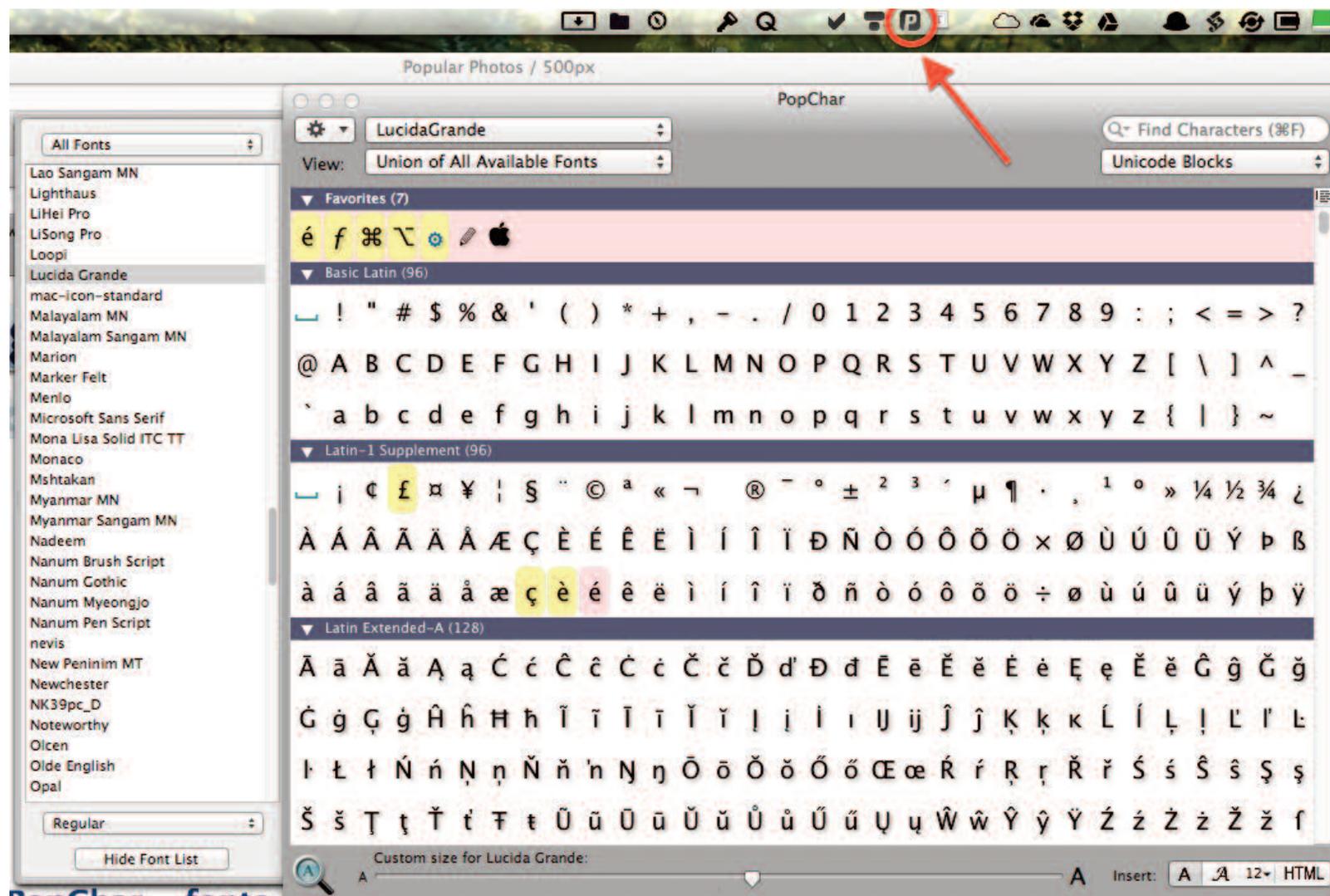# Typinator, PopChar, and KeyCue Applications from Ergonis Software

