

SPEEDING UP YOUR COMPUTER

A faster way to speed up Mail.app

It is possible to get quite a speed boost out of Mail.app by stripping all the bloat out of its Envelope index, an SQLite database Mail uses to store senders, recipients, subjects and so on.

Definition of re-indexing

This command re-indexes your “Envelope Database”. If you don’t know what database re-indexing is here is a slightly modified explanation:

A database index is similar to an index for an instruction manual or a book. When you want to locate something in a book it isn't necessary to read the entire book from cover-to-cover every time you want to find a specific piece of information. Instead, you just look in the index and go to the page that contains the information you're looking for.

Every time you change and/or add a record (in this case adding, deleting or modifying an email) in your database, the index files are changed. These changes are usually added to the end of the index, instead of being placed in proper order. With time your searches become less efficient since they are now out of order.

For this reason index files need to be put back in order every once in a while. This is called re-indexing.

Note: Even clicking a mailbox is equivalent to a search i.e. you are searching for all mail that belong in that mailbox, which is why you get speed improvements across the board with this technique.

1. Quit Mail.
2. Open Terminal.
3. Type the following:

```
sqlite3 ~/Library/Mail/Envelope\ Index vacuum subjects;
```

After a short delay, the prompt will return.

Type Control-D to exit.

4. Restart Mail and enjoy the extra speed.

To see how much space your saving, run the following command in terminal before and after:

```
ls -lah ~/Library/Mail/Envelope\ Index
```

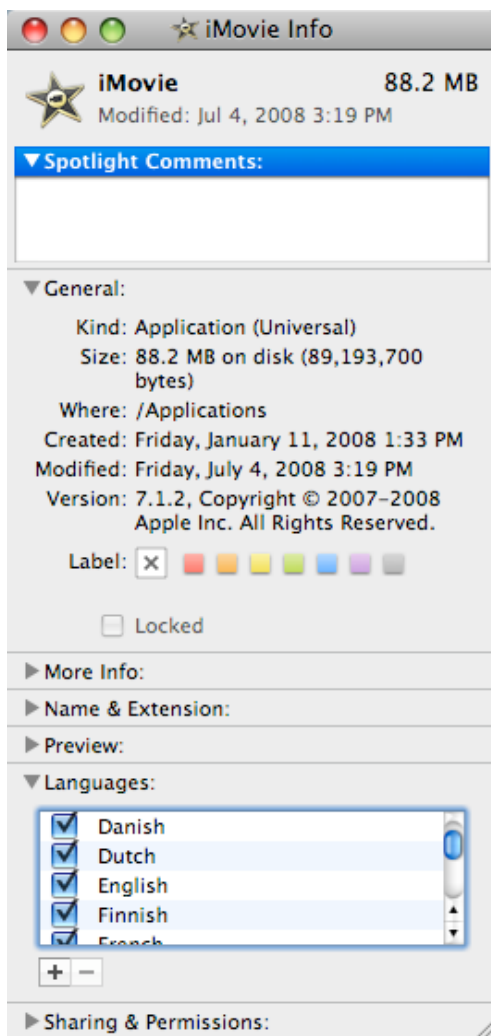
You can also run the following command if you'd like to try and gain even more performance:

```
sqlite3 ~/Library/Mail/Envelope\ Index vacuum body;
```

Speeding up Mail, Safari, iPhoto, iMovie by removing languages

Go to each program in the applications folder then right click (control-click) and then select get info and under the language drop down only select the language you use and uncheck the others, this shaves 1 or 2 secs of the program loading.

You can perform this step on other applications, but I found it only seemed available in the Apple applications.



Speeding up iPhoto

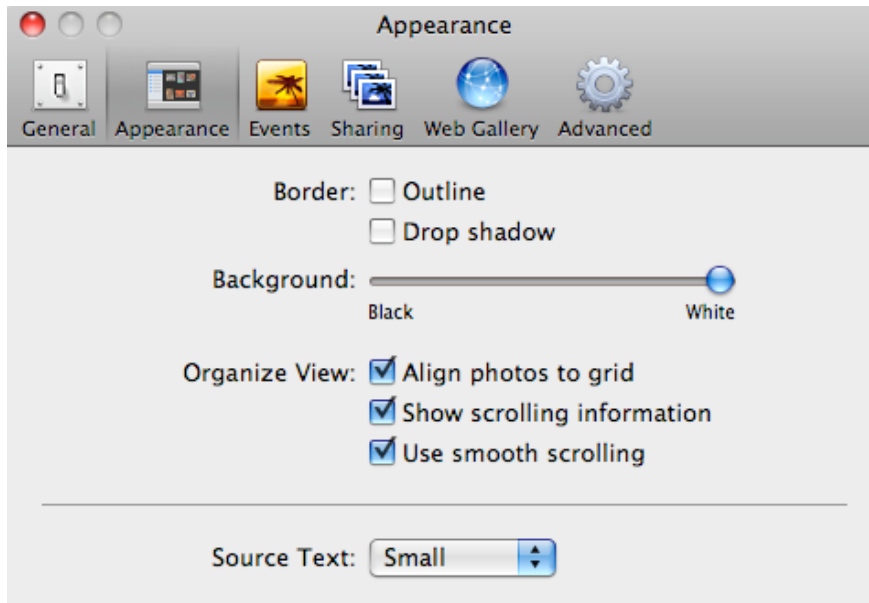
Rebuild the Library

Hold down the apple and option (or alt) keys while launching iPhoto. Use the resulting dialogue to rebuild.



