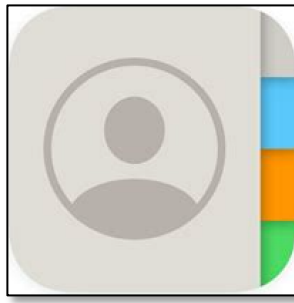


04-24-2022, Mac Basics/Beginners SIG – Duplicate Contacts

Note: This discussion is based on macOS, 12.3.1 (Monterey). Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS or OS X. Most illustrations are from screenshots on my iMac or MacBook Pro.

A couple of months ago, I ran into a problem with the entries in my **Contacts** app. All of them had been *doubled*, including the 15 Groups that I'd set up! This Mac Basics presentation will discuss what I learned about duplicate entries how to fix them. *Note: This is not a comprehensive discussion on using the Contacts app.*

Credit: See the credits at the end of this presentation.



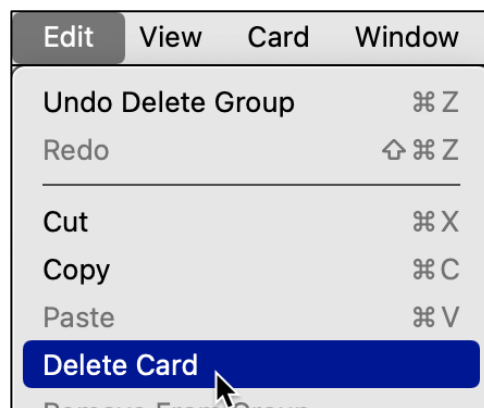
Contacts Icon

The Problem. At the time, I had over 500 entries (cards) in my Contacts app, and then with the doubling incident, I now had over 1,000 of them, and my 15 groups became 30! Perhaps it was a glitch in iCloud syncing as I use it to sync my Contacts with my MacBook Pro, iPad and iPhone. It's possible that the Contacts sitting on iCloud were somehow mistaken as being different than the Contacts on my iMac. Regardless, iCloud sync brought all the entries on iCloud into Contacts on all my devices.

Delete Duplicate Cards - Various Solutions

I've had a few duplicate Contacts show up over the years. Most of them were found by Siri in Mail messages and added to my Contacts. Sometimes I would just leave them, and sometimes, I'd just delete one of the duplicates.

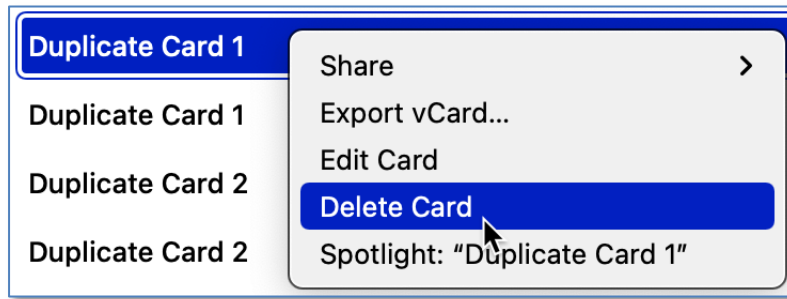
Delete a Duplicate Card. If you start from the **All Contacts** group, one way to delete a duplicate card is by selecting **Delete Card** from the **Edit** menu:



Edit Menu > Delete Card

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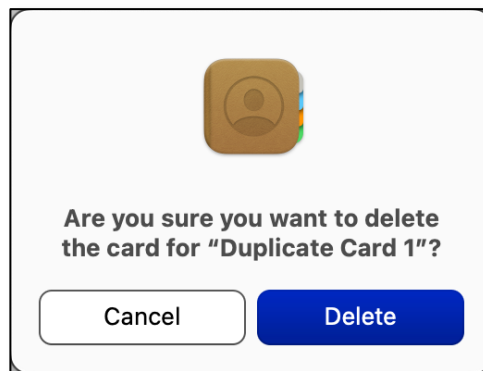
Another way to delete a duplicate card is by [right-clicking](#) on the card and selecting **Delete Card** from the pop-up menu.



