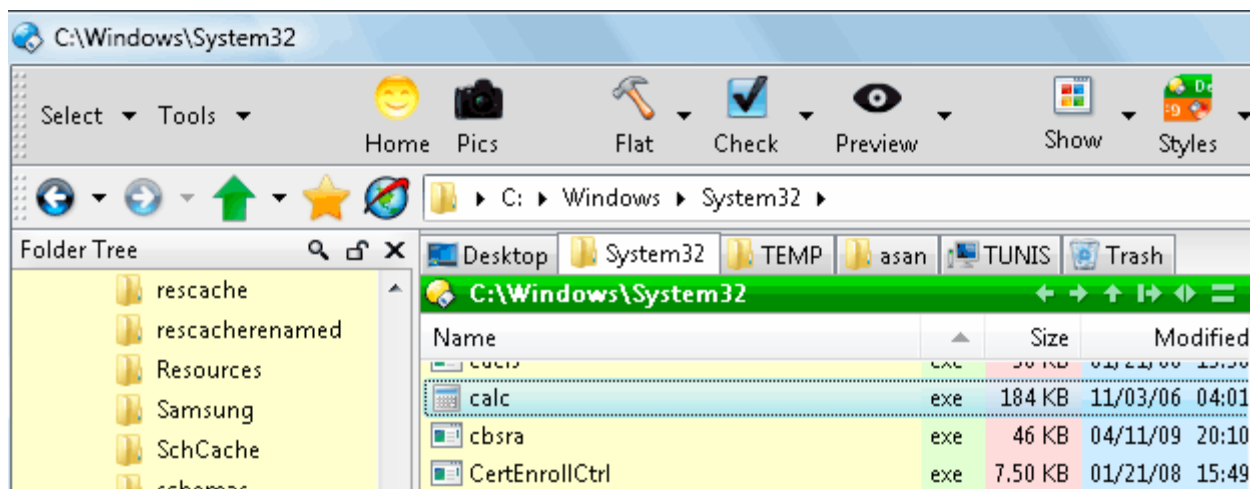


Setting Up Directory Opus

Okay, we're ready for the tour. Let's start with the left side!



Source and Destination

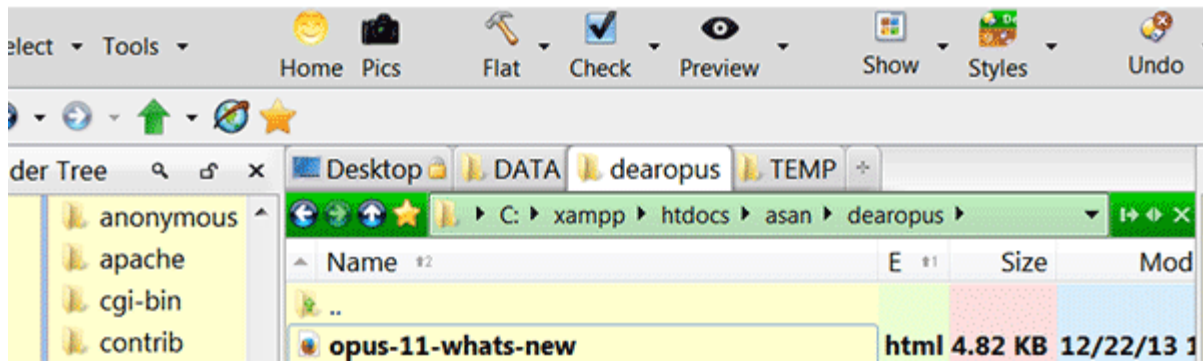
The first thing I'd like you to notice is the green bar at the top of the file display. Opus can work with a single file tree like Windows Explorer, or with two file trees. That's how I use it most of the time because it makes it easy to copy and move files. The idea is that there is a "Source" folder and a "Destination" folder.

Learning about Opus is like an Easter egg hunt. There are treasures everywhere!

The Source has the green bar, the Destination has the Orange bar. If you click on a folder on the right side, it will become the source. The top bar on that side of the display will become green, while the one on the left will become orange. If you scroll up to the [first picture](#), you'll see the two displays side by side. After you install my toolbars, you will be able to use Shift + Spacebar to toggle the focus ("shift the space") between the left and right (or top and bottom) listers. By shifting the focus, source becomes destination and vice-versa.

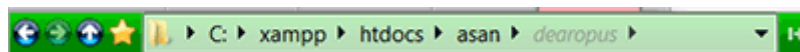
The second thing I'd like you to notice is that this interface only has two named menus: "Select" and "Tools". For how my brain works, the original menus were chaotic. Now everything fits logically in these two menus and in the pull-down menus of the relevant buttons. What's left in the Select and Tools menus are features that I don't use all that much.

Location Bar



The third thing I'd like you to notice is a novelty in Directory Opus 11: in the image above, notice that the green bar is a path bar (location bar). Each lister has its own path bar. On the keyboard, you can target that location bar via F4, and return to the file list by pressing Escape or Enter.

The Opus path bars are quite wonderful. You can click at the end to copy the whole path. You can click any part of the path (or "bread crumb") to navigate to that folder. And you can click on the arrow after each bread crumb to display a menu list that contains each of the subfolders. Windows Explorer now has something close to this, and it's really nice so see that it is slowly catching up to about a thousandth of Directory Opus's cool features.



In the picture above, at the end of the path, notice the "dearopus" folder in light gray? It is a "ghost path". One neat feature of the DO11 path bars is these "ghost paths": when you move up from a folder, the path bar shows a faint trace ("ghost") of the previous folder's name at the end of the path, letting you return there with one click.

The Toolbars

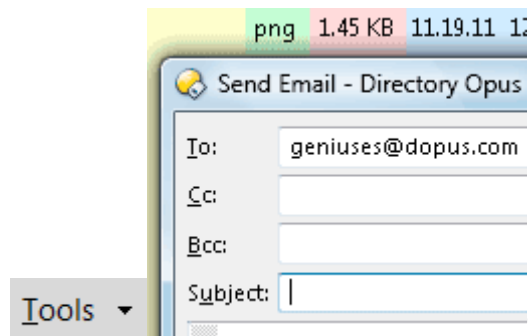
Okay, let's dive into the toolbars. I hope you're excited, because learning about Opus is like an Easter egg hunt. There's a yummy piece of chocolate in shiny wrapping paper at every corner.

Select **The "Select" Menu.** This menu (which is part of the first toolbar you install) gives you great control over which files you select. Its features probably won't matter if you only have twenty files in your display, but they can save you lots of time when you have two hundred. For instance, you can:

- * **invert a selection** you already made—the selected files become deselected and vice-versa (shortcut: Ctrl + I).
- * Deselect all files ("Select None" option, or Ctrl + D like in Photoshop).
- * Select all the files that have the **same base name** as the current selection, or all files that have the **same extension**.

* When comparing two folders in the source and destination, you can select all the source folder files that **do not exist** in the destination folder... or select the files in the destination folder that match the selected files in the source.

* Create elaborate selections with the "Select by Pattern" option (Ctrl + S). In the simple mode, you can type something like *.jpg|pdf) to select jpg or pdf files. In the advanced mode, you can build very complex selection patterns, such as "all images over 2560 x 1600 pixels created before January 1st". You can also make [grep-style selections](#) (some day, please make sure to check-out my [regex tutorial](#)).



The "Tools" Menu. Many features that could be considered "tools" reside under their own buttons, such as the Archive button and the Convert button. As a result, the Tools menu (which comes with the Menu toolbar) is more manageable and mostly populated by a few fairly esoteric features. For instance,

* the Split command lets you split large files into smaller chunks, while the Join command lets you glue these pieces back together. (Another use of the Join command could be to glue twenty text files together.)

* The Print / Export Folder Listing function lets you list (and save) everything that is in a folder tree. This can be convenient if you ever want to look at (or share) a text file that shows the entire content of your music or movie collection.

* One feature you may find yourself using is **Email Files** (shortcut: F11). It emails the selected files directly from Opus, provided you have entered your ISP's SMTP information in Preferences (Prefs button or F12) / Internet / Email. The Email Files function has a counterpart in the Archive button with the "Zip and Email Files" function, accessible via the analogous Shift + F11 shortcut.

* There is a menu item to Run a Command Prompt from your current folder. I use its the shortcut all the time (Ctrl + Shift + R).

* One of the more esoteric functions in the Tools menu is the "CLI" (Command Line Interpreter), a door into the world of Opus's powerful [macro commands](#).

* The Script Add-In submenu give you access to expanded functionality available if you install the [scripts on this page](#) (easy and worthwhile).

* At the bottom of the Tools menu, you will find functions to **schedule a computer shutdown**, and to cancel a scheduled shutdown—handy when you'd like your laptop to say "good night" after it finishes downloading a huge file.



Happy Place ("default") button. The first focus of the interface is to take you back quickly to your default (and perfectly customized) workspace whenever you need to. It's easy to get lost in subfolders. In Adobe apps such as Illustrator and Photoshop, when I stray too far from my standard layout, I restore my default workspace. For me, that's a key feature. In my customized Opus interface, the big smiley button takes you right back to your happy place. Its shortcut is Shift + F5. (In most apps, including Dopus, F5 on its own means "refresh", so adding the Shift key in order to refresh to the default workspace feels right.)



Pics button. This button is meant to give you a perfectly configured layout to browse your pictures. Its shortcut (F6) rhymes with "Pics". It brings up the Images style, which you can configure just right for your needs (I'll [show you how later](#)). For me, the Images style opens with a file tree, two vertical file displays and a [Preview pane](#). The left file display has my main picture folder, in detail view for quick file access. The right file display has the exact same folder, in thumbnail view for visual navigation. [Navigation lock](#) is turned on, so when I dig down to a subfolder on the left, the right side follows. At the very right, the Preview pane helps quickly browse the pictures.




Flat button. For me, the flat view is one of the most useful features of Opus. When you have lots of files in a long tree structure (a typical situation for a music collection), the flat view lets you see (and handle) the files in all the subfolders, all at once. There are several modes, which can show all the folders along with the files, or just the files. Clicking the button quickly **toggles** the "no folders" flat view mode (shortcut: F10 key). The pull-down menu gives you access to the other flat view modes.




Check button. The checkbox mode allows you to select multiple files by checking boxes. This can be very useful in a long list of files where you could lose a complex selection with one wrong click. Clicking the button quickly **toggles** the checkbox mode. One particularly good use of the mode is when you need to select a few pictures from a long list, whether to copy them or to delete them. You can click on a picture, decide whether to keep it, check the box, then click on the next picture (opening it or previewing it in the Preview pane) without losing your selection.


As always on Windows, Ctrl-A selects all files in the display. What is novel is

the shortcut to deselect everything: the F5 key. The button's pull-down menu has two related functions that let you switch an existing selection of files from one mode to another.

 **Preview button.** The Preview pane is quite wonderful. It shows you a preview of the selected file—not just for pictures, but for all kinds of files. If you use your arrow keys to navigate down the file list, the Preview pane can give you a quick glimpse of what's inside a pdf, a Word document, a spreadsheet, an html file. It can even let you preview the "contents" of system fonts! (I'll show you how to make a [font layout](#) to take advantage of that.) The preview is not always instantaneous, but it can still save you time when the only other option is to open and close a series of documents. The button quickly **toggles** the Preview pane. (Shortcut: F8 key. Think of the "8" as the eyes in LOOK.)


The pull-down menu gives you access to a **slideshow function** that cycles through the selected image files (or all of them when none are selected). It also contains the **Upload to ImageShack** function, which uploads a jpg to a free hosting service and gives you links to use the image on websites or forums—convenient when you don't want to host it yourself. At first I thought I'd zap this button as I didn't feel like creating an account with yet one more service, but it turns out you don't need to register for the feature to work.


 **Show button.** As in Windows Explorer, the file display has several modes: details, thumbnails, etc. Clicking the button repeatedly (or pressing its F7 shortcut) will **cycle** through these modes. The pull-down lets you select a mode directly. It also gives you access to other "Show" features. For instance, you can show or hide grid lines in the file layout, the folder tree and the status bar. You can also show or hide system files and hidden files.


 **Styles button.** The "Happy Place" layout uses two vertical displays. Clicking the button (shortcut: Ctrl + H) **toggles** the dual display between vertical and **H**orizontal mode. In the pull-down menu, there is a related shortcut (Ctrl + E) that toggles the display to **E**xplorer mode (single lister), and back to dual.

The button's pull-down menu also has the list of styles: "Dual Horizontal", "Explorer", "Images", "Filmstrip", and others that you define. The Styles button lets you select any of these style modes directly. At the bottom, it also lets you pick your saved layouts, such as My Lister (the Happy Place) and the [Font layout](#) that we'll create together.

Let's now move to the navigation bar on the second row.

 **Back button.** Takes you back to the previous folder. The pull-down menu has a list of the folders you just visited.


 **Forward button.** Takes you "forward" to the folder from which you just clicked the back button.


 **Up button** (or "Go" button). Takes you to the current folder's parent folder. Of course there are faster ways to do this: on the keyboard, just press the Backspace key; on the mouse, double-click any empty spot in the lister (if you have followed [this setup tip](#)).

The button's pull-down menu lets you open the parent folder in a new tab or lister. The "Go to First Folder" item (Alt + Page Up) refreshes the tab location to what it was when you opened it. The "Open file's folder" item opens a selected file's containing folder, useful in collections and flat view.

The menu also includes a "Shortcuts to Misc Locations" submenu, which I have set up to collect shortcuts to locations Windows users often need to access. For instance,

- * The "Drive" sub-menu has shortcuts for all the drives from A to L: Win + Shift + Drive letter, e.g. Win + Shift + C to go to the C drive.
- * Alt + Home for your Computer,
- * Shift + Home for the Desktop (relies on a script, see [shortcuts section](#)),
- * Alt + Delete for the Recycle Bin (relies on a script, see [shortcuts section](#)),
- * Alt + 6 for C:\Program Files (x86) ([see this tip](#) for drive-independent version),
- * Alt + 4 for C:\Program Files (think 64 bits) ([see this tip](#) for drive-independent version),
- * and others that I add with every version of the toolbars.

 **Star button** This button gives you quick access to folders you specify. In my view, it's better if you **don't use this feature for favorites**—after all, if you use a folder all the time, it should be a [tab](#). Rather, I use the Star button for hard-to-find folders that I only occasionally need, such as the Hosts folder. [More about this](#) below. (Shortcut: Alt + 8 because of the "*" above the "8" on the keyboard.)

 **FTP button.** For me, FTP integration is a wonderful feature of Opus. An FTP site is a place with some files, just like a folder, right? Opus knows it, and it displays FTP sites in the standard file display, just like another folder. Within the FTP button, you can add as many sites as you like, and organize them into folders. It's then a short step to opening one of your favorite FTP

destinations in a tab, and to save that tab as part of your default layout. I have abandoned Filezilla! (But only since making the custom button linked a few lines below.)

For a quick upload, Opus FTP is hard to beat, not only because I always have Opus running, but also because the Filter bar at the bottom of each pane lets me find my files in a hurry. I also use the custom "Squash" function (Ctrl + Slash) from the [Copy button](#) to bypass confirmation dialogs. By turning on [Navigation Lock](#) ("Navlock"), with the the FTP folder on the right and the source folder on the left, I'm also able to click on a subfolder on one side, and to have the other side follow automatically. That's magical! For servers that support site-to-site connections, you can even drag and drop from one FTP site to another. In the Tricks section, I explain how to [add a custom button to the FTP menu \(and a shortcut\) that automatically opens the local folder of your choice in the left file display and the target FTP site on the right](#).

Extra: Advanced FTP for Admins. In 2012, I splurged and paid all of ten dollars to use Opus's Advanced FTP function, which I had not understood before and would have used years ago had I known about it. This function lets me open the root of my webserver (which I cannot access through regular FTP) in a tab, like another folder! If you are able to connect to your server through pUTTY, the connection details are the same, because this works through SSH. My VPS has a Parallels Power Panel, standard on a cPanel/WHM VPS. Until I discovered this Opus feature, downloading files from the VPS was a royal pain, as I had to use the clunky "file manager" or copy them to a public folder I could FTP into. WinSCP probably does the same, but if you already have your file system humming in Opus, why downgrade to Windows 3.1?



Drive List. This pull-down menu allows you to quickly select one of the currently connected drives—including external storage devices such as USB sticks, cameras, Kindles and so on. This feature is part of the Operations toolbar that you can download on the next page, but it doesn't show on the screenshots above because I haven't updated them. The button lives between the path bar and the "New" button.

Note that the location bar (path field) at the top of each lister gives you another way to access each drive: click the black arrow at the very left of the bar (before the letter C, for instance), and a menu of drives appears.

As I mentioned in the section about the [Up Button](#), there are also shortcuts to each of the drives from A to L: For instance, Win + Shift + F goes to the F drive.

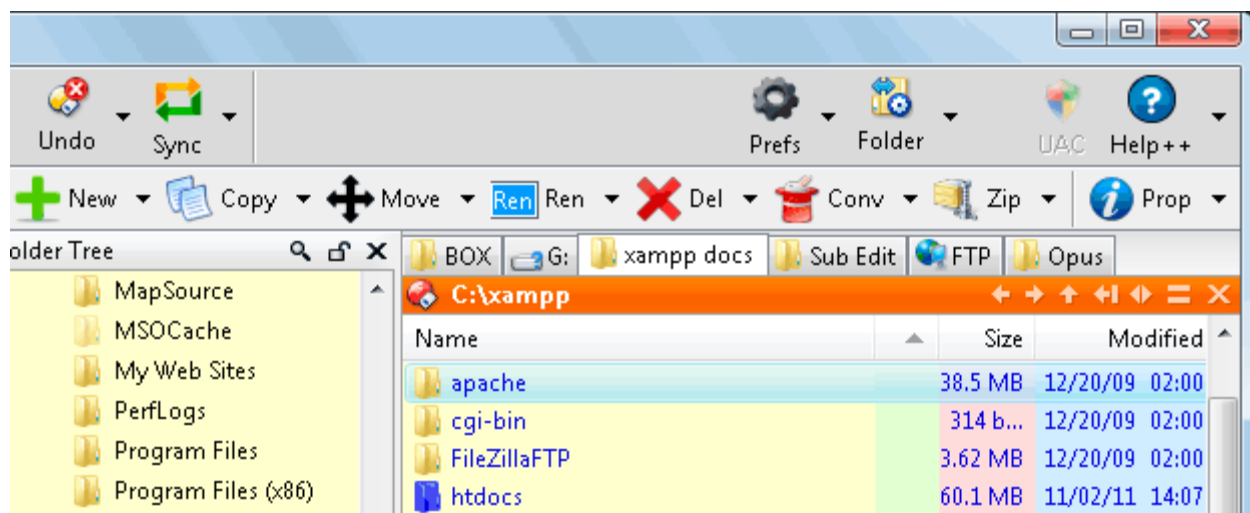
Tabs. The default layout takes full advantage of tabs, showing your most-

used folders. It's up to you to [set them up](#) (we'll talk about that later).

File Display. The standard file display is white. The one shown here has colours. Later, I'll show you how to [customize your display](#), but in the meantime, here's a [must-know trick](#): while holding down the Ctrl key, if you move your mouse's scroll wheel, you can [shrink or magnify the file display's text and thumbnails](#). Awesome! As in many programs, you can also zoom in and out with Ctrl-Plus and Ctrl-Minus, and return to the standard size with Ctrl-0.

My columns here are optimized to save space on a laptop screen. If you click for a moment to go back and take a look at the [picture of the left file display](#), you'll see that to save space in the name column, the file names are shown without their extensions. The extensions appear in the second column, allowing you to sort files by extension. This field replaces the standard "file type" field, which uses more characters. The date field shown here is optimized for space.

Now let's look at the right side of the interface.



Undo button. In Opus, not only can you undo the last file operation (Ctrl + Z), you can undo a whole series of file operations. This button quickly **toggles** the Undo log. The pull-down menu has three items. The first shows an "Undo List" populated with operations that can be undone (the same operations as in the Undo panel, but with fewer details). The second item in the pull-down lets you **undo a Tab close** (with the same shortcut as in Firefox: Ctrl+Shift+T). The third lets you undo a Lister close operation.

Sync button. The Sync panel lets you perform various synchronization jobs between the source and destination folders. You can synchronize in one direction or both, and choose a number of options. The Sync


button **toggles** the Synch panel. Pay attention to whether the small padlocks on the right are locked, because they control whether changing the selected folder on one side also changes the selected folder on the other side.

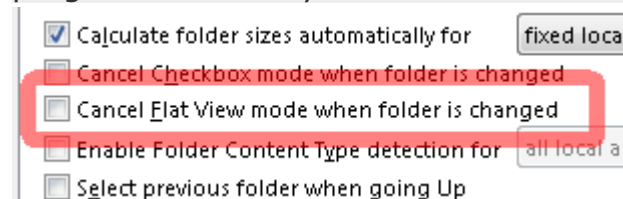
The button's pull-down menu gives you access to another neat panel, the **Duplicate files panel**, which, as you probably guessed, helps you identify files that exist in multiple places. The results are shown in a file collection of your choice. As in the Sync panel, the padlock can help you select folders faster. The MD5 mode is particularly useful when files are identical but names not. When you check "Delete Mode", the results are shown in checkbox mode, with all the duplicates already selected, ready to delete. The Filter box lets you narrow down the kinds of duplicates to look for, html files for instance.

The Sync button's pull-down menu also lets you turn on the **all-important Navigation Lock feature** (shortcut: Ctrl + Shift + K), also known as Navlock. Navlock synchronizes navigation (rather than content): as you click into homologous folder trees, the left and right displays stay in sync, left following right or right following left.

Next in the pull-down menu comes the **Slave Tabs** feature (which you can also activate by Ctrl + Shift + clicking a tab). It's a kind of "super navlock". Whereas folders in Navlock can get out of sync (when you are exploring mirror paths), folders in slave mode are always in sync, because they are slaves of each other (they are the same folder). This allows you to view the same folder on both sides of the display, possibly in different view modes (such as "details" and "thumbnails"). Also, the tabs are linked, so that if you move away from both tabs then return to one of them, the other lister automatically switches back to the slave tab.

Last, the pull-down menu has the **Link Tabs** feature (which you can also activate by Ctrl + clicking a tab). It links the two active tabs, so that if you click other tabs in both listers then click back on one of the linked tabs, the linked tab on the other side automatically becomes active.


 **Prefs button.** Opus has a huge Preferences menu. When you don't know where you're going, it could be daunting if the Opus team hadn't programmed a very sweet filter box at the bottom of the Preferences box.