Change Preference Settings

Choose 'Appearance'. Uncheck both 'Outline' and 'Drop shadow.' Slide the 'Background' all the way to White, and you should notice that iPhoto will startup a little faster.



Speeding up Safari: Reducing spinning pinwheels, other performance bottlenecks

Safari is generally one of the fastest browsers for Mac OS X with regard to page rendering. Unfortunately, it's also prone to significant slowdown -- including repeated stalls accompanied by the spinning pinwheel progress indicator, slow launch times, and more. There are a few procedures you can use to minimize the occurrence of stalls and eliminate other hindrances, improving the overall speed of Apple's Web browser.

Slow launching

Clean startup routines

There are a number of routines Safari has to perform each time it is launched, and making sure there aren't excessive steps in these routines -- by reducing the number of files in certain locations or periodically deleting some folders altogether -- can make for fewer bounces in the Dock.

The ~/Library/Safari (the tilde [~] represents the current home user directory) folder is one of the locations you should check, because Safari checks it as well when launching. Here the browser stores bookmarks, recent downloads, form values, history and favicons, the small icons that appear next to the URL for some sites. Favicons, in particular, can cause sluggishness when starting Safari and when loading pages.

Use the Reset Safari... command under the Safari menu to "Remove all website icons". This will delete all of the favicons.

Delete .plist file

Another file that can be implicated in not only slow but also failed Safari launches is the application's property list (.plist) file, which is located here: ~/Library/Preferences/com.apple.Safari.plist.

Try deleting it if you are experiencing slow launches, but note that you will lose some easily recoverable settings, such as whether or not tabbed browsing is enabled.

Check for errant plug-ins

Problematic plug-ins can impede Safari's launch time significantly. See the section Plug-in inventory below.

Stalls (spinning pinwheels) or slowness when loading pages

Like slow launching, stalled or slow page loads can be due to problematic files stored within the Safari architecture. These symptoms can also be the result of accumulated memory usage and other factors.

Just quit and relaunch

One of the quickest, albeit impermanent solutions for slowness in Safari (as noted by a number of readers) is to simply close then relaunch the browser.

The causes for slowdown after extended operation are varied, but may include lingering, unnecessarily excessive memory usage.

Reset Safari

A blanket approach to deleting many of the potentially problem-causing items is the Reset Safari... command, available under the Safari menu in Safari. Note, however, that this command also deletes your browser history, personal data -- such as stored login passwords, search entries, cookies and more -- that you may not want to clear. Still, it's a good initial cleansing step.

The Reset Safari command deletes all personal information and can also clear some files responsible for slowness.

If you'd rather not invoke a full reset, try using the Empty Cache... command first. Though it's designed to speed loading of often-visited Web pages when a slow connection is present, a full cache actually generally has a degrading effect on the speed of broadband connections.

Clear favicons

Favicons, in addition to causing slow launching (as aforementioned in Slow Launching) can significant delays in loading pages. Use Reset Safari to "Remove all web icons".

If you find that routinely deleting the contents of this folder is a drag, and you don't care to display favicons at all, you can permanently disable their storage. First clear the contents of the aforementioned folder, then do one of the following:

* Lock the ~/Library/Safari/Icons folder by navigating to ~/Library/Safari/, clicking the Icons folder, then selecting Get Info from the File menu. Check the Locked box under General.

* Change permissions for the ~/Library/Safari/Icons folder by navigating to ~/Library/Safari/, clicking the Icons folder, then selecting Get Info from the File menu. Under Ownership & Permissions change the You can setting to Read Only.

Plug-in inventory

Safari plug-ins can cause slowness for a variety of reasons. To see what plug-ins are currently installed in Safari, choose INSTALLED PLUG-INS from the Help menu.

The easiest way to check if a plug-in is culpable in your particular case of sluggishness is to do the following:

1. Go to the Safari menu within Safari, and select Preferences
2. Click on the Security tab
3. Deselect Enable plug-ins
4. Restart Safari, and see if the slowness is gone. If so, a plug-in may be to blame.

Look in the folders: /Library/Internet Plug-Ins and ~/Library/Internet Plug-Ins. Remove any extraneous items you think might be causing the slowdown, then again restart Safari and check for speed improvement.

