Note: This discussion is based on macOS Ventura, 13.2.1. Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS. Most illustrations are from screenshots on my iMac or MacBook Pro.
<u>*Credit*</u>*: See the credits at the end of this presentation.*

Back in January and February 2021, I presented discussions about using Quick Actions. You can find them on the Archives page (Beginners' Group Notes) of Double Click's website [here](#). Since then, two new ones have shown up. This presentation will discuss them along with one of my favorites. First, an updated refresher.

Finder Quick Actions – What Are They?

Quick Actions is a feature that was introduced macOS Mojave (10.14) back in 2018. Its purpose is to let the user work on files directly in the Finder without having to open an app. Quick Actions are specific Finder extensions used for editing a file.

Quick Actions allow us to rotate images, markup a file, create PDFs, and more. Some are pre-installed by the macOS; some by other apps.

Until macOS Ventura, Quick Actions were part of a family of add-ons listed in the **Extensions pane** in **System Preferences**. In Ventura, the new name for System Preferences is **System Settings**, but Extensions are not listed directly in the System Settings sidebar.

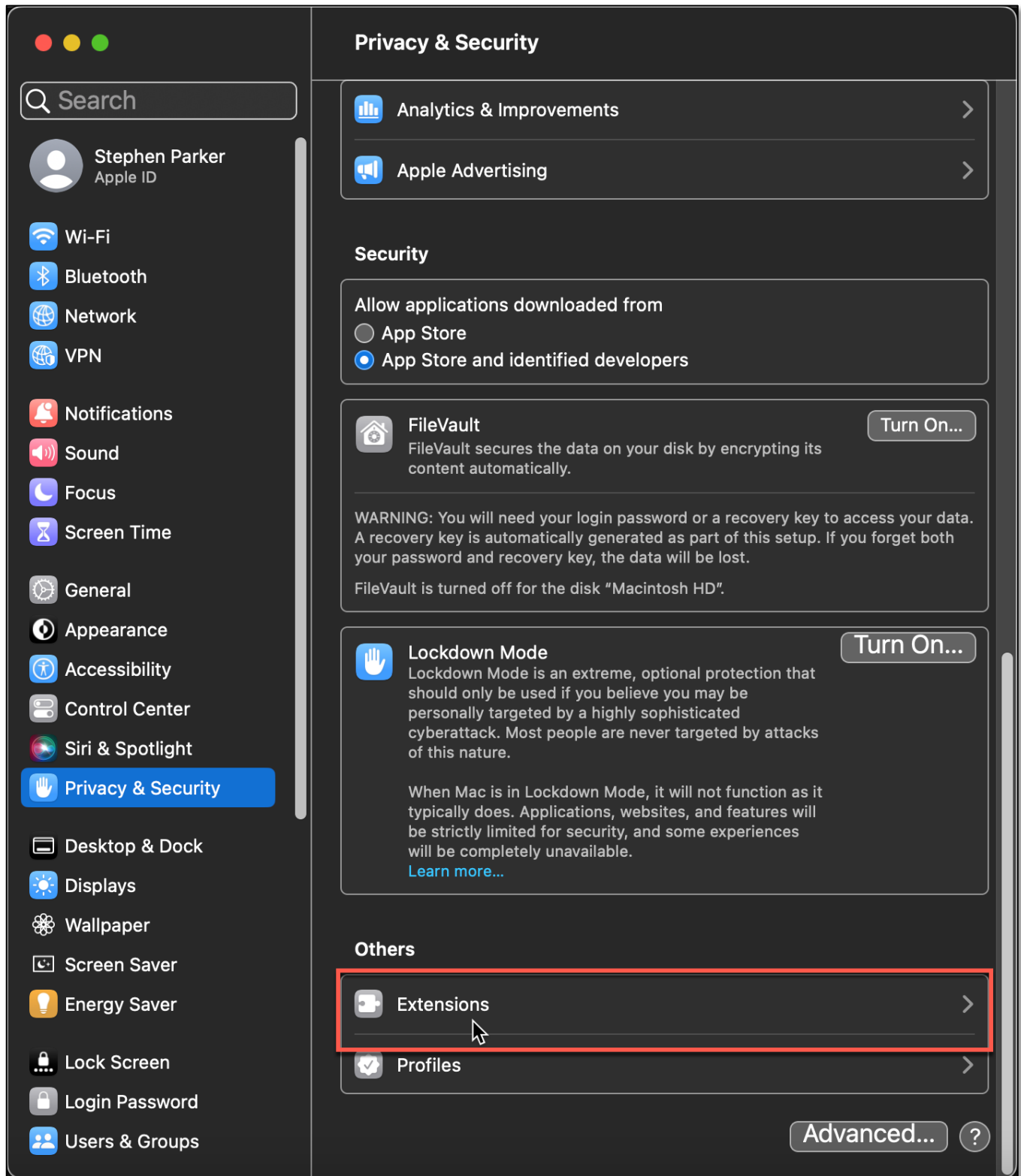Locating available Quick Actions in System Settings is more challenging:

- Extensions are found in the **Privacy & Security** group in the System Settings sidebar.
- Once in the Privacy & Security group, go to the **Others** item at the bottom of the group. **Extensions** is the first item listed.
- Click on **Extensions** to open the Extensions group.
- The bottom item, labeled **Finder**, provides access to **Quick Actions**.
- Click **Finder** to open a window for access to all the **Quick Actions** to show in the Finder. Then check the ones that you want to use.

