



Tech Info Library

CD-ROMs and Startup Volume's Desktop File

Revised: 9/5/91
Security: Everyone

CD-ROMs and Startup Volume's Desktop File

=====
Article Created: 14 May 1991
Article Last Reviewed: 27 May 1991
Article Last Updated:

TOPIC -----

I am told that the Desktop on the startup volume is updated every time the Finder sees an icon it doesn't already have on its own Desktop . . . but that this doesn't apply to CD-ROMs, due to the amount of info they carry.

That must mean that in the case of exploring a couple of very large capacity hard drives (like 600MB) that are SCSI-chained to a Macintosh, the desktop file on the boot volume must get really huge. And the only way to bring it back to "normal" is to rebuild it after you unchain the external drives.

Also, if there are a number of SCSI drives chained to your Macintosh that are up and running and visible on your Macintosh desktop, and then you restart the Macintosh while holding down Option-Command, what desktop files get rebuilt? Only the boot volume or the other ones as well? How would you rebuild the desktop on a non-startup external SCSI volume? (Doing it to a 3.5-inch disk is easy, but a big MacInStor won't fit in the diskette slot!)

DISCUSSION -----

You're right, the Desktop file on the volume can be huge, depending on what storage devices are attached it. On the other hand, how many of these zillions of files are actually unique? The actual file information (where it is physically, how long it is, etc.) is stored in the Desktop on that volume, not the startup volume. Only the icon (and other related) info is stored in the startup volume's Desktop.

Anyway, you can have a googleplex worth of MacWrite II documents, but the startup volume's Desktop will have only the one icon entry for all of them.

So yes, it can get really large--but probably not as big as you think.

The CD-ROM drivers have patches that keep the Finder from going bonkers over the file information there.

As for rebuilding the Desktop: the Finder looks for the Option and Command keys only during the "moment of mounting" -- which is why you can hold down the two keys while you insert a diskette, and get them rebuilt.

To rebuild attached hard drives, it's safest to just hold the keys down all the way through the startup. To do multiple drives, just keep holding the keys down until all of them are done; you'll actually get separate dialog boxes for each volume, and you can either okay (to rebuild) or cancel (to skip) -- just keep holding the keys down. It really does work. All this also means that the Finder will attempt to rebuild the volumes in mounted order, whatever that may be.

Copyright 1991, Apple Computer, Inc.

Tech Info Library Article Number:8174