

## Advanced Spotlight Menu Searches

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Most people just type the words they're looking for into the Spotlight box. But if that's all you type, you're missing a lot of the fun.

### Use quotes

If you type more than one word, Spotlight works just the way Google does. That is, it finds things that contain both words *somewhere* inside.

But if you're searching for a phrase where the words really belong together, put quotes around them. You'll save yourself from having to wade through hundreds of results where the words appear *separately*.

For example, searching for *military intelligence* will round up documents that contain those two words, but not necessarily side-by-side. Searching for "*military intelligence*" finds documents that contain that exact phrase. (Insert your own political joke here.)

### Limit by kind

You can confine your search to certain categories using a simple code. For example, to find all photos, type *kind:image*. If you're looking for a presentation document, but you're not sure whether you used Keynote, iWork, or PowerPoint to create it, type *kind:presentation* into the box. And so on.

Here's the complete list of kinds. Remember to precede each keyword type with *kind* and a colon.

#### To find this:

A program  
Someone in your address book  
A folder  
A message in Mail  
An iCal appointment  
An iCal task  
A graphic  
A movie  
A music file  
Audio file  
A PDF file  
A System Preferences control  
A Safari bookmark  
A font  
A presentation (PowerPoint, etc.)

#### Use *kind*: and one of these keywords:

app, application, applications  
contact, contacts  
folder, folders  
email, emails, mail message, mail messages  
event, events  
to do, to dos, todo, todos  
image, images  
movie, movies  
music  
audio  
pdf, pdfs  
preferences, system preferences  
bookmark, bookmarks  
font, fonts  
presentation, presentations

You can combine these codes with the text you're seeking, too. For example, if you're pretty sure you had a photo called "Naked Mole-Rat," you could cut

directly to it by typing *mole kind:images* or *kind:images mole*. (The order doesn't matter.)

### Limit by recent date

You can use a similar code to restrict the search by chronology. If you type *date:yesterday*, Spotlight limits its hunt to items that you last opened yesterday.

Here's the complete list of date keywords you can use: *this week, this month, this year; today, yesterday, tomorrow; next week, next month, next year*. (The last four items are useful only for finding upcoming iCal appointments. Even Spotlight can't show you files you haven't created yet.)

### Limit by metadata

If your brain is already on the verge of exploding, now might be a good time to take a break.

In Mac OS X 10.4, Spotlight could search on two kind of the criteria: Kind or Date.

But in Leopard, Apple added the ability to limit Spotlight searches by *any* of the 125 different info-morsels that may be stored as part of the files on your Mac: Author, Audio bit rate, City, Composer, Camera model, Pixel width, and so on. Page xx has a complete discussion of these so-called *metadata* types. (Metadata means "data about the data"—that is, descriptive info-bites about the files themselves.) Here are a few examples:

- *author:casey*. Finds all documents with "casey" in the Author field. (This presumes that you've actually *entered* the name Casey into the document's Author box. Microsoft Word, for example, has a place to store this information.)
- *width:800*. Finds all graphics that are 800 pixels wide.
- *flash:1*. Finds all photos that were taken with the camera's flash on. (To find photos with the flash *off*, you'd type *flash:0*. A number of the yes/no criteria work this way: Use 1 for yes, 0 for no.)
- *modified:3/7/08-3/10/08*. Finds all documents modified between March 7 and March 10.

You can also type *created:=6/1/08* to find all the files you created on June 1, 2008. Type *modified:<=3/9/08* to find all documents you edited *on or before* March 9, 2008.

As you can see, three range-finding symbols are available for your queries: *<*, *>*, and *-*. The *<* means "before" or "less than," the *>* means "after" or "greater than," and the hyphen indicates a range (of dates, size, or whatever you're looking for).

**Tip:** Here again, you can string words together. To find all PDFs you opened today, use *date:today kind:PDF*. And if you're looking for a PDF document that you created on July 4, 2008 containing the word *wombat*, you can type *created:=7/4/08 kind:pdf wombat*, although at this point, you're not saving all that much time.

Now, those examples are just a few representative searches out of the dozens that Leopard makes available.

It turns out that the search criteria codes that you can type into the Spotlight box (*author:casey, width:800*, and so on) correspond to the master list that appears when you choose Other from the criteria pop-up menu in the Spotlight *window*. In other words, there are *125 different* search criteria.

There's only one confusing part: in the Other list, lots of metadata types have spaces in their names. *Pixel width, musical genre, phone number*, and so on.

Yet you're allowed to use only *one* word before the colon when you type a search into the Spotlight box. For example, even though *pixel width* is a metadata type, you have to use *width:* or *pixelwidth:* in your search.

