



User's Guide

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Welcome to PopChar

PopChar is a utility application that lets you insert characters from all installed fonts into your documents. You never need to search for and remember keystrokes any longer. Just pop up the PopChar window, click the desired character, and the character will appear in your current document.

System Requirements

PopChar requires Mac OS X 10.4 or newer. Mac OS X 10.6 or newer is recommended.

Installation

Installation of PopChar is easy. Download the disk image from our web server:

<http://www.ergonis.com/downloads/>

Mount the disk image and double-click the PopChar icon in the Finder window that opens. PopChar helps you with the installation by copying itself to the Applications folder and launching the installed copy.

That's it. You will notice that a small box labeled with the letter "P" has appeared in the top-left corner of the menu bar.



PopChar is a background-only application. It will never show up in the dock. The small "P" in the menu bar indicates that PopChar is running. Though small and unobtrusive, the "P" is always there when you need it. Whenever you need a special character, just click it.

Uninstallation

If you wish to remove PopChar from your computer permanently, we recommend the following procedure:

- Select "Preferences..." from the PopChar menu and disable the "Start PopChar at Login" option in the Activation tab.
- Choose Quit from the PopChar menu and move the PopChar application to the trash.

Inserting Characters

Suppose you want to insert the Euro symbol in a text document. Put the insertion point where you wish to insert the symbol, then click the "P" in the menu bar.

A window with all characters in a preselected font appears:



To insert the Euro symbol in your document, click the symbol in this window.

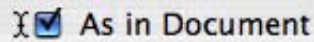
When you point at a character, some information about the selected character appears at the bottom of the window:



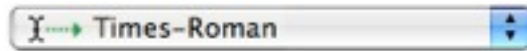
This information tells you that the Euro symbol has the number 219, or "DB" in hexadecimal, and the name of the symbol is "EURO SIGN".

PopChar also displays the keystrokes needed to generate this character. In this case, it tells you that you can also create the Euro symbol by typing option-shift-"2" on a US keyboard.

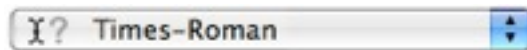
more. This means that PopChar displays the font currently in use by the active application. To enable this feature, select the second item "As in Document" in the font-pop-up menu:



When PopChar displays the same font as used in the current document, an insertion marker with an arrow appears in the font pop-up menu:



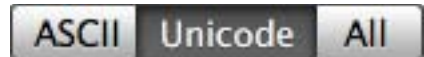
When PopChar has not been able to detect the font used in your document, it displays a question mark and continues to use the previously shown font:



This can happen sometimes when the frontmost window of the current application does not contain editable text with variable fonts (such as a find dialog window).

It is also possible that PopChar is never able to detect the current font in a specific application. PopChar uses a couple of sophisticated techniques to find the font. However, these techniques require support by the current application. When you discover that PopChar is unable to detect the current font in a certain application, you need to manually synchronize the font shown in PopChar with the font being used in the application.

ASCII/Unicode/All



All text that appears on your screen is internally represented as a series of numbers. When an application displays text, these numbers are converted into "glyphs" – the visible shapes that you finally see. The mapping from numbers to glyphs is called an *encoding*. On a Macintosh, most applications use either a simple single-byte encoding or a more sophisticated encoding based on the Unicode standard. The ASCII/Unicode/All control above the character table lets you switch between these two encodings:

- In **ASCII**¹ mode, every character is internally represented as a single byte, which means that approximately 230 glyphs can be used per font. This is the traditional technique that was used before Mac OS X.
- In **Unicode** mode, multiple bytes are used to represent characters, which means that fonts can contain several thousands of characters. The theoretical upper limit is approximately 1.1 millions of characters.

¹ To be more precise, Macs actually use an encoding called *MacRoman*. This is an extension to the ASCII standard, which would allow only up to 96 printable characters.

- The third choice, **All**, is actually a variant of the Unicode setting. The difference is that Unicode displays all glyphs in the current font that can be represented as Unicode characters, whereas All displays all possible Unicode characters in any installed font.

The advantage of Unicode is that Unicode-compatible applications can use a single font to represent text in multiple languages, so a single font (such as Lucida Grande) can be used to write text in English, Greek, and Hebrew. In addition to support for multiple languages, Unicode fonts also contain a variety of special characters, such as arrows, mathematical and currency symbols.