Ergonis produces a trio of extremely useful applications for your computer. I have been using these products for many years (PopChar has been around since 1987). I have reviewed these products more than once over the years. The reviews have to be redone every so often, because these apps evolve as the MAC OS keeps changing. Ergonis has kept up with the times and all of their apps are better than ever. For this review, I will do a brief recap of each of the three apps, highlighting how I use them. For a more detailed account of what they can do, you can look back to the previous reviews or go to www.ergonis.com to get more info.
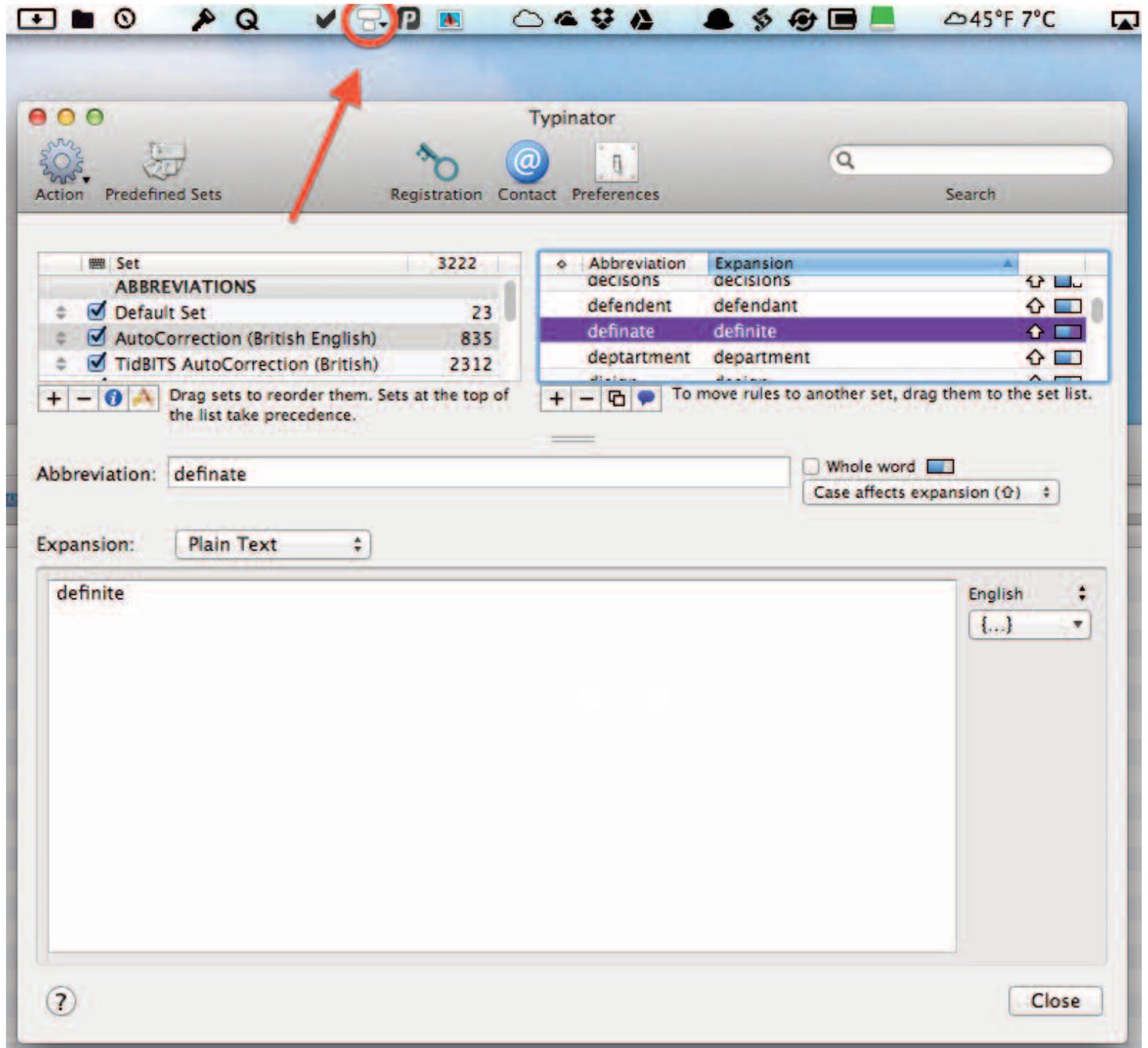
PopChar is the first of the apps that I put on my computer. I had an LCIII at the time. I wanted an easy way to add French accents to some of my documents. Any special character can be displayed by using a combination of simultaneous keystrokes. Unless I was using these all the time, I would forget the exact combination. I always had to look them up. PopChar provided me with a complete list of characters, including all the hidden ones, right from the menu bar where a "P" icon was now shown. The window that resulted from clicking the icon revealed not only those hidden characters but also enabled me to switch quickly to a different font. It opened up for me a vast library of characters. From that window, I could easily compare the same character, shown in various fonts. The font preview option shows various sized paragraphs to give you a quick look of what it might look like. I found PopChar especially useful since it displayed dingbats and other pictorial fonts. I would not have used these at all were it not for PopChar. It made it so easy to incorporate them into my documents. As a Science teacher, I could pick the most appropriate arrow shape, from a Pointers font, to add to a Chemistry equation. PopChar also showed the keyboard combination that produced that character. You could memorize this or, as I do, add the character to a favorites line that appears at the top of the PopChar window. Now I don't have to search around for my most commonly used special characters. I have the apple logo () placed in my favorites line as well as the ✎ ƒ ⌘ ⌥ icons. There are other ways to do this but I have found PopChar is the quickest and most versatile way to use those hidden characters. If you know the character you are looking for you can actually search for it. For example, if you type pound in the search field then PopChar displays "£". If you need info on any installed font, PopChar will display that for you. I last reviewed PopChar back in the October 2010 DoubleClick. Since then it has been updated often so that it is now compatible with Yosemite. The current version also works with Mavericks, Mountain Lion, all the way back to Snow Leopard (10.6). Older versions of PopChar are available if you have a more antiquated MAC OS.

