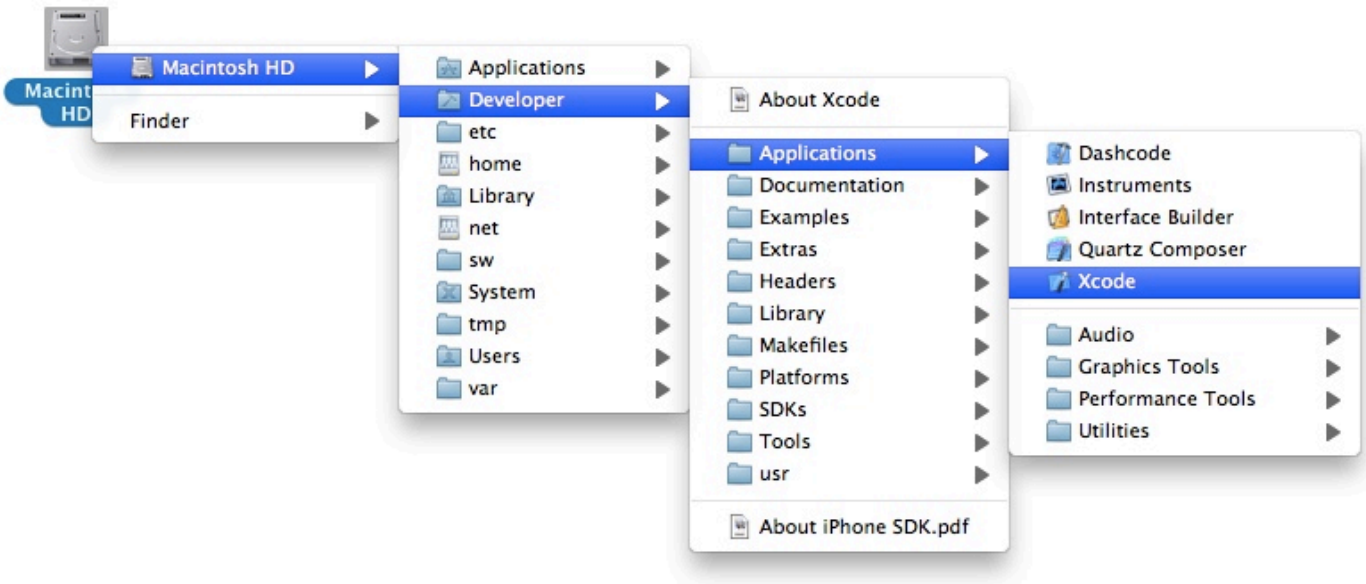

FolderGlance User's Guide

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This guide covers FolderGlance 3.0 and later.
Last Updated: February 23. 2011.

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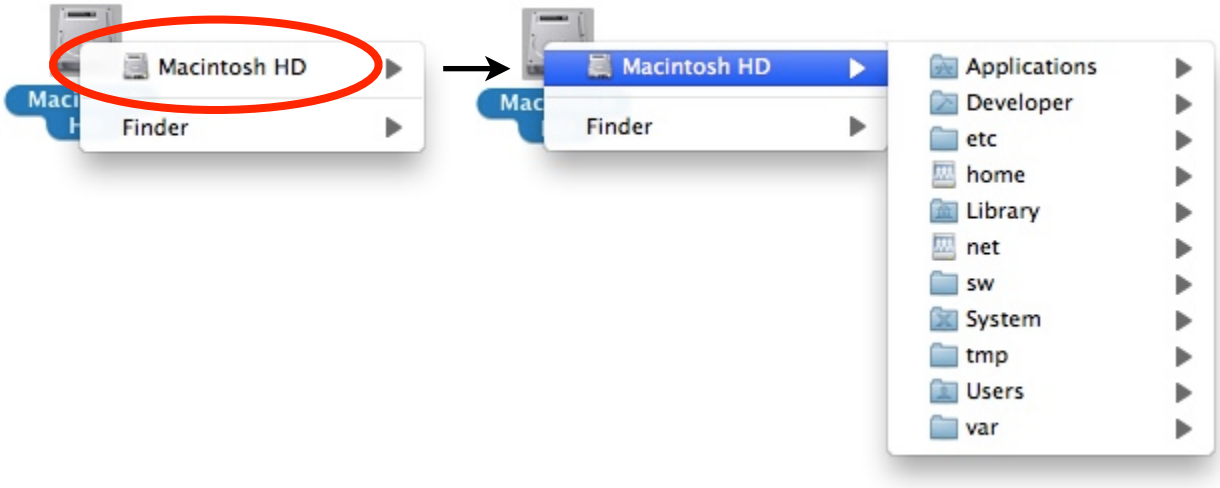
1. Using FolderGlance

The most basic way of using FolderGlance, is to use it for browsing into folders. To do this, simply *right-click, control-click* or *click-and-hold*[1] on a folder in the Finder, in order to bring the contextual menu up. You will be presented with something similar to this:



Notice the top item in the menu to the left. Mousing over it will reveal the contents of Macintosh HD, allowing you to directly open any files or folders contained within, as illustrated by the image to the right. To access the regular Finder contextual menu items, you can browse into the Finder menu, where they will appear. You can also temporarily hide FolderGlance by holding down the Shift-key while right- or control-clicking.