In contrast, ASCII mode requires special fonts for special purposes. For example, there exist fonts that have been created specifically for certain languages. To overcome the limit imposed by the small character set, these fonts replace certain characters from the ASCII set with characters needed for the target language. For example, the capital letter "G" might appear as "Γ" (capital gamma) in a font made for Greek.

Mac OS X has full support for Unicode, but not all applications can handle Unicode text. This means that you need to select ASCII or Unicode/All based on the capabilities of the current application.

Most of Apple's Mac OS X applications (such as Mail, TextEdit, Pages, Keynote, iCal, and even the Finder) fully support Unicode. Many newer applications that have been built specifically for Mac OS X (such as OmniGraffle, Microsoft Word 2004, and Adobe InDesign) also support Unicode, but older applications that were originally created for Mac OS 9 still cannot handle Unicode.

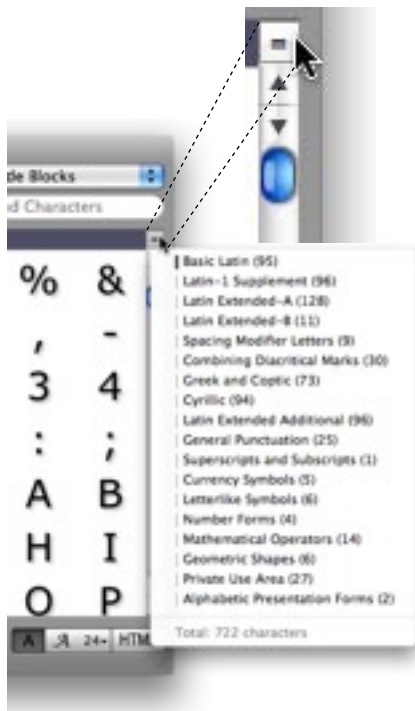
When you use PopChar with an application for the first time, we suggest that you try Unicode or All mode first. When you find out that characters are not inserted correctly, switch to ASCII mode. This will limit you to far fewer characters, but you can at least be sure that the characters shown can be inserted correctly. Note that this is not a limitation of PopChar. PopChar can handle all of Unicode, but certain applications simply do not take advantage of the richer Unicode character set.

In Unicode mode, the characters available in a font are arranged in groups, each with a dark heading:



▼ Greek (339)

The number in parentheses is the number of characters in this group. You can click the triangle to collapse groups you don't need (for example, because you don't speak the language represented by a group). In this way, you can reduce the number of characters shown in the PopChar table, so you get a better overview of the remaining characters. This can be particularly handy for fonts with thousands of Chinese characters.



To get a quick overview of the groups available in a font, click the small button above the vertical scrollbar. Select a group from the menu to quickly jump there. The vertical bars show which groups are currently visible, and the summary at the bottom tells you how many characters the current font contains. In "All" mode, the menu will contain all groups from the union of all installed fonts, and the summary in the last line tells you how many Unicode characters you can use all in all.

The text display and editing components of Mac OS X handle Unicode in a very flexible way. When a piece of text contains a Unicode character that is not present in the current font, Mac OS X uses a "fallback strategy" and uses a similar font for displaying the desired character. In most cases, you will not even notice that a different font was substituted for a certain character, but sometimes you will see that certain characters appear in a different "style" or have different proportions than surrounding characters. When you use the "All" mode of PopChar, the character table shows how all the available Unicode characters will appear in text that is formatted in the currently selected font. Characters that exist in the current font are shown in black; characters that are substituted from a different font appear in blue, as shown in the following snapshot of the "Cyrillic Supplement" section of Lucida Grande:



The "All" mode is great when you are working with a Unicode-compatible application and want to insert a special symbol, no matter which font contains this symbol. Browse through

the Unicode Blocks, or search for the desired character (see below). Then just click the character to insert it in your text.

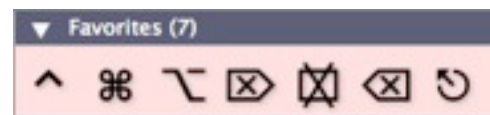
Some symbol fonts (for example, Webdings and the Wingdings family) contain many special characters in the "Private Use Area". This is a section of Unicode that can be used by font designers for font-specific special characters. Different fonts will therefore contain different characters in this section. When you use PopChar to insert special characters from such symbol fonts, you should therefore switch to "Unicode" instead of "All". Also make sure that the current font in your text document matches the symbol font. When PopChar appears to insert a different character, check the inserted character's attributes and apply the correct symbol font to the character.

