

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

---

*Note: This discussion is based on MacOS, 10.12.3 (Sierra). Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS or OS X.*

*Credits: <http://tidbits.com/e/17088> ("macOS Hidden Treasures: Dominate the Dock," 06 Mar 2017)*

After three presentations about Editing Documents on Your Mac—some “heavy duty” material at times—I thought that I’d spend some time to review a macOS feature that’s been an integral part of the Mac experience since the early days of Mac OS X (and something that I haven’t reviewed since 2004): the [Dock](#).

The Dock, of course, is that ribbon of icons found along the bottom of your Mac’s screen (or vertically along the left or right side depending on how you’ve set it up). It contains icons representing apps and documents that you choose to place there and use.

The Dock has been around for so long that you probably don’t even think about it anymore. You just use it. A lot has changed over the years, and I recently came across an excellent article on the TidBITS.com website about the Dock that I’ve used for this month’s discussion and next.<sup>1</sup>

### Handoff in the Dock

If you have multiple Apple devices (iPhone, iPad or Mac), you may have noticed a new icon at the left end of the Dock (or top if your Dock has been moved to either side of your display) on one or more of them. This icon is present due to [Handoff](#).

[Handoff](#) (part of Apple’s Continuity feature set) lets you transfer certain activities among your Apple devices. With Handoff you can start something on one device and finish it off on another. Handoff broadcasts activities using Bluetooth Low Energy (BT LE) and transfers them using Wi-Fi, either directly or via iCloud.

If you’re interested in learning more about Handoff and Continuity, here’s a link to an Apple support document: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204681>.

Handoff Examples: You might start writing an email on your iPhone while you’re out, and when you get home, you can sit down at your desktop Mac, and keep writing the exact same email. Perhaps you’re reading a webpage article using Safari on your Mac and then pick up your iPad or MacBook and keep reading right where you left off.

Handoff Icon in the Dock. Here’s an example of what you might see in the Dock:



### Handoff Icon in the Left End of the Dock (From Safari on Nearby MacBook Pro)

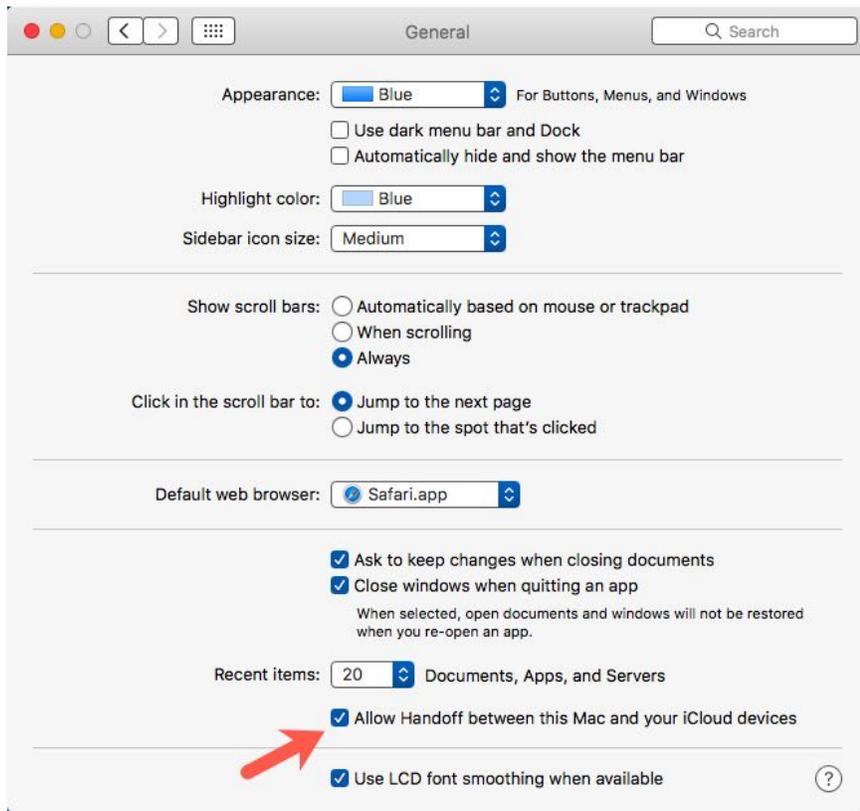
While viewing a Safari webpage on my MacBook Pro with Handoff enabled, I then switched to my iMac, and clicked on the Handoff icon to bring up the webpage that I was viewing on the MacBook Pro.

