS/DropPrint ~/Documents/Recipes
```

Sorry, but right now, you must give DropPrint a full path to the document you want printed if you want to print from the command line.

## Customizing DropPrint

There’s a few features in DropPrint that can be customized. You’ll see it in the Preferences window (select “Preferences” from the application’s menu).



**Delay between processing files (5 seconds by default):** Some applications don't take receiving several "print" Apple events simultaneously very well, so you may run into trouble printing a group of documents belonging to the same application at once (only one or two documents may be printed). If this is happening to you, then set the number in the Preferences window to something other than 5. Setting it to 5 or 10 is probably best, although you can set it as high as 100. The larger the documents you typically process, the higher you'll want to set this number.

This value is the amount of time DropPrint will wait after sending one print event, but before sending another. Some applications seem to handle multiple print events better if they're spaced out over time.

**Enable PDF Forwarding (off by default):** This toggles DropPrint's PDF Forwarding feature. (See PDF Forwarding above.)

**Enable PostScript Forwarding over TCP/IP (off by default):** This toggles DropPrint's PostScript Forwarding feature. (See [For PostScript Printer Owners: PostScript Forwarding](#) above.) Use this option if you have a PostScript printer that is connected to a TCP/IP network.

**Printer's IP address or domain name (empty by default):** You must set this option if you turned on PostScript Forwarding over TCP/IP. Enter your PostScript printer's IP address here. If your printer has a domain name, then you may use that instead. If you're not sure what to put here, then open the Print Center, look at the name of your printer, and copy its name into this field.

**Printer's queue name (empty by default):** This is an optional setting if you're using PostScript Forwarding. If you have a special printer queue that you need to use, then enter it here. Leave this blank to print to the printer's default queue.

**Enable PostScript Forwarding over AppleTalk (off by default):** This toggles DropPrint's PostScript Forwarding feature for printers that are connected to an AppleTalk network. Important note: If you turn both this and TCP/IP forwarding on, then this option will be ignored, and the document will be sent to the TCP/IP printer instead.

**Printer's name (empty by default):** You must set this option if you turned on PostScript Forwarding over AppleTalk. Enter your PostScript printer's AppleTalk name here. If you don't know the name, but you do have a Print Center entry for it, then you may use Print Center to look it up.

**Printer's zone (empty by default):** If your AppleTalk printer is located in a different AppleTalk zone, then enter the zone's name here. If the printer is in the same zone as your computer, then leave this field empty.

### Some Other Questions and Answers

Q: "Can I use DropPrint print documents in the case where I don't have an application that can open the file?"

A: Yes, if the file is a text clipping, or if the file you are trying to "print" is a PostScript file and you have a PostScript printer. Otherwise, no.

Q: "Why?"



A: DropPrint works by sending a message (aka an “event”) to other applications to print certain files. Otherwise, it would need to know other file formats, and not only would this take too long to program, but there would almost certainly be translation issues that would throw things off. The exceptions are text clippings, which is a fairly well known format and can’t be automatically printed by the Finder, and PostScript files, which just program the printer to do certain things.

Q: “You keep talking about a Dock Menu above. What is a Dock Menu?”

A: Load up DropPrint if you haven’t already. If you click on its Dock icon with the right mouse button (or mouse button and Control key) when DropPrint is loaded, then you’ll see its Dock menu. If your mouse only has one button, then try holding down Control and clicking on its icon to see the Dock menu.

Q: “Can I cancel a PostScript forward?”

A: Not at this time. This is because the feature works asynchronously, meaning it can work on several files at once, and it’s not currently possible to cancel specific jobs. If the feature wasn’t asynchronous, then the program would lock up with the well-known spinning beach ball cursor while trying to send a PostScript file, and I figured no one would like that. (No, quitting DropPrint will not cancel any PostScript forwards in process.)

Q: “Is there any way to get the other application to put up, or not put up, a Print dialog window before the document(s) get printed?”

A: Unfortunately no. Different applications have different ways of handling print events. Some of them (ie. AppleWorks) will immediately spool the document for printing, while others (ie. Project Builder) will bring up a Print dialog for every file it is told to print. Unfortunately, this is all up to the implementation of the printing application. If you’d like to see the printing app not give you a dialog window, then you should suggest it to the authors of that application.

Q: “Can I use DropPrint to do a batch conversion of documents to PostScript or PDF format?”

A: Kind of; it won’t be a batch setting, but you can manually do this, as long as you can click on the “Save as file” check box in your document’s Output Settings print setting. However, you’ll have to manually do this for every document you’re printing.

Q: “Could DropPrint possibly do something like the above in the future?”

A: Probably not, unfortunately.

Q: “Why not?”

A: DropPrint can only tell other applications to print something; it can't tell the application how it is to be printed right now.

Q: "DropPrint doesn't work with Application X. Why not?"

A: In order for other applications to work with DropPrint, they must support the "print" Apple event. Apple asks that other developers implement support for this event, but not all do. Also, if you are using OS X 10.0 or 10.1, DropPrint will not work correctly with applications that use a sheet instead of a window for displaying print options (ie. TextEdit) due to an OS X bug.

Q: "I don't have a PostScript printer. If I have a PostScript format file, how do I print it?"

A: If you don't have a PostScript printer, then you need to use PostScript interpretation software in order to print PostScript files. Currently I'm aware of two such programs, MacGhostView (<http://www.kiffe.com/macghostview.html>), and MacGSView (<http://www.ghostscript.com/macos/index.htm>).

Q: "Can I send PDF files directly to the printer?"