Favorite Characters

In the Unicode and All modes, you will find an extra group "Favorites" at the top of the character table. You can customize this group by adding characters that you frequently need. To do this, right-click or ctrl-click any character to pop up the context menu, then choose "Add to Favorites". You will see that all your favorite characters still remain in their original places, but now with a pink background so you can see which characters already appear in the Favorites group.

When you switch fonts in Unicode mode, PopChar displays those of your favorite characters that are available in the current font. And if you wish to see all of them, switch to PopChar's "All" view. Or use PopChar's "Reverse Search" feature to find those fonts that contain a needed character (for more information, see the section *Finding Fonts That Contain Certain Characters* further below).

Hint: If you have been using PopChar for a while already, select "Recent Characters" from the layout pop-up menu above the search field. You will likely find frequently needed characters in this view, so this is a good place to control-click them and add them to the list of favorites.

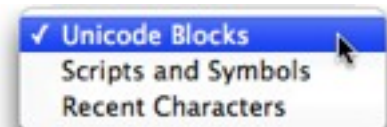


Layouts and Recent Characters

In Unicode mode, the pop-up menu at the top-right of the PopChar window lets you choose between two layouts of characters.

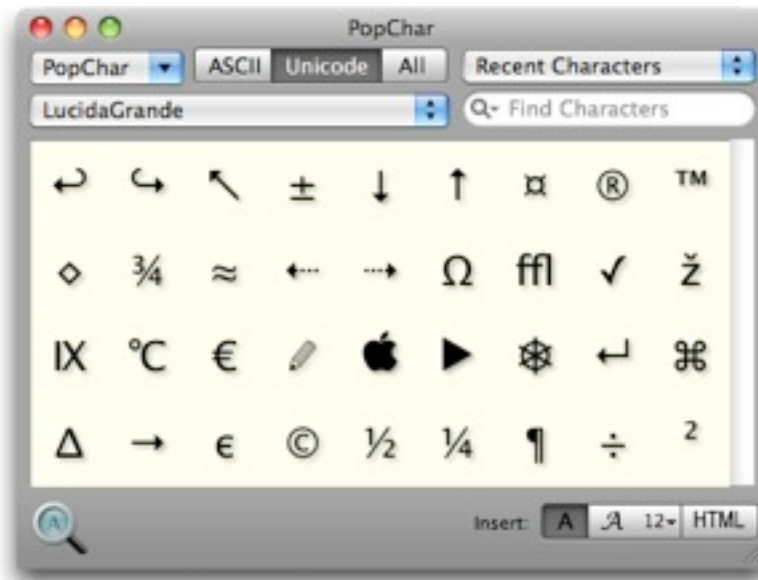
Unicode Blocks arranges the characters based on the grouping as defined by the Unicode standard.

Scripts and Symbols arranges the characters in groups that represent language scripts (such as Latin, Cyrillic, and East Asian) and various types of symbols (such as phonetic, geometric, and technical).



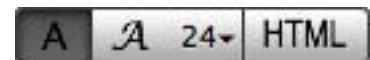
In ASCII mode, a single item *All Characters* appears instead of Unicode Blocks and Scripts and Symbols.

The item *Recent Characters* displays characters that you have inserted recently:



Recently inserted characters appear in reverse order, so the list always starts with the most recent character. The Recent Characters display contains all characters that are available in the current font. When you have recently inserted a couple of phonetic symbols from a special-purpose font and then switch to a font that does not contain such symbols, they will be missing from the list of recent characters. It can even happen that the current font does not contain any recently used characters. In this case, a message will appear instead of an empty character table, so you know what is going on.

Insertion Modes



In the bottom right corner of the PopChar window, you can find a control that lets you choose how PopChar should insert selected characters.

A The first option stands for **plain text**. PopChar inserts the selected character in the font that is in effect in the current document. This is the recommended choice when the font shown in PopChar matches the font being used in the current document. When the fonts do not match, a different character may appear in your document. When this happens, reformat the inserted character with the desired font or try the second insertion mode option.