---

<sup>1</sup> TidBITS articles may be reprinted by non-profit, non-commercial publications if full credit is given, and my article draws heavily from the article credited above.

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

Set Up Handoff. Set up Handoff on your Mac by enabling it in the General System Preference (see below).



**Enable Handoff (System Preferences > General)**

### Opening and Switching to Apps via the Dock

Open and Saved Apps. The first section of your Dock (everything to the left of the fine vertical dividing line, shown in the illustration below) contains icons for apps that are either currently open or that you have saved to the Dock for quick access. These icons are aliases (shortcuts) for the apps, not the apps themselves.



#### Dock Dividing Line

Open App "Dots." Clicking an app's icon either opens it or switches to it. Open apps are denoted by a **small dot** underneath the icon. If the Dock has been moved to either the left or right edge of the display (more on this in Part 2 next month), open apps are denoted by a small dot on the side. Before macOS Sierra, open apps had other markings, such as triangles.

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

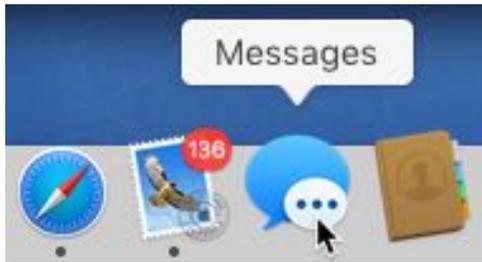
---

In this glimpse of my Dock (see below), you can see that I've got the Safari and Mail apps open (dots below them), but the Messages and Contacts apps are not open (no dot).



### Open Apps (Marker Dot Below Their Icon)

Tooltips. Don't recognize an icon in the Dock? Hover your mouse pointer over the icon, and a tooltip appears showing the app name. (See the illustration below.) It's even more useful for documents and folders (items to the right of the fine vertical dividing line) since their icons are often somewhat generic.



### Tooltip (Identifying the Icon as the Messages App)

Open a Document. When you want to end up with a particular document open in a certain app, you can "drag and drop" a compatible file onto the app's Dock icon. For example, if you drag a text file from a Finder window and drop it on TextEdit's Dock icon, the TextEdit app opens that document. If TextEdit isn't already open, dropping the file on its Dock icon will open it (see below).



### Open a Document by Dragging and Dropping its Icon Onto an App's Dock Icon (Remember: The Document Must be Compatible With the App. Otherwise, it Won't Open.)

Here the icon for a text file ("Mac Dictionary Unleashed") has been dragged to the TextEdit icon on the Dock to open the file.

If the app can't open the document file dropped on it, nothing will happen.

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

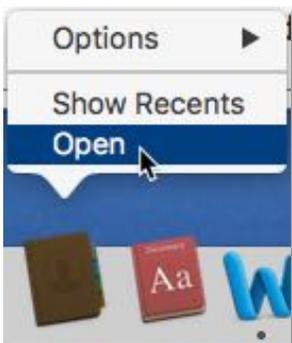
---

**Question Mark (?).** If you see an app icon in the Dock with a question mark (?) on top, it means that the source file for the app has been deleted. (See the illustration below.) This breaks the alias for the icon in the Dock, and the ? is added to the app's icon to indicate that the app can't be found. You'll need to go to the Finder and figure out what happened to the missing app.



