Note: This discussion is based on macOS, 10.14.6 (Mojave). Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS or OS X. Most illustrations are from screenshots on my iMac or MacBook Pro.

There are times when the arrangement of app windows on your Mac just isn't as you would like. Perhaps one of the most common situations involves splitting two of them so that each fills half the screen space (say, a Pages window and a Safari window). That way you can, for example, copy some information from a Safari webpage to Pages.

The macOS offers many ways to manage window arrangement. This presentation will focus on one of them—using the green **Zoom** button. In the next presentation, we'll also show a couple of third-party utilities that make window management even more convenient.

Zoom Button (Full Screen Mode)

Since we're talking about window positioning, you might surmise that the Zoom button would be involved somehow, and you would be correct, although it's not obvious at first. Simply clicking the Zoom button will cause the selected window to enter **Full Screen mode**.

Click to Enter "Full Screen" Mode. The capability of the Zoom button in macOS was enhanced many years ago. When you hover the cursor over it, notice that its icon contains two small *outward-pointing* arrows:

Zoom Button (Before Full Screen)

Clicking on the Zoom button at this point changes the display of the selected window to Full Screen. "Full Screen" as now defined in macOS means to cause the window to fill the screen as expected. This is done so you can focus on what's going on or needs attention in the window. It also provides a bit more vertical screen space for the window. *However, the Menu Bar is hidden, and so is the Dock if you normally have it displayed.*

Click to Exit "Full Screen" Mode. Moving the cursor to the top of the screen will cause the Menu Bar to reappear. Now when you hover the cursor over the Zoom button, its icon contains two small *inward-pointing* arrows:

Zoom Button (After Full Screen)

Clicking on the Zoom button will return the window to its former display, including the Menu Bar.
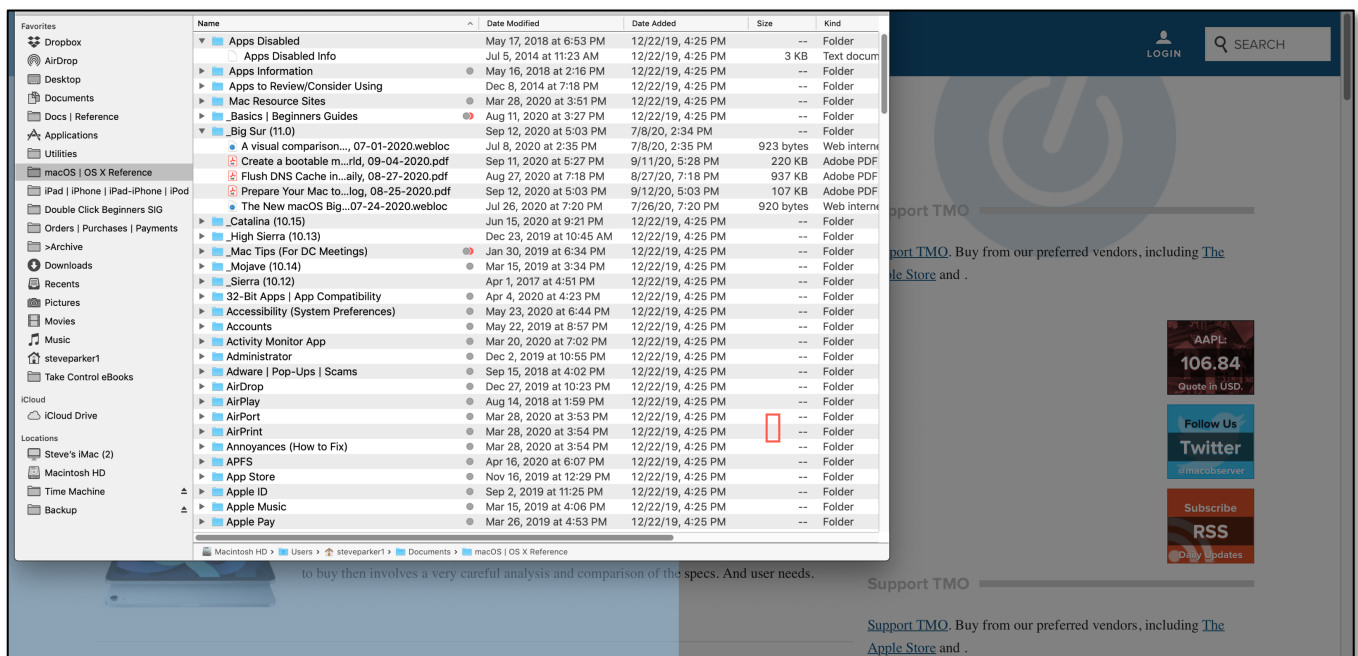
Exit "Full Screen (Keyboard)." You can also enter and exit Full Screen mode with the **Enter/Exit Full Screen** menu item (toggle) found under an app's **View** menu. You can also use the keyboard shortcut (Control-Command-F, ^-⌘-F).

