

Spotlight Tips & Hints

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Spotlight is a quiet little powerhouse inside Mac OS X that silently and automatically indexes everything on your Mac, making it a snap to find any file, any document or nearly anything else you've saved on your Mac in fractions of a second.

Spotlight automatically indexes all of these kinds of files on your Mac's hard disk:

- Applications
- Files and folders by name
- The contents of files compressed in ZIP archives
- iCal appointments
- Fonts and font names
- System Preferences
- Every word and every number inside every kind of document
- Songs, apps, games, podcasts and all their metadata in iTunes
- Address Book entries
- Safari browsing history
- Dictionary & Thesaurus items
- All messages in Apple Mail
- Video and the metadata inside movies in iMovie and iTunes
- Metadata *inside* images, PDFs, documents and audio/video files
- Safari bookmarks

To invoke Spotlight, from inside any application anywhere on your Mac, type **Cmd-Space** (⌘ + Space) to jump to the Spotlight search box at the top right of your menu bar, or type **Cmd-Option-Space** (⌘ + Option + Space) to open a Spotlight finder window. These keyboard shortcuts can be changed in System Preferences → Spotlight.

To change the kind of information Spotlight indexes and presents in search results, and to adjust the order of document types in the Spotlight results, open the Spotlight Preferences pane in System Preferences, and follow the instructions in the dialog box.



Spotlight normally searches for items that contain every word in your search input term. But Spotlight can also search using logical (Boolean) operators, including NOT, OR, AND and AND NOT.

A Boolean query uses AND, OR, and NOT (known as Boolean operators) to narrow the search results. You can also use a minus sign (-), meaning AND NOT, to exclude items when you search. Here are examples of what you might type in the search field when you use Boolean operators:

- author:tom OR author:thom searches for items authored by Tom or Thom, if you don't know the exact spelling of his name
- trip -france searches for items that contain the word "trip" but not "france," so results might include photos from a trip to Spain but not to France
- kind:message date:6/29/08-7/25/08 NOT date:7/14/08 searches for email messages dated from 6/29/08 through 7/25/08, but excludes those dated 7/14/08

You can tell Spotlight to specifically search the metadata contained inside files, for example, the model of the camera that captured an image, or the author of a document. Here are examples of what you might type in the search field when you search using metadata attributes:

- trip kind:document searches for the word "trip" in documents only
- author:tom searches for all items written by Tom
- kind:images created:5/16/09 searches for images created on a specific date
- kind:music by:"glenn miller" searches for music by Glenn Miller

To view metadata for a file, select the file and choose File → Get Info.

Spotlight Keyboard Shortcuts

To do this...	...use this keyboard shortcut
Open Spotlight's menu bar search field	⌘ + Space
Open a Spotlight search window in the Finder	⌘ + Option + Space
Open the top result in Spotlight results list	⌘ + Return
Move to the first item in the next category	⌘ + Down Arrow
Move to the first item in the prior category	⌘ + Up Arrow
Move to the first or last item in the menu	Cntrl + Up Arrow / Cntrl + Down Arrow
Reveal an item's location in the Finder	⌘ + Click the item
Get Info about an item	⌘ + I

To find out a lot more about all of Spotlight's amazing capabilities, click Help in the Finder menu bar, then type Spotlight into the search box and press Return.