

# CHAPTER 12

## MANAGING YOUR DESKTOP WITH EXPOSÉ, SPACES, AND OTHER TOOLS

### In this chapter

Taking Control of Your Desktop 266

Managing Open Windows with Exposé 266

Creating, Using, and Managing Spaces 269

Mac OS X to the Max: Controlling Running Applications 273

## TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR DESKTOP

Mac OS X and modern Macs are powerful. This power enables you to have many applications and documents open at the same time, which is great for your productivity. At some point though, you'll have so many open windows on your desktop that finding the specific document or application that you want to work on can start to become laborious. Fortunately, Mac OS X includes a couple of features designed to help you manage all the desktop clutter. Exposé helps you manage windows that are open on your desktop. Spaces enables you to create collections of applications and open windows so that you can switch among them easily.

As you run all these applications at the same time, you'll also need to know how to manage the applications that are running.

## MANAGING OPEN WINDOWS WITH EXPOSÉ

Because it is so useful to have multiple applications and multiple documents within each application open at the same time, you might have dozens of windows open simultaneously with those windows layered one on another. Getting to the specific window in which you are interested can be difficult. That is where Exposé comes in. It is designed to help you quickly manage all the open windows on your desktop.

### TIP

You can customize the controls used to activate Exposé functions, as you will learn in the next section.

## USING EXPOSÉ

Exposé offers a number of useful functions, which are noted in the following list:

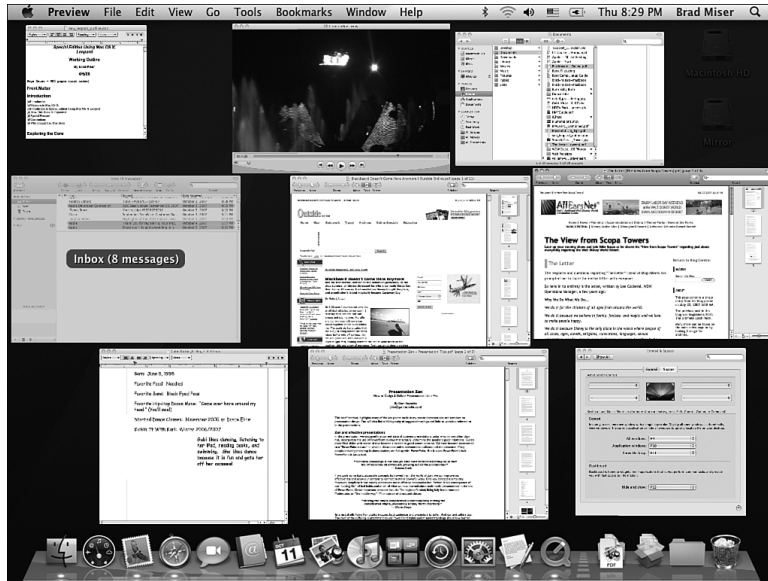
- **See all open windows at the same time**—If you press the F9 key (default), all open windows will be reduced in size and tiled such that they can all be displayed on the desktop at the same time (see Figure 12.1). When you point to a window, its title will appear so you can definitely identify it if you can't do so just by its appearance. (In Figure 12.1, I am pointing to the Mail application so you can see information about the Inbox.) You can click a window to move into that window, and the other windows return to their previous sizes and locations. You can also move into a window in which the cursor is located by pressing F9 again; if you don't point to a different window, pressing F9 will return you to your previous location.

### NOTE

If you use multiple monitors and activate Exposé, the windows on all monitors shrink and remain on the monitor they were originally on when you activated Exposé.