### App Can't be Found (? on Top of the App's Dock icon)

**Open an App via its Contextual Menu.** Although it's a bit awkward, you can open an app in the Dock via its contextual menu. Do this by: (1) **clicking and holding**, (2) **Control-clicking**, or (3) **right-clicking** the Dock icon to display a contextual pop-up menu. Then choose **Open**. See the illustration below:

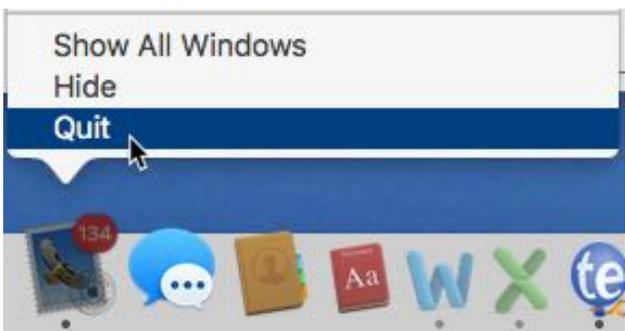


### Open the Contacts App by Choosing "Open" From its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu

### Other App Actions from the Dock

Although the contextual pop-up menu is an awkward way to open an app, it does provide access to several useful actions that you can perform on apps.

**Quit an App.** Quit an open app from the Dock by choosing **Quit** from the pop-up menu. (See the illustration below.) Its icon disappears from the Dock when it quits. (Still, using the keyboard shortcut, **Command-Q**, in the app is probably easier.)

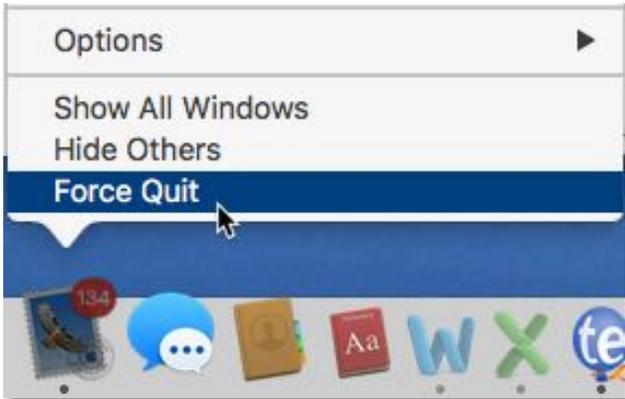


### Quit an App by Choosing "Quit" From its Dock Pop-up Menu

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

---

Force Quit an App. You might encounter an app that's "frozen" and won't quit via the usual methods, such as choosing [Quit](#) from the app's [File menu](#). Try using the app's Dock icon and its pop-up contextual menu. When you hold down the [Option](#) key, the Quit menu item turns into [Force Quit](#). (See the illustration below.) Select [Force Quit](#), and the app should close immediately. Remember, however, that [Force Quit will close the app instantly](#), without prompting to save your work, so any unsaved changes will probably be lost.



**Force Quit an App via its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu (Holding Down the Option Key)  
"Quit" Becomes "Force Quit"**

Relaunch Finder. You might encounter some sort of glitch in the Finder. When this happens in other apps, you can Quit (or Force Quit, if necessary). However, you can't Quit or Force Quit the Finder. Still, you do have an option: [Relaunch the Finder](#) if it's giving you trouble. To do so, hold the [Option](#) key as you invoke the pop-up contextual menu and choose [Relaunch](#) (see below).



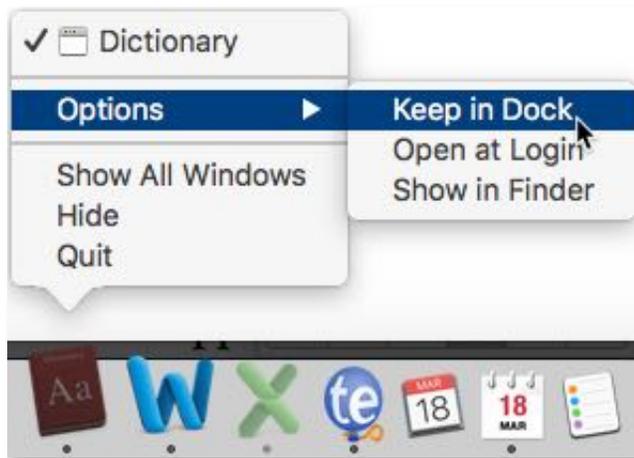
**Relaunch the Finder by Choosing "Relaunch" From its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu  
(Hold Down the Option Key First)**

Note: [Relaunch](#) won't appear if you press the Option key *after* opening the contextual menu, as it does for Force Quit. You must press the Option key *first*.