The second application that I got from Ergonis was Typinator. I consciously use this every day. By typing in a combination of three keys in a row, I get my email address to pop up in a document. Using another combination of keys, I get a draft copy of a generic letter I want to send out. I actually have five different form letters, depending on what I am looking for. Sure you can copy-paste the letter, but first you would have to locate it. With Typinator, I simply remember the keystrokes. And if I forget the combination, it is right there in the menu bar, which is where Typinator is located. And, it not only does print but also graphics. I have our MaUsE logo at my fingertips, ready to be inserted wherever I choose. Typinator takes the tedium out of repeatedly having to type your name, e-mail address, home page url, or other words or phrases again and again. If you frequently need to quickly insert images like your signature, or a location plan into documents then Typinator is for you. The Typinator application also includes a set of downloadable database files which contain common typing errors and their corrections. In the background, Typinator will auto-correct misspelled words. If you type in "defanite" it will auto-correct to "definite". This database of commonly misspelled words can be updated and added to. There is a separate file for American and British spelled words as well as a few other languages. Pick one or the other so that the word "colour" appears as colour and not as color. With thousands of predefined corrections for common typos and misspelled words, Typinator is not only a typing assistant that speeds repetitive typing tasks, but also a system-wide auto-correction tool that automatically fixes typing errors and misspelled words. It is one app I would definitely not be without. I last reviewed this application in the August 2010 DoubleClick.

The final app from Ergonis is KeyCue. I have had this on my computer for quite a while but, I have to admit, I do not use it a lot. Therein lies my problem. If I was using it more frequently, then KeyCue would be much more useful for me. By double tapping the command key and holding it down on the second tap, I get a screen showing all the shortcuts available for the active application I am using. The screen actually separates the shortcuts into those for the active application (on the left) and for System-wide shortcuts (on the right). There are just so many shortcuts available to any application. Unless you are using them everyday, you won't be able to use them effectively. A shortcut is only good if you remember what it is. If you have to go searching for it, time is wasted and the shortcut is rendered useless. KeyCue attempts to show you all the shortcuts at one time to better find what you want. It is hoped that using it will train you to remember the shortcuts. I call it up once in a while, but I have not found that I remember the shortcuts any better. But that is why it is useful, and I am glad it is there. Because it does put all the shortcuts on the screen, I don't have to actually memorize the shortcut. I can simply pick it out from the displayed choices. There is a search field located at the bottom of the KeyCue window which will highlight all the shortcuts that fit the simple profile you are trying to figure out. The more you use this application, the more effective it becomes. I last reviewed this application in the December 2010 DoubleClick.

Ergonis has been around for a very long time. It has been keeping up with the changing operating systems. In the past, when you purchased one of their applications, you were entitled to updates for a couple of years. Now, rather than time-based, upgrades are version-based. Upgrades for minor versions are free while major upgrades require paying for a new license. My favourite app is Typinator which sells for 25EUR. Next comes PopChar, the one I have been using for the longest time, which sells for 29.99EUR. Finally there is KeyCue which sells for 19.99EUR. Ergonis also offers a productivity bundle, which has all three applications, selling for 67.47EUR. These applications can be downloaded on a try-before-you-buy basis. Download and test any of these products for free from www.ergonis.com. See why I have been using them for such a long time and could not do without.

Submitted by Marcel Dufresne