**Figure 12.1**

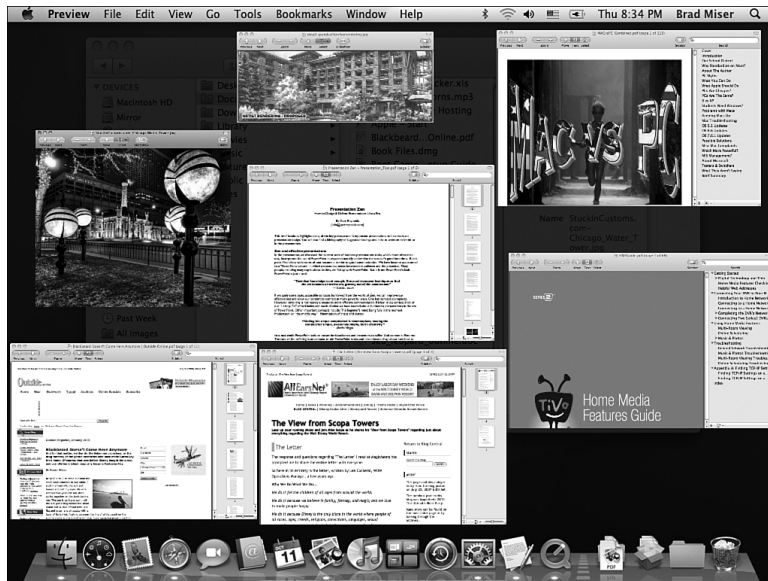
Using Exposé, you can show all open windows on your desktop at the same time.



- **See all the windows in the current application at the same time**—If you press the F10 key (default), all the windows in the current application will be shown (see Figure 12.2). Just like the previous command, you can point to a window to see its title, click it to move into it, and so on.

**Figure 12.2**

Here, I've pressed F10 so that all the windows open in Preview are shown.



**TIP**

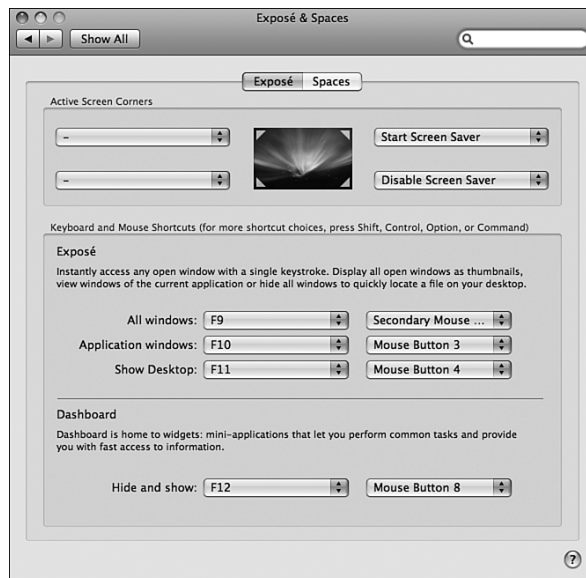
If you hold down the Shift key while you activate Exposé, you see its effects in slow motion. Why is this useful? I have no idea.

- **Hide all open windows and show the desktop**—If you press F11 (default), all open windows will be hidden by being moved off the sides of the desktop and you will see your desktop in all its beauty. This is useful if you have a bad case of desktop clutter and want to work on the desktop without closing or moving the current windows. You can return all windows to their previous locations by pressing F11 again. You can also open an item on the desktop by double-clicking it; when you do, the other windows return to their previous locations. Another option is to click one of the window borders that will be visible along the edges of your screen to return windows to their previous states.
- **Cycle through the Open windows in each application**—If you activate Exposé by pressing F9 or F10, you can cycle through the set of open windows in each application by pressing the Tab or Shift-Tab keys (to move in the opposite direction). Each time you do, the next application becomes active and you see all its open windows. Windows open in other applications remain at their current sizes and are unselectable. When the window you want to work in is exposed, click in it to deactivate Exposé and start using the application with which the window is associated.

## CONFIGURING EXPOSÉ

You can customize the following aspects of Exposé using the Exposé tab of the Exposé & Spaces pane of the System Preferences application (see Figure 12.3):

**Figure 12.3**  
The Exposé & Spaces pane of the System Preferences application enables you to customize various aspects of Exposé.