FolderGlance has several other features. Here's a list of the things you will learn to do using FolderGlance:

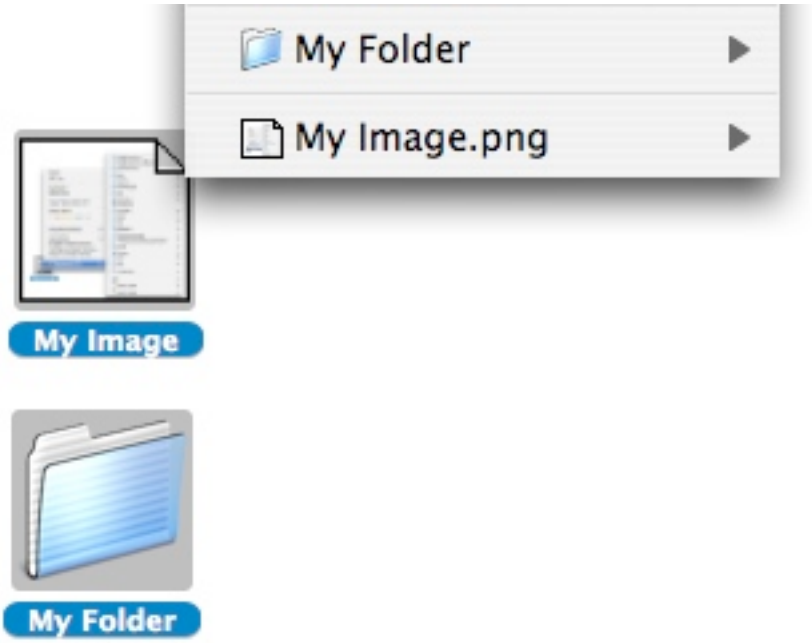
- Move, copy or make aliases of files and folders
- Preview files
- Open files or a selection of files with a specific application
- Dig directly into packages and bundles

Note that depending on your settings, the Macintosh HD item above will either appear by itself, with the Finder's items in its own submenu, or mixed with the Finder's own contextual menu items.

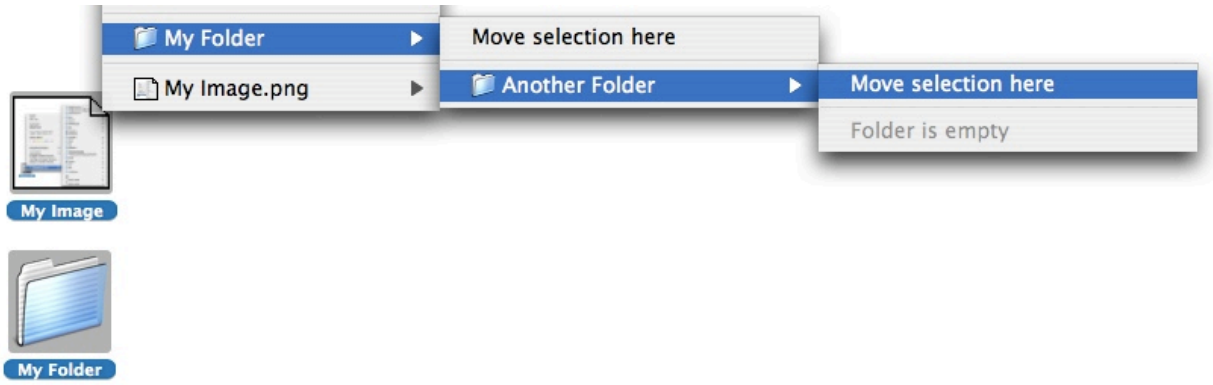
1.1. Moving, copying and making aliases of files and folders

Moving, copying and making aliases of files is a simple thing to do using FolderGlance, but before we delve into this topic, you need to be aware of the following: FolderGlance lets you select multiple files and folders at once! Here is an example, where both the folder My Folder and the file My Image have been selected:

[1] Note that in order for *click-and-hold* to work, you will need to enable *control-free popups,* as explained later.



Note how both the folder and the image file appears in the menu (disregard the fact that the image file also has a sub-menu triangle next to it for now). If you wanted to, you could now browse down into My Folder, and move the image (and any other files or folders you may have had selected) into My Folder:



By selecting the “Move selection here” item associated with the folder you want to move the files to, those files will be moved there. If there are files with the same names as some of the ones you are trying to move, you will be asked if you want to replace the files in the target folder with the ones you are trying to move.

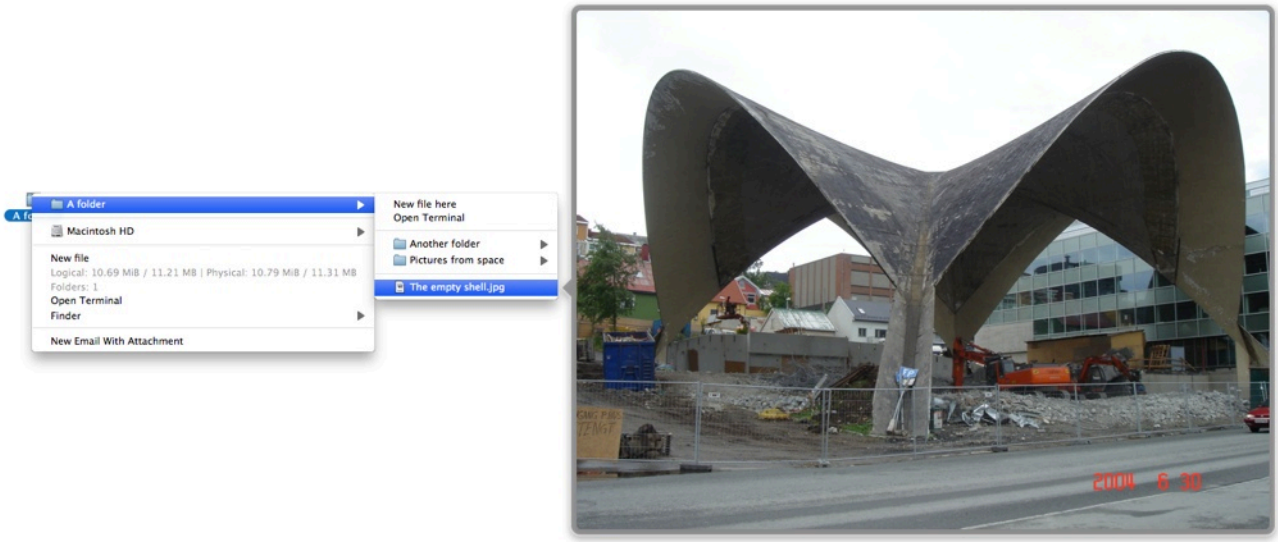
To copy files instead of moving them, hold down the Option-key (Alt-key). The “Move selection here” item will change into “Copy selection here.” If you want to make aliases of the files, hold down the Shift-key. Again, the name of the item will change, this time to “Make an alias of selection here.”