I've also found that clicking the **esc** button will also exit Full Screen mode.

Zoom Button (Split Screen Mode)

Instead of clicking on the Zoom button, *hold it down* for a moment, and you will enter the macOS **Split Screen mode**. The previously-selected window will be highlighted, other windows will be dimmed, and half of the display background will be highlighted in a light blue color. Releasing the mouse button will cause the window to be displayed in the previously-highlighted half screen.
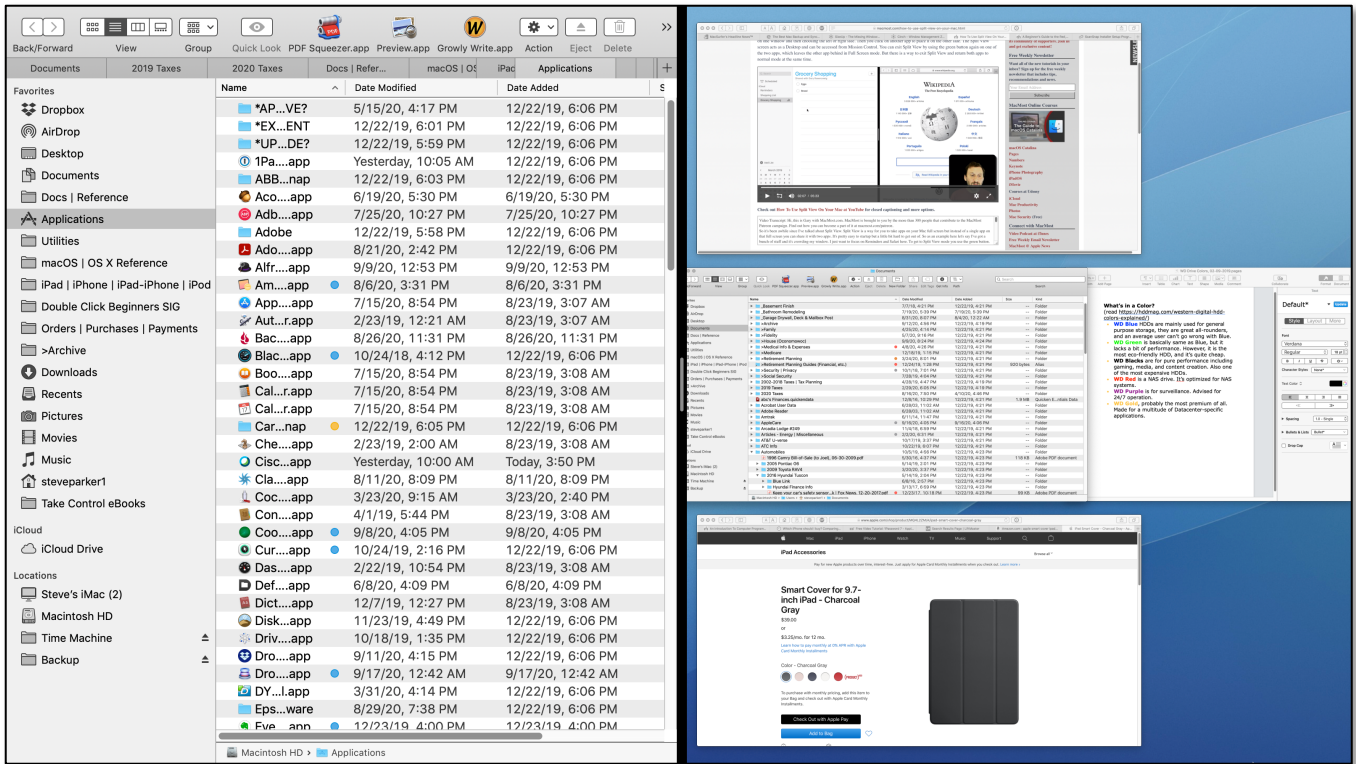

