

## Application Launcher 1.4 Release Notes

### Upgrading from previous releases

If you are upgrading from a version prior to 1.2, you will need to rebuild your application list - it's a good idea to remove `.MetroToolConfigs/AppLauncher.prefs` and `.MetroToolConfigs/Launcher.pos` from your home directory prior to running the new version. If you are upgrading from version 1.2 or later, your docks will be intact but you may need to go to the preferences panel and re-check your preferences. All group-related settings will be intact.

### Overview

This is provided as an addendum to the MetroTools User's Manual. The Application Launcher has been significantly enhanced, and these release notes replace the Application Launcher chapter of the printed manual. The on-line help has also been updated to reflect the new Application Launcher. The printed manual will be updated at a future date.

Whereas versions prior to 1.1 of the Application Launcher have provided a simple pull-down list of applications and documents, it now provides up to 32 highly configurable docks. Application Launcher provides the user with an unparalleled degree of customization for their dock extension. Each dock can stand alone or be a subgroup of the main Application Launcher dock, and can be configured to appear in several forms including:

- Standard icon dock
- Miniature icon dock
- Icon dock with names
- Miniature icon dock with names
- Name dock (with no icons, two different sizes)

Subgroup docks by default are not displayed but are brought up via a tile representing them in the main Application Launcher dock.

Unlike the NeXT dock, Application Launcher docks can contain documents and folders.

Each dock may be reduced down to a single tile and then displayed at full size with a single mouse-click, and may be oriented in any of four directions. Each group can also be color-coded by setting its text to be a unique color.

Individual applications or documents ± or entire groups ± can be set to auto launch, and entire groups can be launched simultaneously by command-clicking.

The docks created by the Application Launcher can be set to any of several "levels" via a pop-up control in the preferences panel. You can specify whether the docks should be at the same level as a normal

window, higher than windows but lower than the NeXT dock, or higher than the NeXT dock itself.

## **Groups**

Each launcher configuration contains at least one group which is always called the Top group. Other groups may either be considered to be subgroups of the Top group or to be independent groups. Each group has its own dock, although the docks may overlap in the Workspace. Each group can have its options set individually (tile type, orientation, grid, etc.). Groups are maintained via the Application Launcher panel in MetroTools. You select groups to operate on via a pull-down Group list. Double-clicking on a subgroup name in the Group Contents list in the MetroTools panel also causes that subgroup to be selected in the panel.

To create a new group, enter its name in the editable field and click the Add button. The new group's dock is positioned over its icon in the Top group's dock. It can be activated by clicking on the small button in the bottom right corner of its group icon. The you can simply drag it to wherever you want.

To rename a group, select it via either the pull-down Group list in the MetroTools panel or by clicking on the its dock in the Workspace. Then edit the name in the editable field and click the Rename button. The Top group cannot be renamed.

To delete a group, select it via either the pull-down Group list in the MetroTools panel or by clicking on the its dock in the Workspace. Then click the Delete button. The Top group cannot be deleted.

## **The Control Tile**

Each dock contains at least one tile ± the control tile. The control tile of the Top group contains the Application Launcher icon (a catapult) while the control tiles of subgroups contain the group icon (four small cubes). The control tile cannot be deleted from the dock, and is the anchor point for the dock. You can reposition docks by dragging the control tile. When you move the Top group's dock, the launcher also moves the docks for any related subgroups.

## **Group Options**

Application Launcher provides substantial control over the appearance and behavior of its docks. Group options are set via the MetroTools panel. The top three checkboxes in the Dock area of the panel provide control over the appearance of tiles in the group's dock. All tiles in a dock have the same appearance. You can specify whether or not the tiles contain icons, the names of their applications or documents and the tile size. When using names, you can specify via the color well the color that the names appear in.

The "Keep dock hidden" checkbox controls whether the dock should reduce down to its control tile when not in use. When this option is checked, a small button appears in the control tile to allow to you reduce or expand the dock.

The Orientation pop-up list allows you to specify in which direction the dock should grow from the control tile.

The Grid pop-up list allows you to specify how the dock should move within the Workspace:

- None - dock moves freely
- Screen left - dock snaps to a grid aligned with the left edge of the screen
- Dock left - dock snaps to a grid aligned with the left edge of the NeXT dock
- Dock right - dock snaps to a grid aligned with the right edge of the NeXT dock

This grid applies to the dock while you are moving it via its control tile. When a subgroup's dock is moved along with the Top group's dock (see below) it maintains its position relative to the Top group's dock regardless of the subgroup's grid.

The Move pop-up list allows you to specify how the subgroup's dock should move relative to the Top group's dock:

- With top group - maintains position relative to control tile of Top group's dock
- With group tile - maintains position relative to the group's tile in the Top group
- Independently - maintains position independently in Workspace

By checking the "Independent group" checkbox you can make a subgroup's dock act independently of the Top group's dock. There will be no group tile corresponding to it in the Top group's dock, and the subgroup's dock will always be on the screen. The Top group always has this checkbox checked.

### **Adding Applications, Documents and Folders**

You may add applications, documents and folders to the Launcher's groups in one of two ways. The first uses the MetroTools panel. Select the group you want to add to via either the pull-down Group list in the MetroTools panel or by clicking on its dock in the Workspace. Then select one or more files using the Workspace File Viewer and drag them into the MetroTools panel.