1.2. Preview files

With FolderGlance, you can preview files directly from the contextual menu, without launching another application. FolderGlance supports graphical previews of the most common graphics-formats (jpg, png, pdf, etc.), as well as raw text previews of files it doesn’t recognize. To preview a file, simply hold down the Option-key. You will notice that

the file gets a sub-folder triangle next to it. When you mouse over it, the preview will be generated on the fly. Keep in mind that if the file contains a large image or is a long PDF file, generating the preview might take a few moments!

The preview that appears here is sized at 768x768 pixels. You can configure the preview to size to suit your tastes from FolderGlance's preference panel – more on this later.

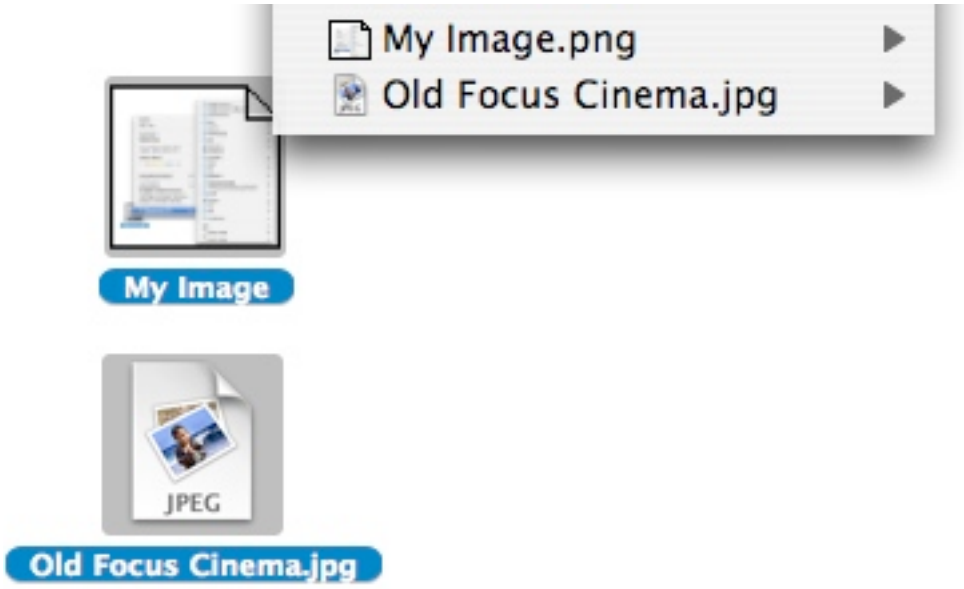


1.3. Open files with a specific application

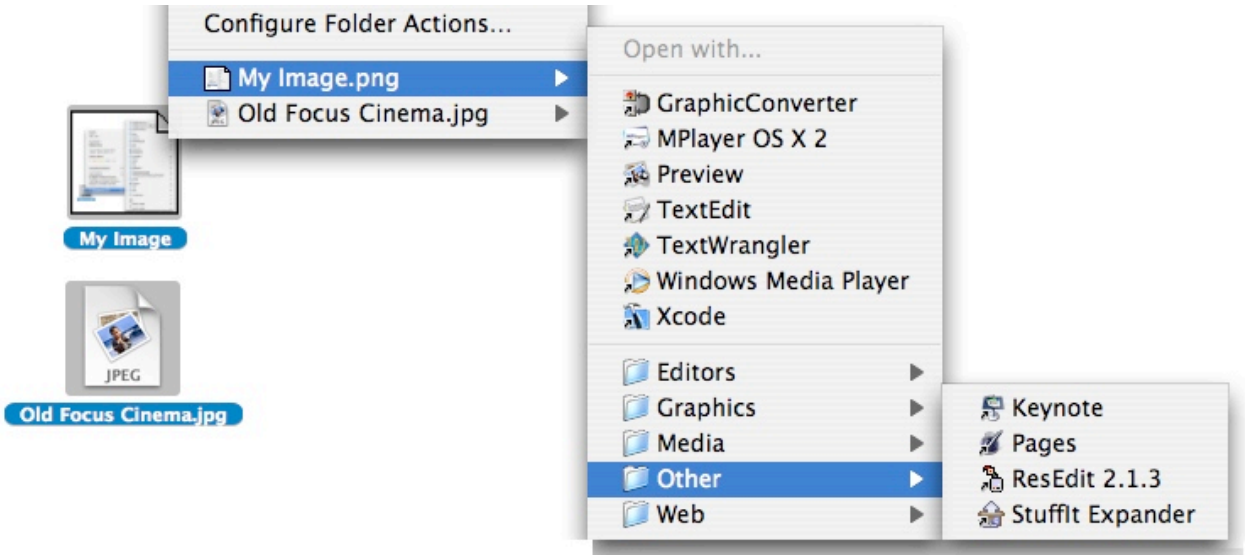
The Finder has for a long time allowed you to open selected files with a different application than the one that would generally open it. For instance, you may want to open an image in an image editor rather than using Preview – for this, the Finder's "Open With" menu could be used. Unfortunately, the Finder always seems to take a rather long time generating this menu, which can be very frustrating. Not only that, but for some reason it always includes a lot of applications that are irrelevant, or it fails to include the application you want.

