

Conflict Catcher, Menu by Menu

This section covers each of Conflict Catcher's menu commands, one by one.

The File Menu

Many of the commands in Conflict Catcher's File menu (not to be confused with the Mac's own File menu) pertain to whatever file you've selected in the Conflict Catcher window (by clicking in the thin strip to the left of its name, so that its description appears in the inspection panel at the left side of the window).

Open — Opens the selected file in the Finder (switching out of Conflict Catcher), exactly as though you had navigated to the icon and double-clicked it. (This command doesn't work on extensions, which can't be opened.)

Move To Trash — Moves the selected file's actual icon into your Trash.

Get Info — Shows you the actual Get Info window — the one built into the Mac OS for every file.

Change Color [Reset Color] — Opens the Apple Color Picker dialog box, where you can specify a color for this particular file. After you've colorized a file, this command changes to say Reset Color, which removes your chosen color from the file.

Show Original — Takes you out of Conflict Catcher, back to the Finder, where the file you're inspecting shows up already highlighted in whatever folder it calls home.

Edit Description — Conflict Catcher has an extensive database of descriptions for the thousands of files it manages. This option allows you to add additional comments.

To do so, use this command— or, even easier, click anywhere in the description panel. Either way, a window appears where you can add your own notes the file's description.

Lock [Unlock] — Conflict Catcher makes it possible to lock a certain file on or off, so that accidental clicking can't reverse a file's status. To lock or unlock a file, you can use this menu command. (The wording of this command changes — to Lock or Unlock — depending on which file you've clicked and whether or not it's already locked. Note that this command can't operate on special files that come pre-locked or pre-unlocked, for

safety, by Conflict Catcher.)

Unlink [Relink] — Linking files is one of Conflict Catcher's most useful features (see the help topic "Links: Clusters of related files").

On occasion, you may want to let one file break free, so that you can turn it on or off independently of the other files in that link. This command succeeds in splitting this individual file apart (after asking you to confirm your decision).

When you unlink a file, you separate it from all links it may belong to. The other files in that link, however, remain intact. Moreover, the file you split apart is still named as belonging to the original link. (You can see this by clicking to the left of a group link's name in the main Conflict Catcher window to view its description.)

After any amount of time, you can return the detached file to all of its original links. Just select the file and then choose Relink from the File menu.

Continue (Temporary Changes) — This command appears only if you have opened Conflict Catcher by pressing the space bar during the startup process.

Suppose you open Conflict Catcher in this way, and you want to turn some files on or off only for the work session that's about to begin. Make whatever changes you want (turning files on or off), and then choose "Continue (Temporary Changes)" from the File menu. The files you've turned on or off remain that way only for this work session — the very next time you turn the Macintosh on, any changes you've just made will be forgotten.

Continue Startup — This command, too, appears only if you open Conflict Catcher at startup time. It closes Conflict Catcher and allows the Mac to continue starting up — the equivalent of clicking the Continue Startup button.

Quit — This command (which doesn't appear if you've opened Conflict Catcher by pressing the Space bar during startup) closes Conflict Catcher and processes any changes you've made.

The Edit Menu

The Edit menu contains commands for processing text in dialog boxes, finding a file in the Conflict Catcher list, and adjusting Conflict Catcher's plentiful preference options.

Cut, Copy, Paste, Clear — In general, you probably won't do much copying, pasting, or undoing in Conflict Catcher. These commands can be useful, however, whenever you're working with text in Conflict Catcher, such as when editing a file's description.

The Copy command is also available when you're inspecting the description panel for a file (after having clicked just to the left of the file's name). It copies all of this description text to the Clipboard, ready for pasting into, for example, a word processor or an email to Casady & Greene's technical support department.

Find, Find Again — The Find command lets you locate one file among the many in the Conflict Catcher file list. It brings up a small window into which you can type any part of the file's name. When you click OK, Conflict Catcher jumps to the first matching file — and selects it, placing a magnifying-glass icon next to its name and showing you its description on the left side of the window.

If you've just used the Find command and located a file, but it's not the file you hoped to find, use the Find Again command. Conflict Catcher jumps to the alphabetically next file in the list that contains the letters you typed. You can repeat this command as many times as necessary.

Preferences

Conflict Catcher's Preferences command opens one of the most useful dialog boxes in the entire program. In this special window, you can change dozens of aspects of Conflict Catcher's behavior.

The options in the Preferences dialog box are organized into six different panels, each represented by an icon on the left side of the screen. Some of these are very technical parameters, provided for the benefit of experienced power users; others are handy time-savers for anyone.