- **Active Screen Corners**—Use the pop-up menu located at each corner of the preview monitor to set an action that happens when you move the cursor to that corner. The actions you can set are All Windows (the default F9 key), Application Windows (the default F10 key), Desktop (the default F11 key), Dashboard, Spaces, Start Screen Saver, Disable Screen Saver, and No Action (-). To set an action for a corner, select the action on the related pop-up menu. When you point to that corner of the screen, that action will occur.
- **Keyboard**—Use the Keyboard pop-up menus to set the keys to activate each Exposé action. In addition to the keys on the menus, you can see other combinations by scrolling down the pop-up menu. If you hold down a modifier key (such as the ⌘ key), you can add that modifier to the shortcut.
- **Mouse**—If you use an input device with more than one button, such as a two-button mouse, the Mouse pop-up menus appear. Use the Mouse pop-up menus to set Exposé actions for specific buttons on the device you use, such as the right button on a two-button mouse.
- **Dashboard**—Use the pop-up menus to select which keyboard and mouse (if you have a mouse with multiple buttons) controls will activate the Dashboard.

➞ To learn more about the Dashboard, see Chapter 6, “Working with the Dashboard and Widgets,” p. 123.

## CREATING, USING, AND MANAGING SPACES

Being able to use Exposé to manage open windows and applications is nice, but if you use a large amount of applications and windows at the same time, getting to the windows you want to work with can still be tedious. Spaces enables you to create environments that contain specific applications so that you can easily switch between them to perform specific actions. For example, you can create an Internet space that has all your Internet applications open and a Project space that contains applications and documents related to a project you are working on. When you want to move from the project to the Internet, simply move into the Internet space and all your applications are immediately available. Getting back to your project space is just as easy.

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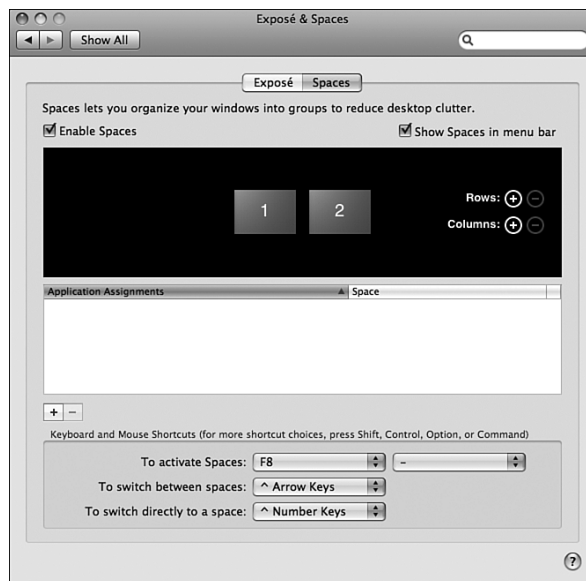
### ENABLING AND BUILDING SPACES

To get started with Spaces, you need to enable the feature and build your spaces. After you create spaces, you assign applications to those spaces. Only applications that are bound to a space are available to you when you access that space. To enable Spaces and create spaces, perform the following steps:

1. Open the Spaces tab of the Exposé & Spaces pane of the System Preferences application (see Figure 12.4).
2. Check the Enable Spaces check box. If you want to have the Spaces menu appear in the menu bar, check that check box, as well.

**Figure 12.4**

Use the Spaces tab to create and configure spaces on your Mac.

