

Automator

Mac OS X 10.4 (Tiger) introduces Automator, which lets users string together preinstalled script steps (Actions) into a sequence (Workflow) that can be run and saved. The sequence is a rudimentary data flow, or pipe: typically, each step outputs some data, which becomes the input to the next step. The advantage for the user is that there's no need to know a scripting language in order to write and run a custom sequence. Two good resources for Automator are:

Automator World

Automator World is dedicated the Mac OS X 10.4 (Tiger) scripting application Automator. Automator World is a clearinghouse of user-contributed Workflows and Actions, as well as Automator information, news and tips

<http://www.automatorworld.com/about/>

Automator Actions

A bank of useful Automator actions to download

<http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/automator/>

Tutorial:: Atomic Learning:

http://www.atomiclearning.com/osx_tiger_orientation

Example: Rotating Pictures

Rotating an image is a fairly easy task. A simple photo program can help you do this in just one click. But this simple task can become very tedious if you need to apply it to a number of photographs. If you have 50 pictures, then you would have to open all those files and rotate them one by one. Enter Automator – your own personal assistant on a Mac. This article provides step-by-step instructions on how to use Automator to rotate a group of image files. Instead of having to rotate each file one by one, the handy Automator will allow you to accomplish this tedious task with just a few clicks.

Step 1

Go to Finder and select all the image files that you would like to rotate (NOTE: in this tutorial, all the files you selected will be rotated towards the same direction/angle). Then, right-click (or ctrl-click if you have a one-button mouse) on any one of the selected images. A menu will appear. Click on Automator >>> Create Workflow. This will launch the Automator assistant.

Step 2

In the Library column to your left, expand the Applications folder and select the Preview application.

Step 3

In the Action column beside the Library column, double-click on Rotate Images. You will then be prompted with a message that says: "This action will change the image files passed into it. Would you like to add a Copy Finder Items action so that the copies are changed and your originals are preserved?" If you click on "Add", Automator will create copies of the originals, and rotate those copies so as to preserve the original files. If you click on "Don't Add", Automator will rotate the original image files without creating any copies. You may choose any of the two options. But for this tutorial, we will choose "Don't Add". Choosing "Add" creates an extra step. We will only be rotating the images anyway, so it is not that imperative that we keep copies of the original. But you may choose "Add" if you wish to.

Step 4

The right side of your Automator window will display the list of actions you've added so far. For this workflow, you should have two actions: (1) Get Specified Finder Items and (2) Rotate Images. In the Rotate Images section, use the drop-down menu to choose which direction you'd like to rotate your images to. You will have three choices: left, right and 180 degrees.

Step 5

Click the Run button, which can be found at the top right corner of the Automator window. This gives Automator the go signal to perform the task. You will have to wait awhile depending on the number of images you chose to rotate. You will see the phrase "Workflow Execution Completed" at the bottom right corner of the window, once Automator finishes the task.

Creating and Saving a Workflow Using Five Applications

Preliminary: using "TextEdit," create an empty text file on your desktop. Call It "newstext.txt"

Open Your Automator Application

Goal: to automate the process of getting text from a webpage and send it to you (or anyone else) as e-mail.

Technique: either double click action or click, hold and drag to the workflow box to the right.

Steps

1. In the Library column, choose **Safari**. This brings up an “action” list: choose “get specified URLs” Edit the URL to the URL you want news to pull text. I used Google News.
2. Next, from the same **Safari** action list: choose action “get text from web page.”
3. Next, go to the “**System**” library and choose action “copy to clipboard.”
4. Go to the “**TextEdit**” library and choose “new text file.” Give it a name, the same name that you created in the preliminary step “currentnews.txt” as this will replace new text as you run the Automator workflow
5. Go to “**Mail**” and choose “new mail message,” double click and address to yourself or whoever. Add a subject line and some copy in the body if you want.
6. Next got to “**Finder**” and choose “get specified finder item.” Add, click on the plus, choose the file that will collect the text from the copy and click open
7. Go to “**Mail**” and choose “add attachments to front message.”
8. Go to “**Mail**” again and then choose: “send outgoing messages.”
9. Click run
10. Save if you want to.