This is where FolderGlance's Open With feature comes into play. In its simples incarnation, it lets you open selected files using any application located in your Applications folder. To try it out, right-click a folder containing some files, browse into it and then hold down the Shift-key. The files in the folder will get sub-menu triangles next to them, which will reveal the Applications folder. Selecting an application will open the file using that application. Magic!

Of course, you can not only use this feature to open files inside folders with a different application, but also files that you have direct access to. If you right click one or a selection of files, they will all appear to have a sub-menu attached, as if they were a set of folders:



By opening one of those submenus, FolderGlance's Open With menu will appear. The real power of the Open With menu doesn't become clear until you configure your very own, custom Open With menu. You will learn how to do this later, when we examine FolderGlance's settings. The result, however, can be something like this:



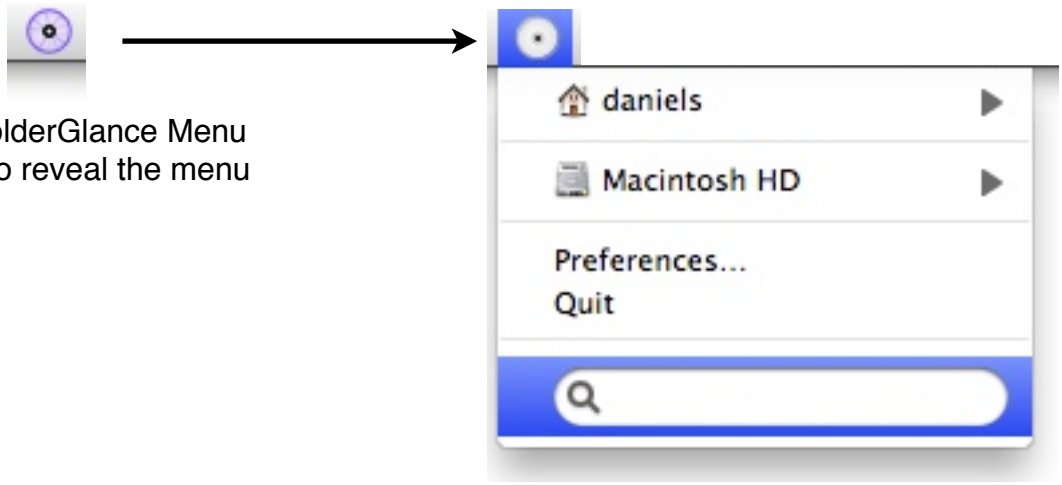
This menu appears instantaneously, and is quite an improvement over the Finder's built-in Open With menu! It can also be configured to contain a list of your currently running applications.

1.4. Dig directly into packages and bundles

FolderGlance lets you dig directly into packages and bundles. To do so, hold down the Option-key. In addition to attaching FolderGlance's preview menu to all files, any packages will also get their own sub-menu triangle, allowing you to dig into packages, letting you browse for files and folders inside it as usual.