Right Click > Delete Card

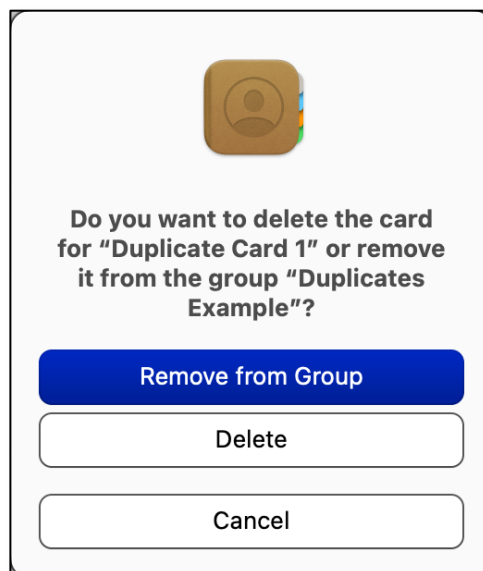
Delete Key. If you don't want to use the Edit menu or right-click, just select the duplicate card, and then use the **Delete** key.

Regardless of how you choose to delete a card, when you do, you'll see an informational warning similar to this one:



Delete Card Informational Warning

If you start from a [duplicated group](#), the informational warning changes giving you the option of only removing from the group or deleting altogether:

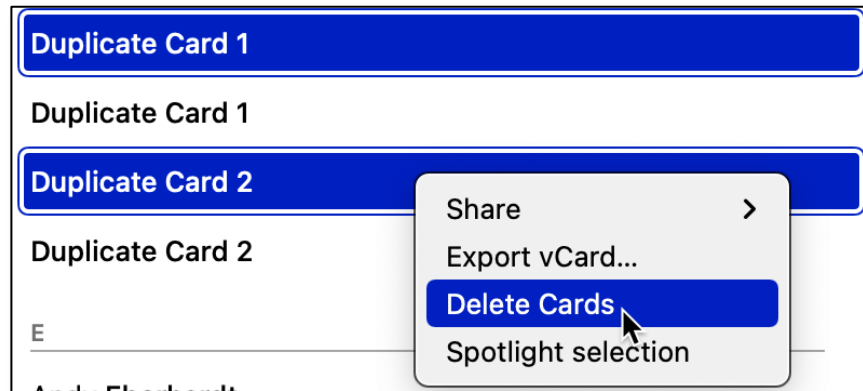


Delete Card Informational Warning (Group)

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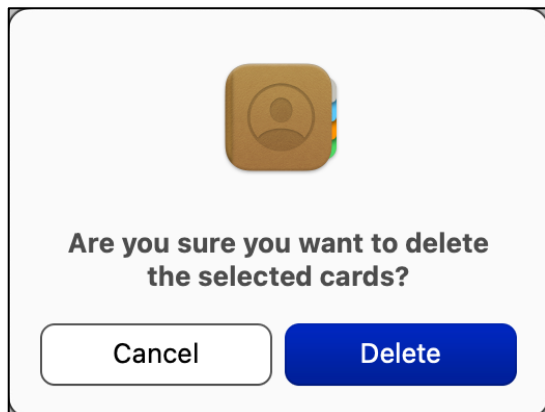
Delete Several Duplicate Cards. While the methods described above are easy for deleting a few individual duplicate cards, one-by-one, what if you have more than just a few (i.e., several) of them (however you want to define "several")? In this case, you can select the desired number of duplicates (one-by-one by holding down the **Command** key, just like you would to select multiple items in the Finder) and then using one the three **Delete Card** options discussed above. When you select multiple cards, **Delete Card** becomes **Delete Cards** (plural).