AutoFill clutter

Safari can stall when loading pages with forms (or even pages without forms) due to bottlenecks caused by the AutoFill function. If you are noticing particular slowness on pages with forms, try going to the Safari menu within Safari, and select Preferences, then click on the AutoFill tab. Turn off some or all of the options and check for persistence of the slowdown.

If you choose to leave AutoFill options turned on, you may periodically want to click the Edit button next to Other Forms in the same preference tab and delete some or all of the entries (sites for which Safari will attempt to use AutoFill).

Clearing AutoFill clutter is particularly useful for otherwise inexplicable, repeated spinning pinwheel progress indicators

Bookmark menu

If you notice that your bookmarks menu takes an abnormally long time to appear, there are two relatively obvious fixes. The first is to reduce your number of bookmarks or organize them into a smaller number of folders. The second, and usually more useful, is to shorten the names of your bookmarks.

Select Show All Bookmarks from the Bookmarks menu in Safari, then click on the desired bookmark to select it, and click it once more to rename it (as you would a file in the Finder). Alternatively, hold the control key and click a bookmark (or right-click) then select Edit Name from the resulting contextual menu.

Check for overall network slowness

If you've exhausted the above options and still don't think Safari is performing up to par, a bottleneck affecting all Mac OS X networking may be to blame. The easiest way to determine whether or not your problem lies with general network speed is a cursory check in other browsers (Firefox, etc.) on several different sites for consistent slowness.

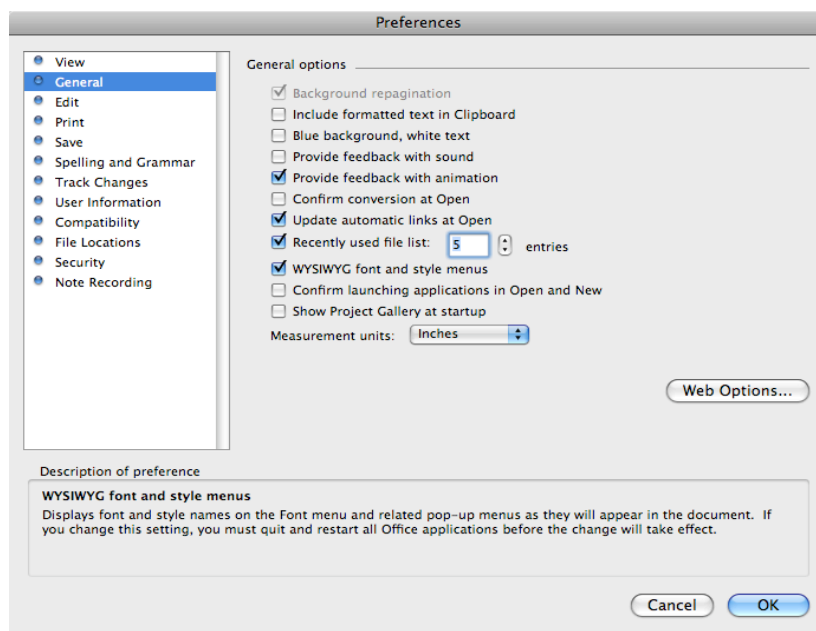
Power cycle your network access device (Cable/DSL modem)

If you are using a DSL or cable connection, try simply powering off your modem, waiting a few minutes, then powering it back on. Doing so can noticeably speed up network access.

Speeding up Office 2008

Many people have been experiencing extremely long load/startup times for Word, Excel and PowerPoint in Office 2008 for Mac. It seems that the problem is how Office renders the fonts for preview. These steps turn off the feature of the font appearing in its typeface in the dropdown font menu. This is hopefully temporary while Microsoft fixes this problem

1. In the menu bar, go to: "Word" > "Preferences..."
2. In the preference pane, click "General"
3. Uncheck the box called "WYSIWYG Font and Style Menus"
4. Uncheck "Show Project Gallery At Start Up"
5. Click "Ok"
6. Quit Word and relaunch



Speeding up most applications

Nearly all applications on your Mac, especially ones made by Apple, have cache files. These cache files contain data to help your application run quicker and generally faster. They cache data which is used often, so it doesn't have to be re-calculated. That's what cache files do. But these cache files get bigger and more bloated over time. As a result they can actually slow down the application, since they may contain data that is not needed but is still being read. It is easy to delete a cache file and let the program make a new one.

Open a new Finder window and navigate to ~/Library/Caches/. This folder contains a lot of folders which contain your cache files. Simply located the folder of the application from which you want to delete the cache file. Delete the file. Make sure the application you are deleting the cache from is closed before you do this, to make sure you don't corrupt anything.

I don't recommend, mind you, deleting every cache file you have. This could cause problems. Only delete the cache files you are having problems with.