



What is AppleScript?

AppleScript is a scripting language that is installed with the operating system onto every Macintosh computer. Scripting differs slightly from programming. Programming generally allows you to write a compiled application that directly controls the behavior of a computer. Scripting allows you to write a set of instructions to control existing applications on a computer. On a Macintosh, this includes the operating system.

AppleScripts are written in an editor application, and Apple has included a script editor in the operating system. Simply called "Script Editor," this application can be used by anyone to write, compile, and save AppleScripts.

Not all Macintosh applications are AppleScriptable. However, there are many well-known applications that are scriptable. It is up to software developers to implement scriptability into their products. Some applications provide little or no support for scripting, while others provide a lot of support. In addition, the quality of AppleScript support can vary greatly from application to application, making some applications easy to script, and others more difficult.

Uses for AppleScript

Whether you know it or not, you have probably used AppleScripts in the past. AppleScript is primarily used to automate repetitive tasks that are performed at regular intervals. Many programs such as application installers and email programs use AppleScripts to perform specialized tasks. The following are some tasks that are commonly automated with AppleScript:

- Image manipulation and conversion
- Desktop and database publishing
- Database maintenance
- Server maintenance
- File/Folder maintenance
- CD/DVD duplication

Benefits of AppleScript

There are many benefits resulting from the implementation of AppleScripts in daily routines, including:

- Increased Consistency
- Increased Efficiency
- Increased Productivity
- Increased Speed
- Increased Profit
- Reduced Errors

Facts and Figures

- AppleScript allowed NASA to have the largest archive of daily radar animations available anywhere in the world.
- In TV Guide's Editorial Graphics Department, it took 4 - 5 designers one week to lay out the pay-per-view listings section of the magazine. Using AppleScript, it takes 1 designer about 20 minutes.
- In just three years, AppleScript allowed TV Guide's Ad Production department to increase their advertising volume by over 20,000 ads a year.
- TV Guide's Ad Production department saved approximately \$52,000 per year in supplies alone by utilizing AppleScript to automate the process of digital ad printing and proofing.
- At Piermed, Inc., the process of manually converting PDF form files for client delivery would take approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes of non-stop manual processing. Using an AppleScript-based solution, this process now takes approximately 10 minutes.

- Companies that implement fully automated workflow systems typically generate a 4.3 times return on their investment during the first year alone.
- Using AppleScript to automate a small workflow system can often result in an initial 2.8 times return on investment in the first year alone.

Businesses Using AppleScript

AppleScript is helping companies from across the globe to increase accuracy, consistency, and efficiency, all while reducing mistakes and spending. The bottom line is that companies become more cost effective with the implementation of AppleScript-based workflow automation. Below is a brief list of companies taking advantage of AppleScript-based workflow automation:

Accuweather	J.C. Penney	Random House
Adobe Systems, Inc.	LA Times	Readers Digest
Apple Computer, Inc.	Lockheed Martin	Showtime
Associated Press	Macy's East	Simon & Schuster
Boston Globe	McGraw/Hill Publishing	Smithsonian Institute
BMG Direct, Inc.	Merck & Co., Inc.	Sony Music
Citibank	Miami Herald	Staples
Entertainment Weekly	Microsoft	Time Warner
Epson America	Morgan Stanley	TV Guide Magazine
Fidelity Investments	NASA Langley	USA Today
Forbes	Prentice Hall	Verizon
Hallmark	Nikon	Viacom
Home Depot	PC World	Weather Central

Getting Started with AppleScript

There are many resources available on the Internet that can provide more information about AppleScript:

- Apple's AppleScript Page – www.apple.com/applescript
- AppleScript News, Books, Links, Examples, and more! – macscripter.net



What is Automator?

Automator is an application, first released with Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger, which brings the power of automation to the user level, with no programming required!

Within Automator, users work with two main types of components, actions and workflows. Actions are built by developers, and each action's purpose is to perform a single task, such as opening a file, checking your email, or rotating an image. Workflows are designed and constructed by users, by piecing together actions in a sequence, to create a virtual assembly line of automated tasks.

Once constructed, workflows may be saved and triggered by a user in a variety of ways. Workflows may be run from within the Automator application, saved and run as an application, as a Folder Action, as an iCal alarm, as a print workflow, and more.

To find out more about Automator, visit Apple's website at www.apple.com/automator/.

Presentation Materials

Sample materials for Benjamin S. Waldie's presentations, including example scripts and documentation, are available for download from www.automatedworkflows.com/presentations.html.

Benjamin S. Waldie

Benjamin S. Waldie is president and CEO of Automated Workflows, LLC, a company specializing in providing AppleScript and workflow automation consulting to Macintosh-based businesses.

A frequent presenter at Macworld, Macintosh User Group meetings and other popular events, Benjamin also writes regular AppleScript columns for MacTech magazine and X-Ray Magazine. He is the author of "AppleScripting the Finder" and the "Mac OS X Technology Guide to Automator," available from SpiderWorks.com, is a contributing editor on MacScripter.net, and is president of The Philadelphia Area AppleScript Users Group.

For years, Benjamin has been developing professional AppleScript-based solutions for businesses across the globe, including Adobe Systems, Apple Computer, NASA, PC World, and TV Guide Magazine. He has also taught custom AppleScript training classes and authored an introductory AppleScript training CD for The Virtual Training Company. Benjamin may be contacted by email at ben@automatedworkflows.com.



This document was created by Automated Workflows, LLC, AppleScript and workflow automation consulting specialists.

For information about Automated Workflows, LLC, please visit www.automatedworkflows.com or email ben@automatedworkflows.com.