Perhaps a quicker way to locate Quick Actions is to search for them in System Settings:

- In the Search box (keyboard shortcut: **Command+F**) at the top of the sidebar in System Settings, start typing "**quick action**" (no need to capitalize anything).
- As soon as you type the first letter (**q**), several items will be displayed in the Sidebar
- One of these is **Extensions** showing two types (Finder Extensions and Touch Bar Extensions). Click it to bring up the Extensions group.
- As before, click **Finder** to open a window for access to all the **Quick Actions** to show in the Finder. Then check the ones that you want to use.
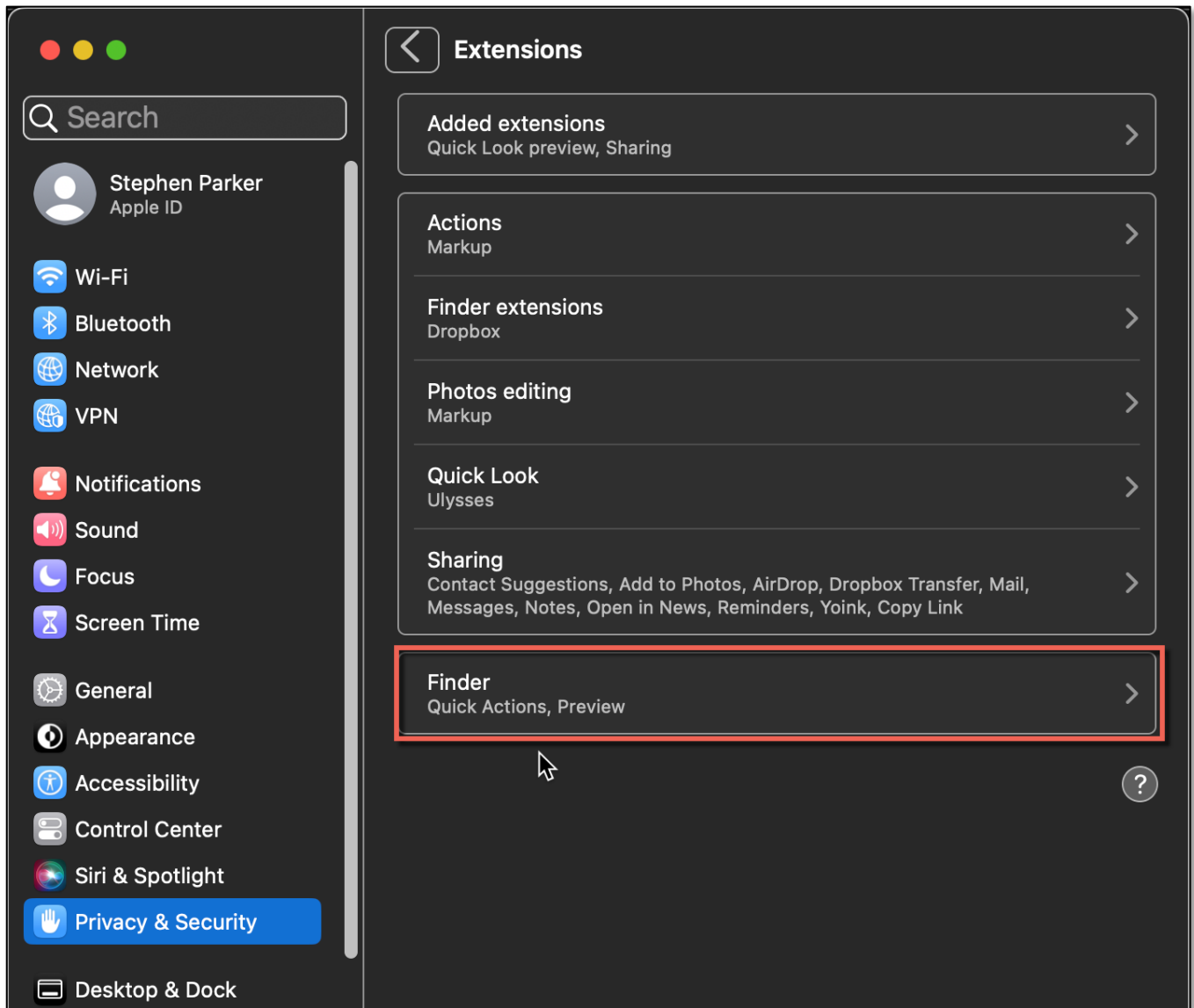
The three images below show the steps to locate the available Quick Actions:

