

The Summary

A set of icons to replace the boring standard black and white “Macintosh HD” disk icon. These new icons feature a 3D greyscale look and special care has been taken to make icons suitable for multiple disks or partitions. In addition, these icons also have the feature of being easy to distinguish even when folders are opened. These icons are Shareware \$5.

The Story (so far)

Way back when System 6 was cool (or even before that), Apple created the icon for the internal hard disk. Until the release of Mac OS 8 it has not been changed. It looks like this -

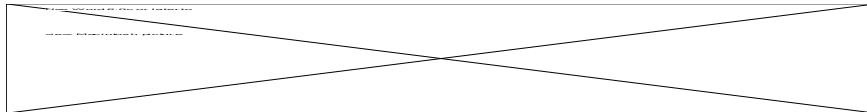


Fig 1: The Standard Macintosh HD Icon

This shows you the various ways the old icon looks, the first one above is when the disk is not selected and has no folders open. Next it is selected. Next it has some folders open but is not selected and finally it is selected and has folders open.

Well, most people I know think that this is an exceptionally boring icon. By the way, most people change the name of the disk from “Macintosh HD” to something more interesting too. (Tip: If you are having trouble doing this then you should try turning File Sharing off). Anyway, the normal thing to do is give your disk a cartoon character icon or something like that. While you are at it, you may go crazy and give all of the folders in you disk custom icons too. This is all well and good, and looks fun I guess, but it has some real disadvantages, especially if you have folders on your desktop with custom icons. The problem is that you can’t tell the difference between desktop folders and hard disks. Also, if you have multiple partitions it’s hard for another person, new to the machine, to work out which disks belong to which partition. And on top of these reasons, finding a suitable icon that you feel is right can be a hard task, after a while they just look a bit corny and out of place.

So, some time ago I jumped into trusty old Resedit (Warning: Do not try this at home unless you have a fair idea of the consequences) and knocked up a 3D version of the basic icon above. It looks like this

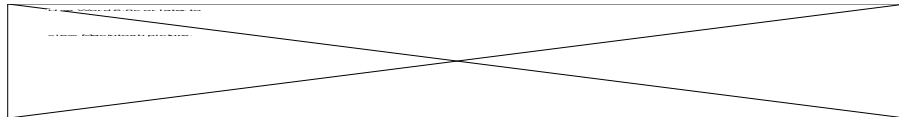


Fig 2: Icons showing the better looking standard icon

OK. So this is already an improvement in several ways. This icon has a nice, shaded look and is a little bigger and closer to the text which makes it easier to click on. Note too that the "activity light" has been colored red and moved to the top. This is just the way I preferred it.

Warning! I am about to rant about disk activity lights. You can safely skip this paragraph if you like. I don't know about you, but I liked it when Apple CPU's had disk activity lights (perhaps you have never seen a mac with one - like the IICI). I like to know when the disk is going, especially if I am turning the machine off or I suspect it's hung. In a quiet room you can hear the activity but in a noisy room it's quite hard. It's also sometimes quite hard if you have a noisy fan in your machine. Before you say it, I distrust Disklight and other software implementations of drive lights - they give a performance hit that I can do without, and the early versions were quite buggy. Anyway I think it was a backward step for Apple to remove disk activity lights (a long time ago now). PC's all have them, and it's useful feedback. Gasp! A PC having something *better* than a Mac! This is outrageous. Phew, I'm glad I've got that off my chest.

For many people, changing the icon to the one above may be all that the need or want to do. If you have never done this before I am somewhat surprised, but for those new to these things I will give you simple instructions on how to do this below.

So anyway, this was enough for me for some years. Then I got a bigger mac with two internal hard disks and one of them had two partitions. I also have an external hard disk with two partitions. This means 5 different hard disks/partitions on my desktop. Even with the better icon above I yearned for a better way to distinguish them, even when the disk has folders open. Sure, I hear you say, "You could just read the name of the disk underneath, lazy bones!", but I respond with: "Who wants to read when you can simply see by and icon (ie if that's all you want then you may as well go back to a non-GUI interface like DOS)". This is a long way of explaining why I went to the bother of creating sets of multiple disk or partition icons. Key to these icons was the idea that even when it had folders open you could still tell by the outline what disk it was. This is important because you almost always have folders open from your hard disk - the outline is what you see most (ie the third icon in the group of four below).