For example, if you choose to delete the duplicate cards from your **All Contacts** group:

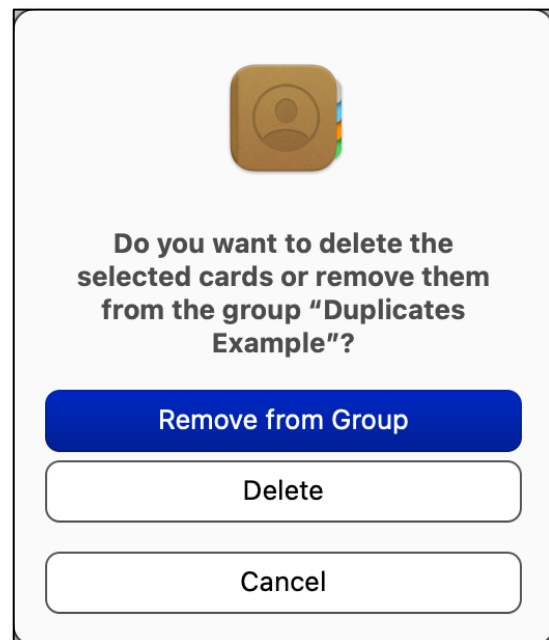


Right Click > Delete Cards

The resulting informational warning will depend on whether you choose to delete the cards from the All Contacts group or from one of your duplicated groups:



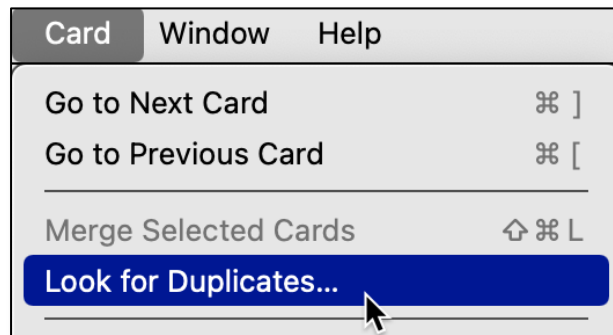
**Delete Card Informational Warning
(All Contacts Group)**



**Delete Card Informational Warning
(Another Group)**

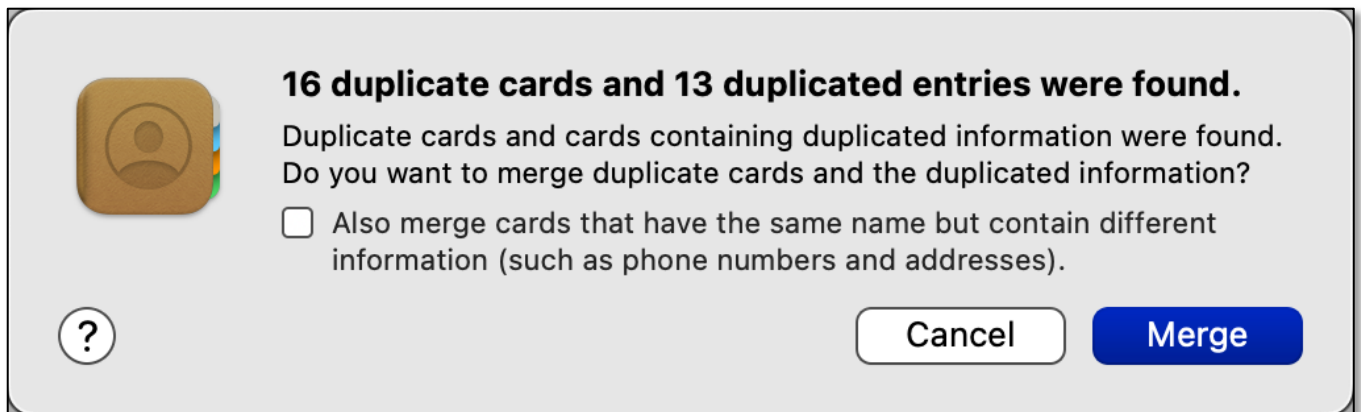
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Dealing With Lots of Duplicate Cards. If you have lots of duplicate cards (like I did) or even just a few of them (your choice), the Contacts app has an option for that, too. Just go to the **Card** menu and choose **Look for Duplicates...**:



Card Menu > Look for Duplicates...