System Settings > Privacy & Security > Others > Extensions
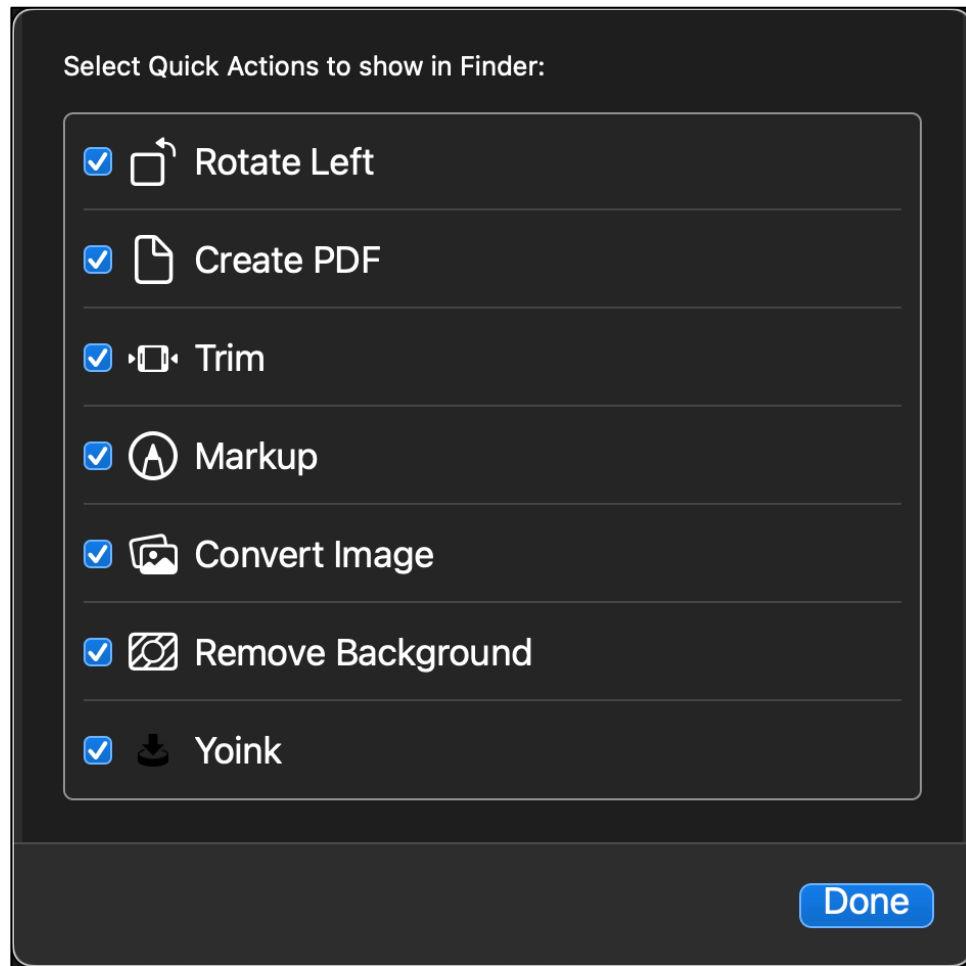
Selecting **Extensions** will display the available ones:

Finder Extensions (Quick Actions)

Selecting the Finder item will show the available Quick Actions. The image on the next page shows those on my iMac. I have all the standard ones available plus a third party one, Yoink, that I use to move items around in the Finder.

Available Quick Actions
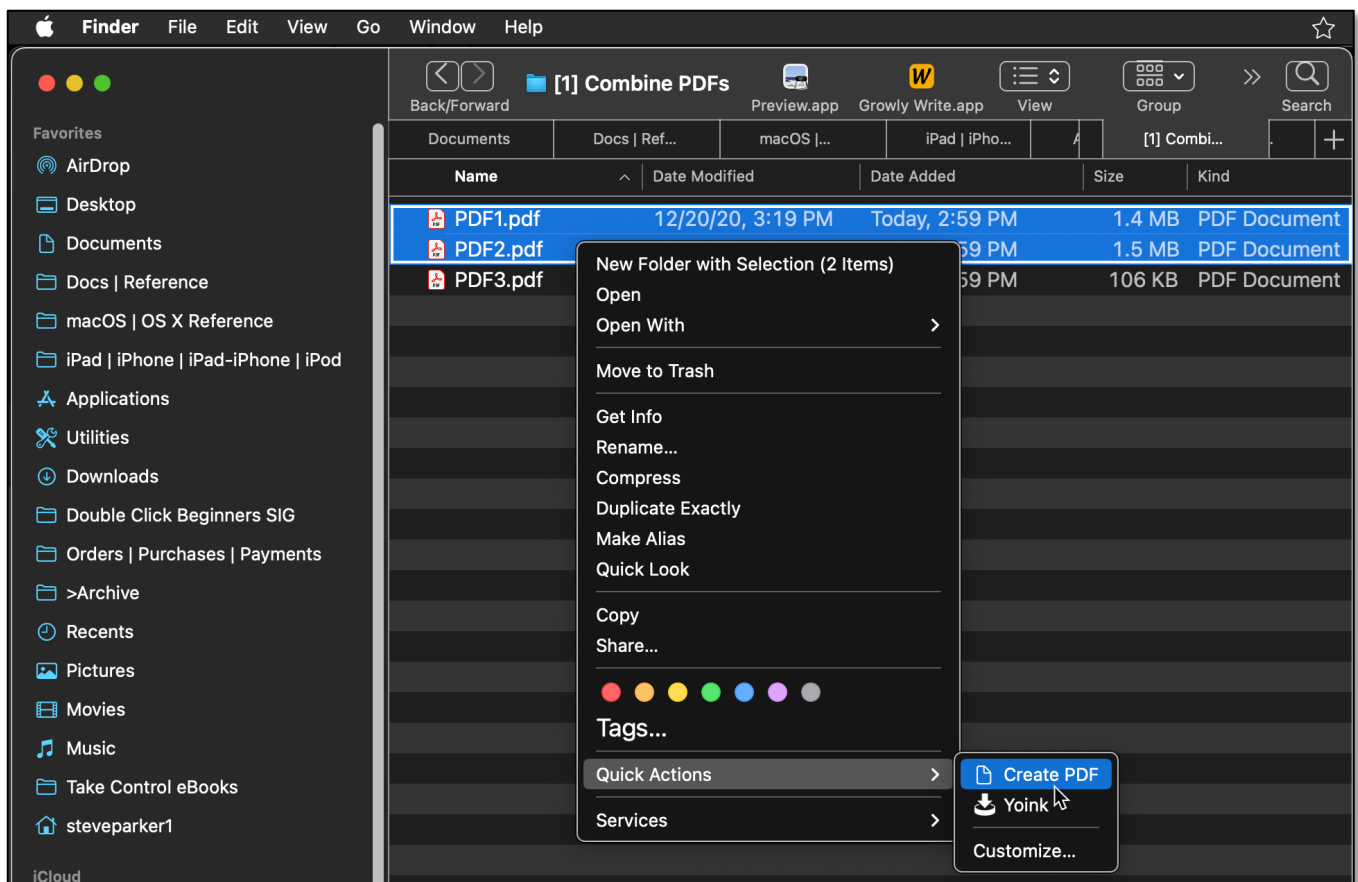
Combine PDFs with a Quick Action

I reviewed the Quick Action to combine multiple PDFs into one in my January 2021 presentation, but I find it so handy that I'm going to present it again. I use it all the time to when saving multiple related articles or receipts from items that I've ordered online.