A 24 The second option stands for **formatted text**. PopChar inserts the selected character along with formatting information about the current font. Since text formats also include the font size, you can select the desired font size by clicking the format-

Search hints:

- When you enter a single letter, you get all variants of this letter.
- You can enter numbers to search for various number forms and fractions.
- To search for all kinds of numbers, type "number".
- Entering decimal or hexadecimal numbers also finds the characters with the corresponding Unicode number. Since decimal numbers can also be interpreted as hexadecimal numbers, entering "100" will find both the lower-case "d" (decimal 100) and the capital letter A with macron "Ā" (hexadecimal 100). To search for decimal numbers only, prefix the number with "#" ("#100"). To search for hexadecimal numbers only, prefix the number with "x" or "0x" ("0x100").
- When you enter multiple words, PopChar displays all characters that match *all* words.
- You can enter incomplete words. For example, "dia" will match both "DIAERESIS" and "DIAMOND".
- You can also search for Unicode block names. For example, "math" will display all characters in the "Mathematical Operators" block, although none of them have the term "math" in their names.
- Last but not least, you can copy an arbitrary piece of text and paste it into PopChar's search field. PopChar then displays all characters that occur in the text you entered. To enforce this search mode, just make sure that the text contains at least one special character. For example, enter a period after pasting the text.


You can also click the triangle in the search field and select one of the predefined phrases. The last item (Unnamed) applies a special filter that lists all characters without Unicode names.

Finding Fonts That Contain Certain Characters

PopChar makes it easy to start with a font and explore the font's repertoire. But sometimes you will need to search in the opposite direction: You want to use a certain Unicode character and wish to know in which of the installed fonts you can find it.

For example, select the font Verdana in PopChar, switch to Unicode mode, then enter the word "arrow" in the search field. PopChar will display a message that tells you that Verdana does not contain any arrows. Now switch from Unicode to "All". You will see that there are hundreds of arrows of different shapes and orientation, but they all are shown in blue because they come from other fonts. Now control-click or right-click one of the arrows and select the command "Mark fonts containing ..." from the context menu. All fonts that contain this character will now appear with a small bullet in the font list. For example, the following display will tell you that Courier New contains the selected symbol, but Corsiva Hebrew and Courier don't:

Corsiva Hebrew
Courier
Courier New



To see only those fonts that contain the marked character, click the collection pop-up menu above the font list and select the item "Marked Fonts".

To quickly locate the character in one of the fonts that contain it, click the bullet next to the font name. PopChar then selects the font and highlights the symbol in the character table.

To remove the bullets from the font list, right-click or control-click inside the character table or the font list and select the "Reset Marks" command.

Hint: When you have a "Mighty Mouse" with the middle button configured as "Button 3", you can also middle-click a character to quickly mark all fonts containing this character.

The PopChar Menu



The PopChar pop-up menu in the top-left corner of the window provides the following commands:

- **About PopChar...** displays information about PopChar and the current version.
- **Contact Us...** opens a window with a couple of buttons that makes it easy for you to get in touch with us. You can visit one of our web pages or send a mail message to technical support and customer service.
- **Registration...** displays a dialog for entering or changing your license key.
If you use PopChar under the terms of a site license, the registration dialog displays the name of the license holder.
- **Preferences...** opens the preferences sheet. See the next section for details.
- **Check for Updates...** visits our web server to check whether a new version of PopChar is available.
- **Help** displays this document.
- **Quit** closes PopChar. You usually need to quit PopChar only when you upgrade to a newer version.

You can also open this menu with the right mouse button or with a control-click on the "P" in the menu bar.

Preferences

The "Preferences..." command gives you a couple of options to configure the display and behavior of PopChar. It is divided in three sections, *Activation*, *View & Insert*, and *Updates*:

Activation:

- Use the radio buttons at the top to specify where the "P" should appear in the menu bar.
- When you choose one of the corners, you can choose to make the "P" invisible, so it appears only when you move the mouse pointer into the corner.
- In addition to the "P" in the menu bar, you can also define a hotkey for quickly opening and closing the PopChar window.
- The "animate" option affects the genie effect when the PopChar window appears and the dissolve effect when the window closes. If you have a slow Mac, you may want to turn this option off.
- In the "close automatically" section, you can specify under which circumstances the window should automatically disappear. If you prefer to keep the window open at all times, uncheck all options. To make the window as unobtrusive as possible, try checking all options.
- "Start PopChar at Login" adds PopChar to your list of login items. This setting is active by default, so PopChar will automatically be launched when you restart your computer or log out and in again. We recommend that you leave this item checked.