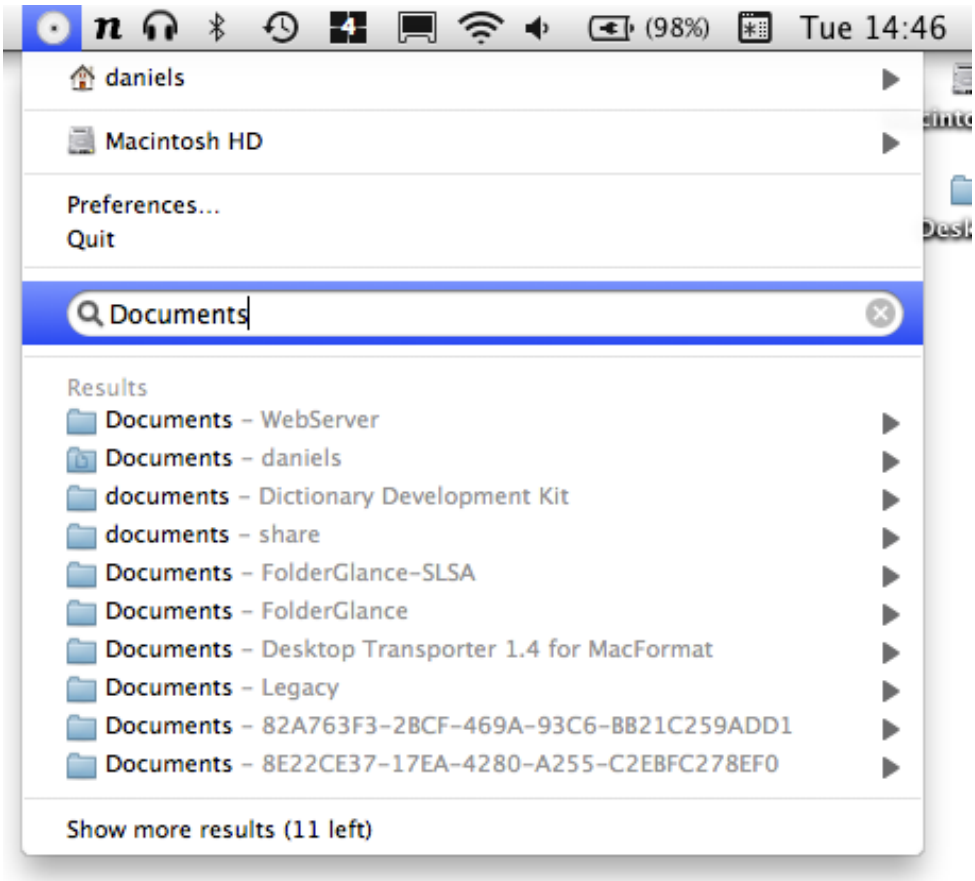
2.FolderGlance Menu Extra

The FolderGlance Menu Extra gives you access to many of FolderGlance's features directly from your menubar. When open, the menu extra by default includes your custom folders and any mounted volumes on your Mac:



Click the FolderGlance Menu Extra icon to reveal the menu

In addition to these items, you can also use the search field to conduct a SpotLight search of your harddrive. Results appear immediately as you begin to type. If there are more than ten results, you can show an additional ten results by mousing over the "Show more results" item. *Note that you need not click this item - merely mousing over it is enough to show additional results!*



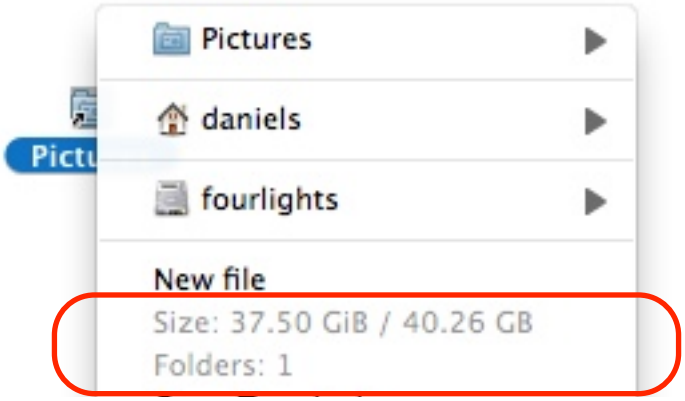
Some scripts also appear when you use the FolderGlance menu extra. For a description of which scripts appear, refer to the FolderGlance Scripting Guide, available by clicking the FolderGlance Scripting Guide button in the FolderGlance preference pane's Help section.

To enable the menu extra, see the Menu Extra section of FolderGlance's preference pane.

3.FolderGlance Scripts

A very powerful feature in FolderGlance 3.0 is the ability to run scripts both on-demand and dynamically. On-demand scripts enable you to extend the context menu and the menu extra with simple scripts that take as input either the current Finder selection, or the folder currently being browsed to. FolderGlance ships with one such script, called “Open Terminal,” which simply opens a new Terminal session in the directory you have browsed to. The possibilities for other types of scripts are nearly endless.

Dynamic scripts offer even further room for customizing FolderGlance. Dynamic scripts apply to the current selection, and allow you to either generate your own menu hierarchies based on the current selection, or perform simple computations. FolderGlance ships with two scripts that perform such computations: The first computes the disk usage of the current selection, reporting sizes using both decimal and binary conventions (KB and KiB, MB and MiB, and so on).



The second script simply counts the number of files and folders in the current selection, and is provided more as a sample than as an ostensibly useful feature. The screenshot below highlights the two dynamic scripts as they have calculated the size of my Pictures folder:

Also, note the presence of the Open Terminal script. FolderGlance also ships with a sample script (not installed by default, but available on the FolderGlance disk image) that demonstrates how a menu hierarchy can be constructed.

To learn more about scripts, read the FolderGlance Scripting Guide, available by clicking the FolderGlance Scripting Guide button in the FolderGlance preference pane’s Help section.

4.Configuring FolderGlance

FolderGlance has a vast number of options that you can tweak to achieve perfection. We'll first take a look at the basic options, before examining the benefits of Custom folders, a custom Open With folder and Scripts.

4.1. Context Menu Settings

The screenshot below shows what the FolderGlance preference panel looks like. To get to it, open System Preferences and click on the FolderGlance icon, located in the "Other" section:

4.1.1. FolderGlance on/off toggle

This setting lets you turn FolderGlance on and off. When off, FolderGlance will not create its contextual menu in the Finder. However, the "font size" setting will still remain in effect. You can also temporarily turn FolderGlance off by holding down the Shift-key when invoking the contextual menu.

4.1.2. Sorting and Sort order

With these settings, you can decide how FolderGlance sorts its menus. You have the choice of either sorting by kind, sorting alphabetically, or sorting by modification date. If you decide to sort by kind or by kind and modification date, you can set the order in which files appear by selecting the appropriate item from the Sort order menu.

4.1.3. Font size

This setting allows you to configure the font size used by the contextual menus in the Finder and the menu extra. Simply select the size you want from the menu and enjoy your smaller or larger menus. Keep in mind that this setting will not affect the font size for the Labels item, as that item is actually an image which is not affected by font size.