Combining PDFs is simple to do:

- Select the PDF files (two in this example, PDF1 and PDF2, but could be more).
- **Right-Click** on the selection to bring up the Contextual Menu and select **Quick Actions**.
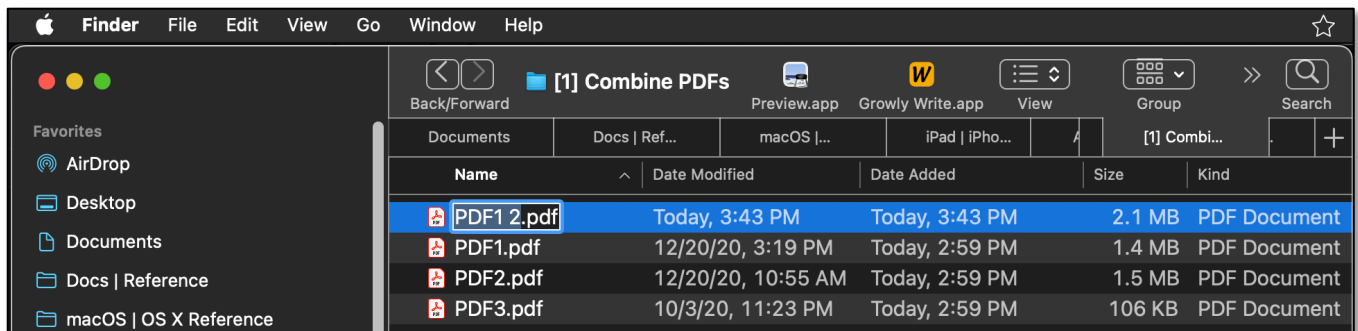- Then choose the **Create PDF** Quick Action.

(See the image on the next page.)

Combine Two PDFs Using the Contextual Menu & Selecting the "Create PDF" Quick Action

Here's the result:

Result of Combining Two PDFs Using the Create PDF Quick Action

As you can see, the new, combined PDF is 2.1 MB in size, slightly less than the size of the two PDFs used to create it (1.4 MB and 1.5 MB). In my previous discussion, the new size was the same as the sum of the size of the two PDFs that were combined. Perhaps macOS Ventura is a bit more efficient in combining PDFs.
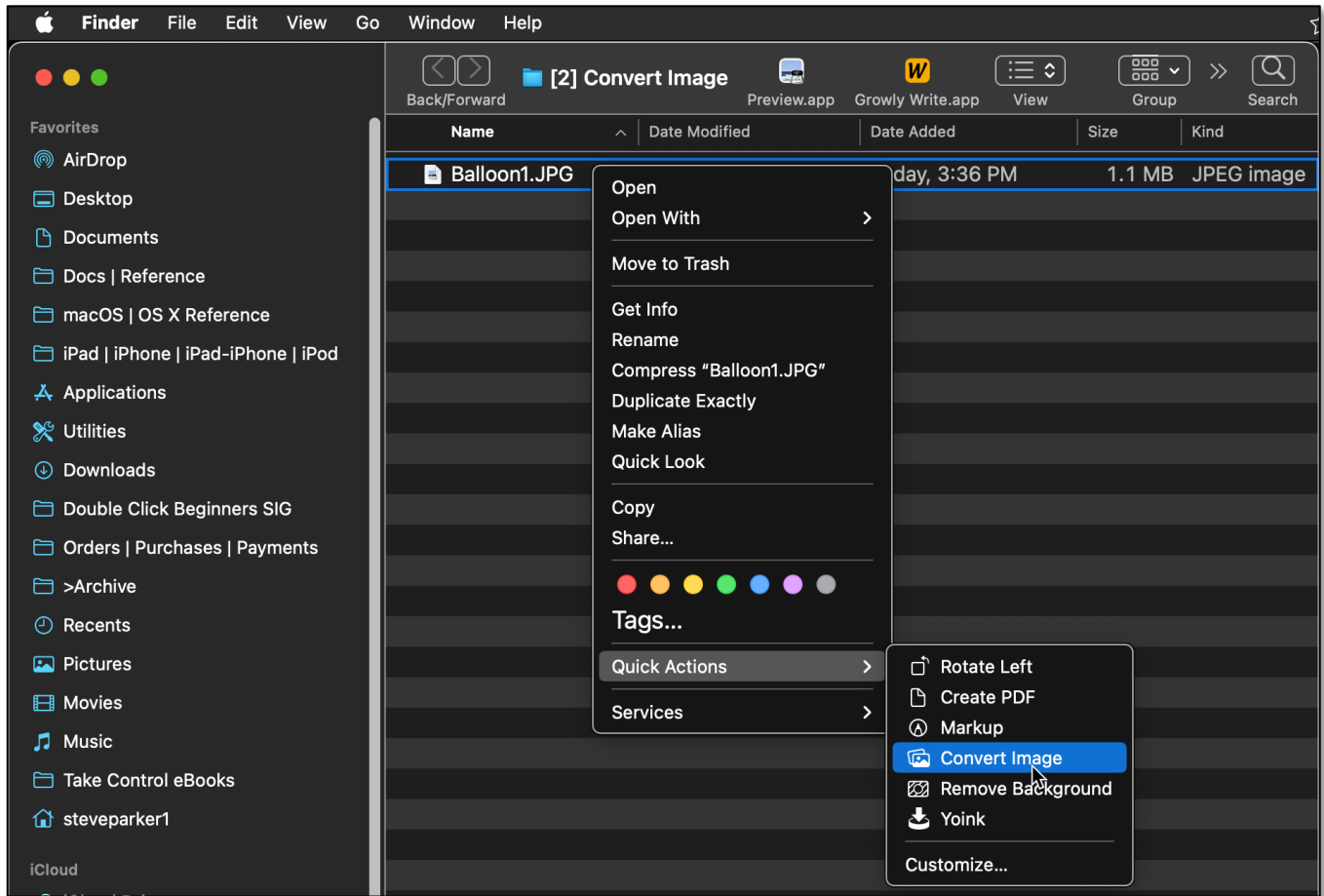
Also, in my experience, the new, combined PDF will use the same name as the first one in the selected group along with a space and a "2" appended to the filename (PDF1 2.pdf).