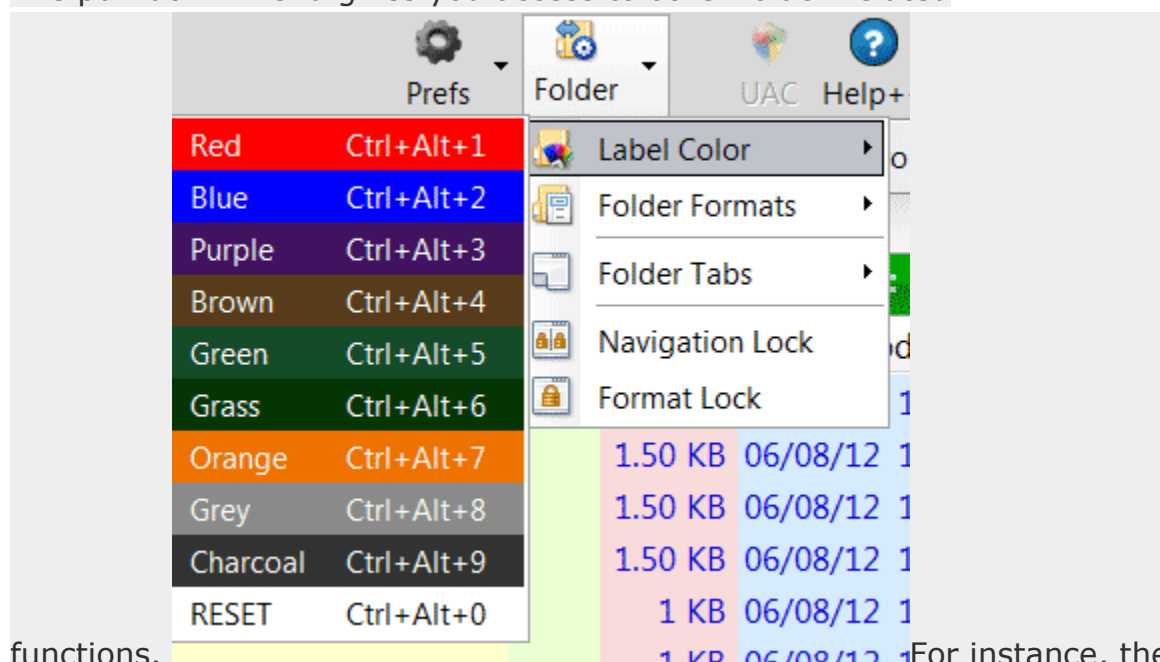
You type in a word or two, press Enter, and the menu shrinks down to the relevant options, with a red box in each of the submenus to draw your attention to the appropriate fields. It's

simply the best interface I've ever seen for a Preferences menu. The Prefs button quickly opens the preferences menu (shortcut key: F12). As of Opus 11, focus is given to the Find box, so you can start typing to filter the preferences. (In Opus 10, press F3 to give focus to the Find box.)

The button's pull-down menu gives you access to the "Backup and Restore" feature, which lets you **export (and restore) your entire Dopus configuration**, and even **export your Opus installation to run on a USB drive** for when you're troubleshooting your grandpa's computer (if you have shelled out the ten dollars for the USB license, well worth it in my opinion). The pull-down also lets you save and manage your listers. And it lets you manage file types, for instance letting you specify that PHP files are part of a new group called "Code", or letting you choose what actions to offer when you right-click a jpg file.

 **Folder Options button.** When you're new to Opus, you may think that all the program's options live in the Preferences menu, especially when you consider how large that menu is. But no, to set up the columns in the file display, you use the Folder Options menu. It's good to know this at the outset as that is a bit counter-intuitive, but once you've lived with Opus for a while it seems very natural. That being said, the Preferences also have folder options (Folders / Folder Display, Folder Format...). This is one of the areas where Opus seems to have a split personality disorder.

Clicking the Folder Options button directly opens the folder options dialog. The pull-down menu gives you access to other folder-related



functions. For instance, the Set Label function lets you **pick a colour for some of your files or folders**—this really helps you find your way around a large collection of episodes of a series of videos you're watching out of sequence! In the image

to the right, notice the very easy shortcuts to quickly colourize a file or folder (Ctrl + Alt + 1 through 9) or to remove the colour (Ctrl + Alt + 0). I have added colours, and you can change them in Prefs / Favorites and Recents / File and Folder Labels. In the same Pres menu, you can make a "wildcard label assignment" to colourize all files of a kind, for instance all php files, or any group of files that you're able to specify with wildcards or [regular expressions](#).

Further down the pull-down menu, I don't use the **Folder Formats** function, which lets you specify that a folder is a movie folder, or some other recognized type—handy if you like Opus to switch the view based on the content of your folders. The Merge Folders button by Leo ([presented here](#)) allows you to merge multiple folders into one. The pull-down menu also has several folder tab functions, as well as Navlock (a repeat from the Sync menu) and the [folder format lock](#).



UAC button (Microsoft shield icon). I don't use UAC, so for me that button is always grayed out. But if you do use UAC, this button lets you elevate your permissions to Admin level for a set amount of time, for instance five minutes.



Help button. Clicking the button opens the help file, which is extremely rich. The pull-down menu gives you access to a number of miscellaneous features. There is a link to the "Quick-Start Guide" (this website). There is a link to a reorganized list of "official" Directory Opus websites (and Ctrl + F1 opens the Opus forum). The menu also gives you access to all the logs. What logs? Earlier, I mentioned the Undo log, but there's also a File log, an Email log and an FTP log. Note that in the File log (which keeps track of file operations) and the FTP log, there's a save button that lets you save all operations to a text file to examine them at your leisure. The pull-down menu also contains the Update checker, the License manager and the About box.

The next section of the lower toolbar mainly has to do with file operations.



New button. At first blush, it looks like a click of this button quickly creates a new folder (shortcut: Ctrl + N). But look closer at the new folder dialog box: if you check the **Create multiple folders** box, you can create multiple folders in one go. Just type their names, separated by commas, for instance 1,2,3,4,5. To create nested folders, you can type 1\2\3. And to create multiple nested folders, you could type something like a\1\2,b\1\2,c\1\2. I always leave the "multiple folders" box checked because it still lets you create single folders. The button's pull-down menu gives you access to other "New" functions, such as "new text document" (shortcut: Ctrl

+ T).



Copy button. Clicking the button immediately copies items selected in the source (green display) to the destination (orange display). **No need to copy-paste!** This is a one-step operation that relies on the Source (green display) / Destination (orange display) model. The shortcut is Ctrl + 1 (for moving, it is Ctrl + 2). You can also click Ctrl + J to "jump" (duplicate) files and folders in the current tree.

The pull-down menu contains a **"Squash" function** (shortcut: Ctrl + forward slash) that I created to update destination files without asking—great with FTP. (The Copy Force function below it is even more forceful: if a destination file to be overwritten is in use, it is replaced when you reboot.) I also added a **"Create Symlink"** function (shortcut: Ctrl + backslash), which creates an advanced kind of shortcut that can be [extremely valuable for backups](#). It also contains two functions for quick synchronization jobs: "Update All" and "Update Existing".

One function I love is **"Copy Filenames"** (shortcut: Ctrl + Shift + N), extremely convenient when writing documentation. "Copy Pathnames" (shortcut: Ctrl + Shift + P) is similar. Another function I love is Copy Add (shortcut: Ctrl + Shift + C), which adds the selected files to the "To Paste List", letting you repeatedly press Ctrl + Shift + C (instead of Ctrl + C) until you are ready to paste.

For html heads there's "Copy hyperLink" (Ctrl + Shift + L), which fills the clipboard with a fully formed html href tag using the file name. In the same vein, Leo's brilliant "Copy img Link" (Ctrl + Shift + I) fills the clipboard with a complete html img tag for the image selected, complete with width and height.

Then there's Copy MD5 Checksums (Ctrl + Shift + 5) and a number of other copy-related functions, from the esoteric to plain cut-and-paste. The *Paste File & Folder List* feature is [presented here](#).



Move button. In one click, this button moves items from the source (green display) to the destination (orange display). [Again, no need to cut and paste!](#) The shortcut is Ctrl + 2 (Ctrl + 1 is for copying).

The pull-down gives access to the "Move As" function, which lets you change the names of the files you are moving. I also included a "Move Up" function, just a placeholder for a shortcut (Ctrl + Shift + U) that moves files "Up" to their parent directory—a task I find myself doing all the time.



Rename button. Clicking this button opens the powerful **rename panel** (shortcut: Shift + F2, in honor of the universal F2 inline rename shortcut). In this panel, you rename a group of files in a single sweep. The "Find and Replace" mode lets you replace parts of a filename with other text you specify. You can also perform complex rename operations using the syntax known as "regular expressions" (regex). If you don't know any regex, for complex renaming operations, you may need a standalone tool such as Lupas Rename. It's well worth investing a little time to learn a bit of regex—that investment will pay you back many times over in numerous programs and contexts. See my comprehensive regular expressions tutorial for examples of Directory Opus [regex rename operations](#), with cool regex rename examples that you can save into your own copy of Opus.

The rename panel also lets you **use metadata to rename a batch of files**. (For this function, though, I am attached to an ancient program called Tag & Rename.) When you check the "Enable file information fields" box, a second arrow appears to the right of the New Name field, allowing you to select metadata tags, such as {mp3artist}. If you check the **sequential numbering box** then enter "010" in the first text box and "5" in the second, a number will be appended to each file, starting at 10, padded with one zero, and incrementing by 5, i.e., 010, 015, 020...

The Rename button's pull-down menu gives you access to **convenient quick-rename functions**: rename to uppercase (Ctrl + Alt + U), rename to lower case (Ctrl + Alt + L), Number Files, Make Web Safe, Time-Stamp Names, Convert Underscores to Spaces, Convert Dots to Spaces, and more. Note that the [humble rename function](#) (clicking on a file name or pressing F2) has powerful features of its own.



Delete button. Sends items to the recycle bin. The pull-down gives you access to "Secure Wipe", which handily replaces a **shredding utility**, and other delete functions. The shortcut to the "Clear Quick Filter" function (shortcut: Ctrl + Shift + X) is handy when you want to clear the filter bar without moving your hands from the keyboard.




Convert button. Opens the image conversion dialog, which is very handy for resizing and converting batches of images when you don't have time to argue with Photoshop. The pull-down menu gives you access to quick conversion options: Rotate Left, Rotate Right and Make Thumbnails.



Archive button Clicking this button opens the archive creation dialog, which has several formats (zip, rar, tgz, 7z, tbz2). RAR is a proprietary format, so encoding only works if you have WinRAR installed. The dialog has options such as splitting and password-protecting archives. The Archive

button's pull-down menu has other archive functions such as "Files to Separate Archives" (handy for a long list of files that all need to be zipped separately). The **Zip and Email Files** function (shortcut: Shift + F11) is similar to the "Email Files" function (shortcut: F11) found in the [Tools Menu](#). It zips and emails files straight from Opus, really fast—check it out! For email to work, make sure to enter your ISP's smtp server under Prefs (F12) / Email.

 **Properties button.** Clicking this button gives you the classic file properties system window (shortcut: Alt + Enter). Quite often, the **Metadata pane** (accessed via the pull-down menu or just F9) gives you even quicker access to the information you need. This pane also allows you to edit a file's metadata, which can be quite handy for a quick edit of an untagged audio track. The pane has "back" and "next" buttons that let you move between files. (For advanced metadata editing, I use an ancient program called Tag & Rename.)

The button's pull-down menu gives you access to other features, such as changing a file or folder's colour in the display (a repeat from the [Folder Options menu](#)), setting its description, and modifying its attributes.

Setting Up the Dear Opus Interface

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This page gives you everything you need in order to set up the Dear Opus interface I've shown you in the [tour of the Opus interface](#). It includes icons and menus that should install in a flash—and can be turned on or off in an instant if you're not sure you like them.

Once in a while, I update the toolbars to take advantage of new features or new ideas. Updating is easy! To read how to update and how to get notified when updates are released, read [this section](#).

Setting up the *real* Default Lister—the Happy Place

In the section just below, I will give you all the icons and toolbars. They're really easy to install.

Opus has its own idea of what "default" means.

 But before we do that, we need to set up what I call the "real default lister", or the **Happy Place** to which you can always escape by pressing the [Happy Place button](#), or its shortcut Shift + F5. Opus has something it calls a *Default Lister*, but even after reading the manual I'm still not sure what it's

about. See, I've never managed to make that "default lister" open by default in all possible launch conditions. In the end, it might boil down to semantics—Opus has a different idea from mine of what a default lister should mean. For me, it means that whenever you open Opus, that particular lister should come up.

At the moment, that functionality seems to be split between the "default lister" and saved listers. To get a default lister that behaves in a way that mere mortals like me can understand, we need to bring these together. Here are the steps.

- * Take some first steps to set up the layout that you'd like to load by default. Normally, that would mean choosing which tabs you want, setting up the columns you want to see, and so on. For now, don't worry about getting it perfect as we will [customize your display](#) at a later stage. The main thing now is to save a layout called "My Lister", which we're about to do.

- * You're still using the standard menu toolbar, so until we install the new menus, I'll give you the commands you need from that toolbar. At the moment, select [Settings / Save as Default Lister](#).

- * [Settings / Lister Layouts / Save this Lister](#). Enter this name: "My Lister". **If you want your lister to work with the Happy Place button, you need to give the lister this exact name.**

- * [Settings / Preferences / Launching Opus](#):

 - ⇒ "Default Lister": uncheck "Update Default Lister Automatically when closing a lister"

 - ⇒ "From the Desktop": select "Open a saved lister layout", select "My Lister" (or whatever you've called your lister), and check the "Close existing listers" box so your listers don't start breeding like rabbits.

 - ⇒ "From the Taskbar Icon": as above.

 - ⇒ "Startup": as above, except that there is no "close" option. Also check "Launch Directory Opus automatically on system startup".

- * **Critical:** [Settings / Preferences / Default Lister](#) / uncheck "Update default lister automatically when closing a lister". Also uncheck the first box ("Ignore folder format of Default Lister").

Once you have done all this, navigate to some obscure sub-folder. Then double-click the desktop (the Windows desktop, not the desktop folder in Opus): your Opus layout should return to My Lister.

New Icon Set for Directory Opus



You are now ready to install my icon pack. I made two of the icons on Photoshop and picked the others on icon sites. Each of the icons I downloaded has a license that allows you to redistribute it for non-commercial use. Often, you have to credit the designer. The proper credits are included in the zip file.

Here are the installation steps.

- * Download my [Directory Opus Icon Pack](#).
- * Extract to the desktop.
- * Opus Preferences: Toolbars / Icons / click the Import icon at the top, navigate to *asan_icons.dis* on the desktop.
- * Delete the icon files from the desktop or put them away somewhere.

You are now ready to install my buttons.

New Toolbars (and Buttons) for Optimized Opus Interface

Before you install my toolbars, make sure you have installed my icon pack in the section just above, otherwise the button icons will not display properly. Note that if you only want a few of the buttons, you can install the toolbars, then drag the buttons you want to your existing toolbars.

It's important to understand that these buttons do not simply replace the default Opus buttons. First there are cool new buttons, such as the Flat view button and the Checkbox button. Then, for existing buttons, the default behavior has often been improved (for my taste anyhow), as have the functions included in the pull-down menu. To get familiar with the buttons, make sure to take the [tour of the interface](#).

Usually, Opus buttons are shared one by one. However, we have so many here that it is easier if I share my two toolbars. That way, you can activate the toolbars, and either keep them as they are (in which case you will turn off the original toolbars), or drag some of their buttons onto your old toolbars. Either way, **this makes it really easy for you to try the interface as you can turn the toolbars on and off**, and compare the inside of the menus with the old ones. Here are the steps.

1. Downloading

Download these three files for Directory Opus 11:

- * my [Custom Folder Colours](#) (*colourgroups.oxc*),
- * my [Menu Toolbar](#) (*Menu_playful_YYMMDD.dop*),
- * and my [Operations Toolbar](#) (*Operations_playful_YYMMDD.dop*).

- * Legacy users: here is the last version ever released of [my DO10 toolbars](#).

Troubleshooting Download Issues

Some users have reported that their browsers (usually Google Chrome) take the antisocial initiative of renaming the extension of these three files to 'xml'. As you can see in your browser's status bar (if it is enabled) when you hover over the download links, the correct extensions should be *oxc* for the custom colours, and *dop* for the toolbars.

If your browser does this, give him a good slap, then rename the extensions of the files before proceeding to the next step.

2. Installing

Non-Standard Shortcuts

Please be aware that my toolbars contain many shortcuts that conflict with the standard Opus shortcuts—for the simple reason that the toolbars are meant as a major customization of the interface. See my [quick tip to resolve keyboard shortcuts](#).

Please remember that you can always **revert to the original toolbars in a few clicks** (toolbars can be turned on and off) by right-clicking any toolbar and selecting the Toolbars sub-menu.

Please see the [keyboard shortcuts](#) page for a beautifully organized list of shortcuts.

- * Open a dual lister. In the path bar (quick selection: F4), paste exactly this then press Enter: `/dopusdata/ConfigFiles`
- * Move the custom colour file (colourgroups.oxc) into the folder that just opened, replacing the original file. (If you defined custom colours for folder labels, you may want to rename your old file with a .bak extension).
- * Open a dual lister. In the path bar (quick selection: F4), paste exactly this: `/buttons`
- * Move the two toolbar files (Menu and Operations) into that folder (you will notice that it contains all the other toolbars).
- * Right-click any place on your old toolbars and select Toolbars, then Menu_playful. **Take this one first**, otherwise you will need to rearrange the order.
- * Right-click any place on your old toolbars and select Toolbars, then Operations_playful.
- * At this stage, I right-click and turn off **all three** default toolbars: Location, Menu and Operations. Give that a try, you can always turn them back on.
- * **Important (new in DO11):** right-click an empty space on any toolbar and pick Toolbars / "Set as Default Toolbars Set". Otherwise when you shift to a different lister, Opus 11 will revert to the default toolbars. (In DO 11, each lister can have its own set of toolbars.)
- * **Important tuning.** As of Directory Opus 11, a toolbar's shortcuts can stay active even when the toolbar is turned off. By default, this feature is ON

for the pre-installed default toolbars, so you need to go and turn that off, otherwise the default shortcuts will interfere with the [beautiful shortcuts](#) in the Menu_Playful and Operations_Playful toolbars. Alt-click an empty space on any toolbar to enter the Customize menu. Select the Toolbars tab. Click on the first toolbar at the top, but without checking its checkbox. At the bottom right, inspect the "Always enable this toolbar's keys in Listers" checkbox. Turn it off if needed. If not, press the down arrow to select the next toolbar—repeat the operation until you reach the bottom of the list. If you like, enable the feature for Menu_Playful and Operations_Playful.

3. That's it! High-five yourself.

Updating the Toolbars

I try to stay on top of all beta releases and to test new features that I feel can improve the toolbars. Every once in a while, I announce a new version. To be notified when the toolbars are updated, make sure to subscribe to this thread on the Opus Forum: ["The Other Manual"](#) (in the *Tutorials* section).

Updating is Dead-Easy

1. [Download the new toolbars](#) then click the **Back** button to return here.
2. Type /buttons in the address bar of an Opus lister, and copy the toolbars to that location.
3. Right-click any empty spot in your toolbars. Select Toolbars / Operations_playful_NEW-DATE and Menu_playful_NEW-DATE. Deselect Toolbars / Operations_playful_OLD-DATE and Menu_playful_OLD-DATE.
4. **Important:** right-click an empty space on any toolbar and pick Toolbars / "Set as Default Toolbars Set". Otherwise when you shift to a different lister, Opus 11 will revert to the factory toolbars.



Next, I will explain how to move buttons around if you need to, and we will look at customizing your file displays.

But first, I highly **recommend you play a bit with all the buttons** (and their pull-down menus) to get familiar with the new interface. Use the [Tour of the Interface](#) section as a reference.

If a shortcut key doesn't work, see the tips & tricks page for a quick fix to [hotkey conflicts](#).

Turn on Alt-Clicking!!! (Editing the Toolbar 101)



love ▾ Ren ▾  Del ▾  First things first. In the Preferences menu (F12), navigate to Toolbars / Options and make sure the box that says **Alt-Click** to Edit Toolbar buttons is checked. This makes it a lot easier to edit the toolbar. Try it! Alt-click any toolbar button. This opens a dialog that allows you to edit

what that button does and looks like. Press the Escape key a couple of times: you are out of the edit mode.

Now Alt-click an empty space on the toolbar to see how editing works. When you Alt-click the toolbars, you enter what is known as "Customize mode". In this mode, you can:

- * Move buttons by dragging them around.
- * Delete buttons by right-clicking them and choosing Delete.
- * Move toolbars around. Look at the very left of the toolbars: you will see "ribbed" handles. By grabbing them, you can move the toolbars up and down, or make them vertical.
- * Resize spacers by dragging their outlines.
- * Turn buttons into files that you can share. Try dragging a button to a folder: it turns into a file with a *dcf* extension. **These dcf files make it easy to share buttons.** You can drag dcf files from a folder straight onto the toolbar. This is the classic way of sharing Opus buttons. Instead, today you installed the toolbars in one go!

You are well on your way to having a killer Opus setup!

Tweaking Toolbar Colours and Fonts

If you'd like to play with the toolbars' colours and fonts, enter the Customize menu again (Alt-click a toolbar) and select the "Toolbars" tab. Now you can select toolbars on the left and edit their settings on the right.

While Customizing Opus, Save your Layout Changes—Often

As you finish customizing your layout, you want to make sure that the changes you make "stick". If you are now working with my buttons and your default lister is called "My Lister", that's easy! Normally, you would need two operations in the Prefs menu: saving the lister as the Default Lister, then selecting "Save this Lister" to overwrite My Lister, with a few confirmation steps in between. But I made a **special menu item** at the bottom of the Prefs menu to perform both operations at once and without fuss.

Click the Prefs button's pull-down arrow, and select "My Lister: Default + Save". That's all! You could also use this keyboard shortcut: Ctrl + Alt + F5. Just watch out because the feature overwrites My Lister without asking you to confirm, and layout saves cannot be undone. So if you are not sure about overwriting My Lister, save the lister to a different name.

Click the Happy Place button (or press Shift + F5): your newly saved layout should pop up!

Getting more out of your Tabs

Tabs are a killer feature of Opus. It takes a bit of tweaking to get them right, and there is more to them than meets the eye.

Tabs at the Top

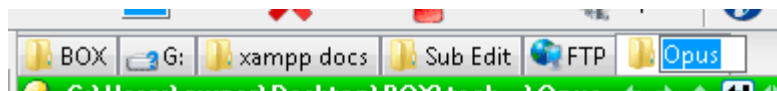
The thing about tabbed navigation is that because of Firefox, many of us expect to see tabs near the top of a program's window. With tabs at the bottom (the Opus default), I don't even *notice* that tabs are there. (I tried it for two months.) To move your tabs to the top of the file display, hit the Prefs button (or F12), then select Folder tabs / Options / Display tabs at the top.

Cycling through Tabs

If you like to use the keyboard to navigate, you can cycle through tabs by pressing Ctrl and the left or right arrow. Conveniently, that is similar to another navigation shortcut, Shift + left and right arrows, which *shifts* the focus to the left (or top) and right (or bottom) lister. Shortcut freaks may also like to know that like in Firefox, Ctrl + Shift + T reopens the last closed tab.

Renaming your Tabs

You can give your tabs custom names, which is helpful in a number of situations, such as when the original folder name is too long. To rename a tab, right-click it and select "Rename Tab". You can also click it in an "insisting kind of way", but not too fast, as by default a tab closes when you double-click it.