So it would probably be helpful to have a master list of the *one-word* codes that Spotlight recognizes.

Here it is, a Missing Manual exclusive, deep from within the bowels of Apple's Spotlight department: the master list of one-word codes. (Note that some search criteria have several alternate one-word names.)

<b>Real Search Attribute</b>	<b>One-Word Name(s)</b>
Keywords	keyword
Title	title
Subject	subject, title
Theme	theme
Authors	author, from, with, by
Editors	editor
Projects	project
Where from	wherefrom
Comment	comment

Copyright	copyright
Producer	producer
Used dates	used, date
Last opened	lastused, date
Content created	contentcreated, created, date
Content modified	contentmodified, modified, date
Duration	duration, time
Item creation	itemcreated, created, date
Contact keywords	contactkeyword, keyword
Version	version
Pixel height	pixelheight, height
Pixel width	pixelwidth, width
Page height	pageheight, height
Page width	pagewidth, height
Color space	colorspace
Bits per sample	bitspersample, bps
Flash	flash
Focal length	focallength
Alpha channel	alpha
Device make	make (camera brand)
Device model	model (camera model)
ISO speed	iso
Orientation	orientation
Layers	layer
White balance	whitebalance

Aperture	aperture, fstop
Profile name	profile
Resolution width	widthdpi, dpi
Resolution height	heightdpi, dpi
Exposure mode	exposuremode
Exposure time	exposuretime, time
EXIF version	exifversion
Codecs	codec
Media types	mediatype
Streamable	streamable
Total bit rate	totalbitrate, bitrate
Video bit rate	videobitrate, bitrate
Audio bit rate	audiobitrate, bitrate
Delivery type	delivery
Altitude	altitude
Latitude	latitude
Longitude	longitude
Text content	intext
Display name	displayname, name
Red eye	reduye
Metering mode	meteringmode
Max aperture	maxaperture
FNumber	fnumber, fstop
Exposure program	exposureprogram
Exposure time	exposuretime, time

Headline	headline, title
Instructions	instructions
City	city
State or Province	state, province
Country	country
Album	album, title
Sample rate	audiosamplerate, samplerate
Channel count	channels
Tempo	tempo
Key signature	keysignature, key
Time signature	timesignature
Audio encoding application	audioencodingapplication
Composer	composer, author, by
Lyricist	lyricist, author, by
Track number	tracknumber
Recording date	recordingdate, date
Musical genre	musicalgenre, genre
General MIDI sequence	ismidi
Recipients	recipient, to, with
Year recorded	yearrecorded, year
Organizations	organization
Languages	language
Rights	rights
Publishers	publisher
Contributors	contributor, by, author, with

Coverage	coverage
Description	description, comment
Identifier	id
Audiences	audience, to
Pages	pages
Security method	securitymethod
Content Creator	creator
Due date	duedate, date
Encoding software	encodingapplication
Rating	starrating
Phone number	phonenumber
Email addresses	email
Instant message addresses	imname
Kind	kind
URL	url
Recipient Email addresses	email
Email addresses	email
Filename	filename
File pathname	path
Size	size
Created	created
Modified	modified
Owner	owner
Group	group
Stationery	stationery

File invisible	invisible
File label	label
Spotlight comments	spotlightcomment, comment
Fonts	font
Instrument category	instrumentcategory
Instrument name	instrumentname

### Boolean searches

Mac OS X 10.5 adds another layer of sophistication to Spotlight searches by permitting what Comp Sci professors call *Boolean* searches. These are search terms that round up results containing *either* of two search terms, or *both* search terms, or one term but *not* another.

To go Boolean, you're supposed to incorporate terms like AND, OR, or NOT into your search queries.

For example, you can round up a list of files that match *two* terms by typing, say, *vacation AND kids*. (That's also how you'd find documents coauthored by two specific people—you and a pal, for example. You'd search for *author:Casey AND author:Chris*. Yes, you have to type Boolean terms in all capitals.)

**Tip:** You can use parentheses instead of AND, if you like. That is, typing *(vacation kids)* finds documents that contain both words, not necessarily together.

If you use OR, you can find icons that match *either* of two search criteria. Typing *kind:jpeg OR kind:pdf* turns up photos and PDF files in a single list.

The minus sign (hyphen) works, too. If you did a search for *dolphins*, hoping to turn up sea-mammal documents, but instead find your results contaminated by football-team listings, by all means repeat the search with *dolphins -miami*. Mac OS X eliminates all documents containing "Miami."

**Tip:** The word NOT works the same way. You could type *dolphins NOT miami* to achieve the same effect. But the hyphen is faster to type.