This menu selection will bring up an informational pop-up similar to this one:



Informational Pop-up

When you **Look for Duplicates...**, you're offered the option to **merge** the duplicate cards and any duplicated information so that only one of each duplicate remains.

Through use of a checkbox, you can also "merge cards that have the same name but contain different information (such as phone numbers and addresses)."

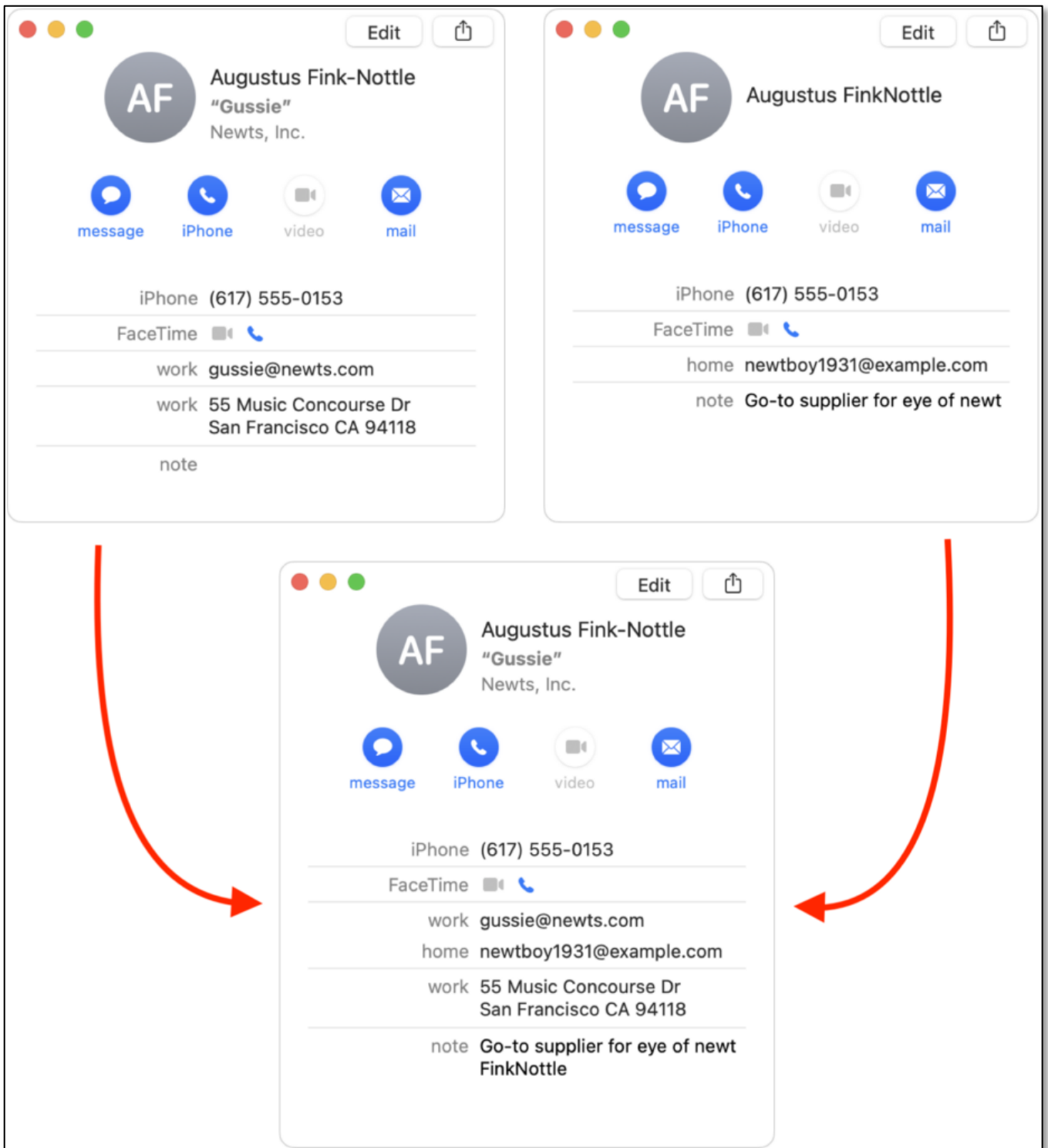
Merge Duplicate Cards Manually

You can also choose to merge duplicate cards manually.