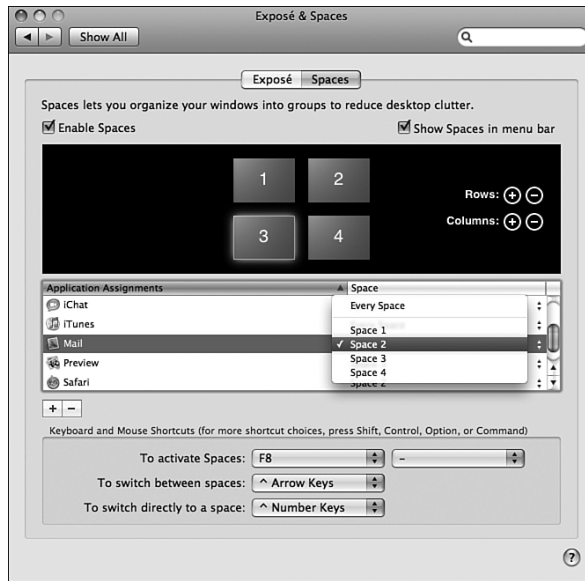


3. At the top of the pane, you see the preview window that shows a thumbnail of each space you have configured; initially there are two spaces in the same row. As you create spaces, you'll add them by row or by column. Below the preview window is the Application Assignments section; here, you see the applications are part of the selected space. At the bottom of the pane are the controls you use to set keyboard shortcuts for specific actions.
4. Use the keyboard pop-up menu to set the keyboard shortcut to activate Spaces.
5. If you have a multi-button mouse, use the mouse pop-up menu to set the mouse control to activate Spaces.
6. Add applications that you want to be part of the spaces you are creating. There are several ways to do this:
  - Drag an application's icon from the desktop and drop it on the space where you want it contained; when the icon is over a space, the space's thumbnail is highlighted to show you that you can drop it on the space.
  - Drag an application's icon from the desktop and drop it on the application list. Then, choose the space where you want the application to be used on the pop-up menu in the Space column (more on that in a bit).
  - Click Add Application and use the resulting sheet to move to and select the application you want to add. Then use the pop-up menu in the Space column to choose the space where you want that application to appear.
7. Add spaces by clicking the Add button in the Row section to add a new row of spaces or the Add button in the Column section to add a new column of spaces.
8. Add spaces until you've added all that you want to have available.

9. To remove spaces, you must remove an entire row or column by clicking the Remove button in the Row or Column section.
10. Use the pop-up menu in the Space column to assign an application to a space (see Figure 12.5). The choices on the menu are each space you've created and Every Space which makes the application available in all spaces. When you select an application, the spaces to which it is assigned are highlighted in the preview window.

**Figure 12.5**

Assign applications to spaces to make them available when you choose a space.



11. To remove an application from the list, select it and click Remove.
12. Use the “To switch between spaces” pop-up menu to choose the keyboard shortcut to move among the spaces you have created.

**TIP**

Hold a modifier key down to see more shortcut choices on these menus.

13. Use the “To switch directly to a space” pop menu to choose the keyboard shortcut you can use to jump directly into a space.

## USING AND MANAGING SPACES

After you've created spaces, you can use them to more efficiently manage your desktop. Here are some space pointers:

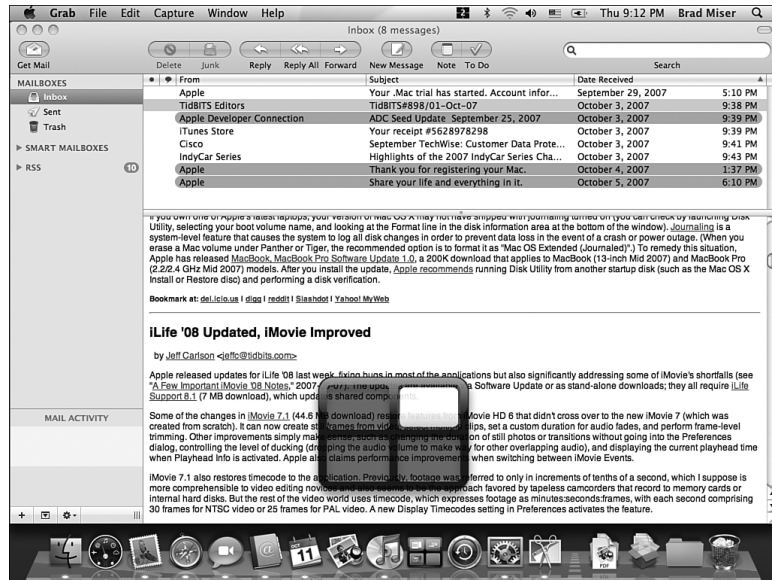
- Press the keyboard shortcut you set for switching between spaces (the default is Ctrl-Arrow key). The Spaces manager appears on the screen (see Figure 12.6). The manager



has a box representing each of the spaces you've created. To jump to a space, keep pressing the shortcut keys until the space you want to use is highlighted. When you release the keys, you jump into that space and return to the last application you were using in that space.

