

AppleScript and Automator gain new features in OS X Mavericks

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Mac power users love to play with scripting and automation. If there's something that's repetitive that needs to be done, it's a lot easier just to either use Automator to automate the process or write an AppleScript to dive in a little deeper. With [OS X Mavericks](#), it appears that Apple has added some features that will help "self-developers" who want to add their own capabilities to their Macs and commercial apps. On the other hand, there are fewer scriptable items available in many of the new Apple apps...

iCloud Sync

To begin with, there's a surprise for anyone who launches either Automator or AppleScript Editor. The first thing you'll find is that both apps were updated with iCloud compatibility. AppleScripts that you've created or Automator workflows can now be moved into the cloud and synced to all of your Macs that are running OS X Mavericks. Sure, that's a little thing, but it's useful if you're creating and updating scripts or workflows that need to be deployed to a handful of Macs automatically.



Notifications

Want to annoy yourself? AppleScript and Automator now includes a `Display Notification` command that you can use to send yourself notifications from your own scripts. That's actually quite useful if you want to write a script or run an Automator action that's going to ping you when it's done through Notification Center. There's got to be a way to use this to annoy coworkers...



Libraries

Now this is cool. Let's say that you have code that can be used in a number of scripts. Now you can create an AppleScript Library, which is a script that contains a frequently used routine. Store that in `~\Library\Script Libraries\`, and now any other script can use that code by simply calling it with a new `use` clause. Write once, use many times. Blogger Don Southard over at MacStories has a good example of how to use libraries in [his writeup of scripting and automation improvements in Mavericks](#).

Code Signing

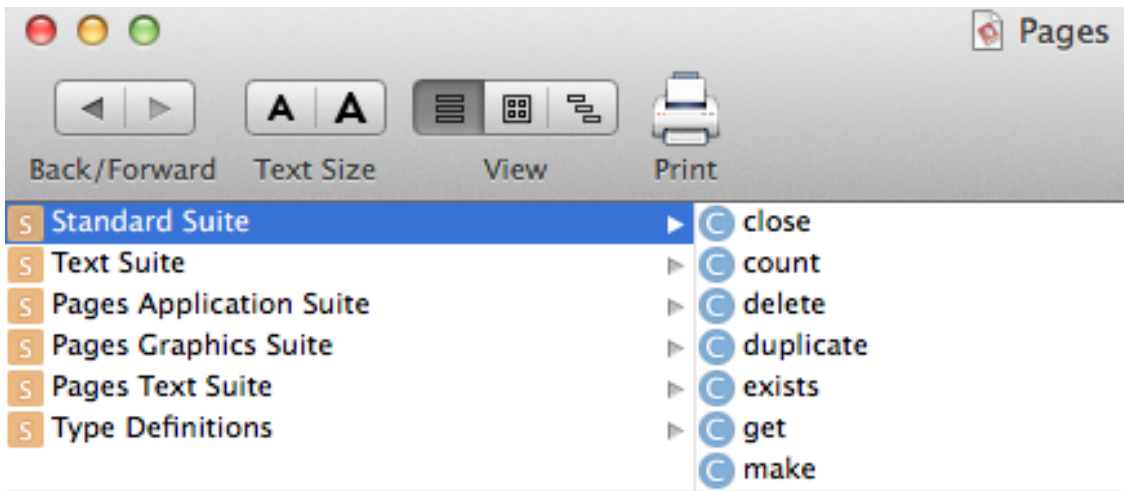
This may not sound like a big thing, but it's huge. Apple developers can now generate signed copies of applets and droplets as part of the export process in both AppleScript and Automator. Signing these applets means that users launching them will not get the usual Gatekeeper security warning, and adds an incentive for developers to include easy automation tools in their solutions.

Speakable-Workflows

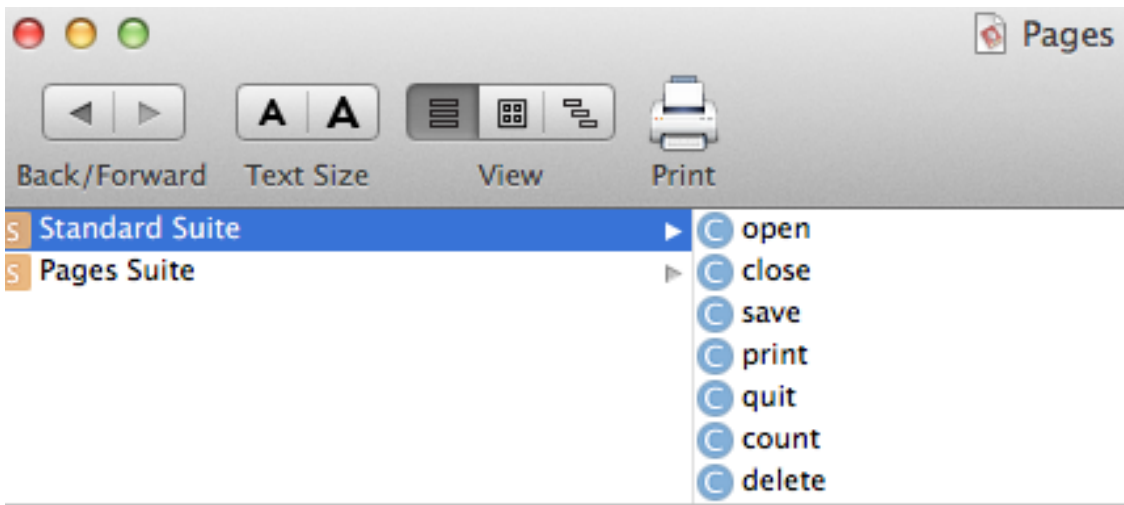
Now here's a wonderful addition for those who are creating accessible solutions. If Speakable Items is activated in the Accessibility system preferences, Automator adds a new option to the save dialog to save applets as Speakable Items. With that one click, those items are saved to the Speakable Items architecture and can be executed by speaking the name of the applet.

Now, about those new apps...

On the bad side, some of the new apps appear to be missing a lot of commands in their dictionaries. For example, opening the dictionary of Pages '09 displayed the following:



Compare that to the new dictionary for the current iteration of Pages:



What's missing? Well, a lot. The Pages Application Suite used to let you do things like script the addition of a chart or table to a document; the Graphics Suite made it easy to script changes to things like the alpha threshold of an image; and the Text Suite even allowed scripting of things like inserting a table of content to a Pages document or fine-tuning the look of character styles. Can't do that with the new Pages... Hopefully Apple will add these capabilities back in an update to Pages and the other iWork apps. (Thanks to reader Peter P. for noting this omission from Pages.)

This is just what I've been able to find -- or not find -- in a cursory look at Maverick's automation tools. As more capabilities and deletions become apparent, this post will be updated. I'd also recommend taking a look at MacOSXAutomation.com, which is always helpful and useful when you're considering the use of the built-in OS X automation tools.