

ontrol Panel Central

This month we look at three control panels, two shareware and one freeware. Control panels, or cdevs as they used to be known, are the proverbial double-edged swords. Like their faceless cousins, the extensions, control panels add great functionality to your system but at a stiff price. They grab RAM as soon as you start up, memory that you would otherwise be using for your applications. Control panels can also be the source of all kinds of headache-inducing conflicts. A bad third-party control panel can crash your machine in a nanosecond, but for pure power-user satisfaction, they really can't be beat.

I use all of the following control panels, and I believe them to be stable and well worth the memory they require.

ust Like Win95; Only Better

GoMac

I must admit, one thing I do like about Windows 95 is the program bar. Proteron Software's GoMac brings the convenience of a program bar to the MacOS.

esiding at the bottom of the screen, GoMac's program bar shows all open applications, a clock, and a Start button. Switch between open programs with a single click or a user-defined hotkey combination. Press the Start button to pop up a menu of frequently used applications, documents, folders or volumes. Yes, it's like the Apple Menu's evil twin. With the Mac's normal menubar at the top of the screen and GoMac at the bottom, things might get crowded so there's a handy auto-hide feature to keep GoMac hidden until you pass your cursor over it.

I just love GoMac (v1.4.4, Dec '97, 124K), and it's never leaving my System Folder. A bargain at \$19.95, GoMac is available from Proteron's website: <http://www.proteron.com/gomac/download.shtml> . Go get it!

op Goes The Finder

FinderPop

One of the many cool features of MacOS 8 is contextual menus. Holding down the control key while clicking on any item in the Finder pops up a menu of commands appropriate to that item, such as Open, Make Alias, Duplicate, Get Info, etc. Turlough O'Connor's FinderPop brings the ease and convenience of contextual menus to users of System 7.

If you've already upgraded to OS 8 (and if you can, you should), FinderPop lets you dispense with the control key. Holding down the mouse button for a second or two brings up the contextual menu.

FinderPop (v1.5.3, Dec '97, 144K) is freeware. Yep, that's right, free. Find it at <http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Bay/2573/> and pop it into your control panels folder.

efault Lies Not In Our Stars, But In Ourselves

Default Folder

Default Folder enhances Open and Save dialogs. This feature-rich control panel allows you to:

- Set up a default folder for any application.
- Switch among recently used folders from a pop-up menu.
- See available disk space and switch between disks from a pop-up menu.
- Click on a Finder window to show it in an Open or Save dialog.
- Open the folder shown in an Open or Save dialog in the Finder.
- Create folders, get information (including changing name, type, and creator), and move items to the Trash from within standard file dialogs.
- "Rebound" back to the last file you used.
- Make "Replace" the default option instead of "Cancel" when saving a file with the same name as an existing file.
- Speed up the display of Open and Save dialogs by turning off custom color icons in the file list.

Use Default Folder for a while and you'll wonder how you ever lived without it! Apple should consider making this part of the System software because it's that good.

Default Folder (v2.7.6, Sept '97, 300K) was written by Jon Gotow and is available from St. Clair Software for \$25. Download it from <ftp://ftp.stclairsw.com/> or learn more about it and St. Clair Software's other great utilities at <http://www.stclairsw.com/> .

Have you found a piece of shareware that you'd like the rest of the Mac community to know about? Or maybe you've just written an insanely-great utility and you want to share it with the rest of us. Send email to brian@applewizards.net and make everyone aware of your 'ware!

See you next month!

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