The icons and the corresponding panels are as follows:

General

The General panel offers a number of checkboxes that govern Conflict Catcher's overall behavior.

- o Show Startup Menu. The Startup menu lists your available System Folders and startup disks. This menu makes it very easy to specify which disk or which System Folder your Mac will start up from the next time you turn it on.

Conflict Catcher can even hunt for working System Folders that are hidden inside other folders. That's the purpose of the System Search Depth option, which lets you tell Conflict Catcher how many folders-within-folders to search in its quest to offer you every available System Folder.

- o Report System Patches. This very technical option expands how much detail is generated when you use the Report function. Under normal circumstances, this option is turned on, producing a special section of the System report that details how many system traps (basic Mac computer-code chunks) are being patched, or, less technically, changed by your startup files.

- o Show Conflict Catcher Tips. Every time you open Conflict Catcher, a small window appears, offering a different tip or trick to help you master the program.

If you'd prefer not to see this tip window each time you open Conflict Catcher, turn off this checkbox (or the checkbox in the tip window itself).

- o Display Finder Menu. The Finder menu is the tiny CC menu at the upper-right corner of your Macintosh screen. It provides convenient access to the various sets of files you've created, as well as a quick way to open Conflict Catcher.

If the presence of this Conflict Catcher menu bothers you, turn off this option.

- o Asked before Saving Sets. When you turn files on or off in one of your sets, Conflict Catcher ordinarily asks if you'd like to save those changes into the active set to preserve the changes. If you'd prefer that Conflict Catcher save these changes automatically — without asking for confirmation — turn off this checkbox.

- o Inform When Restarting. When you press the space bar during the Mac's startup process, Conflict Catcher opens so that you can make changes to your list of startup files. In theory, clicking the Continue Startup button will then let the Mac proceed with the startup already in progress.

Certain kinds of files, however, require special treatment. Suppose you turn off an extension (such as Speed Doubler) that loads extremely early in the startup process — even earlier than Conflict Catcher itself. By the time Conflict Catcher opens, your opportunity to turn that special file off has already passed. Therefore, to accommodate your request, Catcher has no choice but to restart the Mac from the beginning (instead of simply continuing with the startup in progress).

Shared libraries have a similar side effect. Shared libraries are files in your Extensions folder that contain chunks of code that may be summoned at any time by your other software or by your extensions themselves. But Conflict Catcher can't monitor when or how shared libraries load into memory — only the extensions in question can control that behavior. Shared libraries, then, constitute another category of file that, when switched on or off in Conflict Catcher, force the Mac to restart from the beginning.

Usually, when you turn on or off any of these special-treatment files, Conflict Catcher warns you that it will be forced to restart the Mac (rather than letting the Mac complete its startup already in progress). The "Inform When Restarting" checkbox lets you turn off this warning; now, when you click the Continue Startup button, Conflict Catcher immediately restarts the Mac without alerting you first.

- o Always Open at Startup. Ordinarily, the Conflict Catcher window opens at startup time only if you press the space bar. If you'd prefer Conflict Catcher to open automatically every time you turn on the computer, without your having to press any keys, turn on this option.
- o Caps Lock Opens at Startup. This option also affects the way Conflict Catcher opens when the Mac is starting up. If you prefer to have both hands free while your computer is starting up, turn on this option. From now on, instead of having to hold down the space bar, you can simply tap (and therefore lock down) the Caps Lock key as soon as the startup process begins. The Conflict Catcher window will open automatically once the Conflict Catcher icon appears.
- o Mount All Disks at Startup. When Conflict Catcher loads your extensions and control panels, it doesn't require that the actual extensions and control panels be in your System Folder. One of Conflict Catcher's most useful features is its ability to treat aliases for such files exactly as though they were the originals.

Conflict Catcher's ability to load startup files that actually exist on other disks can get tripped up, however, if those other drives aren't available when your Mac is starting up. Suppose, for example, your System Folder contains aliases of files that are actually on a Zip disk. But the Mac doesn't even look for the Zip disk until the hard drive itself has finished loading. As a result, Conflict Catcher won't be able to find the files that correspond to the aliases.

And that is the purpose of this "Mount All Disks at Startup" option: it forces Conflict Catcher to search out and mount (bring to the desktop) all disks connected to your Mac before attempting to find the sources of your aliased

files.

- o **Disable Startup Features.** Technically, Conflict Catcher has two different sets of talents. First, it can turn files on and off. Second, it can enhance the Mac's startup process in numerous ways: displaying the names of your extension icons as they load, letting you rearrange the loading order of your startup files, treating aliases as though they're actual extensions, and so on.