**Figure 12.6**

When you activate Spaces, you see the Spaces manager that indicates how many spaces are available to you.



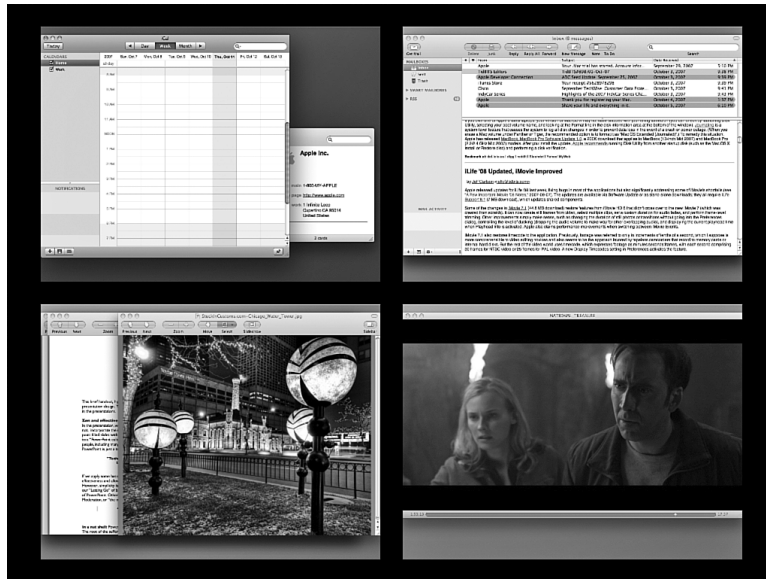
- Press the keyboard shortcut for jumping directly to a space (the default is Ctrl-number key) to move directly into a space. When you do, the Space manager will appear briefly, you move into the space you selected, and applications in that space are available to you.
- When you are in a space, you can open applications that aren't part of that space, just as you can when you aren't using Spaces. That application will be available in the current space, but not in any others. If you open an application that is already assigned to a different space, you jump to the space that it has been assigned to.
- The Finder is available in all spaces.
- If an application isn't running when you move into the space that it has been assigned to, you need to launch it to be able to use it.
- Spaces retain window configurations. If you use multiple monitors and have windows on each display in a space, they will resume their former positions as soon as you move back into that space.
- You can use the Dock to move into open or closed applications. If you open an application in a space, you move into that space. If the application is not part of a space, it opens as usual, but is available only when you are using the space you were using when you opened it. In other words, it is temporarily bound to the space you were using when you launched it.



- If you assign an application to all spaces, its windows will always appear in the same positions in all spaces.
- If you press the Spaces keyboard shortcut (the default is F8), you see large thumbnails of all your spaces (see Figure 12.7). In each space, you see smaller thumbnails of all the applications running in that space. If you use multiple displays, you see a thumbnail for each display. Click a space to move into it.

**Figure 12.7**

Pressing the Spaces keyboard shortcut shows you all your spaces.



- To turn Spaces off, open the Spaces tab of the Exposé & Spaces pane of the System Preferences application and uncheck the Enable Spaces check box. All open applications will return to the desktop. You can start using your spaces again by checking the Enable Spaces check box.