To see what I mean by all of this, take a look at the numbered icon set. This has numbers in roman numerals above the standard disk icon from 1 to 6. This can be partition numbers, disk numbers or even SCSI ID's - it's up to you.

Anyway, notice how the outline still enables you to tell which partition it is, in all states.

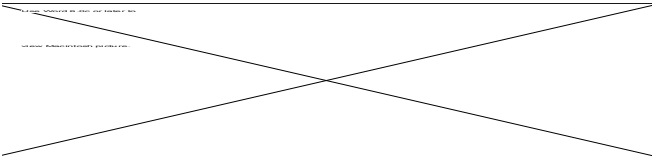
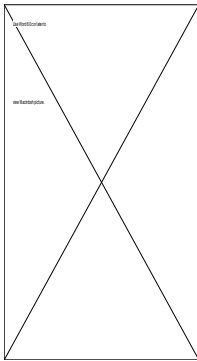


Fig 3: Icons showing the “hole” in the 0

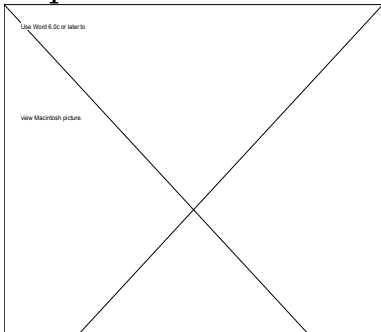
Installation

Installation of new hard disk icons is easy. In fact, you can write the steps out in one sentence: Select the source icon, get info, copy the icon, select the destination, get info, paste the icon. But that's a bit of a rush job for most people, so I'll go through it a step at a time.

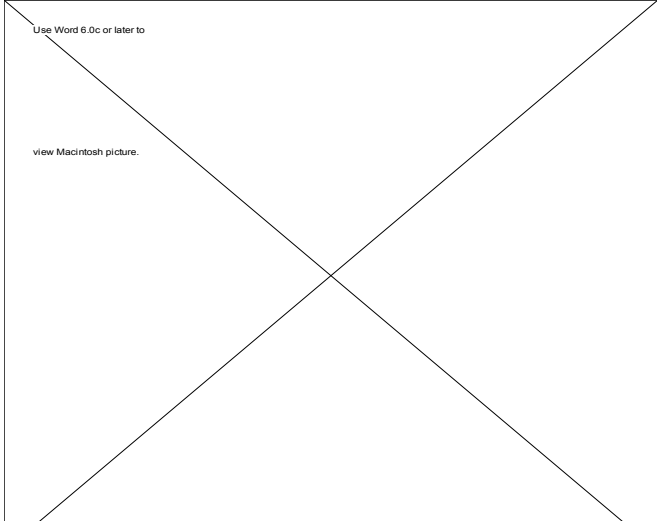
1. Choose the icon you like from my collection. Perhaps the hardest part. It makes sense to have different numbers if you have multiple disks or partitions.
2. Select the icon in the finder. That is, click on it **once**. It should go "grey", like this.