In certain rare circumstances — specifically, when you suspect that Conflict Catcher itself is contributing to a system problem — you may want to experiment with turning off this second category of features. To do so, click this button and restart the Mac. (This button actually appears in the same place on all of the Preferences dialog box screens described in this section).

When you're finished with your experiment, open Conflict Catcher's Preferences dialog box again and click **Enable Startup Features** — and then restart the Mac — to restore Conflict Catcher to full working order.

Display

The controls on this preference panel govern how Conflict Catcher's main window looks.

- o **Display Icons.** These three options control how your files are displayed in the Conflict Catcher window: with names only (and no corresponding icons), with names and tiny icons, or with names and large icons.
- o **Preload Display Icons.** When the Conflict Catcher window opens, it shows you the icons for the hundreds of items in its file list. Displaying all these icons, however, isn't an instantaneous process. Conflict Catcher must actually consult the files themselves in your System Folder to see what their icons look like. This looking-up process takes a few seconds.

That's why, if you listen closely, you'll hear your hard drive rattling in high-speed action for several seconds after you have opened Conflict Catcher. That's the sound of Conflict Catcher surveying your extensions, control panels, and other files to see what their icons look like.

If this hard-drive activity bothers you, turn off the **Preload Display Icons** checkbox. Now, when you first open Conflict Catcher, you'll see the first screen full of icons — which is all that Conflict Catcher knows about at the moment — and the hard drive will be silent. When you scroll down into the list, however, Conflict Catcher then starts looking up the icon pictures for the next screen and, as a result, you'll hear a corresponding flurry of hard disk activity.

- o Use Checkmark Display. Under normal circumstances, a file that's turned on appears highlighted (with a darkened or colored background) in Conflict Catcher's main window; you can inspect a file and read its description by clicking to the left of its name.

If you prefer, however, Conflict Catcher can show you a checkbox for each file in its list. With this configuration, clicking a file's name doesn't turn it on or off — instead, doing so opens the description and information panels. To turn the file on or off, click its checkbox.

- o Display Files in Color. This checkbox lets you see the colors you've assigned to your icons, if any. (See "Folders," below.)

- o Font and Font Size. These controls let you specify what typeface and type size Conflict Catcher uses to display the names of your files.

Startup

The controls on this preference panel all pertain to the startup process itself — that minute or so that your Mac takes to turn on, during which the icons march across the bottom of the screen.

- o Startup Icons. Conflict Catcher gives you a great deal of control over the way your Mac loads icons when it starts up — not just which icons, but how they look, too. For example, the Startup Icons controls let you choose either of two icon sizes — or no icons at all. The no-icons option (the first one listed in this dialog box) is for the neat freak who doesn't want to see any icons at all during the startup process.

- o Show CC's Icon. Conflict Catcher itself has an extension, just like the ones it manages. As such, its own icon appears during the startup process along with the others. If you'd rather not see Conflict Catcher's own icon at startup time, turn off this option.

- o Show Hidden Icons. Some extensions and control panels are programmed not to show icons during the startup process. Turn on this option if you want Conflict Catcher to force their icons to appear during the loading process, helping you become more fully aware of exactly what's going on inside your Mac at startup time.

- o Show Custom Icons. As experienced Mac users can tell you, part of the fun of using the Mac is replacing file icons with new pictures of your own design. Using this method, you can give almost any file, folder, or disk a new icon that you've drawn yourself.

Suppose you've performed this kind of plastic surgery on your extension and control panel icons. When your Mac starts up, Conflict Catcher needs to know which icons show up. If you want to see your files' original icons, keep "Show Custom Icons" turned off. To see the new ones that you've created, turn this option on.

- o Show Icon Names. When you first bought your Mac, turning it on produced a parade of extension icons across the bottom of the screen — but only the icons. With this option on, however, Conflict Catcher actually identifies each icon with its name.

- o Show Set Name. If you are using Conflict Catcher's Sets feature, you may find this option handy. It makes Conflict Catcher identify the currently chosen set by showing a label at the top of the screen during the startup process.

- o Detects Startup Crashes. Conflict Catcher is programmed to detect crashes at startup time automatically. If some startup file brings your Mac to a crashing halt while the computer is turning on, Conflict Catcher will identify the problematic file and open the Conflict Catcher window, giving you the option of turning off or deleting that file.

If you'd prefer that Conflict Catcher not monitor your Mac for startup crashes in this way, turn this option off.