Add an App to the Dock. Opening a document will add the icon of the application used to open it to the Dock. You can also drag an app's application icon from a Finder window (usually the Applications folder) to the Dock. Whether the app's icon stays in the Dock depends on what you do to keep it there.

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

Keep an App in the Dock. If you'd like to be able to open a currently running app from the Dock at a future time, choose [Options > Keep in Dock](#) from the contextual menu. A [check mark](#) then appears next to [Keep in Dock](#). See the illustrations below:



**Keep an App in the Dock  
(Selecting "Keep in Dock" From Pop-up Menu)**



**Keep an App in the Dock  
(Check Mark After Selecting From Pop-up Menu)**

You can also keep a running app in the Dock by moving its icon anywhere within the Dock. Click on the icon, drag and drop, and the app will stay in the Dock.

Remove an app from the Dock. Consistent with other Finder removal actions, the easiest way to remove an app from the Dock is to drag it out of the Dock. For this action to be successful, you must drag it far enough for the [Remove label](#) to appear. Then release the mouse button, and it's gone. If you change your mind mid-drag, either drag the app back to the Dock or press the [Escape \(Esc\)](#) key (see below).



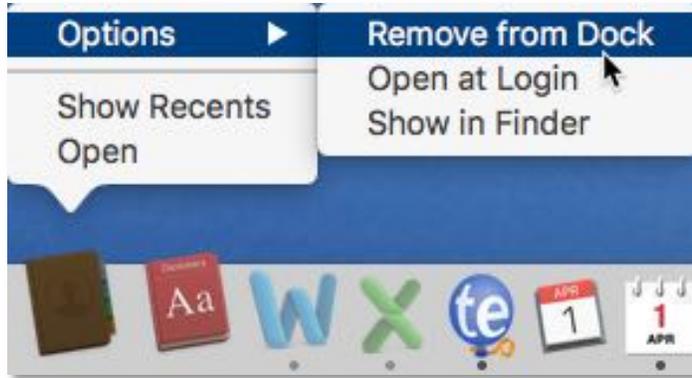
### **Remove an App From the Dock by Dragging its Icon Out of the Dock**

You can also remove an app from the Dock via the pop-up contextual menu. Choose [Options > Remove from Dock](#) if the app is closed. (See the illustration on the next page.)

If the app is open—remember that open Apps have a check mark next to the [Keep in Dock](#) option in the pop-up menu—then choose [Options > Keep in Dock](#) from the pop-up menu to deselect the option (checkmark disappears). When you quit the app, its icon will be removed from the Dock.

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

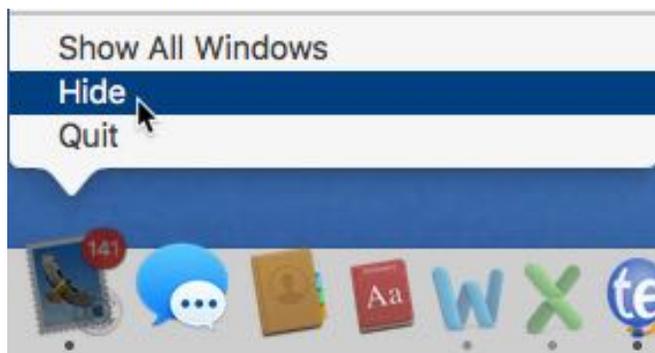
---



### Remove a Closed App From the Dock by Selecting "Remove from Dock" From its Pop-up Menu

Note: When you remove an app from the Dock, this action doesn't affect the actual app, since the Dock icon is merely an alias for the app. If you delete an app from the Dock, you can still locate it in the Finder, usually in the Applications folder.

Hide an App. Suppose that you don't want to quit an app, but just want to get it out of your way for a while. You can hide its windows by choosing [Hide](#) from the app's Dock icon pop-up menu (see below). Click the app's Dock icon again to reveal the hidden app.



### Hide an App by Selecting "Hide" From its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu

There are easier ways, however, to hide an app: [Option-click](#) (1) on the Desktop, (2) any other app window, or (3) any icon in the Dock. You can also use the keyboard shortcut, [Command-H](#) to hide the app when it's in the foreground.