Note: The order in which PDFs are selected for combining is important as this is the way that they will show up in the new, combined PDF.
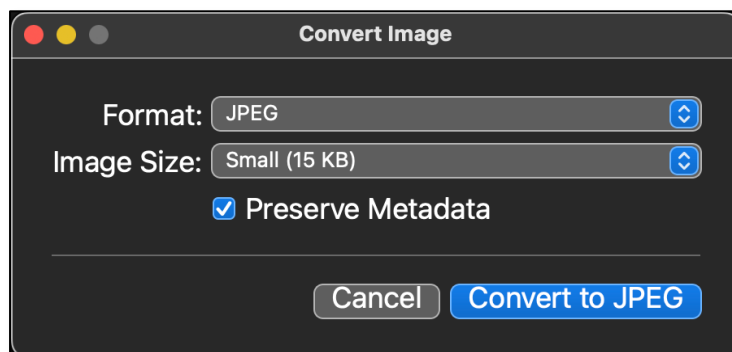
Convert Images with a Quick Action

First introduced in macOS Monterey, there's a simple and fast way to convert images in the Finder from one format to another using a Quick Action. Here are the steps:

- In the Finder, locate the image you want to convert.
- **Right-Click** (control-click) click on the image you wish to convert.
- From the Contextual pop-up menu, select **Quick Actions**.
- Then select **Convert Image** from the Quick Actions menu.

Convert an Image Using the "Convert image" Quick Action

This window is then displayed:

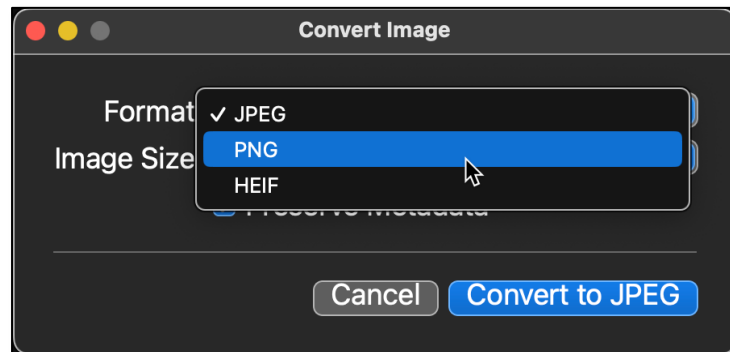
Convert an Image Using the "Convert image" Quick Action

As you can see in the **Format** menu, we started with a JPEG image. You can now choose to convert it to one of the available formats:

- PNG (**P**ortable **N**etwork **G**raphic, a file format is widely used on websites to display high-quality digital images)
- HEIF (**H**igh **E**fficiency **I**mage **F**ile, a file format that has been compressed to be as compact as possible without sacrificing the picture quality
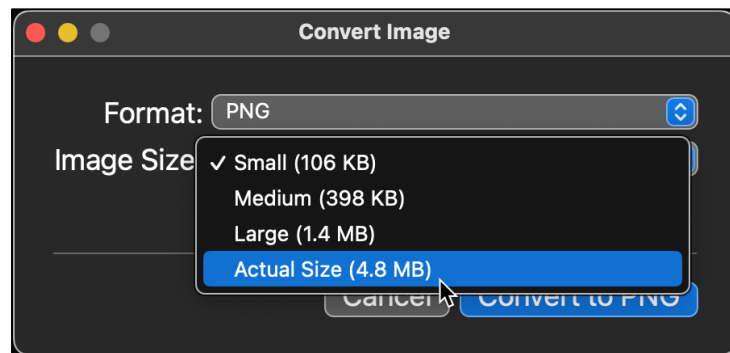
<u>Note</u>: Image conversion is limited to the JPEG, PNG, and HEIF formats.
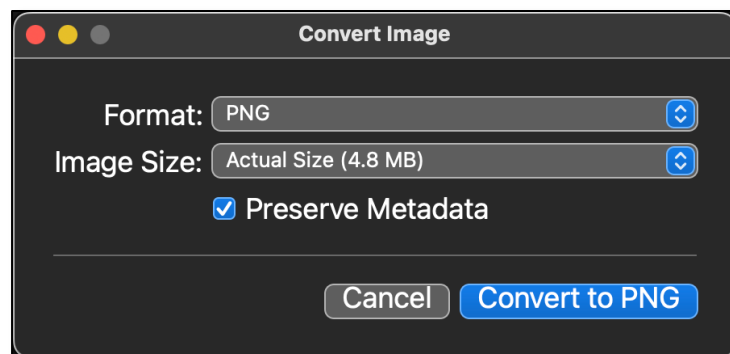
Let's choose the PNG format:

Choose the "PNG" Format

Then select the image size (Actual Size if you do not want to resize the image), which we'll do here:

Choose the "Actual Size"

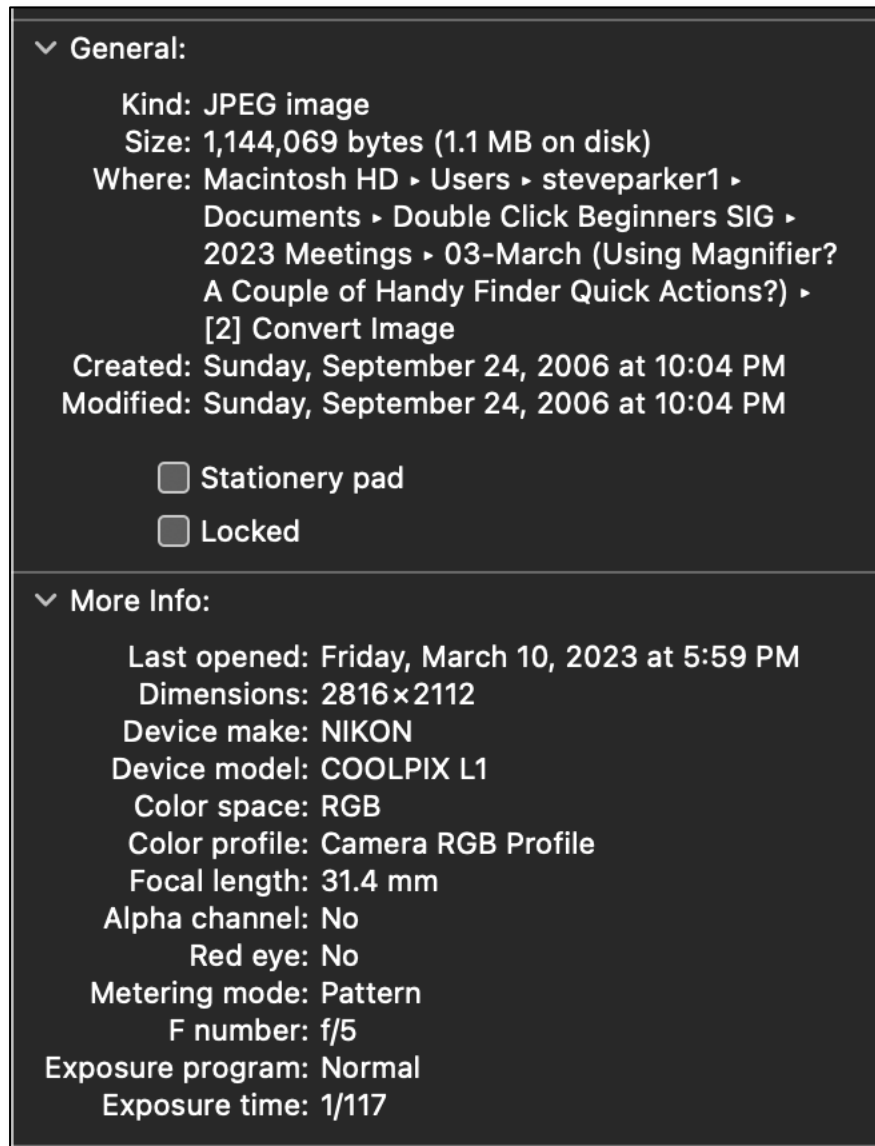Choose whether or not you wish to preserve metadata.

Preserve Metadata

A lot of information is included in a file's metadata. Using **Get Info** on this file shows what's available in the **More Info** section (which may include latitude and longitude information, depending on the device used to capture the image):

```
∨ General:

              Kind: JPEG image
              Size: 1,144,069 bytes (1.1 MB on disk)
            Where: Macintosh HD ▸ Users ▸ steveparker1 ▸
                   Documents ▸ Double Click Beginners SIG ▸
                   2023 Meetings ▸ 03-March (Using Magnifier?
                   A Couple of Handy Finder Quick Actions?) ▸
                   [2] Convert Image
          Created: Sunday, September 24, 2006 at 10:04 PM
         Modified: Sunday, September 24, 2006 at 10:04 PM

            ☐ Stationery pad
            ☐ Locked

∨ More Info:

         Last opened: Friday, March 10, 2023 at 5:59 PM
          Dimensions: 2816×2112
         Device make: NIKON
        Device model: COOLPIX L1
         Color space: RGB
       Color profile: Camera RGB Profile
        Focal length: 31.4 mm
       Alpha channel: No
             Red eye: No
       Metering mode: Pattern
            F number: f/5
    Exposure program: Normal
       Exposure time: 1/117
```
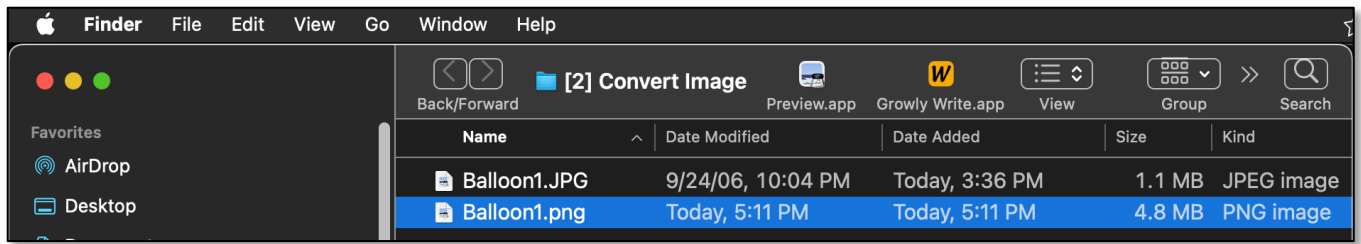
Image Metadata

Note: Unchecking **Preserve Metadata** will make the file size smaller, but it will also remove the extra information.