Locking Tabs

In your default setup, you might like a tab (such as the Desktop tab) never to switch to another folder. When you right-click a tab, you will find a "Lock Tab" menu with four options. "Unlocked" is the default. "Locked" means that if you try to switch to another folder, that folder will open in a new tab. Unless you've had three cups of coffee, I suggest you leave the other two options for another time and skip to the next section.

Still there? "Locked (reuse unlocked tab)" means that if you try to switch to another folder, the folder will open in the next unlocked tab to the right (if any), forcing the target tab to move away from the folder it had been displaying. "Locked (allow folder changes)" means you can switch folders in the locked tab, but if you move to another tab, the locked tab will revert to its "home" folder.

Which Tabs?

Don't feel you have to make hard choices and exclude favorite tabs. If need be, you can save multiple lister layouts in the Prefs button's pull-down menu. Or, more simply, you can create [groups of tabs](#) (as explained in the tricks section) that open all at once when you right-click the tab bar and select the group's name.

Here are a few "generic" folders to consider throwing into your tab mix:

* The Desktop

- * My Computer (renamed to its proper alias)
- * The Recycle Bin (renamed to "Trash" to take less space)
- * The Drive letter of your favorite mass-storage device or USB drive (for instance G:)
- * Your favorite FTP destination

In addition to these, I have tabs for several folders I access frequently. These folders have fairly distinct navigation paths from one another: if two folders were close, one tab would be enough to cover them.

When you're done, remember to [save your layout](#) (Ctrl + Alt + F5).

Creating Tabs by Double-Clicking

When you double-click an empty space on the tab bar, Opus can create a duplicate of the current tab. To enable this, click the Prefs button (or press F12), select Folder Tabs / Options, check "Double-click tab strip to open a new tab showing: Current folder".

Customizing your File Display

For me, it's important to have Opus display files consistently. I get frazzled when Opus automatically resizes columns as I skip from folder to folder. I want certain fields to always display in a fixed width. (If I need to change the fields and widths temporarily, I [use the padlock](#) as explained in the tricks section.) Here is the format that works for me.

Two Folder Trees

In dual display mode, I like to see a tree for each file display. This is set in Prefs / Folder Tree / Options / "Open second Folder tree in dual display mode".

Columns

You can add or remove columns by right-clicking the column field, but here's a faster way to get everything we need.

At this stage we're only selecting a few basic columns that will work with all kinds of files and all screen sizes, but do take a moment to note that Opus offers an astounding array of fields. To see a list of these fields, right-click a field name in the file display (e.g. "Name"), hover over "Columns", then hover over the various categories: Documents, Music, Pictures and so on. Many fields are specific to Pictures (e.g. "aperture"), Music (e.g. "bit rate"), Videos (e.g. "aspect ratio"). There are also fields related to Programs (e.g. "version") and Documents (e.g. "pages"). Later, we'll be making a custom Style just for Images, and at that time you may decide to choose some of these special fields.



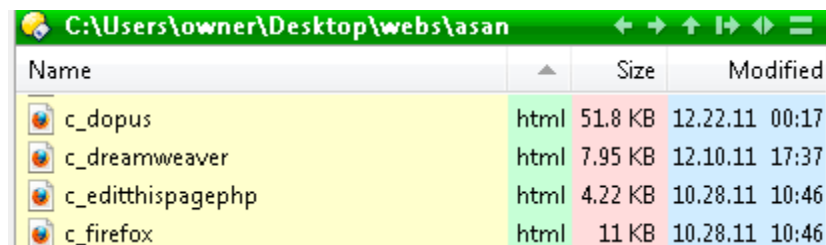
Click the Folder Options button. Select the Columns tab and the General pull-down option. Click the right arrow to bring fields to the right pane, remove the other fields by clicking the left arrow.

Here are my default fields:

- * Name. In the first column, I display file names without their extension. Why? My second field is the extension—making it easy to sort by extension. To remove extensions, stay in the menu of the Folder Options button, select the "Display" tab and check "Hide file extension in Filename column".
- * Extension.
- * Size (auto).
- * Date Modified.

Before you go anywhere, in the Folders button menu, click the first button (Save) and select "For All Folders + Layouts & Folder Tabs". Note that this has no effect in the second lister, so make sure to repeat these steps for the other side.

Notice that this is not the same Save procedure as when we save My Lister. Why not? When you save My Lister, you are saving the full layout for the folders presently being displayed. But that doesn't tell Opus how to display other folders, does it? That's what the Save menu in the Folder Options button is for. I find that a bit confusing too.



Name		Size	Modified
c_dopus	html	51.8 KB	12.22.11 00:17
c_dreamweaver	html	7.95 KB	12.10.11 17:37
c_editthispagephp	html	4.22 KB	10.28.11 10:46
c_firefox	html	11 KB	10.28.11 10:46

Shorter Date Format

To save space in the date column, you need to change the date format. This is done at the system level, in the Windows Control Panel, under Regional Settings. The exact menus will depend on your version of Windows, but it goes something like this: Control Panel / Regional and Language Settings / Formats tab / click "Customize this Format" / Time tab then Date tab: enter formats such as the ones below.

In the "Short Date" field of the date tab, I set the date to MM/dd/yy. You may prefer to use dots instead of slashes, as in the picture above: MM.dd.yy. In the Time format field of the Time tab, I set the time to HH:mm:ss

Column Width

Once you have the fields you want, you can size the columns to fit the information and your display. The first step is to click the Folder Options button, select the Display tab and uncheck "Auto-size columns".

To size columns to your liking, just drag the separator in the field name bar.

Now you're ready to save your changes! In the Folder Options button menu, click the first button (Save) and select "**For All Folders + Layouts & Folder Tabs**". Repeat for the second file display (you need to save on both sides). Then make sure to save the My Lister layout in the Prefs button's pull-down menu ("My Lister: Save + Default" or simply Ctrl + Alt + F5).

Format Flat View and File Collections

The changes you just made apply to the normal view, but not to the flat view and file collections. Now is a good time to make similar changes to these views. Don't try to switch to flat view, drag the columns and save the changes in the Folder Options button, it won't work.

Instead, press the Prefs button (or F12) and navigate to Folders / Folder Formats. Select Flat view, check the box to make sure that this format will be used by default in flat view mode, click the edit icon at the top. You can now edit the fields as above. You can type the field widths directly in the appropriate columns (I use the same values as for the normal folder format). You may consider moving the Extension field to the top so that you can easily distinguish between flat view and regular view. I also include the "Location" field at the end—very convenient to know in which folder a file found in flat view mode actually lives. Don't forget to visit the display tab. Repeat the procedure for File Collections.

Colours

You may like the idea of colours in your file display to help you distinguish the various fields. In case you like mine, here is how to replicate them. These colours were inspired by [Kondi](#) and [bxon](#) on the forum.

Click the Prefs button (or F12), and go straight to the first option: Display / Colours and Fonts / File and Folder Colours. Here, we'll change a few values.

- * File display background: right-click the arrow next to the colour. In the number field, enter 255, 255 and 206.

- * Now move to Other Colours / Folder Tree. For background, again, enter 255, 255, 206.

- * Now navigate to Display / Fields. In the field box on the right, pull the slider down until you see our fields.

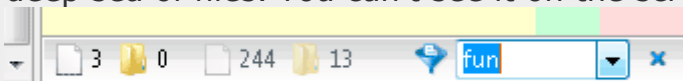
- * For Date modified, Background, enter 215, 235, 255.

- * For Extension, Background, enter 215, 255, 215.

- * For Size (auto), Background, enter 250, 219, 219.

Filter Bar at the Bottom

I love the filter bar. When a folder overflows with files, the filter bar makes life a lot more pleasant. Just type a few letters, and the relevant documents emerge alone from the deep sea of files. You can't see it on the screenshots



higher up on the page, but I love having filter bars at the bottom of my file displays. To do the same, click the Prefs button (or hit F12) then select File Displays / Filter Bar / Display Filter Bar: Always.

In that same preferences dialog, uncheck the "Activation key" box. That way, when you start typing, the filter is immediately active. (If you leave the box checked, the "Find As You Type" system takes over when you start typing,

which is confusing.) While you're in the Prefs box, go to File Displays / Find-As-You-Type, and in the first row (Find), replace the activation key (dot by default) with a forward slash. That way, when you type ".mp3" in the file display, that text will go into the filter bar rather than in the Find-As-You-Type field. You can still access the Find-As-You-Type field (but why would you?) with a forward slash (/), which those of you using Lotus 1-2-3 version 2.01 will appreciate.

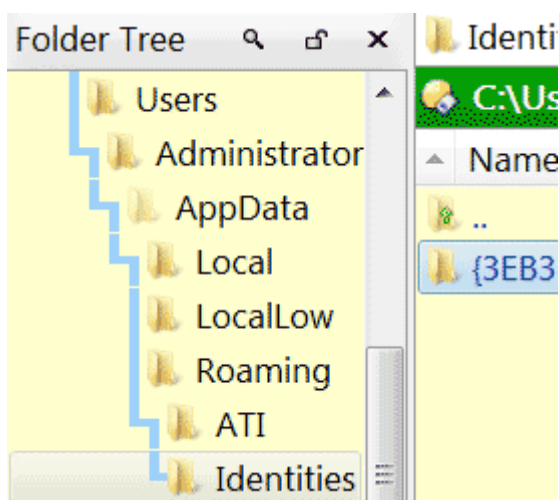
Here are some **quick tips to work fast with the filter bar**:

- * In a file display, to find a file, just start typing a few letters from the file name. No need to select the filter bar with the mouse.
- * When you are happy with what you see in the display, press Enter. This returns focus to the display, where you can navigate with the arrow keys.
- * From the display, start typing again to return to the filter.
- * Or press Ctrl + Shift + X to clear the filter.
- * To filter files not just in the current tab but in any of the open tabs, type "@" at the beginning of your filter string.
- * To find a file that starts with a specific string, append a * wildcard at the end of the string. To find a file that ends with a specific string, place a * wildcard at the beginning of the string. The * wildcard lets Opus know that we are switching out of "find anywhere" mode.

In the filter bar, you can use the old DOS wildcards (* and ?), but the * wildcard is implied by default, as Opus shows you all files where the search strings appears anywhere in the file name. For instance, if you type *.pdf*, you will see the same files as if you had entered **.pdf**.

By the way, you don't need to bother typing a file extension. If you click the pull-down menu to the right of the filter, you can check boxes for the file types to filter.


Highlight the Path to the Current Folder

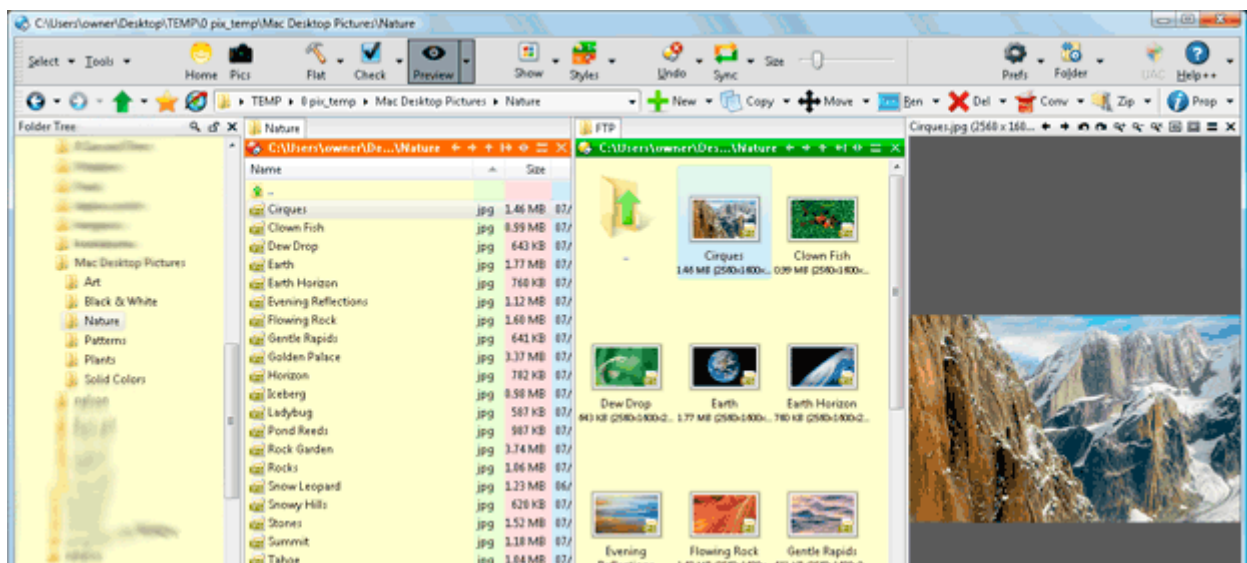


Sometimes, after diving deep into a complex folder structure, you want to use the folder tree to navigate to a nearby folder, but the tree has expanded to such a degree that you are not quite sure where you are anymore. One of the many cool features introduced in version 10.2.0.1 (October 2012) will highlight the path to the current

folder in the folder tree, using a colour of your choice. To turn on that feature, go to Prefs (F12) / Folder Tree / Appearance, and click "Highlight path to selected folder". I leave the sub-boxes unchecked. Then, to select the highlight colour, navigate to Prefs / Display / Colours and Fonts / Other Colours / Tree highlight path to selection. Click the "Background" pull-down menu to pick the colour. With my colour scheme, I find that a value of 162,208,255 (a light blue) works well.

Perfecting your Images Style

 When you click the [Pics button](#), the Images style is invoked. You can make that style show exactly the folders you want, exactly how you want them.



The first thing to decide is whether you want the button to call the Images style, or a tweaked version of that style (which allows you to keep the original Images style). If you want the button to call a new style (call it "Pics"), Alt-click the Pics button then change

Prefs STYLE=Images to Prefs STYLE=Pics.

To modify the style invoked by the Pics button, click the Prefs button (or press F12) then navigate to Layout and Styles / Styles. Select the Images style or, if your button now points to a new "Pics" style, click the duplicate icon at the top and enter "Pics". Now select your style (Pics or Images). Here is how I set mine up.

- * For File Display, choose the second Dual Vertical option (the one with the icon). The icon means that two displays will have navigation lock.
- * For Folder Tree, select "Single".
- * For Preview Pane, select "Vertical".
- * Leave the other upper checkboxes unchecked.
- * In the Left File Display tab, check View Mode: Detail. Check "Folder" and select your main pictures folder. Leave other boxes unchecked. Click Tabs, check "Close existing folder tabs", and do not add any tabs (it will confuse

Navlock).

- * In the Right File Display tab, check View Mode: Thumbnails. Check "Folder" and select your main pictures folder. Leave other boxes unchecked. Click Tabs, check "Close existing folder tabs", do not add tabs.
- * Click Apply, OK: done!

Now when you press the Pics button, the display should quickly switch to a convenient layout in which to browse your pictures. When you click the Happy Place button, you quickly return to a "normal" file layout.

On your display, the Preview pane's image may appear framed and against a white background, as on [this picture](#). For best all-around contrast, I prefer images to appear unframed, against a dark neutral background, as on the screenshot above. To set that up, click the Prefs button (or hit F12), select Viewer / Viewer Pane, uncheck "Frame picture" then click on the Picture background colour arrow and enter these numbers: 89,89,89.

Image-Related Fields

When I navigate image folders, I often press F9 to show or hide the metadata pane. I don't work on huge screens, so in the file display I stick to the basic fields we set up earlier: extension, size and date modified. However, if you have a large screen, you may want to set up your image tabs to show some image-related fields. If you right-click a column name (for instance "Extension") and select Columns / Pictures, you will see that Opus offers you an astounding array of image-related fields that can be shown in the file display. Here are a few among many: ISO speed, aperture, focal length, height, camera make.

Perfecting your Music and Video Styles

I haven't been listening to a lot of music in the past few years, so I haven't put any effort into making a special style for my music folder. But Opus has great features for displaying music files. For starters, it can display album art and list a number of metadata fields.

So I will leave you on your own with this part of the set-up and hope it will be a fun exercise. For inspiration, there's plenty of discussion about music files on [the Opus forum](#). If you invent something marvelous, please come back and let everyone know through the comment form at the bottom!

In the meantime, be aware that as a starting point, the Images style you have already set up will work quite well for Video and Music files. After hitting the Pics button, just switch to a Music or Video folder.

Music-Related Fields

As you construct your music style or layout, be aware that in the file display, Opus can show a great number of music-related fields. To see the list of fields, right-click a field name (such as the file's size) then select Columns /

Music. Here are a few examples among many: Album, year, genre, track number, duration, bit rate, codec.

Video-Related Fields

Likewise, Opus has many columns specific to videos. To see the list of fields, right-click a field name (such as the file's size) then select Columns / Movies. Here are a few examples among many: Duration, aspect ratio, bit rate, high definition.

More Cool Directory Opus Features

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A huge number of Directory Opus's cool features are already mentioned in the [tour of the interface](#). This page zooms in on cool features we haven't yet discussed.

Non-Standard Shortcuts

Please note that the instructions on this page mention non-standard keyboard shortcuts and menu items, such as F12 for "Preferences", because the page assumes you have installed the toolbars from my page about setting up the [Dear Opus interface](#).

Please see the [keyboard shortcuts](#) page for a beautifully organized list of shortcuts.

Zooming in on File Display Text and Thumbnails

I've already mentioned this during the [tour of the interface](#), but this feature is so useful that it bears repeating. With your mouse over one of the file displays, press the Ctrl key and move the mouse wheel: this will magnify or shrink the text and thumbnails in the file display.

As in many programs, can also also zoom in with Ctrl-Plus, zoom out with Ctrl-Minus, and go back to the default zoom size with Ctrl-0. These three shortcuts affect both sides of a dual lister.

As a slightly more advanced level, you can also control zooming by creating custom buttons. For instance, after you've read the [section on commands](#), create a button with the command "Set FONTSCALE=100,125,both" to toggle both displays of a dual lister between two zoom levels (100 percent and 125 percent). In fact, that is one of the secrets of Huge Mode.

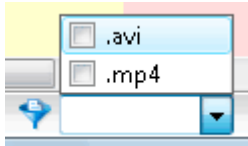
Huge Mode

"Huge Mode" is a shortcut I made so I can control Opus from the couch, far away from the monitor, and still read the names of music files or videos. The shortcut (which lives in the toolbars) is Ctrl + Alt + H. Give it a try!

Finding Files the Easy Way

Instead of searching, try filtering in flat view.

Do you want to find all AVI files in any subfolder of your desktop? Sure, you could use the search box (which rides on the Windows Search function, and which I have removed from my toolbars); you could use a third-party indexing program such as the wonderful "Search Everything"; or you could use Opus's powerful built-in search function, accessible through F3 or Ctrl + F.

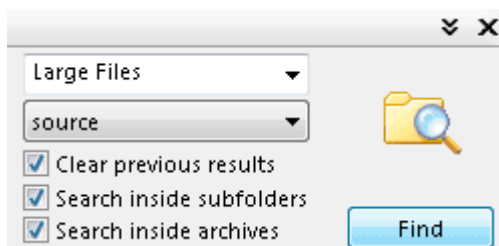


But for me, it seems a lot faster (and cleaner) to click the [Flat View Button](#) then to type `.avi` in the [filter bar that we set up a moment ago](#) right below the file display. It's as easy as that. Actually, it's even easier: instead of typing, you can click the filter's pull-down menu and check the AVI box.

The little blue filter icon lets you toggle the filter on and off.

Power Searches

Opus has an amazingly powerful search function, which you summon by hitting F3 or Ctrl + F. This opens a search dialog box inside of what Opus calls the "Utility Panel". There are two tabs: "Simple" and "Advanced". If you understand a couple of key things about the Opus search box, you will have a great time with it.



The first thing is that in the top-left box, you need to tell Opus which folders to include in the search. The second thing is that at the top right, a few settings determine how the search will work. Search results go into a file collection (these collections live at the top of the folder tree). In the pull-down, you tell the search engine the collection where it will store the results. By default, that collection is "Find Results". But you can point the results to any collection that you have already created (in this image, the results go into the Large Files collection). In the check boxes, you have three important selections to make. Typically, you will want to check the "Clear previous results" box. This means that when you search again, the previous contents of Find Results (or whichever collection you've specified) get overwritten, so that you don't have to deal with a clutter of previous results. Typically, you will also want to search inside subfolders (the second checkbox). The third checkbox lets you search inside archives (such as zip file) if you want.

If you happen to be doing some kind of **forensic search**, looking for files all over computer over a period of time, it's really convenient to be able to uncheck the "Clear previous results" box. You can run multiple searches with different keywords and slowly build up your search results. In such cases, it is particularly convenient to target a file collection dedicated to your search.

Let's now talk about the tabs. The "Simple" tab is simple enough (as is the "Advanced" tab), but it makes me smile because it is already at a level that most other programs would call advanced. You can specify words to find in the file name or *inside* the file itself, and various pull-down menus let you tweak parameters such as type, size and date. Wildcards are allowed.

In the Advanced tab, you can build structured searches to your heart's content, clicking the plus buttons to add a series of filters, using an intuitive series of pull-down parameters. If that's your lingo, you can use regular expressions in the text fields (be sure to check out my A-Awesome [regular expressions tutorial](#)). As an example of a simple search in this mode, you could look for files that contain the word "Hendrix" (inside the files, not in the file name) but not the word "guitar". Advanced searches can use metadata: for instance, you can look for mp3 files in the world music genre with a bit rate larger than 256kbps, or images above a certain pixel width.

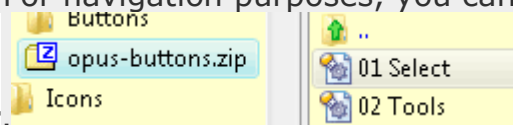
When you build an advanced search, you can **save the search filter**, then reuse it in a later search by clicking the "Filter" pull-down menu. To edit or delete a filter, click the Prefs button (F12) and navigate to File Operations / Filters.

Integrating Opus with Everything Search

For those who use the ultra-fast file indexer called [Everything Search](#), there is a way to display the results of Everything searches in an Opus file collection. (In my mind, as of Windows 7, there is no longer a need for this.) This is a mod offered by a forum member who goes by the nickname *apocalypse*. In short, you keep your existing installation of Everything. You download an archive by apocalypse. It contains SearchEverything.exe (not to be confused with Everything.exe, the original program), which you move into your Everything program folder. Then you make a button by copying code supplied by Apocalypse and pasting it in the toolbar in Customize mode. In the button, you may need to edit the path to your Everything folder. It's slower than the original Everything, but it works, and once the files are in an Opus collection, all the Opus functions are at your fingertips. See the forum post for the [latest files and instructions](#).

Zip Files in Opus—ISO and other Archives

In versions 10 and 11, I find that Opus handles archive files beautifully. An archive file (such as a zip, rar or 7z file) is a package that contains other files, right? For navigation purposes, you can therefore **treat an archive file**

as a folder.  And that's exactly what Opus does. Instead of extracting files out of archives, you just drag and drop as

you do between other folders.