If you just want to temporarily hide a particular app window, you can [minimize](#) it to the Dock (becomes an icon) by clicking on the yellow button located at the top left of the window (see below). Minimized window icons appear to the right of the fine vertical dividing line in the Dock.

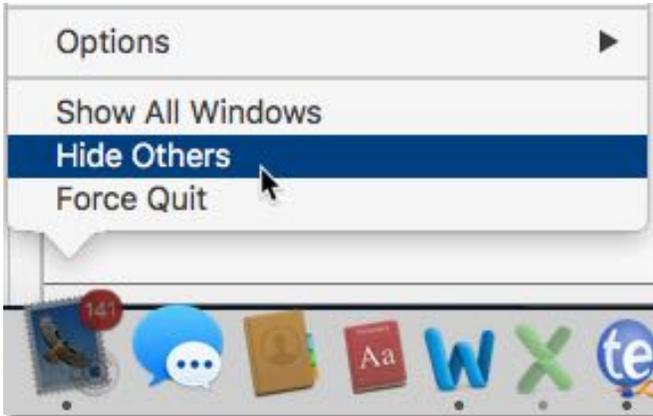


### Click an App's Yellow "Minimize" Button to Minimize Its Window to a Dock Icon (Note the - Symbol That Appears in the Icon as an Indicator About Minimizing)

Finally, you can use the keyboard shortcut, [Command-M](#), to minimize a document to the Dock.

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

Hide all but the Selected App. If you want to focus on a single app and avoid the distraction of other open apps, you can hide all other app windows. To do this, open the selected app's pop-up contextual menu in the Dock and press **Option** to turn **Hide** into **Hide Others**. See the illustration below:



**Hide all but the Selected App by Selecting "Hide Others" From its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu (Be Sure to Press the Option Key)**

Another, perhaps quicker way, to **Hide Others** is to **Command-Option-click** the app's Dock icon. You can also use the keyboard shortcut, **Command-Option-H** while the app is in the foreground.

Show all App Windows. Showing all app windows is the function of **Mission Control** app. If its icon is in the Dock (usually there by default), then just click it to display miniaturized versions of all the windows of open apps that are not hidden or whose windows are minimized to the Dock (see illustrations below).



**Click the "Mission Control" Dock Icon to Display Miniaturized Versions of All Windows of Open Apps**



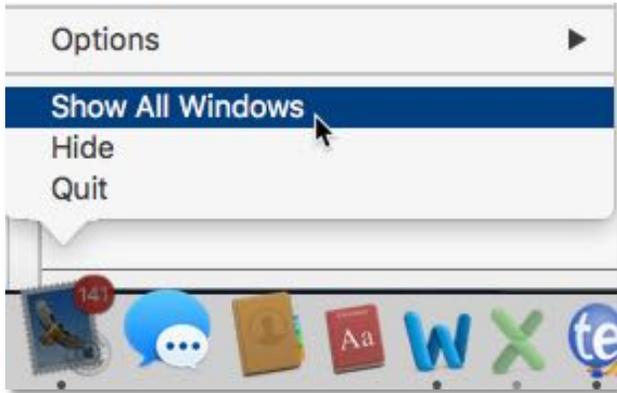
**"Show All Windows" via Any Active App's Dock Icon Pop-up Menu**

Click any window displayed by Mission Control to bring it to the front.