If you find that you have two or more contact cards for the same person or company, they will usually have the same name but likely with different information. However, it doesn't matter if the names are different.

Merging these cards will combine the data from each one into a single card. To do this, select them, and go to the **Card** menu and choose **Merge Selected Cards**. You then have just a single merged card. (See the image on the next page.)

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Merge Two Cards

(Credit: Small Dog Electronics, Kibbles & Bytes #1197, 04-08-2022)

Duplicate Groups

Finally, what about those duplicate groups that I had (in addition to all the duplicate contacts). How can duplicate groups be removed or merged?

- Unlike dealing with duplicate contacts, apparently there is no automated option for dealing with duplicate groups. Unfortunately, there's no option to merge groups in order to gather all the contact entries together. You can't Command-click to select multiple groups to deal with them.

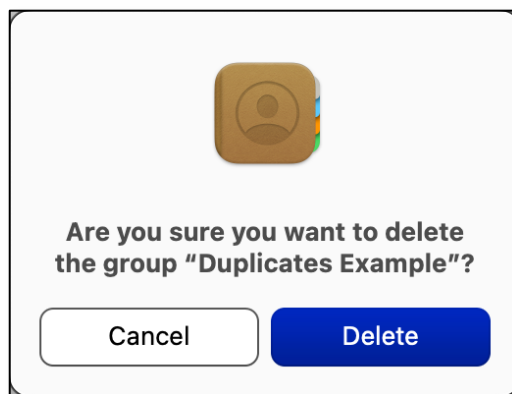
Because your options are limited, you will need to examine the contents of each group and decide what to do:

- If one group contains the same contact card entries as found in the other group plus additional ones, then you can simply delete the other group, leaving the one group that had all the entries.
- If the groups contain different contact card entries, you can copy entries from one group to the other, again leaving one group with all the various entries from the two groups. Then delete the group that you don't want.

Delete a Group. Two options are available to delete a duplicate group. There's no merge option. Your options are:

- Select the duplicate group, go to the **Edit** menu and choose **Remove Group**.
- Select the duplicate group, and use the **Delete** key.

Regardless of how you choose to delete a group, when you do, you'll see this informational warning:



Delete Duplicate Group Informational Warning

Summary

As we use the Contacts app, some duplicate cards (and perhaps even groups) will probably show up. The Contacts app has several ways to remove the duplicates or to merge duplicate cards into one.

If you should have a major duplicates incident like I did, the Contacts app still has a way to merge each set of duplicates into one card.

Next Presentation

For the next presentation, we'll take a look another macOS feature.

Have a favorite Mac Tip or utility? Please feel free to pass it along, and I'll see if I can work it into a future presentation.

If you have any suggestions for presentation topics, including macOS utilities, please contact me at slp4668@gmail.com.

–Steve Parker

Credits:

1. <https://smalldog.biz/newsletter/kibbles-bytes-1197/>
(Three Tricks for Dealing with Duplicated Contacts)
2. <https://support.apple.com/guide/contacts/welcome/mac>
(Contacts User Guide)
3. <https://support.apple.com/guide/contacts/delete-groups-and-smart-groups-adrb07afd3b3/13.0/mac/12.0>
(Delete groups and Smart Groups in Contacts on Mac)
4. <https://support.apple.com/guide/contacts/merge-contact-cards-adrbk1456/13.0/mac/12.0>
(Merge contact cards in Contacts on Mac)