Directory Opus handles an impressive range of archive files. Among these, I'm particularly excited that it handles ISO files. This means that to access the content of an ISO, you no longer need to mount it in Alcohol or Daemon Tools. Instead, you navigate the contents of the ISO as you would for a regular folder.

File Transfer Queues (Jobs Bar)

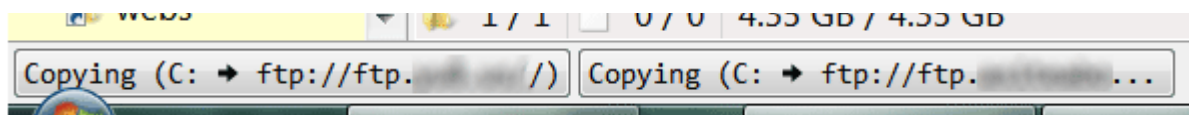
If you often copy and move large sets of files, you will love copy queues and the Jobs Bar.

*** Copy queue.** You've probably run into a situation where you need to copy many files from many folders into one new place. You select some files, copy, then paste. While the copy operation is in progress, you select the next batch of files, copy, paste again. If you repeat this sequence a number of times, you'll have several paste operations running in parallel, a recipe for crashing your system. But with Opus, you don't need to worry about that, because the program queues copy operations that target the same destination. When the first group of files has been copied, Opus moves on to the next. You can also abort jobs or move them up and down in the queue. If you have a long operation that might need to run for a few hours, you can check the "**Unattended operation**" box and choose "Treat as an error" for when files already exist. When you return to your machine, you can review the errors in the log and decide how to handle them.

*** Pausing Copy operations.** Sometimes you launch a massive copy operation that brings your machine to a near halt, and right in the middle of it you realize that you really need to run another task. Why, then, just click the pause button on the Opus copy dialog box.

* Jobs Bars (and how to set them up)

Sometimes you launch several copy or move operations at once. Keeping track of those operations used to require digging in the transfer queue. In Directory Opus 11, below the status bar, a new "jobs bar" shows a button for each of the ongoing copy or move operations. When you click on the button, it opens the usual transfer queue with progress indicators.



The jobs bar comes with settings that allow you to minimize the transfer queue by default, so that it doesn't get in the way. Also, you can remove the queue from the Windows taskbar, so that it doesn't interfere with Alt + F4.

To set all this up:

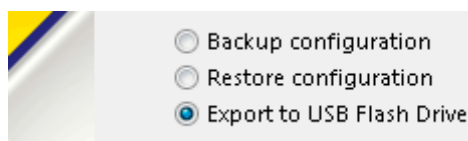
- * Prefs / File Operations / Progress Indicators
- * Check "Display the jobs bar automatically when starting a new job"

- * Check "Prevent progress indicators from showing on the taskbar (or in Alt + Tab)"
- * Check "Minimize progress indicators" and "Only when the jobs bar is visible"

For a nice "shell look" like on the picture, set the Jobs Bar to a monospace font such as Consolas in Prefs / Colours and Fonts / Fonts / Jobs Bar

Running Directory Opus from a USB Stick

When I troubleshoot a friend's PC, one of the things I hate is having to deal with the standard Windows file explorer. I just get lost in there. Not only does it change with every new release of Windows, but everyone configures it differently. Just finding the desktop can be very frustrating.



So it's wonderful that I can just pop in a USB key, run Opus and see my favorite file manager, configured just the way I like it. Everytime I make a major change to my Opus layout, I export the installation to my stick again. The procedure is the same whether you are doing it for the first time or the hundredth time, and it only takes a minute. Note that this only works if you have paid ten dollars for a USB export license.

In the Prefs button's pull-down menu, select Backup and Restore, then check "Export to USB Flash Drive". As of [Opus 10.0.3.1 beta](#), you can install both the 32-bit and 64-bit versions. For versions 10.0.3.0 (released January 10 2012) and below, choose the 32-bit version as the 64-bit version won't run on your friend's 32-bit system, and click "Next" a few times. If Opus tells you that it is already installed on the drive, choose "Replace" in order to save the new settings.

More Dopus Features I Love

Here are some Opus features that I wasn't able to mention in the tour of the interface but that I love nevertheless.

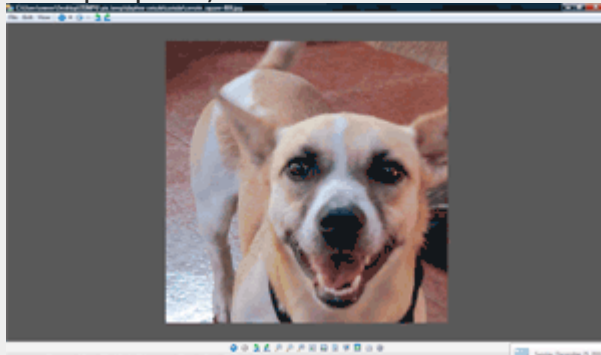
- * **Basic Renaming is actually Powerful.** Renaming a file: What could be simpler? You select it insistently or press F2, then you change the name— isn't that all there is to it? You might never know it, but in Opus this basic function has hidden tricks up its sleeve. Once you've entered rename mode (by pressing F2 or clicking the name "insistently"),
 - ⇒ Pressing the F2 key repeatedly will cycle between selecting the stem of the file name (everything before the dot), the extension, and the entire name.
 - ⇒ Ctrl + U converts the name to UPPERCASE, Ctrl + L converts it to lowercase, Ctrl + W converts it to Word Case.
 - ⇒ Ctrl + ↑ and Ctrl + ↓ access the history of names used for renames.

In Prefs, you can also [control what happens when you press F2](#): which part of the file name gets selected, where the cursor appears, whether its position sticks when you move up and down between files.

For me, these subtle features (you might never even know they exist) are part of what puts Opus in a league of its own. There's always a wonderful little secret to discover.

*** Seeing folder sizes.** When you're space-conscious or just like to understand what's on your hard drive, it's a treat to be able to see the size of your folders without having to right-click them then select "properties". Thank you for saving my wrists, Opus! To set that up, click the Prefs button (F12), select Folders / Folder Behavior, then check "Calculate Folder Sizes automatically for fixed local disks". If you use "soft links", you may want to check the "skip junctions and softlinks" box to speed up the lister by preventing it from getting bogged down in folder size calculations.

*** The Standalone Picture Viewer.** On my machines, I like to have two programs to work with images: Photoshop and a light-weight viewer. The light-weight viewer is for pressing Enter on an image file, having it immediately pop up, and quickly browsing through an image folder with the Page Up and Page Down keys. For this purpose, I used Irfan View for many



years, then I switched to XnView. Recently, as Photoshop gets faster and XnView gets bulkier, I have found that the Opus standalone viewer does everything I need my lightweight viewer to do. Here's how I like to configure it.

First, you need to tell Opus to use the Standalone Viewer by default. Click the Prefs button (or F12), select File Operations / Double-click on Files, check "Use internal viewer for all recognized pictures". Still in the Prefs menu, navigate to Viewer / Standalone Viewer. I check "Auto-size viewer window: Full screen", "Center viewer window", "Cycle through pictures with mouse wheel", "Generate Next/Previous list", "Recycle viewer window", "Reset zoom level for each picture to Fit to Page". Everything else is unchecked, particularly "Frame picture", because I change the Background colour. For the background colour, I enter these numbers: 89, 89, 89. These are very close to the ones Deke McClelland uses in his Photoshop tutorial, and they make a great all-around background for picture viewing. For the left mouse button setting, take "Select clipboard region" (if you select then copy and paste in a folder, you can create crops at top speed).

Here are the basics of how to use the viewer. When you double-click a picture, the viewer opens in full screen. Press Enter to exit full-screen mode

if needed, press Escape to exit the viewer. To zoom in and out, you can use Ctrl-Plus and Ctrl-Minus. Page Down (or Page Up) go to the next (or previous) picture, Home and End go to the first and the last.

Alternative to the Standalone Viewer: JPEGView

One limitation of the standalone viewer is that it does not let you change the default keyboard shortcuts. This has been a problem for me because my toolbars have shortcuts to rotate images left and right (Ctrl + Alt + Left / Right), but these do not work inside the viewer. To overcome this problem, tbone on the Opus forum recommended an open-source program called [JPEGView](#). I have found it to be a perfect drop-in replacement for the standalone Opus viewer because of its small footprint—yet it is fully configurable and immensely more powerful. See this [post on the Opus forum](#) for configuration tips.

* **Copying File Paths.** You probably remember that the [Copy button](#) has a "Copy Path" function that can come in quite handy. In that vein, a neat trick is that when you copy a file to the clipboard even *outside of Opus*, if you hit paste in the Opus address bar, Opus will paste the file's path.

Conditional Toolbars: Toolbars that Appear Depending on Context

In DO10, you specified the toolbars you wanted to see, and these were the toolbars you saw in all contexts—in all listers, view modes and paths.

In DO11, you can create sets of toolbars that get activated (replace the defaults) in certain contexts:

- * when a certain lister is opened
- * when a certain layout is activated
- * when a certain view mode is used (e.g., when viewing thumbnails)
- * when a certain folder format is activated
- * when navigating to certain paths

I'm aware that my present coverage of this feature is quite weak. On the forum, there is a lot of excitement about this feature, and examples of what people are doing with it.

For my part, I am still pondering how to use it. The reason is that I feel that I am using a set of toolbars that already work exceptionally well in most contexts: see my [tour of the Opus interface](#), which showcases my toolbars.

If anything, instead of swapping toolbars, I would prefer what I call **conditional buttons**, i.e. buttons that pop onto my default toolbars in certain contexts. For instance, when clicking on an image, audio or video file, a few buttons pertaining to these file types could squeeze into an empty space of the default toolbars.

I will be following discussions about how people use the new feature and updating this section as my thinking evolves.

Tips & Tricks to Master Directory Opus

PROTECTED BY **COPYSCAPE** DO NOT COPY

Before we start, I should mention that a huge number of Opus features are explained on the [Tour of the Interface](#) page and on the [More Cool Features](#) page. If you're here, I'm assuming you've already read the other two pages.

Non-Standard Shortcuts

Please note that the instructions on this page mention non-standard keyboard shortcuts and menu items, such as F12 for "Preferences", because the page assumes you have installed the toolbars from my page about setting up the [Dear Opus interface](#).

Please see the [keyboard shortcuts](#) page for a beautifully organized list of shortcuts.

On this page, I'd like to share some tips to get the most out of Opus. Before I get into this, I feel I should say that you don't have to read all of this, and you certainly don't have to *know* all this. Some of it is very advanced, and I certainly don't remember all of it—if I need something esoteric, I use this page to refresh my memory.

Opus is mind-blowingly powerful. Even if you only use it at two percent of its capacity, you may still enjoy a significant uplift in productivity. But if you would like some idea of what the program can do, this is a good starting place. Granted, I only know a fraction of what the program can do, so this section may have left out entire planets of Opus uses and users.

Let's start with something easy.

The Windows Desktop is a Huge Launch Button

If you work a lot in Opus, you may catch rarer and rarer glimpses of the Windows Desktop. You simply don't need to go there to access your files! Not long ago, I went to the Windows Desktop and realized, upon seeing the beautiful background image, that I had not seen it in about two weeks! Opus is up from the time I start up to the time I shut down.

When I mentioned this to Leo on the Opus forum, he said:

The desktop is just a giant button for launching Opus. :-)

It took me a while to see the truth of that seemingly off-the-wall statement.

When you double-click any empty space on the Desktop, a lister opens. So the Desktop is indeed a giant Opus launcher.

By the way, this only works if you have gone to Prefs (F12) and selected Launching Opus / From the Desktop / Open a Saved Lister Layout. You probably did so when we [set up the Happy Place layout](#).

Quickly Switching between Left and Right (or Top and Bottom) Displays


When you are working with the keyboard, it can be very convenient to have a [shortcut to move from the left to the right lister](#) (as you do so, the source and destination follows of course.)

Use Shift + Space to toggle the focus ("shift the space") between the left and right (or top and bottom) listers.

Also, remember from the [Styles button](#) that Ctrl + H (think "horizontal") toggles between vertical and horizontal dual listers, while Ctrl + E (think "Explorer") toggles between Explorer (single lister) and dual lister mode.

The Star is not for Favorites!

In most programs that offer the feature, I often forget that Favorites exist. And so for Directory Opus... except when I need to locate some hard-to find folder, at which time I remember that I can access it with the favorites

button, which I call the [Star button](#).  In my view, the Favorites feature in Opus is not useful to keep track of folders you use all the time. For that, you have the permanent Tabs in My Lister. For me, the true calling of the star button is to keep track of these few folders that you only need occasionally and always resent having to navigate to.

Here are folders I find particularly useful to have in my star button:

- The folder that contains the hosts file. You never know when you'll need to direct an annoying site to localhost.
- The Fonts folder.
- System32.
- The Windows user folder (e.g. C:\Users\owner)

When you select "Edit Favorites" from the Star button's menu, you can move favorites up or down in the list. You can also assign shortcuts to your starred folder.

Speaking of shortcuts, remember that some common folders have shortcuts already defined in the [Up button](#)'s *Shortcuts to Misc Locations* submenu: for instance, My Computer (Alt + Home), the Recycle Bin (Alt + Delete), Programs x86 (Ctrl + Shift + 6).

Backing up and Restoring your Configuration

Opus is mind-blowingly powerful.

In case you missed that in the section about the [Prefs button](#), the back-up and restore options are in that button's pull-down menu. Backup is called export. It's the same option that lets you export Opus to a USB drive. If you have a heavily customized installation, the backup and restore feature is very convenient when you need to install Opus on a second or third computer.

Restoring the Original Configuration

Maybe you've messed up your preferences or your toolbars, maybe you just want to see what the original config looked like. There are several easy options for you depending on what you'd like to restore.

- * To do a full restore, first make sure you back up your current configuration, just in case. Ready to restore? In the path bar, paste `/dopusdata`. In that folder, delete everything. Restart Opus.
- * To only reset the Preferences to their original state (without affecting saved lists and stored data), click the Prefs button (or hit F12). At the top left, there's a File menu. Select "Reset All to Defaults".
- * To only restore the toolbars, right-click an empty space on one of the toolbars and select "Toolbars / Reset to Default Toolbars".

Quickly Creating Text Files

Here are three cool text file tricks.

- * The Ctrl + T shortcut creates an empty text file in the current folder.
- * If you have text in the clipboard, selecting Paste (or Ctrl + V) creates a text file that contains that text.
- * Furthermore, when you paste clipboard text to create a file, the "Paste As" command from the copy menu (Ctrl + Shift + V) asks you what to name the file.

Middle-Click a Folder to Open it in a New Tab

In most browsers, middle-clicking a link opens it in a new tab. You can set the same behavior in Opus.

- * In Prefs / File Displays / Mouse, select *Single middle-click runs Middle double-click*.
- * Open the File Types dialog (in my toolbars: Prefs / File Types)
- * Select *All Folders*, click the Edit button
- * Click the Events tab, select *Middle double-click*, click the Edit button
- * In the function dialog, type *Go NEWTAB*

Automatically Label Files—for instance, Bold all Files Modified in the last Day

Opus lets you automatically label files (i.e., change their colour, bold their name etc) that meet certain conditions: size, file type, rating, image resolution and so on.

For instance, let's create a filter that will bold the names of all files and folders modified in the last day (I find this quite useful).

Go to Prefs / Favorites and Recent / File and Folder Labels. First, let's create a "Bold" label. At the top of the panel, next to "Labels", click the Add icon. Give it the new label a name: "Bold". Click the Bold checkbox. That's all we're doing to define the Bold label, but you could also define a colour by changing fields such as "Unselected Text". Next, lower in the same panel, next to "Labelled files and folders", click the first pull-down icon and select "Create a new label filter". In the Description field, type "modified within 1 day". In the Label pull-down, pick "Bold". In the conditions field, select fields to obtain "Date Match Modified Within 1 Day". Click OK and Apply. That's it! In your file displays, recently modified files will now jump out at you. Note that the filter has a convenient pull-down menu so you can quickly choose to apply a different label. Now might be a good time to create a label for "Underline".

In the filter definition, you could also add a line so that the filter only applies to files, but not to folders. To do that, edit the filter. Below the "Date Match Modified Within 1 Day" line, add this condition: "And Type Match Files Only". If you are not sure, note the checkbox next to the condition: you can disable it then re-enable it later—whereas clicking the "-" icon at the beginning of the line would just delete the condition.

Now you know everything you need to know in order to automatically display music files with a rating of 4 or above in bold blue!

Automatically Apply Custom Icons to Files that Meet Certain Conditions

This is exactly the same procedure as the one just above to create [custom labels or "styles" for certain kinds of files](#). When defining a label, instead of choosing formats, click the Browse button next to the Icon image field, and navigate to an image.

You can use this feature to change the icons of files matching certain extensions, or you can be much more creative. For instance, some people use the feature to place a "HD" icon next to high-resolution images—a condition you can define when creating a file label by selecting the "size" condition. I use this feature to display a "quality star" icon next to files that have a high rating in the file name—a naming convention I have been using for some time, For instance "8.9 Rest Of The File Name.extension".

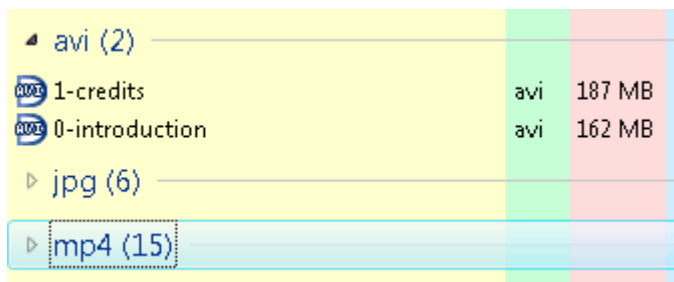
Note that the custom labels and icons discussed in the last two tips can also be applied manually, rather than automatically.

You just need a button with the code "Properties SETLABEL=LabelName" (if making buttons is new to you, read the section on [Commands](#)). Some people use this to manually apply a "Check" icon next to files they have dealt with, for instance documents they have read or TV episodes they have watched.

Saving Screenshots

On Windows, hitting the Print Screen key captures the screen. You can then paste your screenshot in a program such as Photoshop. With Opus, after punching Print Screen, you can also chose a folder and hit Paste (Ctrl + V): your screenshot will be saved as an image file. By default, Opus saves screenshots as BMP files. You can change that format in Prefs / Miscellaneous / Options / "Paste clipboard images as".

There is a fast, easy way to create a cropped screenshot. If you have [set up your standalone viewer](#) as I have, then in Prefs / Viewer / Standalone Viewer, at the bottom, for the left mouse button setting, you have picked "Select clipboard region". This means that when you open the screenshot you just pasted, you are able to click-drag across an area of the picture and press copy. Now hit paste in any folder: you have just created a cropped screenshot.



Grouping Files

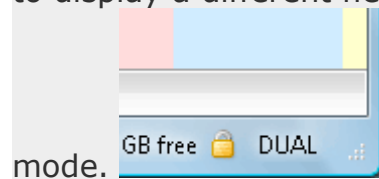
To see your files in cleanly separated groups, Alt-click a field name in the field bar. For instance, if you Alt-click "Ext", files will be grouped by extension. These groups can be collapsed or expanded by clicking the arrow to the left of a group's name. By right clicking any of the group headers, you can choose to **collapse all groups**, which is a great way to get a sense for the content of a large folder.

Sorting Files on Multiple Fields

You know how clicking the name of a field in the field bar sorts all the files by that field? If you hold the Ctrl key then click another field, you can sort your files on compound criteria, for instance on type + name.

Temporarily Changing the File Display (Fields, Widths etc.) for All Folders

In the section on [customizing your file display](#), you may have followed the steps to ensure that field sizes never change. But sometimes you may want to display a different field for a short time, and browse various folders in that



mode. To do so, first make the adjustments you want by dragging the column widths in the field bar, and by right-clicking the bar to add or remove fields. Then click the padlock icon at the bottom right of the screen. You can then move from folder to folder in that mode until you remove the lock. By the way, **hovering over the padlock** can be useful as the tip box explains why the file display is showing what it is.

A Layout Example: Seeing all the Fonts on your System

With layouts, you can save the size and position of all the elements in your lister. But do you remember to use layouts? Sometimes, I notice that I keep reconfiguring my lister to navigate to the same two folders, when a saved layout would do the trick. So here is an idea for a layout to get you started. On the left side, it displays the Windows fonts folder (C:\Windows\Fonts). The right side is a Preview pane. When you click on any font on the left, the Preview pane displays the font at various sizes with some sample text. You can arrange the screen as I just described, then go to the Prefs button's pull-down menu and choose "Save This Lister". It will then appear at the bottom of the Styles button's pull-down menu.

Sending a Quick Email

If you have installed my buttons, select any file then press the F11 key (or select Tools / Email files). In the dialog, click and delete the attachment. This allows you to send a quick email without attaching anything (assuming you have entered your SMTP information in Prefs / Internet / Email). If you don't want to go through the step of deleting the attachment, you can make a dedicated button just to send an email (read the section on [Commands](#) and enter "Help NEWEMAIL" in the button code). For my part, I don't want to clutter the interface and memorize another hotkey.

Defining Aliases for Complex Paths

Tabs give you quick access to everyday folders. The Star button gives you access to hard-to-find folders. There is yet another way to get to faraway branches of the folder tree: Aliases. Let's say you keep all your water bills on your computer. Maybe the latest bills live at the end of a long folder path:

`Docs/Admin/House/Bills/Water/2012`

To create an alias, click the Prefs button (F12) then navigate to Favorites and Recent / Folder Aliases. Call your alias water12. In the path bar, you can now type (including the forward slash):

/water12

and Opus will take you straight to your last water bills! Combine this with the F4 shortcut that selects the path bar, and you can do some very fast navigation without touching the mouse.

At the bottom of the same Preferences dialog, notice the checkbox to show built-in aliases.

If you're going to be using aliases, you may also like to know about **special characters that automatically expand to certain paths** when you type them in the path bar. For instance, the caret (^) expands to the Windows System Folder, the back tick (`) expands to the Desktop, the hash sign (#) expands to Program Files. This feature works if you have path completion enabled (Prefs / Miscellaneous / Options / "Path completion in path fields: automatically, as I type". In that same Prefs box, click the question mark at the top right to see the other auto-expanding special characters.

Custom FTP Menu Item to Open default Local Folder on the Left and FTP site on the Right

The FTP Sites in the FTP button are wonderful, but compared to Filezilla, one thing is missing: a default local folder that opens along with each FTP site, allowing you to see your local files on the left and the remote files on the right. I will show you how to add a menu item to do just that. In fact, in the FTP button that came with my toolbar, I included a template. All you need to do is give it a quick edit.