4.1.4. Preview size

FolderGlance can generate an instant preview of your files from the submenu by holding down the Option-key. The Preview size setting, controls the size of those previews. Choose between 128x128 (quite small), 256x256 (standard) and 512x512 (rather large). Previews are generated using QuickLook, and if no QuickLook preview is available, a raw textual preview is shown instead. This selector also controls the size of hover previews (see below).

4.1.5. Only show folders in main context menu (no files)

If you dislike the fact that files also get an entry in the main context menu when they are part of a selection, you can disable that feature here. Note that even though they won't appear in the menu, they will still be moved/copied/made aliases of if you choose to perform one of those operations. Also note that files will still appear in the submenus generated by FolderGlance.

4.1.6. Open target folder for move/copy/alias operations

When enabled, the target folder for moving, copying or making aliases of the current selection will be opened after the operation has been performed.

4.1.7. Hide move/copy/alias menu items

When checked, FolderGlance hides the ability to move, copy and make aliases of items.

4.1.8. Collapse move/copy/alias menu items

When checked, the move/copy/alias menu items are shown as a single item. You can access copy or alias by holding down the Option or Shift keys, respectively. When unchecked, the three items are shown successively, without the need for a modifier key to access the individual items.

4.1.9. Automatic root Open with... menu

By default, the Open with menu is automatically attached to the current selection in the Finder. If you do not want this behaviour, you can turn it off using this setting. To access the Open with menu for items in the root context menu, hold down the Shift key.

4.1.10. Running apps in Open with... menu

When this setting is enabled, FolderGlance will include your currently running applications in its Open with menu.

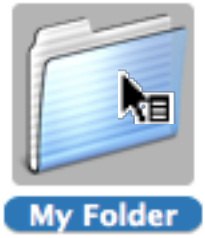
4.1.11. Place Finder items in separate submenu

This was the default behaviour for FolderGlance 2.5.x. In versions 2.6 and later, FolderGlance merges the Finder's own contextual menu with its own items, placing its own items on top. Use this setting to revert to the old behaviour, resulting in a "cleaner" root contextual menu.

4.1.12. Control-free popups in the Finder and Delay before popup

These two settings control the use of control-free popups, as well as the delay before a control-free popup is invoked. To enable control-free popups, select either "In the Finder" or "Everywhere" from the pop-up menu. Before control-free popups start working, you will need to control-click/right-click *at least once* in the Finder. This is necessary to have FolderGlance read the new settings. Once you have done this, control-free popups can be invoked as follows:

1. Click-and-hold the mouse button in the Finder (or, if you selected "Everywhere", you can click-and-hold in any application)
2. Keep holding the mouse button down until you see the cursor change into the contextual menu cursor:



3. Now, release the mouse button, and the contextual menu will appear!

To change the delay before you can release the mouse button, simply drag the slider until the delay is as long or short you want it to be.

If you change your mind about opening the popup menu (perhaps you didn't even mean to open the contextual menu), simply move the cursor. This will prevent the contextual menu from opening when you release the mouse button.

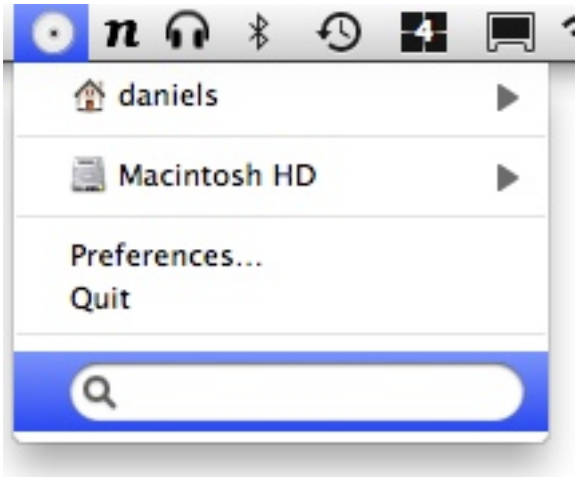
If you would like to use control-free popups in all applications, select "Everywhere" in the pop-up menu, rather than "In the Finder." Note however that the contextual menu cursor will only appear in the Finder; in other applications, you will have to judge for yourself how long to wait before releasing the mouse button.

4.2. Menu Extra Settings

These settings are available from the Menu Extra section of the FolderGlance preference pane.

4.2.1. Show menu extra

When enabled, the menu extra will be shown in your menu bar, if it isn't already there, as shown in the screenshot below:



4.2.2. Start menu extra on login

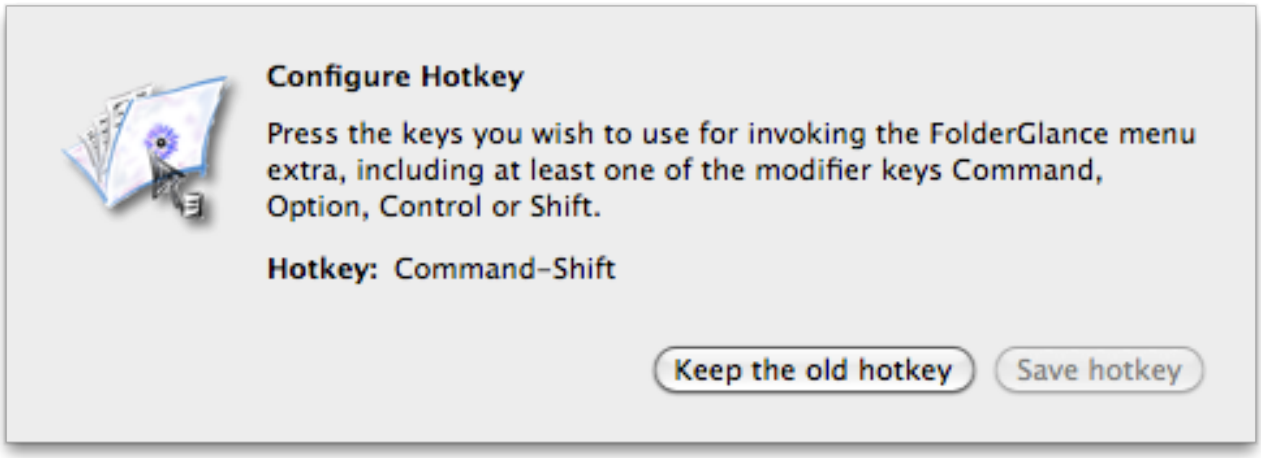
When enabled, the menu extra start automatically when you log in. If this setting is not enabled, you will need to start the menu extra manually by enabling Show menu extra in FolderGlance's preference pane.

4.2.3. Include files in search results

When enabled, SpotLight searches made in the menu extra will also include file-results, instead of just folder results which is the default.

4.2.4. Configure menu extra hotkey

You can configure a hotkey that opens the menu extra, allowing you to quickly search for folders and files which you can then browse using FolderGlance's browsing mechanism. Click the Configure hotkey… button, and a small panel will appear:



Press a combination of modifier keys (Command, Option, Shift or Control) as well as a regular key (a character, number, the space key, return and so on). The default hotkey is Command-Option-Control Space.

4.3. Advanced Settings

These settings are available from the Advanced section of the FolderGlance preference pane.

4.3.1. Show

This setting allows you to configure which files appear in the menus FolderGlance creates. You can choose between the following:

Only visible files	Only displays visible files.
Files that start with "."	Displays visible files and files starting with a period.
Other hidden files	Displays visible files and hidden files that don't start with a period.
All files	Includes all visible and invisible files.

4.3.2. Always show package contents

If you want to have instant access to package contents all the time, without having to hold down the Option-key, you can turn this option on. Package contents will now be visible by default, without the need for holding down the Option-key.

4.3.3. Colorize names with label colors

When enabled, file and folder names will be colorized using its corresponding Finder label color.

4.3.4. Show New file/New folder item

When enabled, an item called New file will appear at the top of every submenu you browse to, as well as in the root context menu. Selecting this item will allow you to create a new file in the directory you have browsed to. By holding down the option-key, you can use this item to create a folder instead. You will be prompted for the name of the new file or folder upon selecting the item.

4.3.5. Enable recent items for applications

This setting places a submenu hanging from any applications appearing in the Folder-Glance menu tree. If an application has recent items, these items will appear in the sub-menu, allowing for easy access to them.

4.3.6. Right-click items to reveal in Finder

When this setting is enabled, right-clicking a file or folder you have browsed to in the context menu or menu extra will reveal the item in the Finder, instead of opening it.

4.3.7. Show hover preview after...

This setting controls hover previews. The delay indicates how long you must keep the cursor stationary before an automatic preview of the currently selected item in the contextual

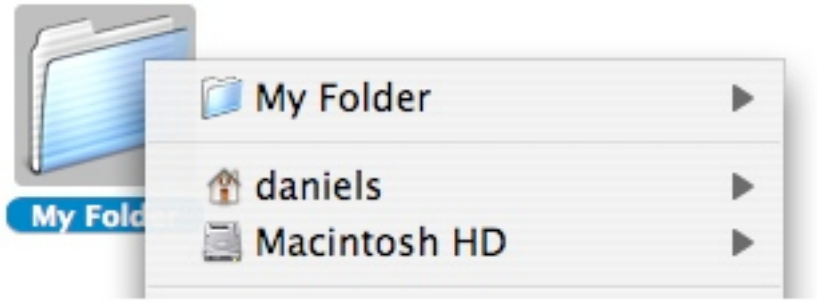
menu appears. The shortest delay is 0.5 seconds, and the maximum delay is about 5 seconds.

4.3.8. FolderGlance Scripts folder and Enable FolderGlance Scripts

These settings control the location and state of FolderGlance Scripts. The location of the folder defaults to the Library/Application Support/FolderGlance/Scripts, however you can change it if you like. FolderGlance Scripts are only active when the Enable FolderGlance Scripts button is checked. FolderGlance Scripts are a powerful way for you to further extend the Finder's context menu with your own items. Read the FolderGlance Scripting Guide to learn more about what scripts do and how to write them, available by clicking the FolderGlance Scripting Guide button from the Help section of the preference pane.

4.4. Custom folders

To make full use of FolderGlance, you should add some custom folders. To add a folder, click the Add folder button, and then select the folder or disk you wish to add. You can also drag-and-drop folders to the list. One good idea is to add your home directory, giving you access to this folder regardless of where you are when you control-click in the Finder. Custom folders are also available in the menu extra. The image below shows one custom folder in the list. Click Add Separator to add a separator between different groups of custom folders. If you have many custom folders, you can organize them by creating a smaller set of folders in the Finder, and add aliases to frequently used folders there, rather than adding them all to the flat list supported by FolderGlance.