View & Insert:

- Use the Character Size slider to choose an appropriate display size. PopChar computes the font size based on this setting, such that characters from any font take up approximately the same space.
- The "Fit ASCII table" checkbox tries to fit all characters into the window when ASCII mode is enabled, so you can see all of them without scrolling. To avoid tiny characters when the window becomes too small, you can specify a minimum font size in the pop-up menu below.
- The next option controls whether the characters appear with drop shadows. Since this is a matter of personal taste, it is up to you if you prefer sharp characters or softer shadows.
- "Recent fonts in menu" specifies how many recent fonts should be shown in the font pop-up menu. When you have a large screen, you may want to see more fonts listed in the menu, so you will need to open the font list less often.
- "Highlight recent characters" lets you choose how many of your recently selected characters should be highlighted in the character table with a yellow background. This option helps you to locate frequently used characters faster.

- The last option controls whether HTML symbols are inserted by their names ("HTML entities") or numerically. HTML entities are easier to read in HTML text, but numeric HTML codes are supported by more browsers.

Updates:

In this section, you can control whether PopChar should check our server for new versions regularly. To disable automatic version checking, select "never".

Registration

If you use PopChar under the terms of a site license, this section does not apply for you. If PopChar asks for a license key when you launch it, ask your system administrator about the proper installation procedure.

PopChar is distributed on a "try before you buy" basis. When you do not yet have a license key, PopChar runs in trial mode. You can try how it works, but many special characters will be disabled.

To order a license key, please visit our online store at

www.ergonis.com/store/

or select "Registration..." from the PopChar menu and click the "Order" button.

When you order online, you usually receive your license key immediately with your order (in rare cases via e-mail within the next business day). To enter the license key, select "Registration..." from the PopChar menu. Enter your license key exactly as you have received it.

Hint: To avoid typing errors, you can copy the license key from the browser window or mail message and paste it into PopChar's registration sheet by typing command-V.

Once you have registered PopChar, the demo limitation is immediately removed; you don't need to quit and relaunch PopChar.

Known Issues

- When the "P" is in the top-right corner of the menu bar, the standard menus in this area (time, monitor, sound, Airport settings etc.) may briefly drop down over the PopChar window. This is a harmless cosmetic effect, caused by a known inconsistency in the menu handling of Mac OS X.
- Some fonts (in particular Carta) do not work properly with Adobe applications (in particular, Photoshop and InDesign). Wrong characters or black/white rectangles get inserted when you try to insert certain Carta characters in these applications. This problem has nothing to do with PopChar; the same problem occurs when you try to copy/paste Carta characters from other applications into Photoshop or Indesign.

- Insertion of Unicode characters requires active Unicode support by applications. Applications with limited or missing Unicode support will insert wrong characters for certain Unicode characters. We expect that more and more applications will take advantage of the Unicode features of Mac OS X. For example, Microsoft Word 2004 and InDesign CS2 or newer fully support Unicode, whereas older versions do not.
- If you cannot access PopChar because some other utility conflicts with the top-left location of the "P", double-click the PopChar application icon in the Finder to bring up the Preferences dialog. You can then select an alternate location for activation of PopChar.

Credits

Many people contributed to PopChar – too many to thank them all individually. In particular, we have been receiving much encouraging feedback and many helpful suggestions and hints from PopChar users and testers. We'd like to thank all of them for their continuing support.

The following individuals deserve explicit credits due to their outstanding contributions to PopChar (in alphabetical order): Hervé Bismuth, Manuel Blaschek, Arlen Britton, Travis Brown, Patrick Bunout, Stewart Candlish, Jean-Jacques Cortes, James Doyle, Kristy Effinger, Herbert Elbrecht, Laszlo Falvay, Frank Flammersfeld, Yuri Fokin, Christina Fröstl, Ken Gee, Michael Graubart, Barry Hincks, Peter Hoerster, Mary Beth Janes, Chad Jones, Michael Kamprath, Mark H. Koury, Sascha Kratky, Frédéric Latour, Alberto Lenz, George Marcus, Matt Neuburg, David J. Nightingale, William Rae, John Reeder, Christoph and Thomas Reichenberger, Maria Schöllhammer, Rob Snoijink, Martin Tik.