At this point, all conversion choices have been made (Format, Image Size and Preserve Metadata). Now just click the **Convert to PNG** button to finish the conversion process.

The conversion result is shown on the next page. Notice that the original image is preserved along with the converted image.

Also notice that the PNG image is much larger than the JPEG (4.8 MB vs. 1.1 MB). So, when converting images, you'll need to decide which format works best for you taking in account image quality and size.

Converted Image

<u>Don't Forget Preview</u>. While this Quick Action image conversion tool is quick and easy to use, if you want to convert to additional image file formats, you can use **Preview** to convert the images:

Preview Image Conversion Formats

Remove Background from Images with a Quick Action

With macOS Ventura, a new Quick Action (**Remove Background**) allows you to remove the background from an image or photo. This lifts the primary subject(s) out of the image and turning it into a transparent PNG file.
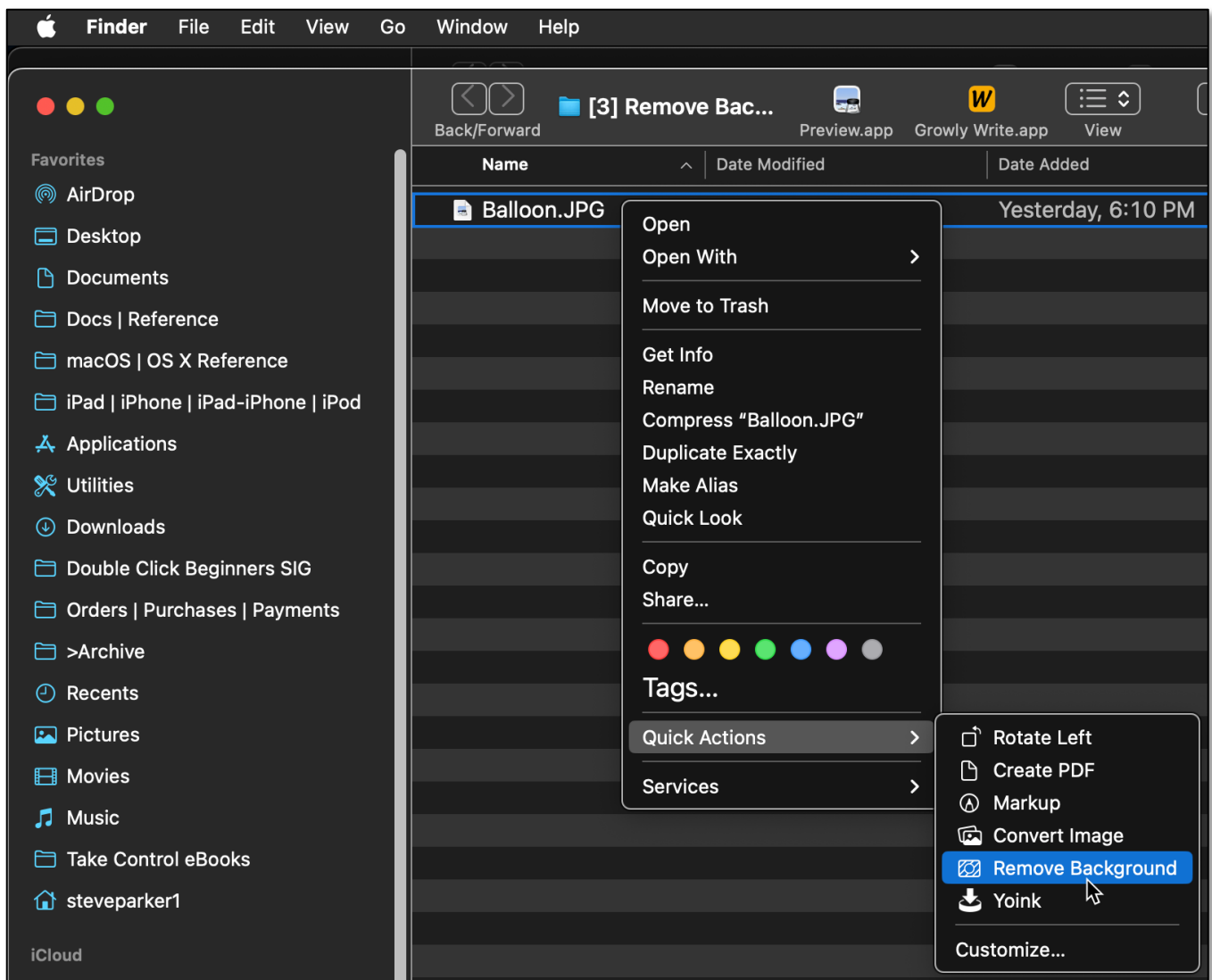
For example, casual users might want to remove the background from a vacation picture to focus on people in the foreground. Professionals might want to use this feature for their design projects.