3. Now, while this is selected you go to the file menu and choose "Get Info", or press command-I.



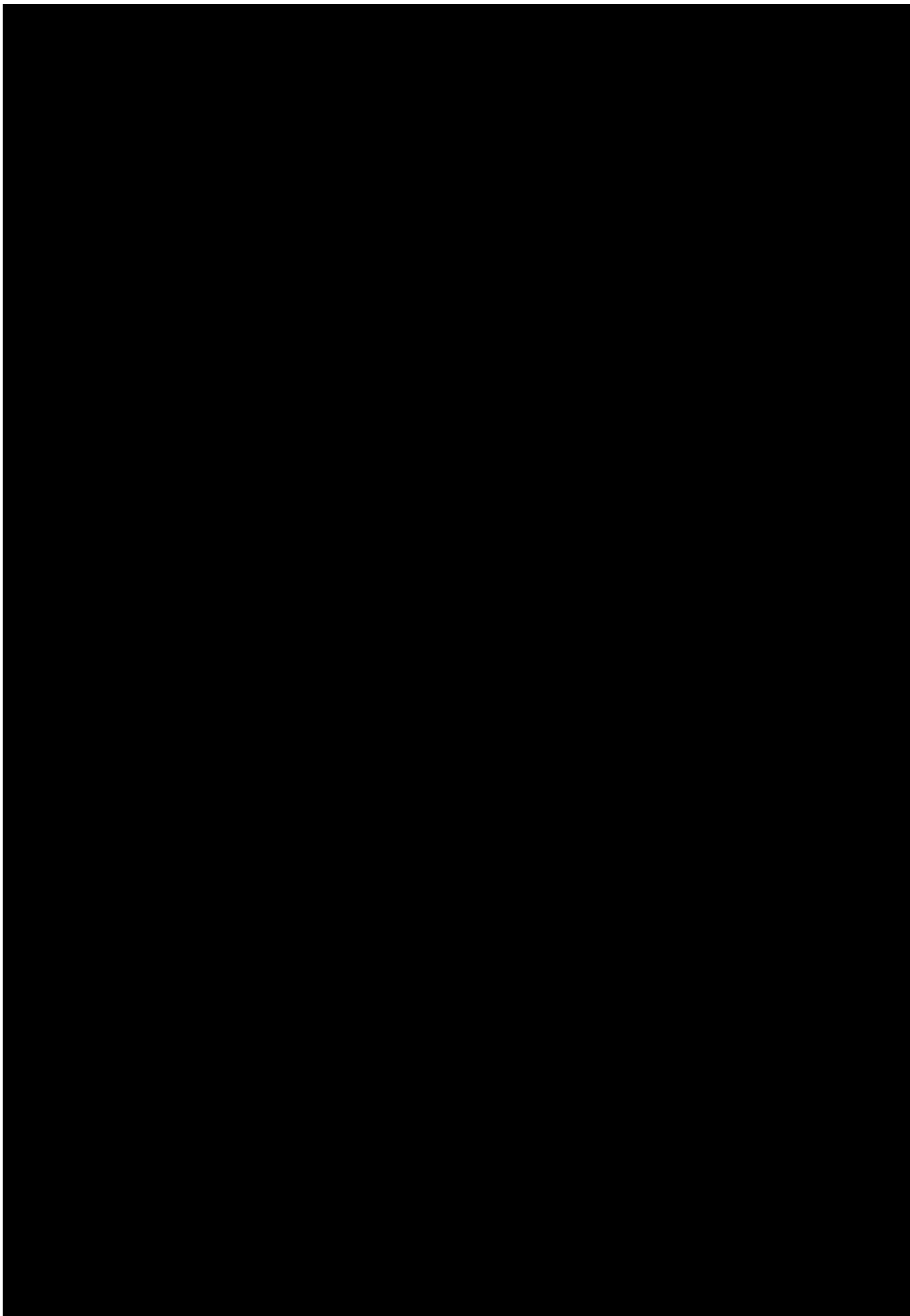
4. Now the info box for that icon will appear. Click on the icon (once) in the top left hand corner so that a black box goes around it, like so..



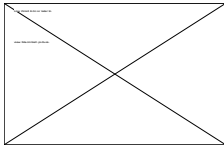
Use Word 6.0c or later to

view Macintosh picture.