- o Reset Ignored Crashes. Suppose Conflict Catcher detects that your Mac crashed during the startup process. The next time you turn on the Mac, Conflict Catcher will identify the guilty party. How does it know which extension caused the crash? It assumes that whichever extension was loading at that moment caused the crash.

Occasionally, Conflict Catcher is mistaken in that assumption. For example, the interruption may have been caused by a power failure or by you turning off the Mac during the startup process. In such cases, Conflict Catcher will name an innocent icon. That's why the dialog box that appears always offers an Ignore button (which means: "Forget it, Conflict Catcher — there's really no problem. Let's just get on with the startup process").

But Conflict Catcher also offers an Always Ignore button. It means: "Yes, Conflict Catcher, I'm aware that this extension has caused startup crashes several times. But I'm willing to live with the headaches it brings me, so stop naming it as the culprit every time the Mac crashes as it's loading." Conflict Catcher makes a mental note not to bother you the next time the Mac crashes as that file loads.


This long explanation finally leads to the purpose of the Reset Ignored

Crashes button. Click this button to take back all the times you've clicked the Always Ignore button, thus clearing Conflict Catcher's mental notes. Now, if that particular file crashes your Mac again at startup, Conflict Catcher will once again ask if you'd like that file turned off.

- o Load Aliases at Startup. As described earlier in this help topic, Conflict Catcher is capable of treating aliases of your files exactly as though they were the actual files. This checkbox is the on/off switch for that feature.
- o Guarantee System Heap. This extremely technical parameter makes Conflict Catcher create a memory buffer to protect against poorly programmed startup files — files in which the original programmer failed to properly specify the memory requirements.

If you seem to be having crashes during startup, experiment with turning this option on. (The number boxes that appear when you turn on this checkbox are useful primarily to programmers and other very technical users.)

Folders

This preference panel lets you direct Conflict Catcher to manage the contents of other kinds of folders (such as plug-ins,  menu items, fonts, and so on). For a complete tutorial in using this feature, see the help topic "Managing Fonts, Plug-ins, and Other Files."

- o [folder names]. This scrolling list of checkboxes controls which folders will show up in the main Conflict Catcher window — and therefore which kinds of files Conflict Catcher can control (turn on and off, check for damage, run conflict tests, and so on).
- o Add. If none of the checkbox items reflect the new kind of folder you want Conflict Catcher to manage, click this button.
- o Modify. After selecting a checkbox item by clicking its name, click Modify to change its parameters. For example, this option lets you change the checkbox item's name, the color of its files, the folder that contains the plug-ins for a certain program, and so on.
- o Delete. Click this button to remove a selected checkbox item from Conflict Catcher's list. (You're not, of course, deleting the actual files from your Mac.)
- o Exclude Files. In general, the Conflict Catcher window lists all files in each folder Conflict Catcher manages — all of your control panels, for example, all of your fonts, and so on.

The Exclude Files button lets you specify certain files that you don't want to see in Conflict Catcher's window. Clicking this button produces a list; double-click the names of the files you'd prefer that Conflict Catcher ignore.

Internet

Conflict Catcher is extremely Internet-savvy. It's capable of helping you search for help online, download updates, read troubleshooting information, and so on. This panel lets you set up Conflict Catcher for Internet use.

- o Use Internet Config. Internet Config is a popular, free Mac program that serves as a central database for your email address, real name, favorite home page, Web-browser selection, and other frequently used Internet parameters. Having recorded this information once, you can instruct many Internet-savvy programs (including Conflict Catcher) to use Internet Config's information — saving you the trouble of having to re-enter all of this data in each Internet program you use.

If you don't have Internet Config installed, turn off this checkbox.

- o Configure. This button opens the Internet Config program so that you can make changes to your settings.
- o Select Browser. Click this button to specify which Web browser you want Conflict Catcher to use when it goes online — Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer, for example. (The browser you've selected using Internet Config, if any, overrides any selection you make here.)
- o Show Web Menu. Conflict Catcher's Web menu offers one-command connections to a number of useful Web sites. If you don't have an Internet account, however, there's no need for the Web menu to clutter up your screen. Turn off this checkbox to hide Conflict Catcher's Web menu.

User Level

If you use Conflict Catcher in a school or in another environment where uninformed or destructive hands could have access to your computer—thus disturbing a carefully designed, stable startup-file configuration, for example— you might appreciate these options.