You may also directly drag file icons into the various Launcher docks. The control tile of the dock you have dragged it into will animate as icons are dragged into the dock. Dropping an icon onto a specific tile will insert the icon in that position. Dropping an icon onto the control tile will add the icon to the end of the dock. You may drag in a selection containing multiple applications or documents.

### **Moving Applications, Documents and Folders**

You can change the position of applications, documents and folders within their groups by holding down the control key and dragging them up or down within the Group Contents list in the MetroTools panel. You may also drag tiles directly within their docks.

### **Removing Applications, Documents and Folders**

You can remove applications, documents and folders from their groups by selecting them within the Group Contents list in the MetroTools panel and pressing the Remove button. You can also remove subgroups of

the Top group using this method.

Tiles can also be removed directly from within their docks. When you drag a tile within its dock, the control tile will turn into a recycler tile. Dropping the moved tile onto it will remove the tile from the dock. You will be asked to verify any tile removed using this method. Dragging a group tile into the recycler will remove the complete group (of course it doesn't delete the actual applications and documents from your system).

### **Launching Applications, Documents and Subgroups**

To launch an application or open a file, simply double-click on its icon. If the icon is contained in a subgroup that is not set to "Independent group", the subgroup's dock will disappear unless the "Manually hide docks" preference is enabled.

To launch all the applications and documents contained in a subgroup, hold down the command key while double-clicking on the group's icon in the Top group's dock.

### **Opening folders**

To open a folder, simply double-click on its icon. A new file viewer will be created in the Workspace containing the contents of the folder. If the icon is contained in a subgroup that is not set to "Independent group", the subgroup's dock will disappear.

### **Selecting Applications, Documents and Folders in the Workspace**

To select a given file or folder in the Workspace, double-click on its icon while holding down the Control key. The main file viewer will position itself to the file. When used with folders, this is a handy alternative to having a large "shelf" in your file viewer.

### **Displaying Subgroup Docks**

If a subgroup is not set to "Independent group", you must use its group icon in the Top group to bring it up on the screen. Either click on the small button contained in the group's icon or double click on the icon.

To hide the group without launching anything, click once more on the small button contained in the group's icon in the Top group's dock.

### **Using Hidden Tiles**

If a group's tiles are set to be hidden, the group's dock reduces down to the size of the control tile to use up minimal screen space. To show all the groups tiles, click on the small button contained in the group's control tile. After launching an application or file contained in the group, the group will shrink back down to the control tile, unless the "Manually hide docks" preference is enabled.

To shrink the group's dock without launching anything, click once more on the small button contained in the control tile.

Shrinking the Top group's dock will also remove any subgroup docks from the screen.

### **Using The Shift Key**

To avoid shrinking docks and removing subgroup docks from the screen when launching applications with the "Manually hide docks" preference disabled., hold down the Shift key while double-clicking.

Similarly to avoid removing any displayed subgroup docks when shrinking the Top group's dock, hold down the shift key while clicking on the small button contained in the group's icon or double click on the icon.

### **Using The Command Key**

To open a file from inside a particular application contained in an Application Launcher dock, select it in the Workspace File Viewer and drag it onto the tile of the desired application while holding down the Command key.

### **Using The Control Key**

As mentioned earlier, to select a given file or folder in the Workspace, double-click on its icon while holding down the Control key. The main file viewer will position itself to the file. When used with folders, this is a handy alternative to having a large "shelf" in your file viewer.

### **Using The Alternate Key**

To launch an additional copy of an application, hold down the Alternate key while double-clicking on its tile. The three dots will not come back on the tile until the first launched copy of the program has terminated.

### **AutoLaunch**

You can set individual applications and documents to launch automatically when the launcher is first enabled by selecting them within the Group Contents list in the MetroTools panel and clicking on the AutoLaunch checkbox. Checking a subgroup's entry within the Top group's list will set all the applications and documents in the group to automatically launch. When an application is autolaunched from Application Launcher, it will behave as if it had been autolaunched from the NeXT dock itself. For instance, autolaunching Mail will start it with its windows hidden.

### **Other Options**

The Application Launcher docks can be enabled and disabled by clicking on the "Enable launcher" checkbox in the preferences panel.

You can control whether or not application tiles are displayed in the bottom left corner of the screen when their applications are launched by the Application Launcher by using the "Hide application tiles on launch" button in the preferences panel.

You can control whether or not docks are automatically hidden after launching a program or opening a file from them by using the "Manually hide docks" preference. When "Manually hide docks" is checked, docks will stay visible until closed using the small button found in the control tile or the group's tile in the Top

group's dock.

The Application Launcher can automatically scan for the existence of applications and documents and remove them from its docks if they are no longer present. To enable this feature, check the "Verify applications at startup" checkbox in the preferences panel.

You can choose whether you want executable shell scripts to behave like applications or documents. If you select the "Treat shell scripts as applications" checkbox in the preferences panel, shell script tiles will contain three dots as if they were applications, and their launching and running will be tracked visually by the Application Launcher.

The Application Launcher's dock level can be adjusted relative to other windows on the screen or the NeXT dock. This is controlled by the Dock Level pop-up list in the preferences panel. All Application Launcher docks will change to the level specified. When changing to a normal window level, the docks will remain "above" normal windows until they are clicked on. When at the "Same as NeXT dock" level, Launcher docks will appear in front of the NeXT dock when they are selected and in back of the NeXT dock when it is selected.