- * For convenience, create an alias to your local folder. Prefs / Favorites and Recent / Folder Aliases, click the Add icon at the top.
- * Alt-click the toolbar (Customize mode), click the FTP button. In the menu, double-click "Your Site (EDIT ME!) Dual".
- * In the Hotkey box, you'll see that the button has Ctrl + Shift + A for a shortcut. If you want to change it, click the Hotkey field and punch in your shortcut. (If there is a conflict, see [quick fix for all hotkey conflicts](#).)
- * Edit the Label field. (The \t is a tab. The text after \t is a hint showing your chosen shortcut.)
- * Click in the code box at the bottom. Replace "YourAlias" with the name of the alias you just created. Keep the forward slash!
- * Replace YourFTPSite with the name of an FTP site you have saved in Opus (the Opus name, not the FTP address). You're done!

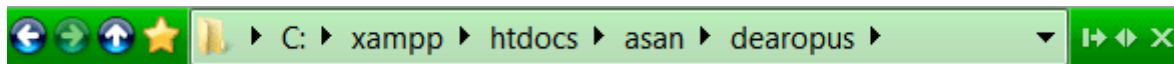
When you click the button or punch the shortcut, the local files will appear in the left display (which will be the source) while the FTP site will appear on the right. If a tab for either of the two folders was already there, it will be selected rather than duplicated. Navlock is turned on, so if you dig deeper in your local or remote tree, the other side will follow.

Your last job, if you have other FTP sites, is to duplicate and edit the button for your other sites. (In Customize mode, right-click the button then select Copy and Paste).

Saving a Group of Tabs

If you often have to work with a group of the same five folders, you could save a layout or a style just for these occasions. But that's a lot of "overhead" if you're not doing anything particular to the layout for these tabs. Easy solution: save your tabs as a group! In your display, close all tabs except the ones you want to save as a group. Now right-click any tab and select Groups / Save. Later, to open the group, right-click on the tab bar and select Groups and the name of your group. To edit or delete your group, select Groups / Edit or hit the Prefs button (F12) and navigate to Folder Tabs / Tab Groups. When you edit a tab group, there is a handy checkbox that allows you to "Close existing folder tabs" when you load a tab group, preventing clutter.

The File Display Border is a Toolbar



Look at the green file display border in the image above. As of DO11, it is a toolbar that can be configured like any other: adding buttons, functions and so on.

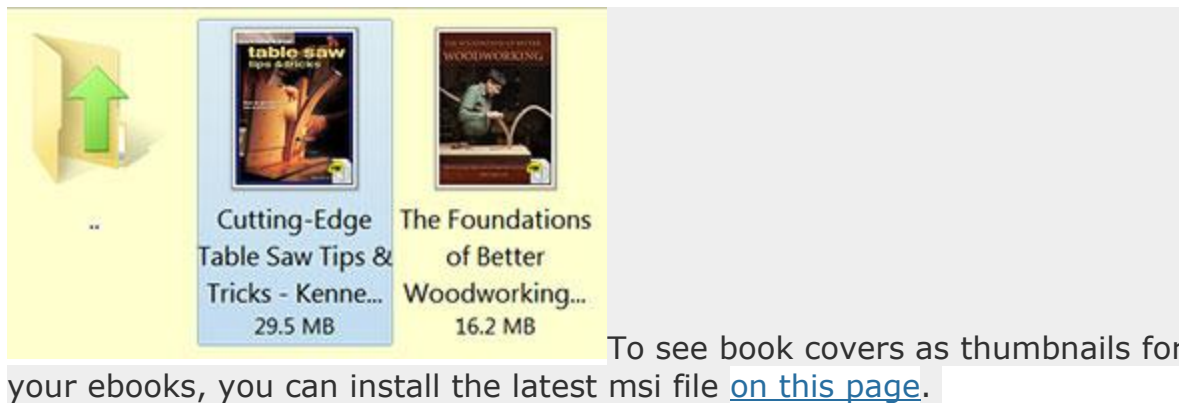
In Prefs / File Display / Borders, you can specify the name of that toolbar. This has a lot of potential. I haven't used that function yet, but at some point I might add a File Display Border toolbar to my set of shared toolbars.

Viewing Source Code in the Preview Pane

The Directory Opus Preview pane shows source code in plain text format. To preview source code in colours, it used to be that you could install the [Source Preview Handler](#) from SmartFTP. Now the module needs a license, and at the moment the only replacement I now about is [this one](#).

When the installer finishes, click on a source code file, then click on the Preview button (or hit F8). The code is now formatted in easy-to-read colours.

Ebook Thumbnails



Making a System-Wide Shortcut Key Combination

A system-wide shortcut key combination is a shortcut that is understood regardless of "where you are" on the computer. For instance, by default, Windows + D brings you to the desktop. Opus lets you create system-wide shortcuts. For them to work, though, Opus has to be running (it can just be in the background). To create a system-wide shortcut, Alt-click the toolbar to enter Customize mode. Select the Keys tab, click the New Hotkey icon at the top left. In the New Hotkey dialog, check the "System-wide Hotkey" box at the top right. For the "Function" and "Start In" boxes, if you are launching a program, the easiest is to first create a regular shortcut to that program; then to Alt + Enter that shortcut (Properties) and copy-paste the content of "Target" and "Start In" boxes.

I made global shortcuts to services.msc, msconfig.exe and calc.exe. On the forum, Leo gave me the command to launch system properties: just paste `control system` in the Function box. (The usual Windows shortcut is Windows + Break, but it doesn't work on my laptop). I also made a global shortcut to Process Hacker (my replacement task manager): Ctrl + Shift + Alt + Del. It seems to work better than entering a key combination in the properties dialog for the shortcut that's in the quick-launch bar.

Multiple Key Combos for Keyboard Power-Users

As you can tell from my [shortcuts page](#), keyboard shortcuts are a big part of my workflow. But I was running out of possibilities with Ctrl + Shift, Ctrl + Alt, Ctrl + Win... And had started going to mash sequences such as Ctrl + Alt + Shift with great reluctance.

In Opus 11, you can use multiple key combos: for instance, Ctrl + O, E. This opens vast possibilities: this Ctrl + O, E could stand for "**O**pen with" **E**ditpad. Then you can have a series of related shortcuts: Ctrl + O, P for "**O**pen with **P**hotoshop", and so on.

To set up a multiple key combo shortcut, Alt + Click the menu item as usual to enter the command editor. In the hotkey field, there is now a pull-down menu at the right. After entering the initial sequence (for instance Ctrl + S), select "Add to Sequence" from the pull-down.

If you have cool ideas for such sequences, please send them over! In the meantime, here are a few ideas to get us started.

Key combo + C, Key: Toggle **C**olumn (courtesy of abr), e.g Rating, Bitrate...

Key combo + S, Key: **S**ort by column, e.g Date, Size, ...

Key combo + O, Key: **O**pen with application, e.g. Photoshop, Editpad...

Key combo + D, Key: **D**rive letter A, B, C... (At the moment, this is Alt + drive letter in my toolbars, and I might keep it that way)

Key combo + R, Key: **R**ename using preset, e.g. Uppercase, Lowercase...

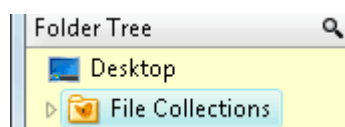
Key combo + R, Key: **R**ate the file (1, 2, 3 stars...)

Key combo + F, Key: **F**TP a given site

This thread discusses [opening a pop-up menu when the initial key combo is pressed](#).

Making icon Sets

Icon sets are files with a ".dis" extension. These are zip files with a different extension. Inside the zip file, you have icons and a simple xml file. Full instructions are available at the bottom of the [Opus download page](#). See the [Preferences page](#) for a tip to [easily open dis files](#).



Creating Collections of Related Files—for backups or just for convenience

It may take a while to get used to this feature, but once you know it's there, you may find more and more uses for it. Near the top of the folder tree, you will find the "File Collections" folder, where you can create virtual folders that "contain" related files scattered around the disk. It's a bit like a collection of shortcuts, but it's more like having the same file in two places at once. If you rename the file in the collection, it is renamed for real. And if you delete it, the "real file" goes to the recycle bin! (However, you can delete a collection without affecting the files.) I find collections particularly useful to organize files and folders that I want to backup regularly. Normally, I would have to hunt for those files around the disk. With a *Backup* collection, all the material is assembled in advance. When you perform a search through the powerful [Find panel](#) (F3), the results go into a file collection.

Having a File in Several Places at Once with Symbolic Links

Symbolic links (also known as soft links or symlinks) are [advanced kinds of shortcuts](#) that can be used by any program because they are system-level links, whereas a Windows shortcut is just a file with a *lnk* extension, a file that some programs may not know how to handle. If you copy a soft link, you copy the real file. It's sometimes more convenient to have a soft link than a shortcut in a folder—for instance when you're going to be backing up

that folder. Unlike the kind of "advanced shortcuts" found in file collection, symlinks can be renamed or deleted without affecting the original file. To create a soft link in the destination to a file selected in the source, select **"Create Symlink"** from the Copy menu or press Ctrl + backslash.

Setting a Variable that Keeps its Value (after reboot)

I'm not using this yet but want to keep it in mind: the @set directive now lets you store values into variables that persist beyond the current command. The scope of these variables can be the source tab or the destination tab; it can be the current file display or the current lister; it can be global; and it can even survive a reboot.

There's an example of it [here](#).

Thumbnails as one of the Lister's Columns

As of Directory Opus 11, you can add a "Thumbnails" column to the file display. This means that you no longer have to be in the Thumbnails view mode to see thumbnails: for instance, you can have thumbnails in details mode.

I mostly work in details mode in dual listers, where space is a premium, so I haven't yet figured out how I will use the feature. But I am sure I'll make good use of it—perhaps in Explorer mode.

Filtering out certain Files or Folders at the Global or Local Level

Never want to see another file called desktop.ini, thumbs.db, or one of the dirty "mac pellets" left on your usb key after you stick it in your friend's Mac? Hit the Prefs button or F12, Folders / Folder Display / "Global hide Filters", and check "Enable global wildcard filters". You can also hide (or show) certain files only in specific folders. To do so, navigate to that folder, click the Folder Options button, and select the Filters tab.

Looking inside and Editing Config Files (OCB files)

When you export your configuration, Opus creates a file with a ".ocb" extension. This file is convenient if you want to import your configuration to a new machine. That's fine for your own computers, but **think twice before sharing OCB files as they often contain sensitive information** such as your FTP sites (including passwords), your smtp settings and your license key.

When you use an OCB file to move your configuration to another computer, you may not want to overwrite the layouts on the target machine, as they may use special fonts. No problem: you can edit the OCB file! These ocb files are actually zips file with a different extension. If you change the extension to zip, you can look inside. But the easiest way to open ocb files is to change

the default handler, so that they open like zip files when you double-click them. See [how to easily open ocb files](#) on the Preferences page, then click the back button.

Inside ocb files, most of the files are xml files with different extensions, such as ocx. They can be opened with a text editor. Here is my **workflow to transfer an OCB file from my main machine to my second machine without losing the layouts and Font settings**. It works great for me... but no warranties!

- * Before you start, export an ocb from both machines. Place these two files side-by-side in a dual lister.
- * Rename the ocb from the target computer *OLD.ocb*. Rename the ocb from the source computer *NEW.ocb*. The idea is to tweak NEW by incorporating some settings from OLD.
- * In OLD, navigate to Layouts. Copy your important layouts to NEW.
- * If you have different screen sizes, it is important to keep your default file formats. In OLD, navigate to Formats. Copy all the files with an *off* extension to NEW.
- * If you are using my buttons, your Images style may refer to a localized folder on each machine. If so, in OLD, navigate to ListerStyles. Copy *Images.ols* to NEW.
- * If you want to keep the target machine's fonts, we need to edit one of the Prefs files. In NEW, navigate to ConfigFiles. Extract *prefs.oxc* to a regular folder. You need to do that so you are able to edit the file (edits made inside the archive won't stick). In OLD, open the equivalent *prefs.oxc* file. About one page from the top, find the section that begins with `<fonts>`, and copy everything between there and `` a few lines lower. Paste that over the same section in the file you have extracted from NEW. Save the file, and place it back in NEW/ConfigFiles, replacing the original.
- * Now you are ready to import *NEW.ocb*!
- * If something goes wrong, you can always go back to *OLD*!

Fixing Hotkey Conflicts

My toolbars and buttons are meant to be used as easily with the keyboard as with the mouse. Many buttons have easy-to-remember shortcuts. For instance, you can select a file or folder, keep Ctrl + Alt pressed down, then press 1, 2, 3 and the other numbers to choose a colour for the file or folder. (Ctrl + Alt + 0 removes the colour.) To make these shortcuts, I had to replace a few default shortcuts that called functions I would never call with a shortcut. So when you install the toolbars, there will be a few conflicts. They only take a minute to resolve. Alt-click the toolbar to get into Customize mode. Select the "Keys" tab. In the list, the shortcuts in red are those that are assigned to only one operation. Make sure that only one box is checked. Among the conflicts, here are some correct assignments:

- * F1 for Help++
- * F8 for Preview
- * Ctrl + D for "Select None"
- * Ctrl + Alt + number: these are all assigned to colours

- * Ctrl + Shift + A: you can keep UAC (default) or use this combination for the super cool [quick dual FTP menu item](#) that you may want to edit.
- * Ctrl + Shift + T: Undo Close Tab

Managing File Types

I'm not into this, but this feature may be just the thing you're after. Remember that the Prefs button's pull-down menu has a File Types option? In the dialog, if you pull the vertical slider all the way to the bottom, you will run into the File Type Groups options. You can edit those, or create new groups, such as "Code" for files ending in .php, .c and so on. You can then use these groups when searching and filtering, using the grp:Code syntax. See the help file or the manual for more details.

Macro Commands

In the section about the [Tools menu](#), I mentioned the Command Line Interpreter (shortcut: Ctrl + Alt + Shift + R), which you can use as a door to the powerful Opus macro commands. If you installed my button pack, you may already have noticed these commands while editing a button. For instance, if you Alt-Click the [Happy Place button](#), you will see this command in the Functions box:

```
Prefs LAYOUT="My Lister"
```

This is an example of an Opus macro command. There's a lot you can do with Opus commands. You can make all the buttons included in your current toolbars. You can launch external programs. You can make buttons to run the instructions of DOS-style batch files. And you can make buttons to automate very specialized tasks.

If you'd like to get an idea of the range of functions in the Opus command language, Alt-Click the toolbar to get into Customize mode. Now right-click the toolbar to the right of the Properties button and select New / New Button. Double-click the new button. Click "Advanced" at the bottom of the dialog. In the bar above the text window, click on the Commands menu, and select GO. Now click on Arguments and select BACK. Click on Modifiers. Notice how many options are open to you at each of these steps? Click cancel a few times so the button is not saved to your toolbar.

Apart from writing commands inside buttons, you can add commands to the Customize menu's Command tab. In that tab, toward the end, find the User-defined Commands header. Expand it, click Add new User Command, and you're on your way. For more details, you'll want to consult the [user-defined commands section of the manual](#).

I'm very far from being an expert at the Opus macro language. The fact is, there is so much in Opus that you don't need to know *anything* about macros to take advantage of the program's powerful functions. Here are a few sample commands to give you an idea of the syntax and functionality. You

can try some of them in the CLI (Ctrl + Alt + Shift + R).

```
SetAttr META * // Clears all the metadata in a file
```

Image ROTATE=EXIF HERE REPLACE // When your camera stores wrong data in a photo (e.g. wrongly tagging it as vertical), this command resets the data so the picture appears normally.

Copy MAKELINK=softlink // In the destination, creates a "[soft link](#)" (or "symbolic link") to a file in the source.

CLI DOSPROMPT="admin,colour=1B" // Opens a Dos prompt in light aqua text on a blue background.

"C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CS5.1 (64 Bit)\Photoshop.exe" {allfilepath} // Opens selected files in Photoshop (a nice [example from the manual](#)).

@confirm:Are you sure?|Ya|Nope // Displays a confirmation dialog before running the function. Technically, this is a "[command modifier](#)".

Making Custom Toggle Commands

To illustrate macro commands, here is code you can use to create custom toggle buttons. Many commands have a toggle parameter. For instance you can toggle the checkview mode with `Set CHECKBOXMODE=Toggle`. What if you want to toggle between two modes that don't have a toggle parameter? You can use @ifset, which is one of many [command modifiers](#). It enables you to test whether a state is set, and depending on the result, to execute one command or another. In this example, the command would toggle between dual vertical and explorer mode.

```
@ifset:DUAL=On
Prefs STYLE=Explorer
@ifset:else
Prefs STYLE="Dual Vertical"
```

You can achieve something similar (but not identical) with a built-in toggle command: `Set DUAL=toggle,vert`. This illustrates that Opus often gives you several ways of doing things.

Command Arguments

To quickly read the arguments of a macro command, open the CLI (Ctrl + Alt + Shift + R) and type the command followed by a question mark, for instance: `SetAttr ?` If you'd like to read up on the Opus macro language's commands, arguments and modifiers, visit the [Command Reference](#). For programmatic use of the commands, things get interesting in the section about [codes to open dialogs](#).

Some of my Opus Preferences

Here are some Preferences that I really like and haven't mentioned earlier.

Preventing the folder tree from shifting left and right as you navigate

Prefs / Folder Tree / Options / Horizontal Scrolling Style / Windows 7 (no scrolling or scrollbar at all)

Preventing Opus listers from breeding like mad

With this setting, when you click a folder on the desktop, it opens in a new tab in the current lister.

Prefs / Launching Opus / Explorer Replacement / (checkbox at the bottom:) Open external folders in a new tab

Improving navigation with folder shortcuts

If you often use two distant folders together, you may find it convenient to have them contain shortcuts to each other. By default, shortcuts are listed as files (.lnk extension) but you can change that.

Prefs / Folder Behaviour / Sort shortcuts to folders like folders.

Improving selection method in the folder tree

In the folder tree, to select a folder with a short name, you have to focus the mouse on the name. Selection is easier if you can click anywhere on the folder's line in the tree.

Prefs / Folder Tree / Appearance / check "Full-row selection".

Making it easier to work with Opus preference (.ocb), icon (.dis) and theme (.dlt) files

These files are actually zip files with a different extension. To work with these files, instead of renaming them each time, tell the Opus zip handler to open them!

Prefs / Zip Files/ Zip extensions / add .ocb;.dis;.dlt

Inside the ocb file, you will find lots of ocx files that are actually xml. Right-click one of them, Open With, then select your favorite text editor to open these files by default.

Inline Renames: Controlling Selection and Cursor Position

Under File Operations / Inline Rename, there are options that control how your cursor works during inline renames.

I played with the "retain cursor position" option for some weeks, then decided to turn it off as it drove me mad. When you rename a list of files and use the up and down arrow keys to navigate from one file to the next, it keeps the cursor position in the file name, for instance between the fifth and sixth characters.

The "Default Selection Mode" option controls which portion of the name gets selected and where the cursor gets placed when you press F2. At the moment, instead of selecting the entire file name, I am playing with "Cursor at Start", as I find that I often only want to change a few characters in the stem of a file name. We'll see if this option also drives me mad after a while.

One new feature that I find useful in DO11 is that you can now **specify new "break characters" where the cursor jumps** when you use Ctrl + left / right arrows to navigate the file name. By default, the cursor jumps to the space character. I added the dash, underscore and period.

How? Prefs / paste wordbreak_char_names in the search box / enter -_. in the text field.

Keeping flat view or checkbox modes when changing folders

When I select the flat view or the checkbox mode, I want to keep that mode as I shift folders, until I turn it off, which is easy with the Flat view button and the Checkbox button.

Prefs / Folders / Folder Behavior / uncheck the "cancel checkbox mode" and "cancel flat view mode" boxes.

Tweaking the sort order of file names

In the phonebook, Alan Bulldozers comes before Alanis. What about in your file display?

This tweak does not live in the Preferences, but under the Folder Options button. (Yes, Opus needs therapy when it comes to folder options.) At the bottom of the display tab, I like keeping the "Word sort" box checked.

Another sort order tweak (new in DO11) is to tell Opus to **ignore prefixes such as "The" or "An" when sorting**. In a list of files, you may want to avoid sorting files starting with "The" or "An" at the letters T and A. This was possible in DO10 through folder formats, now you can set that globally.

Prefs / Folders / Global Filters / "Ignore prefix when sorting" / paste something like "An |The " to ignore "an" and "the"

Increasing control in the file display

When a file display is full, there is no empty space where to right-click. This is not a problem if clicking other fields than the name does not select files. While we're at it, turn on the option to go to the parent folder by double-

clicking an empty space in the display (fields other than the name count as empty space). (To improve on this feature, look up the [Lister Double Click script](#).)

At this stage, you can do away with the `..` at the top of each lister, as you have many options to reach parent folders (Backspace, breadcrumbs etc.)

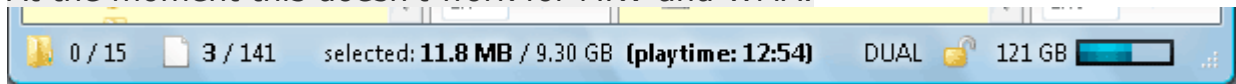
Prefs / File Display Modes / Details / File selection style: Full-width of the Name column.

Prefs / File Displays / Mouse / Double-click on the file display background / Go to parent folder.

Prefs / Folders / Folder Display / uncheck *Show '..' parent item in folders*

Seeing the play time of audio and video files in the status bar

At the moment this doesn't work for MKV and WMA.



Prefs button (F12) / Display / Status Bar. In the text box, replace everything to the left of {rpad} with this:

```
{sf}/{tf} files, {sd}/{td} folders, selected: {sba} {h!}  
(playtime: {smp3}){h!}
```

For details of the syntax, while you are on that Prefs page, click the question mark at the top right of the Prefs dialog box. Here is [the code for my current status bar](#) shown above, which is inspired by [Leo's November 2011 status bar](#).

Better readability for Metadata Pane

I like it with a classic yellow on dark blue.

Prefs / Search Box / Metadata Pane

Opus Shortcuts

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Keyboard shortcuts are vital to fast work flow in many programs, and Opus is no exception. In my [custom toolbars](#), few of the original shortcuts remain. I have tried hard to make a rational collection of useful keyboard shortcuts, which often give access to custom functions that live in my toolbars. Opus is designed with this kind of flexibility in mind.

On this page, I maintain the list of Opus shortcuts that live in my toolbars, attempting to organize them into meaningful themes:

- * [Three basic shortcuts](#)
- * [Display shortcuts](#)

- * [Copying & Moving shortcuts](#)
- * [Location shortcuts](#)
- * [Renaming shortcuts](#)
- * [Tab shortcuts](#)
- * [Selection shortcuts](#)
- * [Web shortcuts](#)
- * [Script-dependent shortcuts](#)
- * [More Great shortcuts](#)

The work of inventing (or reading about) custom functions to go in the toolbars, making keyboard shortcuts to call these functions, and organizing such shortcuts is never done... So please feel free to send me your ideas in the comment form at the bottom.

Please note that most of the keyboard shortcuts below are not standard: they come with the [toolbars for the Dear Opus interface](#).

Four Shortcuts to Get Started

Shortcut	Function
F12	Preferences
Ctrl + Z	Opens Undo list
Ctrl + T	Creates a new text file.
Ctrl + N	Creates a new folder.