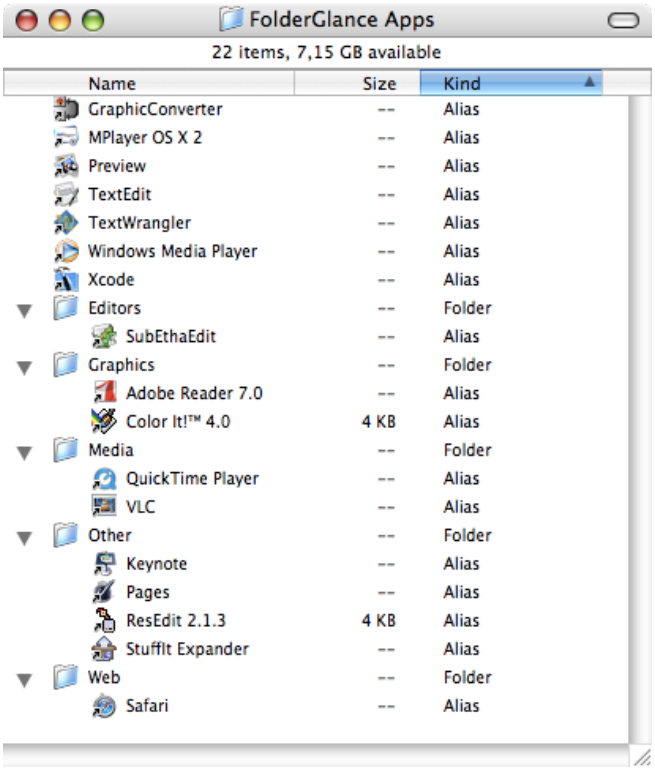
The great thing about custom folders is that they can be used to easily access common places where you move or copy files. You can also create a folder containing aliases to the applications you use the most, and add that folder as a custom folder. The result is that you get instant access to those applications, without a trip down to the dock or the Applications folder. To remove a custom folder, simply click on it, then press the backspace key.

4.4.1. Show custom folders before contextual selection

This option controls where the selection in the Finder appears in the contextual menu. If you want your custom folders to appear below the current Finder selection when the context menu is brought up, leave this option unchecked.

4.5. A custom Open With menu

As mentioned earlier, the Finder's built-in Open With menu has a number of shortcomings: It is slow, it doesn't show you the applications you need (sometimes it doesn't even display any applications!), or it shows too many applications. With FolderGlance's custom Open With menu, you can avoid that entirely. First, create a folder somewhere in your home directory (say, in your Documents folder, for instance). It doesn't matter what you call it - I have named mine "FolderGlance Apps".



Next, place aliases of common applications in that folder. My FolderGlance Apps can be seen to the right. Finally, in FolderGlance's preference panel, in the Custom Folders section, click the Open With path control, and select the folder you just created. This folder will now appear whenever you right-click a file, or hold down the Shift-key for files inside one of FolderGlance's menus. Enjoy!

4.6. Hover previews

Hover previews are a quicker way of seeing previews of items in FolderGlance's contextual menu. By simply hovering the cursor over a file (folders and applications are not supported) for a short while, a preview will appear automatically on-screen. The preview changes as you move the cursor from item to item, and disappears if you move the mouse outside of the menus or close the contextual menu.

5.Purchasing FolderGlance

The trial version limits the maximum number of levels you can dig into and inserts purchase reminders into the contextual menu generated by FolderGlance. The full version of FolderGlance costs $20. To purchase a license, visit http://store.kagi.com/?W8 and enter the number of copies you wish to purchase. Shortly after purchasing, you will receive a license key by e-mail. Enter the name and license key exactly as they appear in the e-mail in FolderGlance's preference panel, in the License section:

FolderGlance automatically notices when the name and license key are entered correctly. When the license key is deemed correct, the name and key entry fields will vanish and your copy of FolderGlance will be fully licensed.

6.FolderGlance Modifier Keys Cheat Sheet

Much of FolderGlance's functionality is cleverly concealed using modifier keys or keyboard shortcuts. The following table enumerates the different modifier keys, and gives a brief explanation of their effect.

Modifier key or shortcut	Effect
Command-key (⌘-key)	• Dragging a file or folder while the Command-key is pressed will let you grab that item and drag-and-drop it elsewhere.
Option-key (Alt-key)	• Lets you copy files or folders instead of moving them • Enables previewing of files (mouse over files to show a preview of it) • Enables digging directly into packages and bundles • Enables browsing of the Network folder
Shift-key	• Lets you make an alias of the selected files and folders, rather than moving them • Shows the Open with menu for all files • Disables FolderGlance temporarily when held down just before invoking the Finder's contextual menu.
Option-key + Shift-key	• Changes the Open with menu to open *all* selected files
Command-Backspace Command-T	• Move the file or folder *currently under the cursor* to the trash. The contextual menu will stay open, allowing you to continue browsing files and folders. (This feature is currently not available in Snow Leopard.)
Click-and-hold	• If you have control-free popups enabled, you can click-and-hold until the cursor changes into the contextual menu cursor shape. At this point, the contextual menu will appear once you release the mouse button.
Hover cursor over an item	• Displays a preview of the item under the cursor.

7.A final note

Hopefully, this users guide will have given you a better idea of the many different things you can do using FolderGlance. As always, if you have any suggestions for additional things you would like FolderGlance to do, any bugs you wish to report, general criticism or comments, feel free to get in touch:

Send an e-mail:	yls@scsc.no
Website:	http://www.scsc.no/products/folderglance
Purchase the full version:	http://order.kagi.com/?W8

Thanks for reading,
Daniel Stødle
(Got his Ph.D. in Computer Science at the
University of Tromsø, Norway on November 6th 2009. Yay!)