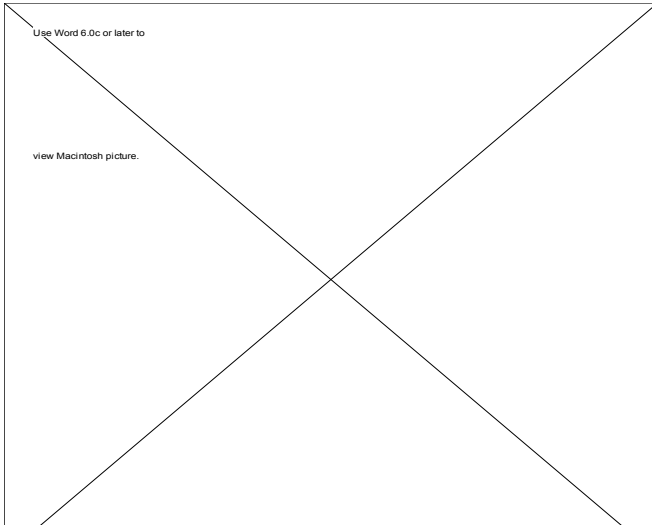
- 5.
6. Select copy from the file menu, or press command-C or press F3. This copies the icon into the clipboard.



7. Now, close the "Get Info" window. And select your hard disk icon.

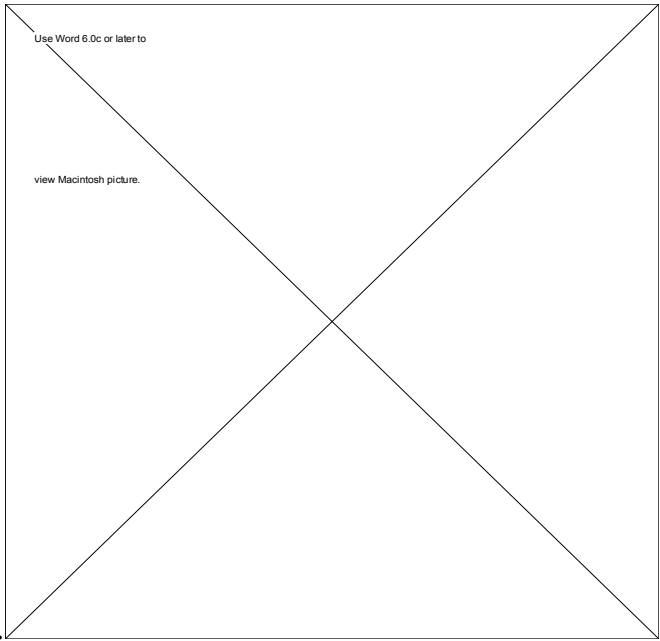


8. OK. We are almost there! Now repeat step 3, that is, choose "Get Info", but this time it's on your hard disk. This may take a few moments, don't be alarmed. It's just counting files and things and this can take a while.



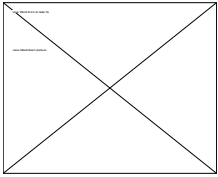
9. Now select (click once) the hard disk icon in this window so that it gets a black square around it, like before.

10. Now choose paste from the file menu, or press command-V or press F4.



11.

12. Close the info window and gasp at the splendour of your new icon (ie that's it!). Pretty cool, eh?



Shareware (Please!!!)

These icons are not free. If you use any of them you are obliged to pay the shareware fee, which is \$5US in your local currency. Your payment will register you for these hard disk icons and **any future released** icon sets from me. In particular I am thinking about the Mac OS8 disk icon and what I can do with it. Your payment will go towards the purchase of a graphics tablet that I will use to create better icons. If you provide me with your email address I will email you directly any updates or new icon sets. It's a bargain!

Please send your payment of \$5US, in cash of your local currency, to

Saul Bryan
101 Maxwell Street
Turramurra
NSW 2074
Australia

Please include the following information (you can write it on the back of the envelope if you like) -

Name: _____

Address: _____

email: (Optional) _____
q Please email me updates/new icons!

Comments: (Optional) _____

It's fun! Tell me a bit about yourself if you like... C'mon, how often do you get to write a letter and send something to someone in Australia? All you have to do is print off this last page to fill out the blanks above.

Please distribute these icons, as a whole package with the read me file, to anyone you like. Please do not redistribute part of this icon package, or modify any of it's contents, claim it as your own work etc. This icon collection may be included on Shareware CD's but note that you are still required to register.

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