Display Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
Shift + F5	Refreshes the display to my Happy Place (My Lister)
Ctrl + Alt + F5	Saves My Lister and sets as the "default" lister
Ctrl + E	Toggles between Explorer and Dual mode.
Ctrl + H	Toggles between Horizontal and Vertical mode.
F6	Pix Layout (rhymes with six)
F7	Cycles through View Modes
F8	Toggles the Preview Pane. (The 8 are the eyes in lOOk)
F9	Toggles the Metadata panel.
F10	Toggles the Flat View.
Ctrl + Alt + H	Huge Mode
Ctrl + 0	Resets the Zoom level to normal
Ctrl + Scroll Wheel	Magnifies or shrinks the file display's text and thumbnails
Ctrl + Plus / Minus	As above, magnifies or shrinks the file display's text and thumbnails
Ctrl + Space	Autosize columns
Ctrl + Alt + 0 through 9	Changes the file colour (1-9), or resets it (0).

Copying & Moving Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
Ctrl + 1	Copies from the Source to the Destination
Ctrl + 2	Moves from the Source to the Destination
Ctrl + /	"Squash": Copies from the Source to Destination and overwrites without asking
Ctrl + J	Duplicates ("Jumps") selected files or folders.
Ctrl + Shift + U	Moves files Up to the parent folder.
Ctrl + Shift + D	Moves files to the Desktop.
Ctrl + Shift + N	Copies the Names of the selected files. Surprisingly useful!
Ctrl + Shift + P	Copies the Path of the selected files.
Ctrl + Shift + 5	Copies a file's MD5 hash to the clipboard.
Ctrl + Shift + L	Copies a fully-formed html hyperLink to the selected files to the clipboard.
Ctrl + Shift + I	Copies an html Img link to the selected files to the clipboard.
Ctrl + Shift + C	Adds the selected files to the clipboard (without replacing the current files in the clipboard).
Ctrl + Shift + V	Asks file name when pasting clipboard text into a tab (which creates a text file).
Ctrl + Alt + Shift + 1	Copy As: copies from Source to Destination, asking for a new name.
Ctrl + Alt + Shift + 2	Move As: moves from Source to Destination, asking for a new name.

Location Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
Alt + Home	Computer.
Shift + Home	Desktop. Relies on the GoExisting script (drag and drop the script file into Prefs/Toolbars/Scripts).
Alt + Delete	Recycle Bin. Relies on the GoExisting script (drag and drop the script file into Prefs/Toolbars/Scripts).
Alt + Page Up	The tab's original folder.
Alt + Page Down	Opens the selected file's folder (useful in collections and flat view).
Alt + Backspace or just Backspace	Goes up to the parent folder.
Alt + A through Z	Go to Drive A—Z.
Alt + 2	System 32
Alt + 6	Programs x86
Alt + 4	Programs (think 64-bit)
Alt + Left or Right arrow	Back or Forward to the previous / next folder.

Renaming Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
Shift + F2	Opens the Rename panel.
Ctrl + Alt + L	Converts file names to L ower case.
Ctrl + Alt + U	Converts file names to U pper case.
Ctrl + Alt + S	Converts file names to S entence case.
Ctrl + Alt + C	Capitalizes first word of the file name.
Ctrl + Alt + W	Converts file names to W eb-safe case.
Ctrl + Alt + .	Converts dots to spaces.
Ctrl + Alt + -	Converts dashes to spaces.
Ctrl + Alt + _	Converts underscores to spaces.
Ctrl + Alt + Spacebar	Removes spaces.

Tab Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
Shift + T	New Tab.
Ctrl + Shift + T	Undo Close Tab.
Ctrl + Left or Right arrow	Shift to the next tab to the left or right in the source display.
Ctrl + Shift + Left or Right arrow	Shift to the next tab to the left or right in the destination display.
Ctrl + Shift + 1	Duplicate Current Tab to the other side.
Ctrl + Shift + 2	Move Current Tab to the other side.
Ctrl + K	Toggles loc K ing or unlocking the tab's format.
Ctrl + Shift + K	Toggles Navigation Loc K .
Ctrl + Alt + Shift + K	Toggles Slave Tabs ("super navloc K ").
Ctrl + Alt + Shift + L	Toggles L inking the active tabs.

Selection Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
F4	Moves cursor to the Path Bar.
Shift + Space	Toggles focus between the left and right (or up and down) listers.
Ctrl + I	Inverts the selection status of all files in the lister.
Ctrl + D	Deselects.

Web Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
Ctrl + F1	Open Opus Forum.
Ctrl + Shift + G	Search with Google.
Ctrl + Alt + Shift + G	Search with Google Images.
Ctrl + Shift + W	Search with Wikipedia.
Ctrl + Shift + Y	Search with YouTube.

Script-Dependent Shortcuts

The following shortcuts will only work if you have installed the script used by the button. This is dead-easy (see my page on [Opus scripts](#)).

Shortcut	Function
Ctrl + S	Toggles between Showing Details and Thumbnails mode, preserving the current selection. Relies on this script .
Alt + Del	Go to the Recycle Bin. Relies on the GoExisting script.
Ctrl + Shift + Del	Empty the Recycle Bin. Relies on the GoExisting script.
Shift + Home	Desktop. Relies on the GoExisting script.

More Great Opus Shortcuts

Shortcut	Function
F11	Email this File.
Shift + F11	Email this File, zipped.
Ctrl + Shift + X	Clears the Quick Filter.
Ctrl + Shift + R	Opens a Command Prompt in the current folder.
Ctrl + Alt + Shift + R	Command Line Interpreter ("super Run").
Ctrl + \	Creates a Symbolic link ("super shortcut").
Alt + Enter	File Properties.
Ctrl + B	File attriButes.
Ctrl + P	Edit file descriPtion.
Ctrl + M	Edit file Metadata.
Ctrl + Alt + L	Rotate Picture Left
Ctrl + Alt + R	Rotate Picture Right
Ctrl + Q	FTP Quick connect.
Ctrl + Alt + Q	Edit FTP Quick connect address book.
Windows key + O	Opens a new lister.
Shift + Escape	Close the current lister.

Potential System Hotkeys

The following hotkeys are not part of the toolbars. They are custom hotkeys I added to my installation of Opus to help me quickly access certain Windows features. I am listing them here to remind myself of what they are, and to share ideas for such potential hotkeys. For those, I like the Ctrl + Win combination because we are controlling Windows.

The hotkeys are "global", which means they are supposed to work from any place in Windows, as long as Opus is running.

To create a global hotkey, Alt-click an empty space on the toolbars to enter

Customize mode, then select the "Keys" tab. There, select the "Add" icon. The Add hotkey dialog box has a checkbox to make a system-wide hotkey.

Hotkey	Function
Ctrl + Win + C	Configuration (%SystemRoot%\system32\msconfig.exe)
Ctrl + Win + U	Uninstall programs (control appwiz.cpl)
Ctrl + Win + I	System Information (control system)
Ctrl + Win + M	Computer Management (%windir%\system32\compmgmt.msc /s)
Ctrl + Win + S	Services (%SystemRoot%\system32\services.msc)
Ctrl + Win + /	Calculator (%SystemRoot%\system32\calc.exe)

Using Scripts to Expand Opus Functionality

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Directory Opus 11 introduced a scripting interface that allows users to make Opus do new things by writing scripts in a variety of languages. At first, it could seem that this feature would only be useful to programmers. But it is not so. Soon after the launch of DO11, talented coders started posting a variety of useful scripts on the [forum's scripting page](#). If you invest a few minutes to learn how to install a script, you will gain access to a treasure trove of new features.

Before DO11, Opus allowed users to create renaming scripts (in the advanced rename panel) and script functions (inside buttons). This page is mainly concerned with the new kinds of scripts introduced in Directory Opus 11: script add-ins, which are installed in the new Scripting panel under Preferences. Rather than give you an abstract list of a script add-in's capabilities, I'll let you browse through the [scripts](#) presented below.

This page does not aim to teach you how to write scripts for Opus—as indeed I have not yet learned that art. Instead, it aims to:

- * explain [how to install scripts](#)
- * present a number of [scripts I have found useful](#)
- * point to [resources](#) for those who wish to code their own scripts.

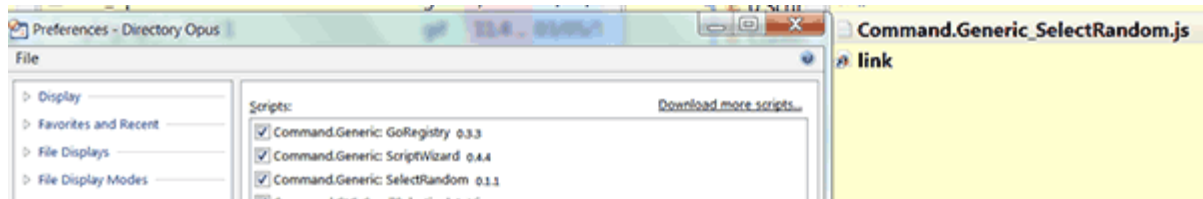
[\(direct link\)](#)

Installing Opus Scripts

Installing a script add-in is usually a two-step process:

* **Step 1.** First, you download the script file (usually a *js* or *js.txt* file) to your machine. You then install the script itself by going to Prefs / Toolbars / Scripts and dragging the file from the lister to the right pane of the

Preferences panel.



* **Step 2.** Next, you create a button (or series of buttons) that call the script, possibly passing some parameters. To do so, typically you would Alt-click an empty space on the toolbars to enter Customize mode (assuming you've activated Prefs / Toolbars / Options / Alt-click to edit toolbar buttons), then click inside a menu and choose Insert New / New Button, then paste a command inside the button and possibly assign it a hotkey.

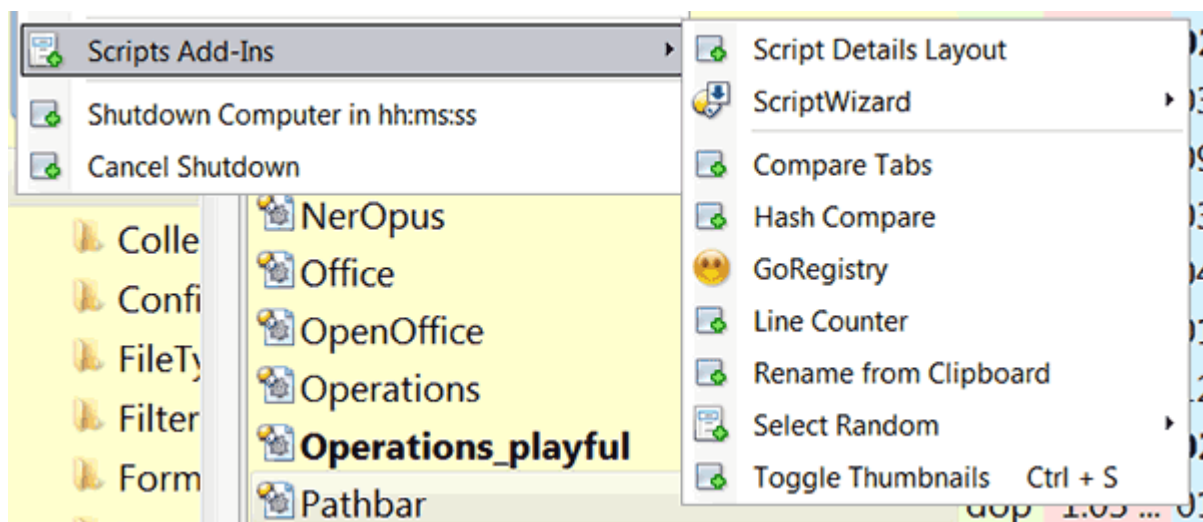
For instance, after installing the *Select Random* script, you can create one button containing `SelectRandom` in the Function box to select a random file, and another button containing `SelectRandom FILES ITEMCOUNTPERC=50` to randomly select half the files in the lister.

That's it! Your script is ready to go.

Occasionally, you need to **configure the script** by selecting it in Preferences / Toolbars / Scripts and clicking the *Configure* button... or even by editing the code of the script itself.

Skipping Step 2

If you are using my toolbars from 15 February 2015 or later, for the scripts on this page you can skip the second step as buttons (which you can tweak) live under Tools / Script Add-Ins.



Script-in-a-Button

The button scripts that were available before script add-ins do not require the first step of the installation procedure outlined above: their code is fully contained in a button that you drag to the toolbar or a sub-menu after Alt-clicking to enter Customize mode. That is for instance the case for

Leo's [Merge Folders](#) and [Paste File List](#) scripts.

Updating Script Add-Ins

As bugs are fixed and new features implemented, script authors often post new versions on the forum page corresponding to their script. To keep abreast of updates, you could become a frequent visitor of the *Scripts* section of the Opus forum, but for many scripts there is a simpler solution. Using the [ScriptWizard](#) script, you can update all compatible scripts without leaving Opus.

Under the ScriptWizard button's pull-down menu, select *Go Script Addins*. This opens the Opus folder where scripts reside. Selecting scripts, you can then select *Update* or *Check for Updates* under the same pull-down menu.

[\(direct link\)](#)

A (Very) Incomplete List of Scripts

Any list of scripts necessarily represents the compiler's own bias, itself a result of his perceived needs. I therefore recommend you explore scripts at your leisure in the [Scripts](#) section of the Opus forum.

Nevertheless, to give you an idea of the range of functions made available by scripts contributed by the Opus community, this section presents a number of scripts I have found useful. If your script is missing, please don't be upset—I may not have noticed it or found a fit for my particular workflow.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Jumping Points

For easy navigation, here are some jumping points to the scripts on the page:

- * [Select Random](#)
- * [ScriptWizard](#)
- * [Confirm Multi Open](#)
- * [Merge Folders](#)
- * [Compare Tabs](#)
- * [Hash Compare](#)
- * [Line Counter](#)
- * [Regex Columns](#)
- * [Go Registry](#)
- * [Toggle Thumbnails](#)
- * [Lister Double Click](#)
- * [Paste Empty File & Folder List](#)
- * [Rename from Clipboard](#)
- * [GoExisting](#)
- * [External Compare and Merge](#)

[\(direct link\)](#)

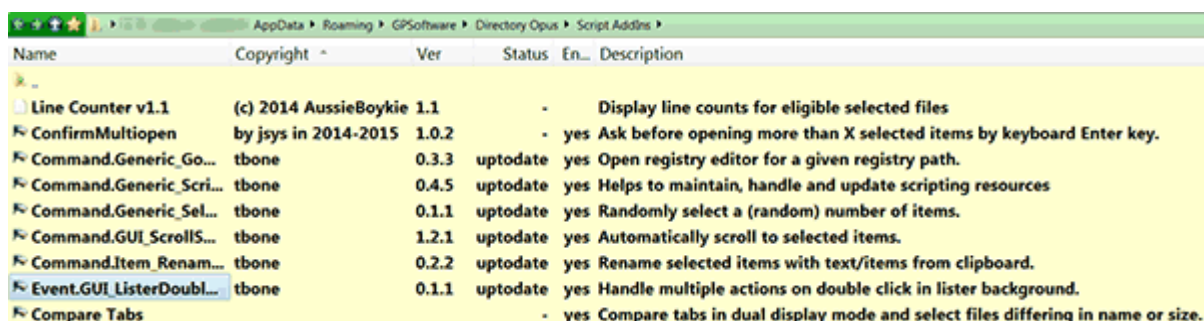
[Select Random](#)

This script by tbone allows you create buttons that select a number of random files—and possibly do something with them. For instance, one button can select half of a folder's files and create a slideshow. Another button can select ten files and send them to your music player. On [my toolbars](#), buttons for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Select Random.

([direct link](#))

ScriptWizard

This script by tbone is probably one you should consider installing once you have picked one or two scripts you like. Among other features, it allows you to update scripts you have installed. Another feature I like is that it defines custom columns that you can use in a layout to view information about your scripts, as shown in the picture below.

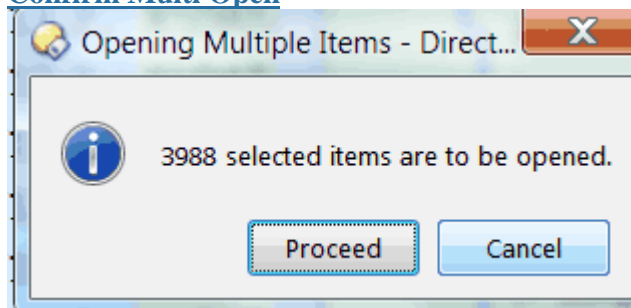


Name	Copyright	Ver	Status	En...	Description
Line Counter v1.1	(c) 2014 AussieBoykie	1.1	-	-	Display line counts for eligible selected files
ConfirmMultiopen	by jsys in 2014-2015	1.0.2	-	yes	Ask before opening more than X selected items by keyboard Enter key.
Command.Generic_Go...	tbone	0.3.3	uptodate	yes	Open registry editor for a given registry path.
Command.Generic_Scri...	tbone	0.4.5	uptodate	yes	Helps to maintain, handle and update scripting resources
Command.Generic_Sel...	tbone	0.1.1	uptodate	yes	Randomly select a (random) number of items.
Command.GUI_Scrolls...	tbone	1.2.1	uptodate	yes	Automatically scroll to selected items.
Command.Item_Renam...	tbone	0.2.2	uptodate	yes	Rename selected items with text/items from clipboard.
Event.GUI_ListerDoubl...	tbone	0.1.1	uptodate	yes	Handle multiple actions on double click in lister background.
Compare Tabs	-	-	-	yes	Compare tabs in dual display mode and select files differing in name or size.

On [my toolbars](#), buttons for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Script Wizard.

([direct link](#))

Confirm Multi Open



This script by jsys asks you to confirm when you try to open a large number of files (you specify the threshold). Have you ever selected a thousand files and pressed Enter by mistake? All these files might spawn a picture viewer or text editor window. This is the kind of situation this script aims to rescue you from. This script does not require a button.

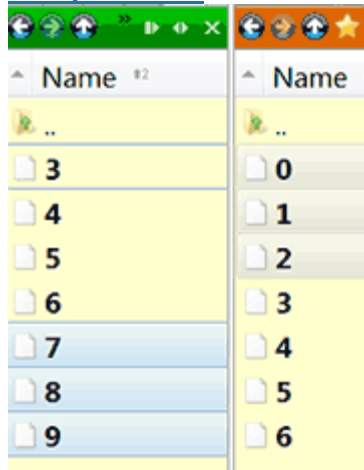
([direct link](#))

Merge Folders

This script-in-a-button by Leo allows you to select multiple folders and merge them to a single folder, whose name you specify. You could accomplish the same in Flat view, but that would be more fiddly. On [my toolbars](#), this button lives under Folder / Merge Folders.

([direct link](#))

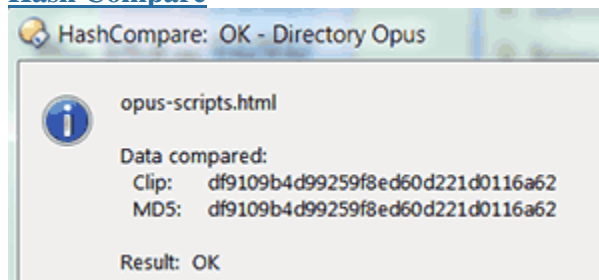
Compare Tabs



In a dual lister, this script by aprold selects the files that are missing from the other lister. On [my toolbars](#), a button for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Compare Tabs.

[\(direct link\)](#)

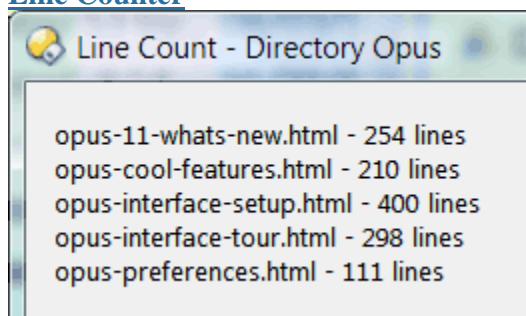
Hash Compare



This script by steje lets you check if the selected file has the same MD5 or SHA-1 hash as the text in the clipboard. On [my toolbars](#), a button for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Hash Compare.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Line Counter



This script by aussieboykie lets you select one or multiple files and count the lines of text in the files it contains. On [my toolbars](#), a button for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Line Counter.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Regex Columns

Name ^	Ext	hero	score
..			
batman 99	txt	batman	99
spiderman 33	txt	spiderman	33
tarzan 22	txt	tarzan	22
zorro 12	txt	zorro	12

This script by wowbagger lets you define custom columns based on the file name using [regex](#), a tool dear to my heart. On the image, you can see how the two custom columns *hero* and *score* have been defined to extract the hero's name and the number from the file name.

At the moment, the configuration process for the script is a little heavier than for some other scripts. The script is provided as an osp file. Assuming you haven't set a handler for osp files, rename the extension to zip, and extract the contained archive, which is a js file. (Alternately, add "osp;" in Prefs / Zip & other archives / Zip Files / Zip Extensions.) Then edit the file, which contains the column names and definitions, for which you'll need to know a little regex. (If you're new to regex, I suggest you visit my [regex site](#).)

In my view this feature is immensely valuable because it lets you create complex file-naming conventions containing file metadata. For instance, you could name your movie files according to a convention such as *rating-title-year-director*. Using regex columns, you can now sort movies not only by regular file attributes such as file name and size, but also by their rating, title, year and director.

I made a small modification to [support capture groups](#) (the post has an attached script you can install alongside the original).

[\(direct link\)](#)

[Go Registry](#)

This script by tbone opens Regedit and makes it jump to the registry key in the clipboard—saving you a lot of navigation time.

Try it for instance by copying HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop On [my toolbars](#), a button for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Go Registry.

[\(direct link\)](#)

[Toggle Thumbnails](#)

This button and script package by tbone allows you to switch between Details and Thumbnails mode while keeping the same files selected. I like it so much I've assigned it to Ctrl + S. On [my toolbars](#), a button for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Toggle Thumbnails.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Lister Double Click

This script by tbone extends the actions Opus takes when you double-click on an empty space in a lister. As you may recall, clicking an empty space on the lister goes up to the parent folder (as does pressing the back button). Now, in addition,

- * Shift-double-clicking an empty space copies the path of the current folder to the clipboard, saving me the F4 / Ctrl + C combination I seemed to be doing ten times a day;
- * Ctrl-double-clicking an empty space navigates to the path currently present in the clipboard, saving me the F4 / Ctrl + V combination I seemed to be doing just as frequently.

This script does not require a button.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Paste Empty File & Folder List

This script-in-a-button by Leo allows you to copy a list of file names from a file or a web page and to paste them in a lister, which creates empty files bearing these names. File names that terminate with a \ are pasted as folders. On [my toolbars](#), this button lives under Copy / Paste File & Folder List.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Rename from Clipboard

This script by tbone allows you to copy a list of desirable file names, select an equal number of files, and click a button to rename all the files with the names in the clipboard. On [my toolbars](#), a button for this script live under Tools / Script Add-Ins / Rename from Clipboard.