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

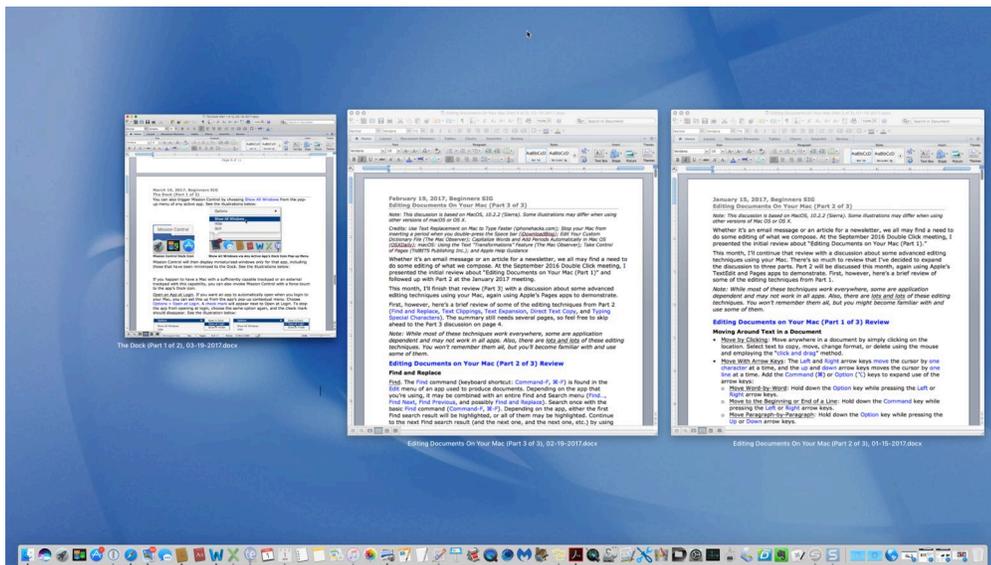
Dismiss the Mission Control display of miniaturized windows by clicking again on the Mission Control icon in the Dock. You can also dismiss the Mission Control display by clicking the [Escape \(Esc\)](#) key.

You can also invoke Mission Control by choosing [Show All Windows](#) from the pop-up menu of any active app. See the illustration below:



### “Show All Windows” via Any Active App’s Dock Icon Pop-up Menu

Mission Control will then display miniaturized windows *only* for that app, including those that have been minimized to the Dock (see below).



### Display Miniaturized Windows of an App by Choosing “Show All Windows” From its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu

If you happen to have a Mac with a sufficiently capable trackpad or an external trackpad with this capability, you can also invoke Mission Control with a force touch to the app’s Dock icon.

Open an App at Login. If you want an app to automatically open when you login to your Mac, you can set this up from the app’s pop-up contextual menu. Choose [Options > Open at Login](#). A [check mark](#) will appear next to Open at Login. To stop the app from opening at login, choose the same option again, and the check mark should disappear. (See the illustrations on the next page.)