Zoom Button Held Down
(Finder Window Dragged to the Left, Blue Half)

Note: If before you release the mouse button, you had dragged with window to the other half of the screen, this half would have been highlighted, and releasing the mouse button would have moved the window to this other half of the screen.
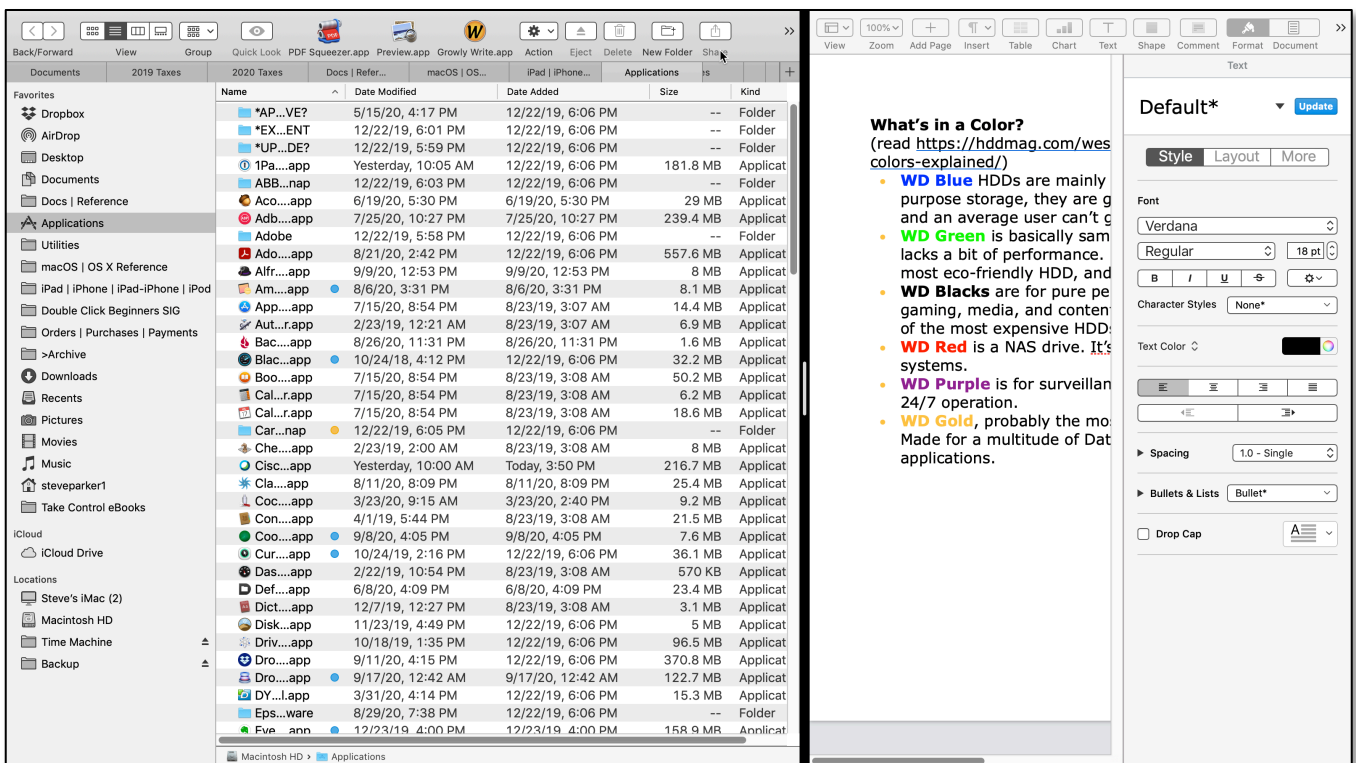
Once the selected window has been repositioned to half of the screen display, miniature versions of the windows from other apps will be shown in the other half of the screen. (See the image on the next page.)

