

Modifying the Macintosh Startup Sequence (OS 9)

excerpted from an article by Adam C. Engst <www.tidbits.com>

Controlling the Post-Startup Environment

Most Macintosh users know about holding the Shift key down to prevent extensions from loading, but there are numerous startup modifiers that affect the state of the system after the boot process finishes. For the complete list view TidBITS#529/01-May-00 <<http://db.tidbits.com/getbits.acgi?tbart=05922>>

Shift causes the Mac to boot without extensions, which is useful for troubleshooting extension conflicts. If you hold down Shift after all the extensions have loaded but before the Finder launches, it also prevents any startup items from launching.

Spacebar launches Apple's Extensions Manager early in the startup process so you can enable or disable extensions before they load. Casady & Greene's Conflict Catcher, if you're using it instead of Extensions Manager, also launches if it sees you holding down the spacebar.

Option, if held down as the Finder launches, closes any previously open Finder windows. On stock older Macs, holding down Option does nothing at startup by default.

Control can cause the Location Manager to prompt you to select a location.

Command turns virtual memory off until the next restart.

Command-Option rebuilds the desktop files on disks when they're mounted. This can happen when you insert removable media, or at the end of the startup process as the Finder launches. Holding down these keys while all your extensions load may disable some of them - it's best to press the keys between when you see your last extension icon appear and before the Finder launches.

Command-Option-P-R "zaps" the Mac's Parameter RAM, or PRAM, which contains a variety of low-level settings. This can sometimes clear up a flaky system after other measures have failed.

The **mouse button** causes the Mac to eject floppy disks and most other forms of removable media, though not CD-ROMs.

The **C key** forces the Mac to start up from a bootable CD-ROM, if one is present, which is useful if something goes wrong with your startup hard disk.

Option activates the new Startup Manager on the iBook, Power Mac G4 (AGP Graphics), PowerBook (FireWire), and slot-loading iMacs. The Startup Manager displays a rather cryptic set of icons indicating available startup volumes, including any NetBoot volumes that are available. On some Macs with Iomega Zip drives, holding down Option at startup when there is a Zip startup disk inserted will cause the Mac to boot from the Zip disk.

Command-Shift-Option-Delete bypasses the disk selected in the Startup Disk control panel in favor of an external device or from CD-ROM (on older Macs). This is also useful if your main hard disk is having problems and you need to start up from another device. (On some PowerBooks, however, this key combination merely ignores the internal drive, which isn't as useful.)

The **D key** forces the PowerBook (Bronze Keyboard and FireWire) to boot from the internal hard disk.

The **T key** forces the PowerBook (FireWire) (and reportedly the Power Mac G4 (AGP)) to start up in FireWire Target Disk Mode, essentially the modern equivalent of SCSI Disk Mode and enables a PowerBook (FireWire) to act as a FireWire-accessible hard disk for another Mac.