Spotlight Tips & Hints

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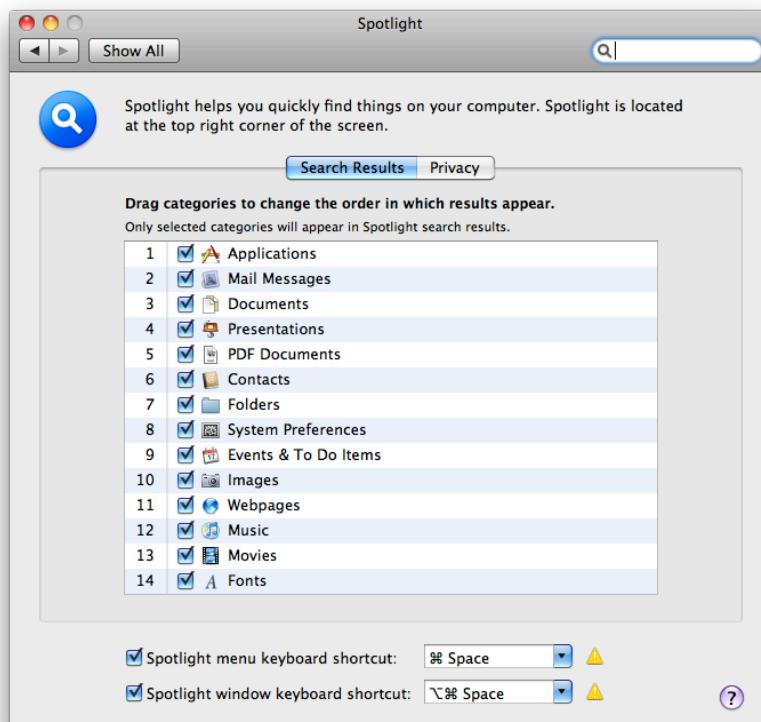
Spotlight is a quiet little powerhouse inside OS X that silently and automatically indexes *everything* on your Mac, making it a snap to find any file, any document or nearly anything else you've saved on your Mac (or in iCloud!) in fractions of a second.

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

- Apps on your Mac, by name or by what function they perform

- System Preferences

- Dictionary & Thesaurus items

- Files and folders by name

- Every word and every number inside every kind of document on your Mac or in iCloud

- All messages in Apple Mail

- The contents of files compressed in ZIP archives

- Songs, apps, games, podcasts and all their metadata in iTunes

- Videos and the metadata inside movies in iMovie, Aperture and iTunes

- Calendar appointments

- Contacts entries

- Metadata *inside* images, PDFs, documents and audio/video files

- Fonts and font names

- Safari browsing history

- 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 to adjust the order of hits returned in the Spotlight results list, open the Spotlight Preferences pane in System Preferences, and follow the instructions in the dialog box.

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: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
Reveal an item's location in the Finder	⌘ + Click the item
Get Info about an item	⌘ + I (letter '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.