Restricted. Conflict Catcher's Restricted mode makes many of the program's more advanced features unavailable, and protects your current setup in several ways. For example, in Restricted mode, you can't: create new sets, create or edit links, turn individual files on or off, add , delete, or otherwise change which folders Conflict Catcher manages, make any

changes to Conflict Catcher's Internet setup, or change whether or not the Conflict Catcher Startup menu shows up.

When you click the Restricted button, Conflict Catcher asks you for a password. Type a password you'll remember — capitals matter — or leave the password blank empty, if security isn't an issue. You'll be asked to type the password again (or leave the password blank empty again) to guard against typos.

- o Normal. This is Conflict Catcher's normal condition, providing full access to all its features.

The Sets Menu

Edit Sets — Opens a dialog box offering a full list of your sets and Create, Duplicate, Modify, Delete, Print, Import, and Export buttons for managing your sets.

Save Set — If the Conflict Catcher window is open, and you've made a few changes to the on/off status of various files, use this command to make those changes part of this set forever (or until you make further changes).

Save Set As — Suppose Conflict Catcher is open, and you've made a few changes to the on/off status of your files. You may want to preserve this current list as a new set with its own name. To do so, use this command; you'll be offered a dialog box where you can name your new set and specify its various characteristics.

Revert "[This Set]" — Now suppose that Conflict Catcher is open, you've made a few changes to the on/off status of your files, and then you decide you'd be better off leaving things the way they were. This command undoes any changes you've made by clicking file names. It restores the set to the condition it was in before you began making changes. (The actual name of this command reflects the name of the current set.)

Enable All in "[This Set]"; Disable All in "[This Set]" — These commands turns on or off all of the files in whatever set you're viewing. (You can then, of course, selectively click the few files you want back off or on.) The actual name of this command, too, reflects the name of the currently selected set.

Compare with Set — This command lets you compare one set against another, highlighting the difference in your files' on/off status. For details, see the Help topic "Sets (Predefined File Lists)."

The Startup Menu

The Startup menu lists every available System Folder on every disk attached to your Mac. For example, you might see a command called “Macintosh HD: System Folder,” which refers to the System Folder on a hard drive called Macintosh HD.

The purpose of this menu is to let you conveniently switch among different System Folders or startup disks before restarting the computer. (You can hide the Startup menu, if you wish, using Conflict Catcher’s Preferences command.)

The Web Menu

The Web menu gives you a direct route to some of the most useful World Wide Web pages pertaining to the Mac and Mac troubleshooting. For example, if you’ve configured Conflict Catcher to go online (see “Preferences,” earlier in this section), you can choose any of the listed Web names from this menu to dial the Internet, launch your Web browser, and visit the corresponding pages.

The Special Menu

Conflict Catcher’s Special menu (not to be confused with the Mac’s own Special menu) offers a host of commands:

Edit Links — This command opens Conflict Catcher’s Edit Links dialog box, where you create, change, delete, import, export, or print information about the links you’ve created between various startup files.

Create System Report — This command generates a report covering every possible technical parameter pertaining to your Macintosh and its System Folder.

Start Conflict Test — Choose this command to begin a conflict test.

Continue Saved Test — If, because of a lack of time or patience, you decide to postpone completing a conflict test, you can interrupt a testing progress in order to finish it later. When you do interrupt the process, you’ll be asked to save a small document called conflict test document onto your hard drive.

When you want to pick up from where you left off, choose this command. You’ll be asked to locate that conflict test document, which tells Conflict Catcher exactly where to resume the testing you had started.

Scan Files for Damage — This command tells Conflict Catcher to examine

each startup file that's turned on in the active Conflict Catcher set, checking out each one to make sure that it's not corrupted in some way.

Scan Folder for Damage — This command makes a dialog box appear in which you can select any folder on your hard drive for Conflict Catcher to examine. Conflict Catcher will let you know if any files inside are damaged.

Rebuild the Desktop — Rebuilding the Desktop is a common Macintosh troubleshooting technique. Conflict Catcher's method of rebuilding the Desktop is especially effective; this command begins the process. (Restarting your Mac completes it.)

Clean-Install System Merge — This command begins the process of merging an older System Folder's contents into a new one. See the Help topic "System Folder Merging and System Folder Switching" for details.

Restart, Shut Down — Identical to the Mac's own Restart and Shut Down commands.

The Help Menu

About Balloons — Displays instructions for using Balloon Help.

Show Balloons — Turns on balloon help, the tiny cartoon-like balloons that identify each Conflict Catcher item as you point to it with your cursor.

Conflict Catcher Help — Summons the help window you're reading now.