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

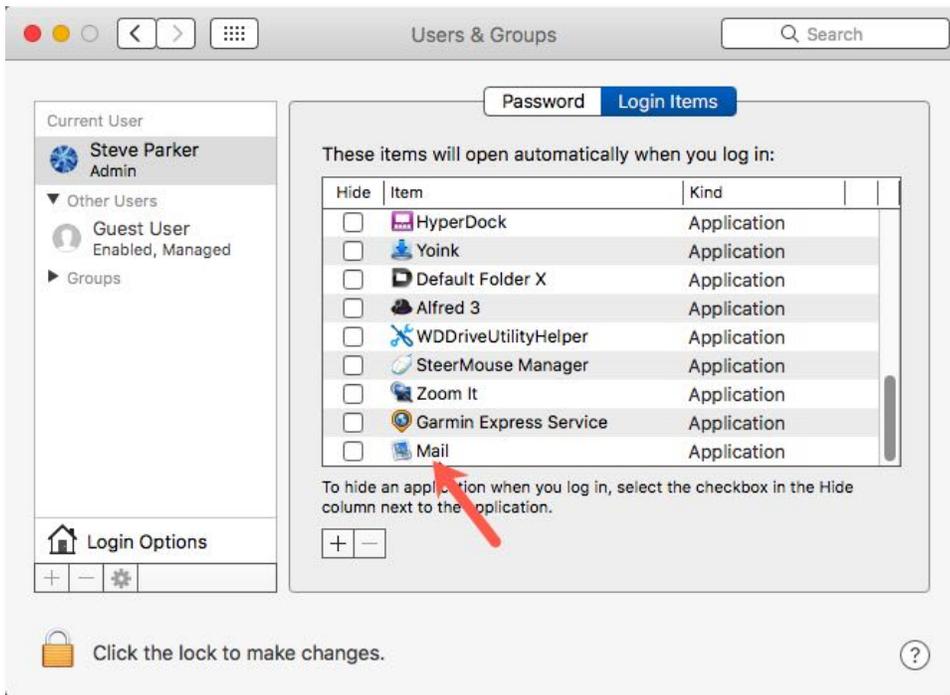


**Open an App at Login by Selecting "Open at Login" From its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu**



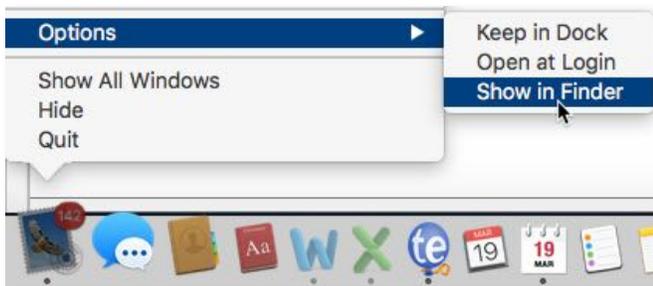
**Open an App at Login (Note the Check Mark After Selecting)**

You can verify that this has happened by looking in [System Preferences > Users & Groups > Login Items](#) (see below).



**System Preferences > Users & Groups > Login Items Tab (Note that Mail has been added)**

Show an App in the Finder. Suppose that you want to delete (or just locate) an app that's in the Dock, but you've forgotten where it's located. To show the app's actual location, open its Dock pop-up menu and choose [Options > Show App in Finder](#) (see below). A new Finder window will be opened, and the app will be highlighted.

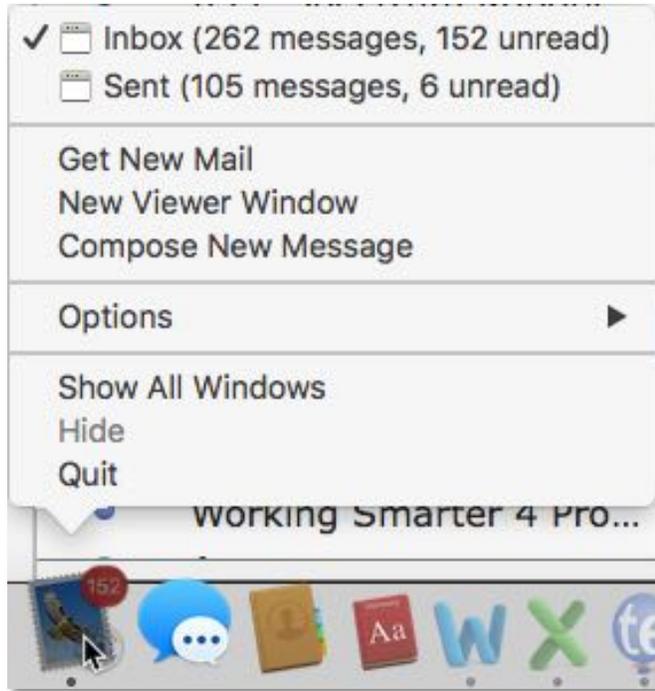


**Show an App in the Finder by Selecting "Show in Finder" From its Dock Icon Pop-up Menu**

## March 19, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 1 of 2)

---

**App-specific Commands.** Apps can add their own commands to their pop-up Dock menus. For example, the Mail app lists open windows in its menu and also offers commands for [Get New Mail](#), [New Viewer Window](#), and [Compose New Message](#). Every app with custom commands will be different, so be sure to check your most-used apps. In the illustration below, two



### **App-Specific Commands via Mail's Dock Icon**

Notice that for the Mail app, two viewer windows are open (Inbox and Sent). The pop-up menu also displays any open view windows. Here the front/active viewer window (Inbox) is indicated with a checkmark.

### **Next Presentation**

Next month, we'll finish in Part 2 the review of the Dock (Documents and Minimized Windows in the Dock, Working with Folders in the Dock, Working with Trash in the Dock, and Customizing the Dock's Look and Feel).

If you have any suggestions for presentation topics, please contact me at [slp4668@gmail.com](mailto:slp4668@gmail.com).

*-Steve Parker*