Here's the process, which is very similar to converting an image format:

- In the Finder, locate the image you want to convert.
- **Right-click** (control-click) click on the image you wish to convert.
- From the Contextual pop-up menu, select **Quick Actions**.
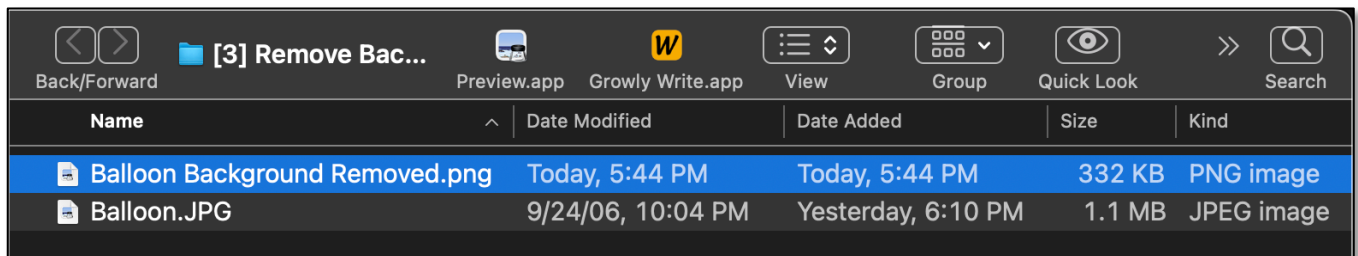- Then select **Remove Background** from the Quick Actions menu.

(See the image on the next page.)

Remove Background from an Image Using the "Remove Background" Quick Action

It will take a few moments for the image to process. Then a transparent PNG image of the same file will appear in the same folder location as the original, with the title of "(original file name) Background Removed.png."
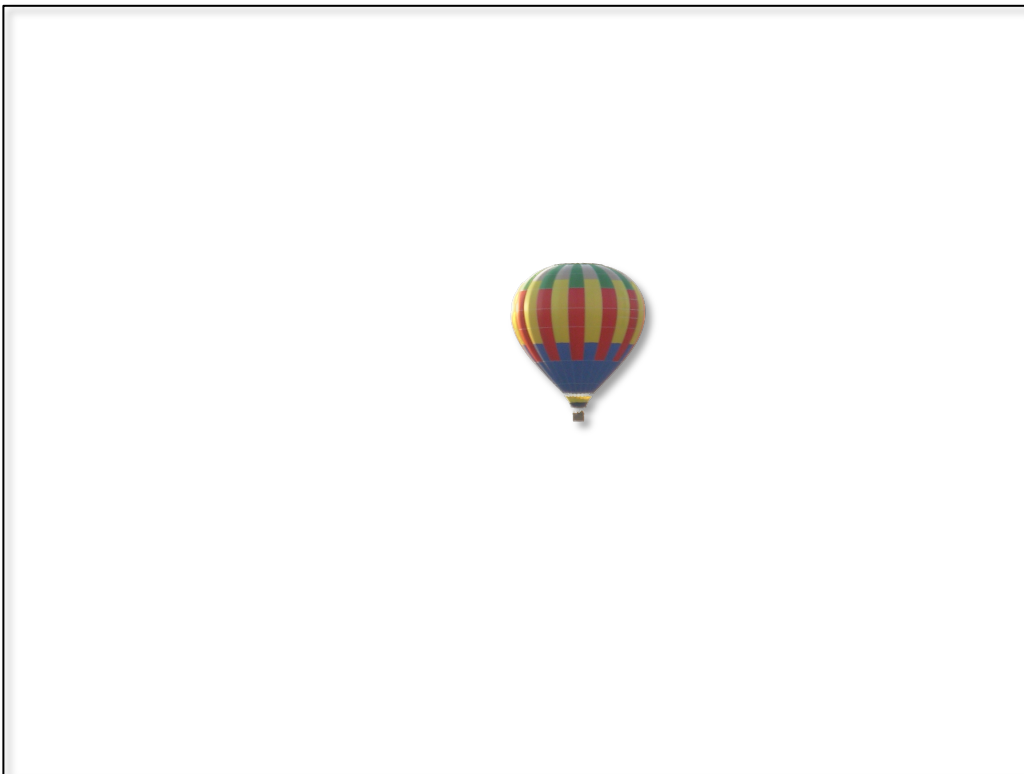

Balloon Image – Background Removed

(See the "Before" and "Background Removed" images on the next page.)

Balloon Image – Original (Before)

Balloon Image – Background Removed

For complex images, the process to remove the background may take a few seconds. In this case, a pop-up progress bar with the label "Remove Background" will be displayed in the Finder. If desired, you can cancel this process.

Note: There's a fair amount of "art" in removing the background from an image. In my experiments, I found that it helps if the item to be kept after removing background clearly stands out and/or is in the foreground.

Custom Quick Actions

A brief search on the web and also the Mac App Store didn't yield a source of custom third-party Quick Actions. Still, there might be some out there.

However, you can create your own Quick Actions using the **Automator** app in macOS. Also, if you happen like me to use the **Keyboard Maestro** app (create or record custom macro shortcuts), you can export a shortcut as a Quick Action. Using either of these is beyond the scope of this presentation.

Summary

Finder Quick Actions (specific Finder extensions used for editing a file) can be really handy to work on files in the Finder directly without having to open an app. They allow you to do such things as rotate images, markup a file, create PDFs, etc.

In macOS Ventura, they're found here:

System Settings > Privacy & Security > Others group > Extensions > Finder group

Three Quick Actions were discussed in this presentation:
- Combine PDFs
- Convert Images
- Remove Background

Each of these Quick Actions involves selecting in the Finder two or more files (for Combine PDFs) or a single file (for Convert Images and Remove Background). Then Right-Click on the selection and choose the desired Quick Action.

Next Presentation

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

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:

How to Combine Files Into a PDF on Mac
https://osxdaily.com/2021/01/05/how-combine-pdf-files-mac/

Convert Images on Mac Quickly from Finder
https://osxdaily.com/2023/02/28/convert-images-on-mac-quickly-from-finder/

Remove Background
https://osxdaily.com/2023/01/19/how-to-remove-the-background-from-images-on-mac-with-a-quick-action/