The Dock

The Dock is a prominent feature of the graphical user interface of macOS. It is used to launch applications and to switch between running applications.

macOS Dock appareance

Keyboard shortcuts and actions

Keypress	Action
^ + fn + F3	Show or Focus on the Dock
^ + F3	Show or Focus on the Dock when `Fn` keys are locked
⌥ + ⌘ + D	Show/hide the Dock
⟵	Select left application
⟶	Select right application
Enter	Switch to the selected application

Managing the Dock through defaults

Additionally to **System Settings**, the **Dock** can be adjusted using the `defaults` command (from the command line using **Terminal** or a similar application). All these commands requires to relaunch the **Dock**. So, for practical purposes all the commands shown here includes the `killall Dock` command.

The defaults command

`defaults` allows users to read, write, and delete macOS user defaults from a command-line shell.

defaults actions

Action	Description
read	Prints all of the user's defaults, for every domain, to standard output.
write	Writes value as the value for key in domain. value must be a property list, and must be enclosed in single quotes.
delete	Removes all default information for domain or a key ion a domain

Domains, keys and values

A *default* belong to a **domain**, a domain name of the form `com.co mpa nyn ame.ap pname`, which typically correspond to individual applications. Each **domain** has a dictionary of **keys** and **values** representing its *defaults*; for example, "Default Font" = "Helvetica". **Keys** are always strings, but values can be complex data structures comprising arrays, dictionaries, strings, and binary data. These data structures are stored as XML property lists.

Flag	Type
-string	Default value type if no flag type is provided. Allows the user to specify a string as the value for the given preference key.
-int[eger]	Allows the user to specify an integer as the value for the given preference key.
-float	Allows the user to specify a floating point number as the value for the given preference key.
-bool[ean]	Allows the user to specify a boolean as the value for the given preference key. Value must be TRUE, FALSE, YES, or NO

For more information on other flags, consult the online help in the command line via **Terminal** or similar applications (*e.g.* `man defaul ts`).

Empty

References

1. "*Dock (macOS)*", **Wikipedia**, web. Visited: 2024.12.18. URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dock_(macOS))

2. `man defaults`, **macOS 15.2**, *General Commands Manual*.

3. "*The Dock on your Mac*", **Apple Inc.**, web. Visited: 2024.12.18. URL: https://support.apple.com/en-ca/guide/macbook-air/apd4b7f-b731f/mac

Reaction time

Time to show or to hide

`defaults write com.ap ple.Dock autohi de- delay -floa`

Animation time to show or to hide the Dock

`defaults write com.ap ple.dock autohi de- tim e-m odi Dock`

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Page 1 of 2.

Spaces, size and effects

Adding an space between the icons in the Dock

```
defaults write com.ap ple.dock persis ten t-apps -array-add '{"t ile -ty pe"= " spa cer -ti le";}'; k illall Dock
```

Size of the Dock

```
defaults write com.ap ple.dock tilesize -float 48; killall Dock
```

Magnification size

```
defaults write com.ap ple.dock largesize -int 128; killall Dock
```

Applications

To show all windows of an application doing an scroll action on the icon

```
defaults write com.ap ple.dock scroll -to -open -bool TRUE; killall D ock
```

To keep only the active applications

```
defaults write com.ap ple.dock static -only -bool TRUE; killall Dock
```

To highlight hidden (⌘ + H) applications

```
defaults write com.ap ple.dock showhidden -bool TRUE; killall Dock
```

Resetting the Dock

Resetting the Dock to the factory settings

```
defaults delete com.ap ple.dock; killall Dock
```

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Page 2 of 2.