[\(direct link\)](#)

GoExisting

This script by jon creates the GoExisting command that opens a tab with the specified path. If that path already appears on a tab on either side of a lister, that tab is focused. Usage:GoExisting somepath

On [my toolbars](#), this script is used in the shortcuts to go to the desktop (Shift + Home), go to the recycling bin (Alt + Del) and empty the recycling bin (Ctrl + Shift + Del).

[\(direct link\)](#)

External Compare and Merge

wowbagger wrote a well-regarded script that allows you to use a variety of external tools (such as BeyondCompare) to compare and merge folders. I do not use these tools so I haven't had a chance to try it.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Resources for Coders

This section is not a scripting manual. Rather, it aims to present basic information and collect resources to get you started fast.

Choice of Language

The first thing you need to know is that most Opus scripts are written in JScript, Microsoft's flavor of JavaScript. Even if you're not a JavaScript coder, this may affect your choice of language because it means that you will find more working examples and help from the community if you work in JScript.

You can actually use any active scripting language to write Opus scripts, but since Windows doesn't ship with ActivePython and ActivePerl (PerlScript) installed, the reach of your scripts will be reduced if you use these languages. On the other hand, JScript and VBScript are supported out of the box.

If I were writing a script for myself, the only reason that would make me choose ActivePython or PerlScript would be if I needed the script to give me advanced regex functionality. Indeed, to my mind [JavaScript has the worst regex support](#) of any of the major languages, so much so that its regex flavor is intensely distasteful to me. On the other hand, Python (with Matthew Barnett's alternate *regex* module) and Perl have some of the best regex engines.

Getting Started Writing a Script

There are various kinds of Opus scripts, and you create them in various places. Although the focus of this page is script add-ins, it's worth mentioning the other kinds of Opus scripts.

- * Rename scripts. To create a Rename script, open the Advanced Rename panel and check the *Script Mode* box.
- * Script-in-a-button. When you enter Customize mode to edit a button, press *Advanced* at the bottom of the box and select *Script Function* from the Function pull-down menu.
- * Script add-ins. Under Prefs / Toolbars / Scripts, the File menu at the top left of the window has a *Create New Script* item that lets you create a stub. You will find this stub in the `/dopusdata/Script AddIns` folder (I'd suggest adding this folder to your favorites).

Resources

Here are some Opus scripting that seem useful to me. If you know some particularly useful posts, please send them along in the comments section.

- * Your first stops should be the [Manual's scripting section](#), then the [example](#)

[scripts](#) and [scripting reference](#).

* tbone wrote an article on [Script Initialization using Script.config items](#).

* tbone wrote a [ConfigHelper class](#) you can paste in your scripts to help create configuration items.

* MrC wrote a post explaining [how to set up ActivePerl for DO11 scripting](#).

* Leo explained why [scripting Opus with ActivePython may not be the best idea](#) even though it is supported. It seems to me that his points largely extend to ActivePerl.

Using File Names to Make a Database

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This page presents a blisteringly powerful way of organizing files.

By **embedding data in a file's name according to a naming convention**, you can ask your favorite file manager to show data about the file—such as a movie's year and director, a book's author and number of pages, or any kind of value or "flag": Is the status "on hold"? Is the game compatible with macs?

Na...	Ext	Size	Title ^	Director	Min	Year	IR	CC	Lang	Subs	Date	TT
C.	mkv	755 ...	Cosi e la Vita	Aldo, Giacom...	105	1998	6.7	IT	ita	en-srt	06/16/13 t...	
H.	mkv	1.39 ...	Hill Halfon Doesn't Ans...	Assi Dayan	93	1976	7.9	IL	heb	en-srt	08/29/13 t...	
T.	avi	696 ...	The Valet (La Doublure)	Francis Veber	82	2006	6.6	FR	fre	en-srt	06/09/13 t...	
T.	mkv	1.35 ...	Türkisch für Anfänger	Bora Dagtekin	109	2012	5.9	DE	ger	en-srt	06/14/14 t...	

The example in the image above shows comedy movie files with columns for the title, director, duration in minutes, year, IMDB rating, country code, language and subtitle format.

With such a layout, you could click the "Year" column to **sort** the movies by year of release, or **group** the movies by country code.

Several key features may not jump out at you:

* the metadata displays correctly even though the files are in different formats (*avi*, *mkv*).

* the files themselves do not contain the metadata shown in the columns.

* the file names are in the column at the very left (which has been minimized and only shows an arrow).

* The "tt" column contains the movie's [IMDB](#) code. If you press *Ctrl + I*, the IMDB page for the movie opens!

* More columns exist but aren't shown. For instance you can embed the name of a key actor, an award won by the movie, a yes/no flag indicating

whether you've seen it—basically any data about movies you feel like keeping in your "database".

This technique is useful to manage many kinds of files, from an architect's CAD files to a dentist's collection of comics.

This page contains a complete walk-through of the technique, as well as **two fully fleshed-out packages** (one to manage **movie** files, the other to manage **books or comics** files), and instructions to adapt these packages to any kind of files.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Jumping Points

For easy navigation, here are some jumping points to various sections on the page:

- * [Options to Store Metadata](#)
- * [Using File Names to Carry Metadata](#)
- * [An All-Purpose File Naming Convention](#)
- * [A Movie Database based on File Names](#)
- * [A Comics \(or Books\) Database based on File Names](#)
- * [Bulk Metadata Work on Your Files](#)
- * [Editing and Defining Fields](#)
- * [Adapting the Scripts for Other Kinds of Files](#)

[\(direct link\)](#)

Options to Store Metadata

Before diving in, let's step back for a moment to look at various ways data about files (*ormetadata*) can be stored.

Metadata stored by the operating system

A file's very name is metadata. So is its creation date. These fields (and others, such as *permissions*) are stored by the operating system.

Metadata embedded inside files

By now, most people who have used *mp3* and other music files are familiar with the idea of embedding *metadata* inside each track (for instance, the artist and album names). This is useful not only in a music playback device and in music management software, but also if you use a file manager that lets you see the various metadata fields in columns. In such a file manager, you can click on the *Album* column to sort your music, or on the *Height* column to sort your images.

This works well for music files and *jpg* images, where standards describe how the metadata should be embedded in the files.

When there is no embedding standard

Then there are file formats where metadata *can* be embedded (usually using

an *xml* sub-file to describe the main file), such as movies in the *mkv* container, or comics in *cbz* archives.

Often, different programs come up with different ideas about how to embed the metadata—there is no standard. This means that if you use a dedicated program to manage your collection, you get married to that program. If you move your files to a different collection manager, your metadata may not display properly.

Embedding by mixing metadata with content

For a text file with a *txt* extension, you don't have the option of embedding an *xml* file in the original file.

But you can include a descriptive section at the beginning of the file. If that description follows a standard (for instance, it always begins with `Start_Description` and ends with `End_Description`), then you could conceivably write a script that peeks inside your text files and extracts the metadata, when it exists.

This technique would be pushing the semantic boundaries for *metadata*, since the metadata would be part of the text container (the file's data) and will interfere with the "actual data" if you view files in regular text editors.

When embedding is not an option

For certain file types,

- * you may not have the option or the tools to embed metadata in the file (for instance, an *exe* file)
- * you may reject the option of [mixing the metadata with the content](#) because it interferes with the file
- * you may hesitate to adopt existing metadata standards because they only apply to one of several types of files that you want to manage together.

In such cases, you'll probably want to turn to using a file naming convention.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Using File Names to Carry Metadata

File naming conventions are nothing new. Everyone uses them. For instance, if you add a prefix to your Word files to indicate the date (as in *150101-New-Year-letter-to-Joan.doc*), you have a file naming convention.

This particular file name carries three pieces of information about the file:

- * A date (*150101*),
- * A description of the content (a New Year letter),
- * A recipient (Joan).

By using a file naming convention, file names can be harnessed to carry useful information about files. For instance, this would be a reasonable name for a movie:

6.6 The Valet (2006).avi

It obeys the following convention: Rating Movie_Name (Year).extension

This particular convention allows you to sort movies by their rating, since the 6.6 is at the beginning of the file's name. Conversely, if your movie file names looked like

2006 The Valet (6.6).avi,

you could sort them by year. But you can't do both.

Or can you?...

With the right tools, you can. This is what this page is all about.

The right tool will extract the metadata out of any file naming convention you choose, allowing you to see it into columns, sort files, group them and so on.

[\(direct link\)](#)

An All-Purpose File Naming Convention

There is nothing wrong with the two file naming conventions we just saw, of which the two following names are examples:

6.6 The Valet (2006).avi

2006 The Valet (6.6).avi

In fact, you can easily edit the [movie database script](#) lower on the page to extract the year and rating from either format. For instance, to extract the year from the second format, you would replace the year's field definition with this simple one (please don't worry about understanding the details):

```
'year' : { pattern: /^\\d{4}/ }
```

These two naming conventions are fine, but they are not designed to carry a lot of metadata. What if you want to add the director's name? The number of minutes? The country?

There are many possible solutions to this problem. Any of them can be used by the [movie database](#) and the [books and comics database](#) scripts lower on the page. The particular convention I've implemented is easy to extend. Here is how it works:

* A simple file might look like this:

The Stranger [y=1942_auth=Albert Camus].epub

* The metadata lives [in the brackets]

* The metadata is a series of **key=value** pairs (for instance y=1942 is one such pair, auth=Albert Camus is another)

* The **key=value** pairs are separated by the underscore character _

* In each file name, you only use the fields you want. You do not have to

write empty fields.

* The order of the `key=value` pairs doesn't matter. This means you could have named the file

The Stranger [auth=Albert Camus_y=1942].epub

and the metadata would still work. You don't have to remember a complex order.

* Acceptable values for each key are specified in the [script file](#). Here the year can be specified with either `y=`, `yr=` or `year=`. This allows your memory to be a bit fuzzy on occasion.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Aren't Long File Names a Problem?

With this system, you can end up with long file names. For instance, I wouldn't consider this especially long. Don't be scared!

The Valet (La Doublure) [y=2006_ir=6.6_cc=FR_lng=fre_sub=en-srt_min=82_tt=tt0449851_dir=Francis Veber_act=Gad Elmaleh].avi

Will this trash my display?

Look again at the image from the top of the page:

Na...	Ext	Size	Title ^	Director	Min	Year	IR	CC	Lang	Subs	Date	TT
	C. mkv	755 ...	Cosi e la Vita	Aldo, Giacom...	105	1998	6.7	IT	ita	en-srt	06/16/13 t...	
	H. mkv	1.39 ...	Hill Halfon Doesn't Ans...	Assi Dayan	93	1976	7.9	IL	heb	en-srt	08/29/13 t...	
	T. avi	696 ...	The Valet (La Doublure)	Francis Veber	82	2006	6.6	FR	fre	en-srt	06/09/13 t...	
	T. mkv	1.35 ...	Türkisch für Anfänger	Bora Dagtekin	109	2012	5.9	DE	ger	en-srt	06/14/14 t...	

The giant file name above corresponds to the one highlighted on the image!

You don't need to worry about long file names cluttering your screen, because the entire file name is not meant to be shown in the file manager. Instead, we'll create layouts that show exactly the columns we want to see.

However, **there is a limit** to how much data you can have in the file name. And that limit depends not only on the length of the file's name, but also of that of its path on the operating system.

Windows has a 260-character limit for sum of the lengths of a file's name and of its path from the root (for instance, for `C:\python\boa.txt`, that total would be 17 characters). 260 characters is enough to do a lot of things, but bear in mind that if you store files deep in the folder hierarchy, you will have fewer characters left.

To put things in perspective, the movie file name above that looked extremely long only takes up 63 characters. This means 197 characters are left to specify the folder's path. That's a lot.

[\(direct link\)](#)

What tool should you use with these files?

This page is published on my "fan site" about Directory Opus (in my view the finest productivity improvement software there is), so it's no surprise that I

had Opus in mind for these filename-based databases. But after using the scripts for a while, and while writing the page, I wondered what other programs can use this technique. After all, extracting fields via regex is not rocket science.

This research let me to the site of XYplorer (another well-regarded file manager), where I learned that it too can create custom columns by extracting fields from file names. The feature is called [scriptable columns](#). I don't have XYplorer, but I suspect the column definitions in this page's scripts would be easy to adapt.

If you know of other tools that can readily extract data from file names, please let me know by using the comment form.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Installing Scripts

Once you're downloaded one of the scripts below, I suggest you first install it without making any edits to check that you can make it work "out of the box".

- * In the Opus Preferences panel, type *script* in the bottom left filter. This opens the Scripts page.
- * Drag the script and drop it into the panel.
- * Make sure the checkbox is checked.
- * Click *Apply* and *OK*
- * Name one file according to the naming convention.
- * Right-click a column header. In the Script menu, pick a column that corresponds to a field you've set in the file name.
- * The column will be added in the rightmost position of the lister. Scroll to the right to make sure it displays properly.

Editing Scripts

If things work correctly, at this stage you can customize the script if it doesn't fit your need. To do so, edit it in a text editor. The section about [defining fields](#) has examples of how to add and edit fields. And the section about [adapting scripts](#) explains how to create a copy of the script to use with other kinds of files.

Once you've edited the script, save it. Once again, open the the Scripts page of the Preferences panel. Drag and drop the new script, and choose the *Replace* option. Make sure the checkbox is checked. *Apply...* You should be good to go.

Editing is usually a multi-pass process. I recommend leaving the Scripts page of the Preferences panel open when you edit scripts so you don't have to open it with every little change. You can drop the script repeatedly on that page without closing it.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Generic Script: *RegexColumnsReloaded*

To implement all the features on this page, you can if you wish start from a generic regex columns script I've made called [RegexColumnsReloaded](#). This script allows you to add any kind of regex column—you don't have to follow a naming convention.

But I've also adapted *RegexColumnsReloaded* into two sample scripts to showcase how one might craft a full solution that creates columns based on naming convention. These are the [Movie FileName Database Script](#) and the [Books & Comics FileName Database script](#) that we're about to see. So you can also start from these.

Bear in mind that you can add any kind of regex column to the *Movies* and *Books* scripts. They are loaded with columns designed to parse file names into specific columns, but they are also full-featured regex column scripts, since they are based on the same core: *RegexColumnsReloaded*.

With that, let's jump right into the *Movie FileName Database Script*.

[\(direct link\)](#)

A Movie Database based on File Names

So maybe you're pleased with yourself because over the years you've ripped the DVDs you've acquired so that if a disk stops working, your movie won't be lost. Over the years, you've used different software to rip, so that now your movie collection is a *mélange* of *divx*, *avi* and *mkv* files—not to forget the occasional *VOB* files.

You'd love to tag your movies in order to keep track of directors and other items of interest, but how do you get the metadata for all these files to display consistently? Some collection managers want to transcode all your files into one central format—heart attack! (By the way, the last time I looked at iTunes, that's what it did to music. But don't let me get started on my Apple rant.) A gentler solution would be to repack all your files into an *mkv* container and go with someone's embedded *xml* solution.

Our solution here just relies on naming the movie files according to a simple and flexible convention.

Na...	Ext	Size	Title ^	Director	Min	Year	IR	CC	Lang	Subs	Date	TT
	C. mkv	755 ...	Così è la Vita	Aldo, Giacom...	105	1998	6.7	IT	ita	en-srt	06/16/13 t...	
	H. mkv	1.39 ...	Hill Halfon Doesn't Ans...	Assi Dayan	93	1976	7.9	IL	heb	en-srt	08/29/13 t...	
	T. avi	696 ...	The Valet (La Doublure)	Francis Veber	82	2006	6.6	FR	fre	en-srt	06/09/13 t...	
	T. mkv	1.35 ...	Türkisch für Anfänger	Bora Dagtekin	109	2012	5.9	DE	ger	en-srt	06/14/14 t...	

Naming Convention

The naming convention follows the [Key = Value format](#) presented above. As

a reminder,

* A simple file might look like this:

The Valet [y=2006_ir=6.6].avi

* The order of the `key=value` pairs doesn't matter. This means you could name the file

The Valet [ir=6.6_y=2006].avi

and the metadata would still work. You don't have to remember a complex order.

* There may be several acceptable values for each key. For instance, the year can be specified with either `y=`, `yr=` or `year=`. This allows your memory to be a bit fuzzy.

Here are the fields currently available through the script. Remember that you only use the ones you want.

Column	Valid Keys	Notes
Title	(automatic)	Everything to the left of the [brackets]
Actor	act, actor, actress	Who featured in it?
Again	again	Would you like to watch it again some day?
Award	awd, award	awards won. e.g. Oscar, Palme d'Or
Camera	cam, camera, cin	Cinematographer e.g. Robby Müller
Colour	col, colour	Is the movie in colour? B&W?
CC	cc, country	Country code: Which country is the movie from? E.g. US, FR, RU
Critique	crit, critique	Critique, e.g. "great", "meh"
Director	dir, director	Who directed it?
IR	ir	imdb rating, e.g. 7.5
Lang	lang, lng	Language, e.g. "eng"
Min	min, dur, duration	Duration in minutes, e.g. 120
Num	num, nb, no	Number in the series, e.g. 01
Qual	q, qual, quality	Quality, e.g. "blurry"
Rating	rat, rating	Your rating
Script	txt, text, scr, script	Who wrote the script?
Seen	seen, sn	Have you watched it? E.g. yes, T, false, N, 1, 0...
Series	ser, series	e.g. "Three Colours"
Subs	sb, sub, subs, sbs, subtitle, subtitles	subtitles, e.g. en, de, fr
Tags	tag, tags	tags, e.g. "comedy,romance"
TT	tt	imdb code, e.g. tt0478331
Year	y, yr, year	What year was it released?
Namelen	(automatic)	The length of the file name.
Charsleft	(automatic)	The number of characters still available to use in the path + file name.

Special Fields

In the table above, you may notice that for three fields, you don't need to

type in a key=value pair in the brackets.

- * **Title:** the title is assumed to be everything to the left of the brackets (minus any spaces immediately preceding the left bracket.)
- * **Namelen:** this is the number of characters in the file name. Note that Opus also provides a column for the length of path + file name (right-click column header, General / *Path length*)
- * **Charsleft:** this is the number of chars still available to use in the path + file name. Windows imposes a 260 maximum length for the Path + File name, so this column can be handy if you are getting close.

Bear in mind that you are not limited to columns that fit the file naming convention:

- * The script is based on the [RegexColumnsReloaded](#) script, so it can handle any regex columns
- * The script has a special space where you can define [special columns](#) whose value can be the product of any kind of code. You don't have to use regex everywhere.

[\(direct link\)](#)

The Magical IMDB Field

One field you're going to love is the `tt` field. It contains IMDB's unique identifier for a movie title. For instance, if you open [this link for the movie *The Valet*](#), you will see that the url is

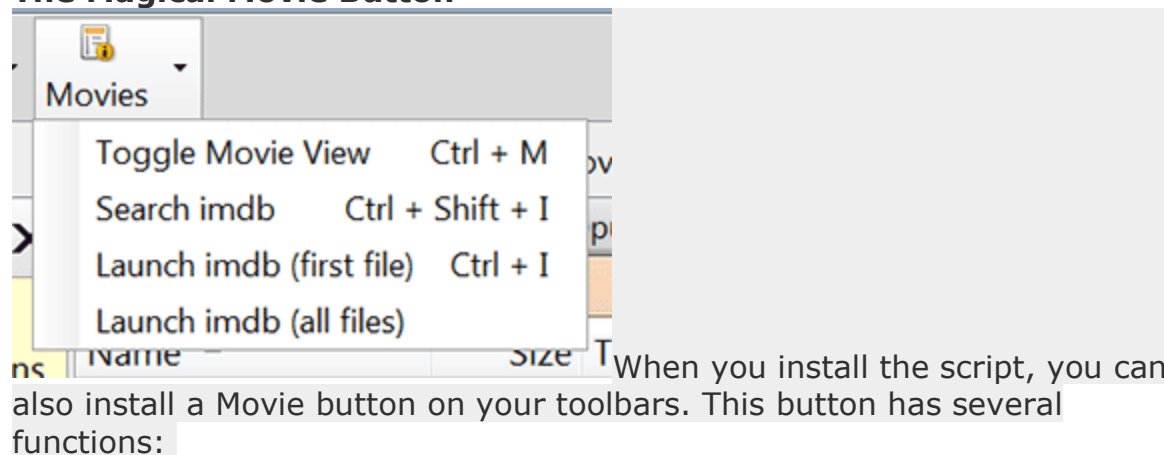
`http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0449851`

The identifier is the section that starts with `tt`. To insert it into your file metadata, you would add `tt=tt0449851/`

What does that do?

[\(direct link\)](#)

The Magical Movie Button



When you install the script, you can also install a Movie button on your toolbars. This button has several functions:

- * If your file contains the `tt` field, the button can open the imdb page for the movie (shortcut: `Ctrl + I`).
- * If your file does not contain the `tt` field, it can search Google for the imdb page for the movie (shortcut: `Ctrl + I`). Usually the first result is the one. You can then double-click the `tt` field right from Google results and add it to your file.

* The button can toggle "Movie View". This assumes you've set up a view (in Opus terms, "folder format") to take advantage of the metadata: we'll look at this next.

The button toggles *full-row selection* mode, which enables you to easily select your file even when the file name column is minimized.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Setting Up a "Movie View"

It's convenient to be able to switch from your usual layout to one you've set up especially for movies. In fact, the [movie button](#) is ready to toggle a *Movie* view.

There are several ways to set up a *Movie* view. You can ask Opus to automatically switch to that view when more than a given proportion of files in a folder are movie files. Or you can toggle the view manually. I do the second, but we'll talk about both. First, let's cover the differences.

* For a view that turns on automatically, you'll set up the view in Prefs / Folders / Folder Formats / Content Type Formats. You'll be able to edit the existing Movies view there. You'll also need to check the "Enable Folder Content Type detection" box in Prefs / File Displays / Find-As-You-Type.

* For a view that you turn on manually, you'll set up the view in nearly the same menu: in Prefs / Folders / Folder Formats / Favorite Formats.

* The [movie button](#) is set up for the second option. If you'd like the *toggle* menu item to work with the first option, you'll have to change the part of the button code that says Set Format "Movies" to Set CONTENTFORMAT Movies.

To get you started, here is the *Movies* view that works for me at the moment. Note that the filename field is quite narrow. That's because we don't need to see the whole file name. Since the Movie button activates full-row selection, we can still easily select the files.

Displayed fields	Width	Sort
Filename	50	
Extension	50	
Size (auto)	70	
movies_Title	310	✓
movies_Director	150	
movies_Min		
movies_Year		
movies_IR		
movies_CC		
movies_Lang		
movies_Subs		
Date (modified)	90	
movies_TT		

[\(direct link\)](#)

Downloading and Installing the Script

The latest version of the script will always live on [this thread on the Directory Opus forum](#).

One of many advantages of hosting the latest file on the Opus forum is that the script can be updated using *tbone's* [ScriptWizard](#) script.

- * Follow the [installation instructions](#) given earlier.
- * Don't forget to install the [movie button](#)!