A: Yes, if you are using Mac OS X 10.2 or later. Otherwise, you will need Adobe Acrobat.

Q: "How do I print PDF files?"

A: If you are using Mac OS X 10.2, then turn on PDF forwarding and any PDF file you drop onto DropPrint will print.

If you are using 10.0 or 10.1, then you must use Acrobat Reader, since DropPrint doesn't work correctly with Apple's Preview application. You should already have Acrobat Reader installed if you're using Mac OS X 10.1 or later. To make PDF files open by default in Acrobat Reader, find a PDF file that is associated with Preview, have the Finder get info on it, go to the "Open with application" pane, change the document's application from Preview to Acrobat, then click on the "Change all..." button. Now all your PDF files will open by default in Acrobat Reader, which has been tested and is known to work correctly with DropPrint.

Q: "Hey, one of the two (or both) PostScript Forwarding options is dimmed, and I can't turn it on! What gives?"

A: DropPrint won't let you turn on PostScript Forwarding if it couldn't find the appropriate software. The software needed for both TCP/IP and AppleTalk printing should be present in OS X 10.1 and 10.2, but if you're using some future version of the OS, then it may have been moved or removed. Look for a newer version of DropPrint.

Q: "I just dragged and dropped a number of files onto DropPrint's icon in the Dock when DropPrint wasn't running. It loaded OK, but it didn't print my files. What gives?"

A: You have to register DropPrint for this feature to work reliably. DropPrint should load, send the commands for your files to print, and then quit if you registered it. If you pre-load DropPrint first, then it should work...

Q: "How do I use services? They're always grayed out!"

A: Services should work in Cocoa applications. Try selecting some text or data and try looking at the Services menu in a Cocoa application. Currently, not all Carbon applications support services. If you are using Mac OS X 10.0 or 10.1, then the Finder does not support services. The 10.2 Finder does, though.

Q: "DropPrint's services are not showing up in my applications' Services menu."

A: You must put DropPrint into an applications folder the OS will recognize. The Applications folder works, and your personal Applications folder (if you have one) should also work. Once DropPrint has been placed there, you will need to log out and log back in again for the service to appear.

Q: "When I forward a PostScript file, the printer prints the text of the file instead of following the PostScript instructions. Why?"

A: Your PostScript printer is most likely getting confused and thinking the PostScript document is a text document. First of all, make sure that the printer accepts PostScript files. If it does support PostScript, then it may be looking for PPD information in the file but can't find it. DropPrint does not append PPD information to PostScript files, so make sure that whatever generates the PostScript file is including the PPD information. If all else fails, then you may need to use a PostScript to PDF interpreter, then print the PDF...

## Contacting the Author

If you have any more questions or feedback, please E-Mail Nick at:  
**[dreamless@attbi.com](mailto:dreamless@attbi.com)**

The latest version of DropPrint will always be available from Nick's Software Page:  
<http://dreamless.home.attbi.com/dropprint.html>

## Acknowledgments

Your author would like to thank, in no particular order:

- The Apple Developer Tech Support group, for answering all those questions I had...
- Everyone on the [macosx-dev@omnigroup.com](mailto:macosx-dev@omnigroup.com) mailing list, for helping me with this and that...
- Everyone who has helped me test features of DropPrint I couldn't test myself. Special thanks to the good people on the [macosx-admin@omnigroup.com](mailto:macosx-admin@omnigroup.com) and [macosx-talk@omnigroup.com](mailto:macosx-talk@omnigroup.com) mailing lists.
- Everyone who has registered DropPrint. Thanks!

## Version History

Version 1.0 (April 11, 2002):

- First release.

Version 1.1 (April 22, 2002):

- Added a new feature for PostScript printer users: Postscript forwarding. This option, if turned on, will have DropPrint forward PostScript files directly to PostScript printers, just like the old LaserWriter 8 driver used to do.
- DropPrint now loads Print Center by file descriptor instead of hard path, which means that the "Open Print Center" command should now work if Print Center is located at a path other than `"/Applications/Utilities/Print Center.app"`. If DropPrint can't load the Print Center for any reason, it will now present an error message instead of doing nothing.
- DropPrint is no longer described in the Finder's Get Info as an "Except Applications" document type, and is now correctly described as an "Application."

Version 1.2 (May 7, 2002):

- DropPrint now handles and prints Finder text clippings.
- Added a new menu item, "Open Quick Print Text Window," that allows users to open up a window where they can quickly print dragged and dropped text, or text from the Clipboard.
- Added two OS X Services, "Print This File," and "Print This Text," that allow printing things from the Services menu.

Version 1.3 (September 5, 2002):

- Updated contact information.
- Rebuilt using GCC 3.1.
- The preference file name has changed from “DropPrint.plist” to “com.attbi.home.dreamless.DropPrint.plist”. The old preference file will be imported.
- Added PDF forwarding for users using Mac OS X 10.2 or later. This allows anyone to print PDF files directly from the desktop without using Preview or Acrobat Reader.
- Added hotkeys for the services.
- Improved the registration system.
- Other minor optimizations...

Version 1.4 (December 11, 2002):

- PostScript forwarding now forwards “plt” (plotter) files.
- Added PostScript forwarding over AppleTalk.
- More minor optimizations.

### Legal Stuff

DropPrint is provided “as is” and has no warranty, either expressed or implied, attached to its use. The user agrees by running DropPrint that DropPrint is to be used at the user’s own risk; the author can not be held liable for the program doing anything damaging to the user or the user’s computer hardware/software, and the author can not be held liable for the actions of the user using the software.