

Product Information

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Freeware

Whatsa matter, Bunky? You say you've got a separate spell checker for each and every one of your applications? And you're constantly updating each and every dictionary separately? And wouldn't it be fantastic if you had one single spell checker that would work with all of your applications? Is that what's bothering you, Bunky?

Well, your worries are at an end. In the great computer-user tradition of demanding something for nothing, I give you SpellTools, freeware from Newer Technology (the people who bring you GURU and high-quality upgrade cards). SpellTools provides "seamless integration of spell checking and other text tools into existing Macintosh applications." And you get all of this for 256K of real estate.

Features

SpellTools is a universal spell checker whose functions are controlled from a floating palette, which can be oriented either vertically or horizontally. Another plus is that you can place your floating palette in a different location for each separate application you use it in. So, if one position is good for your e-mail program, but not so good for your browser, no problem. Place it where it best suits your work habits in each application and SpellTools will remember its location every time.

pellTools comes packaged with a wide assortment of plug-ins for many existing applications. But what if you have a program that isn't mainstream? Nothing to it. Simply drag the desired application icon on to the SpellTools icon and SpellTools automatically creates a plug-in for the desired application. That's it.

The Tools

pell Tool; this is the main function of the program. Simply highlight the text that you wish to check and click on this button. It comes with a user-definable dictionary that can be manipulated through keyboard shortcuts. Also, there's a field in the SpellTools window that highlights the offending word in its context.

Speech; highlight the desired text and, as long as you have the Speech Manager extension installed, you can have your selected text read back to you.

Stamps; a very useful and customizable feature. Besides the usual date and time stamps, you can create custom stamps with ease, either from a text selection or from scratch. Very handy for salutations and closing lines that you use repeatedly in business correspondence (I use it with my e-mail client constantly).

Text Tools; an array of useful options; word counting; uppercasing, lowercasing, and capitalization of text; stripping or adding ">"s in e-mails; and stripping lead spaces (not as

extensive as the shareware program textSOAP, but handy all the same, and Hey!...it's free!).

Preferences; shortcut to SpellTools prefs file. Allows you another avenue to edit your stamps, your plug-ins, and your user dictionary.

Despite its ease-of-use, SpellTools comes with a brilliantly simple hands-on tutorial that walks you through each function of the software. Within no more than three minutes any newbie will have mastered this program.

Comparison

How does SpellTools stack up to its commercial competitors? SpellTools is plain Vanilla to their French Vanilla. Both Online Army Knife <<http://www.atpm.com/4.08/page17.shtml>> and Spell Catcher <<http://www.atpm.com/2.09/page9.shtml>> offer far more bells and whistles, such as batch processing, grammar correction, and basic auto-correction. These applications are far more extensive than SpellTools. But some of their bells and whistles are "vanilla" themselves. For example, Online Army Knife has a limited sound conversion function. You can run rings around it with SoundApp, another indispensable piece of freeware.

Conclusion

If FinderPop is the greatest freeware utility of all time (and make no mistake about it, it is), then SpellTools is a very close second. No, it's not for power users. If you are working on a thesis or reams of text, then you want to look to the commercial applications. But if you're an average user doing basic word processing, e-mail, and such, then it will dutifully serve its purposes. I can think of no reason that SpellTools shouldn't have a permanent place in your bag of tricks.

Oh, and did I mention that it's free?

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