[\(direct link\)](#)

A Comics (or Books) Database based on File Names





So you have a collection of electronic books. *PDF* files can contain some metadata. So can *mobi* files (Kindle) and *epub* files (generic ebook format). If your book collection contains comics, you can embed metadata in your *cbz* or *cbr* files.

So, all is well, right?

No, in fact this situation is a mess:

- * To manage your regular ebook files, you'll probably use Calibre, which will let you edit the metadata.
- * To manage your comics, you may decide to use a program such as ComicRack.
- * These programs may not support some fields you want to embed.
- * You may soon find yourself with multiple copies of files on your computer—some in the collection managers' folders with metadata included, then original versions without metadata.
- * In your file manager, you can't select files based on their metadata, because the metadata is only available in the collection managers (Calibre and ComicRack).

What to do?

Na...	Ext	Title ^	N.	C...	Tags	Col	Year	Read	Ra...	Author	Writer	Artist
	B.pdf	Bell's Theorem	1	DE	novel	color	1986			Matthias Schultheiss		
	F.cbz	Footnotes In Gaza		US	doco	gray	2009			Joe Sacco		
	T.cbr	The Black Order Brigade		FR	novel	color	1979	yes	9.0		Pierre Christin	Enki Bilal
	T.cbz	Too Much Coffee Man's ...		US	comedy	black	1998	yes	6.5	Shannon Wheeler		

The solution in the image above lets you use the same format for all kinds of ebook files (see the *pdf*, *cbr* and *cbz* in the image). It may not fit everyone's needs: the metadata you enter will appear in the file manager, but it won't transfer automatically to collection managers such as Calibre and ComicRack. I use it and I like it. It's up to you.

Naming Convention

The naming convention follows the [Key = Value format](#) presented above. As a reminder,

* A simple file might look like this:

The Hunting Party [art=Enki Bilal_txt=Pierre Christin_yr=1983].cbz

* The order of the `key=value` pairs doesn't matter. This means you could name the file

The Hunting Party [yr=1983_txt=Pierre Christin_art=Enki Bilal].cbz and the metadata would still work. You don't have to remember a complex order.

* There may be several acceptable values for each key. For instance, the year can be specified with either `y=`, `yr=` or `year=`. This allows your memory to be a bit fuzzy.

Here are the fields currently available through the script. Remember that you only use the ones you want.

Column	Valid Keys	Notes
Title	(automatic)	Everything to the left of the [brackets]
Again	again	Would you like to read it again some day?
Artist	art, artist	Who drew the book?
Author	auth, author	Use when the same person is the writer and artist
Award	awd, award	awards won. e.g. Eisner, Fauve d'Or
Col	col, colour	Is the book in colour? Grayscale? Duotone?
Country	cc, country	Which country is the book from? E.g. US, FR, DE
Crit	crit, critique	Critique, e.g. "great", "meh"
Ed	ed, edition	Edition, e.g. "3rd"
Lang	lang, lng	Language, e.g. "eng"
List	list, lst	Does it feature on a list?
Num	num, nb, no	Number in the series, e.g. 01
Publisher	pub, publisher	Publisher
Q	q, qual, quality	Quality, e.g. "blurry scan"
Pgs	pg, pgs, page, pages	Number of pages
Rating	rat, rating	Your rating
Read	read	Have you read it? E.g. yes, T, false, N, 1, 0...
Series	ser, series	e.g. "Tintin"
Tags	tag, tags	tags, e.g. "scifi,romance"
Writer	txt, text, wr, writer	Who wrote the text?
Year	y, yr, year	What year was it published?
Namelen	(automatic)	The length of the file name.
Charsleft	(automatic)	The number of characters still available to use in the path + file name.

You may notice that for three fields, you don't need to type in a `key=value` pair in the brackets. These are the same fields explained in the [special fields](#) section of the Movie Script.

Bear in mind that you are not limited to columns that fit the file naming convention:

- * The script is based on the [RegexColumnsReloaded](#) script, so it can handle any regex columns

- * The script has a special space where you can define [special columns](#) whose value can be the product of any kind of code. You don't have to use regex everywhere.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Books + Comics View Button

The [download](#) page for the script includes a button. The button can toggle "Comics view". This assumes you've set up a view (in Opus terms, "folder format") to take advantage of the metadata: we'll look at this next.

The button also toggles *full-row selection* mode, which enables you to easily select your file even when the file name column is minimized.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Setting Up a "Books or Comics View"

It's convenient to be able to switch from your usual layout to one you've set up especially for books or comics. I'll refer you to the instructions to [set up the Movie view](#).

To get you started, here is the *Books and Comics* view that works for me at the moment.

Displayed fields	Width	Sort
Filename	50	
Extension	50	
Size (auto)	70	
comics_Title	300	✓
comics_Col	70	
comics_Year		
comics_Num		
comics_Read		
comics_Rating		
comics_Author		
comics_Artist		
comics_Writer		
comics_Tags	70	
comics_Series		
comics_Award	70	
comics_Country		
Date (modified)		

[\(direct link\)](#)

Downloading and Installing the Script

The latest version of the script will always live on [this thread on the Directory Opus forum](#).

One of many advantages of hosting the latest file on the Opus forum is that the script can be updated using *tbone's* [ScriptWizard](#) script.

Follow the [installation instructions](#) given earlier.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Bulk Metadata Operations on Your Files

If you already follow a naming convention and would like to switch to the one presented here, it's a *renaming* problem, which is not a big problem.

Those who know regex will write one or several rename presets. If that's not you, you can either:

- * [learn regular expressions](#) (a very worthwhile investment),
- * use one of the scripts on the Opus forum such as MrC's [Dynamic Renamer](#),
- * Use a standalone renaming tool. The best I've seen by far is Gillmeister's [Rename Expert](#).

[\(direct link\)](#)

Adding One Field to Many Files

Let's say you have already tagged your files and you'd now like to add the field `cc=US` to many files. These are the steps:

- * Select the files to rename. (The filter bar is your friend. So is checkbox mode.)
- * Open the Opus renamer.
- * Switch to regular expressions mode.
- * In the *Old Name* field, paste `^([^\]]+)(\].*)`
- * In the *New Name* field, paste `\1_cc=US\2`
- * Make sure to save the preset.

If you want to add another token, open the preset and edit it on the fly.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Editing and Defining Fields

Adding columns to the "database" is easy. Open the script file and look for the section labelled *"DEFINE YOUR FIELDS (i.e. COLUMNS) HERE"*.

Column Definitions

If you scroll past the "manual", you will see that a column definition looks

like this:

```
'Column Name' : { (properties) },
```

For column definitions that parse file names into Opus columns based on regular expressions, inside the curly braces, you have one or more properties. At the very minimum, you have the `pattern` property, which contains the regular expression to be used. For instance, this is all it takes to define a simple `Title` column:

```
'Title' : { pattern: /^(?:[^\ ]| (?!\\[\\]))*/ },
```

You can add more properties which I will explain in a moment, but for the time being you may be shocked by the `/^(?:[^\]| (?!\\[\\]))*/` in the pattern. This is a text matching pattern known as a regular expression. If you want to craft columns that don't fit the format of this script, it will greatly help if you [learn some regex](#) (an investment that will pay you back a thousand times over). **But you don't need to know regex to add a basic key=value column** because these all look about the same.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Adding a simple key=value column

Let's say you are using our naming convention to set column in the file names by using bracket definitions such as `[year=1985_author=Be11]`

To create a column called *Status*, so that you can add values such as `stat=On Hold` in your file name, this is all you have to add to the script:

```
'Status' : { pattern: /\[(?:[^\ ]|_)?stat=([^\ ]_+)/i, group: 1 },
```

Drop it in, update the script in Preferences / Scripts, and you can start using your column!

If you want a column with a name other than *Status*, and a key name other than *stat*, just copy the exact code above and edit the two words!

A simple key alias

Here is a refinement if you want the option to use two aliases when setting the *Status* column in the file name: *stat* and *status*. Notice that these two are made of the same prefix *stat*, followed by an optional *us*. Your column definition becomes:

```
'Status' : { pattern: /\[(?:[^\ ]|_)?stat(?:us)?=([^\ ]_+)/i, group: 1 },
```

Notice the bold sections? I'm sure you can see how to adapt this to a column whose aliases are either *col* or *colour*.

You can make more complex aliases, but this is as far as I will take you if you don't know regex. You can now skip to the [Cool Properties](#) section to refine your columns.

For those who *do* know regex, there will be some [great](#) tricks lower down.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Files with a Different Naming Convention need Different Regular Expressions

If your files follow a different naming convention from the one in the Movie Database and the Comics Database, you will need different regex.

If your regex is not strong, post your problem on the [RegexColumnsReloaded](#) script thread on the Opus forum. If I don't see it, someone else probably will.

Another place to ask is [StackOverflow](#). Make sure to describe your data, your desired output and what you have already tried, as people on the site want to feel they are helping others learn how to fish rather than doing their homework. Site etiquette suggests you upvote all helpful answers and add a checkmark to accept the one that helped you the most.

[\(direct link\)](#)

The Cool Properties Available in a Column Definition

Our first column, `Title`, had a single property: `pattern`. Our second column, `Status`, had two properties: `pattern` and `group`. We'll now talk about the cool properties you can add to a column definition.

You could, for instance, add a `width` property to the `Title` column. In fact, this is what we have in both scripts:

```
'Title' : { pattern: /^(?:[^\ ]| (?!\[)])*/ , width: 30 },
```

This tells Opus that by default, unless specified otherwise, the `Title` column will be created with a large-enough span to accommodate 30 characters.

Here are all the properties we can use. If something doesn't make sense to you, you are probably not meant to use it.

- * `pattern`: the regex pattern.

- * `group`: the regex capture Group that will set the column value. By default, this is zero (the whole match).

- * `target`: the specific property of the file that will be the subject of the regex. By default, this is the file's name stem without the extension (or `name_stem`). Other possible values are `name` (the file name including the extension), `ext` (the extension), `realpath` (the file's full path including the file name itself), [and more](#).

- * `width`: the column's default width, in number of characters.

- * `justify`: specifies whether the column should be justified *left* (the default), *right*, *center* or *path*.

- * `sort`: when set to *DESC*, if you click on the column to sort it, it will first

sort in descending order (helpful for dates and ratings, for instance.)

* **type**: by default Opus will display your columns as plain text, but columns can be set to other types

too: *number, double, size, zip, percent, graph, igraph* (**try this!**), *date, time, datetime, stars*.

* **infotiponly**: when it is set to *true*, the column will only display in the "info tips" that pop up when you hover over files. These info tips are defined per file type in the file type editor.

* **subjectPrefix**: a string that gets prepended to the target string to form the regex subject. This facility enables you to [transform the text in the regex without writing a special column case](#) in the code.

* **returnTheFirstNonEmptyGroup**: a Boolean (true/false) that indicates we should return the first group that is not-empty. Takes precedence over "group".

* **fileOnly**: a Boolean (true/false) that restrict the column to files (don't display for folders).

* **dirOnly**: a Boolean (true/false) that restrict the column to folders (don't display for files).

* **fullCupValue**: using this value, convert the column to a scale of 5 or 100 depending on whether the type is *stars* (5) or *percent, graph* and *igraph* (100).

[\(direct link\)](#)

Special Columns

The focus of this script is to use regular expressions in column definitions to parse the file name into columns. However, sometimes you may want to display a column that cannot be obtained with regex, such as, for instance, the total number of vowels in a file name.

That's no problem: the script has built-in room for special columns. There are two steps.

First, define a column. You can leave the definition empty, as below, or set the *width* property and others we've already seen. For instance, for a column about the file name's length:

```
'Name Length' : { },
```

Second, in the function `OnRegexColumn`, find the section labelled "*First, handle special NON-REGEX Columns*". There, test for your column name, and compute or set the column's value. For instance:

```
// Is this the name length column? if (colName == 'Name Length') { //
Set the column's value ColumnData.value =
ColumnData.item.name.length.toString(); }
```

That's all!

If you have several special columns, remember to use `else if` on the second one.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Trick: inspecting the file properties reported by Opus

Most of your regular expressions will run against the file's name stem (the default mode). You know what the name looks like, so writing these kinds of expressions should be straightforward if you know regex.

But the column definition format in the scripts allows you to specify different **targets** for the regex, such as *modify* (the file's last modification date), or *realpath* (the file's path).

Unless you know exactly what these properties look like, it will be hard to manipulate them or search them using regex. Before you try doing so, I therefore recommend you set up a temporary column to display the property.

To do so, we use a regex pattern that matches the whole property. For instance, to inspect the *modify* date, we just add this column:

```
'Modify' : { pattern: /.*/ , target: "modify" }
```

A *Modify* column is now available in your lister, allowing you to inspect what the values look like.

[\(direct link\)](#)

Advanced Trick: Boolean Columns using Regex (no ifs!)

As we discussed, you can add [special columns](#) that don't fit our standard column definition format by creating special *if* cases later in the code.

You would think that in order to display a *yes / no* value based on the presence of text in a column, you would indeed need to write such a special *if* case. However, with the awesome trick I'm about to show you, you can create *yes / no* columns using the regex column definitions you've already seen. The trick uses the technique I fleshed out in my article about [matching line numbers](#) on my regex site.

To make this work, we only need to add one property to our column definition: `subjectPrefix`. This `subjectPrefix` field contains a text prefix that will be prepended to the subject text against which the regex tries to match. For instance, if we set the `subjectPrefix` to the string `0` and the target property is `somefile`, the regex will run against `0somefile`.

The trick is that during the regex match, we use the extra characters we've

prepended to the subject. Here are some examples.

To display Y when the file's is at a depth level of three or more in the file hierarchy (counting the root of a drive as level 0), we could use this simple column:

```
'3-deep' : { pattern: /^(Y)(?:[^\]\\*\\){4}/, target: "realpath", group: 1, subjectPrefix: "Y" }
```

The column is included in the [Movies script](#) so you can try it. What happens here?

- * The capture group that will be shown in the 3-deep column is Group 1.
- * Now notice that our target is `realpath`, which is the file's full path (for instance, `C:\Python\readme.txt`).
- * To this target, `subjectPrefix` prepends Y. The subject that the regex runs against therefore becomes `YC:\Python\readme.txt`
- * The regex captures the initial "Y" to Group 1 (which sets the value of the column when there is a match), then proceeds to match four backslashes
- * This means that when four backslashes are found (when we are at depth level 3 or more), the column will display the content of Group 1, which is Y.

Here is a variation that not only displays Y when the depth level is 3 or more, but which displays N when it isn't. It is also included in the [Movies script](#).

```
'3-deep YN' : { pattern: /^Y(?:=(?:[^\]\\*\\){4})|N/, target: "realpath", subjectPrefix: "YN" }
```

Here,

- * `subjectPrefix` prepends YN to the target, so that the subject the regex runs against becomes `YNC:\Python\readme.txt`
- * We use an alternate pattern on the right side of the `|` in order to match the N when the left side fails.
- * Instead of displaying Group 1, we display the whole match because Group 1 cannot be recycled to match either the Y or the N. This forces us to use a lookahead.

Expanding the *if-less* regex trick to columns with sets of 3 or more possible values

Note that the trick above doesn't have to produce Boolean columns. For instance, the following column displays *num* if the file stem is entirely numeric, *CAPS* if it is entirely in upper case, *low* if it is entirely in lower case.

The main difference is that we add the property `returnTheFirstNonEmptyGroup`, which tells Opus to set the column to the value of the first capture group that is not empty. (If JavaScript regex supported `\k` or lookbehinds, we could write the regex without this new property.)

```
'NumCapsLow' : { pattern: /^(num)CAPSlow\d+$|^num(CAPS)low[A-Z]+$|^numCAPS(low)[a-z]+$/, subjectPrefix: "numCAPSlow", returnTheFirstNonEmptyGroup: true }
```

Using the same idea, we can display three values depending on the path's depth—"0-2", "3-5" or "6+":

```
'pathdepth' : { pattern: /^0-2(3-5)6\+(?:[^\]\\*\\){4,6}[^\]\\*$|^0-23-5(6\+)(?:[^\]\\*\\){7}|(0-2)/, target: "realpath", subjectPrefix: "0-23-56+", returnTheFirstNonEmptyGroup: true }
```

The possibilities are endless!

[\(direct link\)](#)

Adapting the Scripts for Other Kinds of Files

If you'd like to adapt the [Movie FileName Database Script](#) for another kind of files, these are the steps. That's exactly what I did to create the [Books & Comics FileName Database script](#). We'll assume the theme of your new collection is CAD files.

- * Copy the the script file (its extension is *js.txt*) to a new file
- * Rename the new file to something like *CADdatabase.js.txt*
- * Open the file in a text editor.
- * Find the `initData.name` line and change it to `initData.name = "CAD Columns";`
- * Find the `ColumnPrefix` line and change it to `ColumnPrefix = "CAD_";`
- * Edit the columns as explained in the [Defining Fields](#) section
- * Install the script as explained in the [Installing Scripts](#) section

In an Opus lister, you can now right-click the column header and select your columns under *Scripts / CAD Columns*. And under *Prefs / Folders / Folder Formats*, you can select your columns while defining formats.

Well, that's all I have to say about the topic of "file name databases" for the time being! This page was a lot of work and I'm sure there are typos here and there. If you see any, please write to me using the form at the bottom. I'd also be interested (really!) to hear your ideas about this topic.

Rex Eats Regular Expressions for Breakfast

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Rex eats regular expressions for breakfast. And so can you! This regex tutorial, one of the most detailed on the web, takes you all the way to mastery.

This page explains what makes this site special among all other regex sites, but first let's answer a burning question:

What is the meaning of life?

That's easy. As per the [regex humor page](#), it's simply

```
^(?=(?!(.)\1)([^\D0:105-93+30])(?-1)(?<!\d(?<=(?![5-90-3])\d))).[^\WHY?]*$
```

Now for the other burning question...

What is a Regex?

First, a regex is a text string. For instance, `foo` is a regex. So is `[A-Z]+:\d+`.

Those text strings describe patterns to find text or *positions* within a body of text. For instance, the regex `foo` matches the string `foo`, the regex `[A-Z]+:\d+` matches string fragments like `F:1` and `GO:30`, and the regex `(?<=[a-z])(?=[A-Z])` matches the position in the string `CamelCase` where we shift from a lower-case letter to an upper-case letter.

Typically, these patterns (which can be beautifully intricate and precise) are used for four main tasks: to **find** text within a larger body of text; to **validate** that a string conforms to a desired format; to **replace** text (or **insert** text at matched positions, which is the same process); and to **split** strings.

For instance, the `CamelCase` pattern from the last paragraph can be used to split `MyLovelyValentine` into its three component words. And you could use the regex `_\d+_` to find digits within underscores (as in `_12_`) and to replace the underscores with double dashes, yielding `--12--`, something you could not do with a conventional search-and-replace (details for that technique are in the recipe about [replacing one delimiter with another](#)).

Who does this work of finding, replacing, splitting? A *regex engine*. For instance, you can find regex engines in text editors such as Notepad++ and EditPad Pro. You also find regex engines ready to roar in most programming languages—such as C#, Python, Perl, PHP, Java, JavaScript and Ruby.

Let's compress the definition from the earlier paragraphs:

A regex is a text string that describes a pattern that a regex engine uses in order to find text (or positions) in a body of text, typically for the purposes of validating, finding, replacing or splitting.

Is a Regex the same as a Regular Expression?

Mostly yes, with a little bit of no. At this stage, this is a semantic question—it depends on what one means by *regular expression*. That topic and other juicy details are discussed on the page about [Regex vs. Regular Expressions](#).

About this Site

Before we dive in—and only if you have time—I'd like to introduce this site and what makes it special.

I love regular expressions. They are a small computer language of their own. When I was a young dinosaur, I didn't take the time to properly learn the syntax, largely because I really didn't feel like learning another language. Who needs regex, I thought, when your programming language has functions that let you dig into strings from the left, the middle and the right?

What's more, the raw syntax you usually see in code that contains regexes used to intimidate me. Who wants to deal with a language that looks like this?

```
(?s)/\*(?:(!\*/)[*$ _/+\- ])*(.*)[*$ _/+\- ]*\*/
```

It is well worth investing a bit of time in Regular Expressions. You won't look back!

As it turns out, you really don't have to write your regular expressions like this. In many regex flavors, you can aerate your regex just like code, indenting and inserting comments as you go. If you walk with me through this site, you will be able to understand the expression above. Just as a preview, here is how the very same regex might look once "aerated" and commented, on multiple lines:

```
(?xs)      # Turn on free-spacing and DOTALL modes
/\*       # Match a forward slash and a star
(?:      # Some comment goes here
  (!\*/)  # Blah
  [-+*_/\ ] # Blah blah
)*        # Blah blah blah
(.*)     # More blah
[-+*_/$ \ ]*? # Yadda yadda blah
\*/      # Match a star and a forward slash
```

No doubt about it, even with comments and breathing room, there is something raw and experimental about writing a regex pattern.

Besides, how well your pattern performs doesn't only depend on applying correct syntax. There are several ways of doing things, and various regex engines may optimize some of these ways behind your back.

With regex, you are stepping down to a fairly low level, within earshot of the machine room. I like that. And I've been liking it all the more since learning about tools and safeguards to keep me from falling into the boiler.

A (hopefully) Different Presentation of Regex

To really learn, you need to see the same information in different ways.

There are excellent web pages about regex. Not many, but there are some, and I reference my favorite ones throughout the site. Then there are many pages that repeat the same old syntax reference. The problem is that for unfamiliar technical information to anchor itself in your mind—or at least in mine—you need to see it presented from various angles. When I started learning regex, as I was hopping from page to page and book to book, the content was much alike so the "information tree" wasn't yielding all its fruits. As a result, several questions that cut diagonally through the field of regex were staying unresolved.

RexEgg tries to present regular expressions a bit differently, in the hope that these different angles help many people become more grounded in their knowledge of regex. If you are looking for a drawn-out primer, this is not the place, as I don't see the need to pollute our beautiful world wide web with another explanation of how to match "foo" in "foo bar". But if you take your time to read the carefully-built tables on the [quick-launch page](#) then perhaps the [page about \(? ... \) syntax](#), you will experience what may be the most accelerated regex introduction around.

What Will you Find on this Site

Oh, yes, and forget about practice, that's completely overrated.
Just kidding.

Get ready, because as far as I know, this site is one of the two most comprehensive regex sources on the net—along with Jan Goyvaerts excellent [regex tutorial site](#). It aims to fill gaps in how regex information is presented elsewhere, including the major regex books. Here are some of the things you will find here.

- * A step-by-step explanation of simple and advanced regular expressions crafted for various contexts (such as text matching, file renaming, search-and-replace).

- * A presentation of the many contexts where you may run into regular expressions (from Apache to your html editor and file manager), complete with examples.

- * A reference about (? ...)—to reduce confusion by bringing all the pieces of syntax that start with an opening parenthesis and a question mark into a single place.

- * A discussion of Conditional Regexes, a topic about which there is little information.

- * A discussion of Recursive Regexes, a topic about which there is very little information.

- * Pages dedicated to regex in C#, Python, PHP and other languages.

- * Plenty of tips & tricks.

- * Sections about regex tools and regex books.

- * And much more!