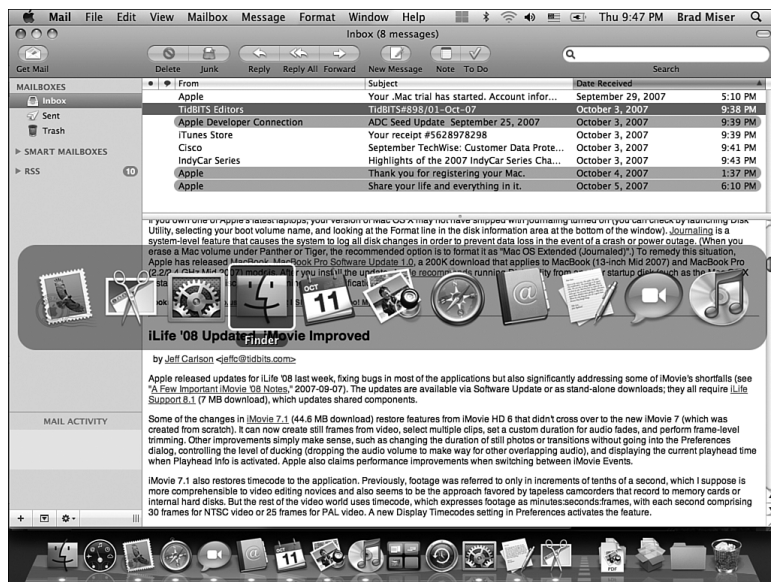
## MAC OS X TO THE MAX: CONTROLLING RUNNING APPLICATIONS

Exposé and Spaces enable you to control which applications and windows you view on the desktop and use. Mac OS X also provides many ways to control open applications, including these:

- You can switch among open applications by clicking the icon of the open application that you want to switch on the Dock. If you're using Spaces and the application is bound to a space, you move into that space.
- You can move among open applications using the  $\mathcal{H}$ -Tab or Shift- $\mathcal{H}$ -Tab keys. When you press these keys, the Application Switcher menu, which is a list of the currently

open applications, appears (see Figure 12.8). The active application is always located on the far left edge of the menu. You can move into a different application by pressing the  $\mathbb{A}$ -Tab or Shift- $\mathbb{A}$ -Tab keys until the application you want is selected, or you can click an application on the Application Switcher menu to move into it. If you select an application that is bound to a space, you'll move into that space as well.

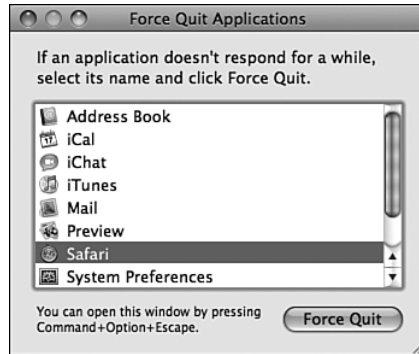
**Figure 12.8**  
The Application Switcher menu appears when you press the  $\mathbb{A}$ -Tab or Shift- $\mathbb{A}$ -Tab keys.



- Use Exposé (press F9) to show all open windows and click a window in the application you want to switch to.
- Move into a space where an application has been assigned; if the application is open, you'll be able to use it immediately. If not, you'll have to launch it.
- Hide applications quickly by either pressing  $\mathbb{A}$ -H or choosing *Application*, Hide where *Application* is the name of the active application.
- Quit an open application by opening the application's Dock icon and selecting Quit on the pop-up menu.
- There are several ways to force a hung application to quit. Press Option-Command-Esc to open the Force Quit Applications window, select the application you want to quit, and click Force Quit (see Figure 12.9). (If an application is hung, its name appears in red in the Force Quit Applications window and "Not Responding" is shown next to the application's name.) Open the Activity Monitor application (Applications/Utilities); select the application (process) you want to quit; and select View, Quit Process (or press Option- $\mathbb{A}$ -Q). You can also use the Unix `kill` command in the Terminal application along with the process number of the application you want to force to quit. Yet another way is to choose the Apple menu and then Force Quit; this also opens the Force Quit Applications window.

**Figure 12.9**

You can force an application to quit by opening the Force Quit Applications window, selecting the application you want to quit, and clicking Force Quit.

**TIP**

When you select the Finder in the Force Quit Applications window, the Force Quit button becomes Relaunch—the Finder must always be running when you are using Mac OS X. If the Finder hangs, force it to relaunch.

- ⇒ To learn more about using Unix commands, [see Chapter 14, “Unix: Working with the Command Line,” p. 297.](#)
- ⇒ To learn more about the Activity Monitor, [see “Using the Activity Monitor to Understand and Manage Processes,” p. 961.](#)

**TIP**

You can also use the Force Quit Applications window to quickly move into open applications. Just open the window by pressing Option-⌘-Esc and then double-click an application shown on the list. That application moves to the front. You can leave the window open all the time if you want to; because it is always on top, it makes a convenient application palette. Of course, if you don't have a lot of screen real estate, this window can get in the way.