Zoom Button Held Down
(Finder Window in Left Half & Other Windows Displayed in the Right Half)

Click on a window in the other half of the screen to open it there. Let's choose the Pages document.

Resulting Screen (Finder Window on Left & Pages Window on Right)

Here are some items to note:

- Initially, each window will probably fill its half of the screen. Depending on the apps involved, the size of the two may not necessarily be 50/50.

- When hovering over the divider bar between the two windows, the cursor will change to a double-ended style to indicate that you're properly positioned over the bar:

Windows Divider Bar

- The divider bar can be dragged to the left or right to change the relative size of the windows. How much depends on the apps, and some may not permit resizing at all. (See the image on the previous page where the divider bar was moved to the right.)

- If the divider bar has been moved, you can double-click on it to snap back to equal size windows.

- When in Split Screen mode, neither window shows its Menu Bar (or the Dock if you normally have it displayed). However, moving the cursor to the top of the screen in either window then displays that window's Menu Bar.

Zoom Button (Exit Split Screen Mode)

Unfortunately, exiting Split Screen mode can be a little difficult.

- If you click the Zoom button in one of the windows, that window will exit Split Screen mode (in its half screen) as expected. As before, you can also select **Exit Full Screen** from its **View** menu or use the keyboard shortcut.

  In addition, the window will fill the entire screen regardless of how wide or where it was previously positioned on the screen.

- However, the other window will still be in Full Screen mode, filling the entire screen (regardless of how wide or where it was previously positioned on the screen). To exit Full Screen mode for this remaining window, you will have to click its Zoom button or use the View menu item or keyboard shortcut.

- An alternative way that I've found to exit Split Screen mode, one app at a time, is to select each one and press the **esc** key.

- There is a way to exit Split Screen mode for both windows at once: Bring up the **Mission Control** app, either by a keyboard shortcut that you've set in the Keyboard system preference or by clicking its icon in the Dock if you've placed it there (my preference).

Next, hover over the split screen icon at the top of the screen for a moment until a small double arrow badge appears at the top left corner of the icon. Click the badge to exit Split Screen mode for both apps.

Summary

Rearranging app windows can be helpful for viewing and copying information. A common way to do this is to split two of them so that each fills half the screen space.

The green **Zoom** button offers a convenient was to display two windows on the screen (Split Screen mode). However, be careful when using the Zoom button. Just clicking the Zoom button will put you into Full Screen mode for the selected window. The result will be a window that fills the entire screen but also hides the Menu Bar and the Dock (if you're using it). Exit Full Screen mode by the **Enter/Exit Full Screen** menu item (toggle) found under an app's **View** menu. You can also use the keyboard shortcut (Control-Command-F, ^-⌘-F).

Hold down on the Zoom button for a moment to enter Split Screen mode. The selected window will be highlighted and moved to whichever half of the screen that you drag it to. Other app windows will be displayed in miniature in the other half of the screen. Select one to open it in that half of the screen. A divider bar will separate the two windows, and the bar can be moved, in most apps, to adjust the size of the two split windows. Double click the divider bar to restore the 50/50 window split.

Exiting Split Screen mode can be a little involved. First move the cursor to the top of the screen to reveal the Menu Bar. Then click the Zoom button to exit Split Screen mode for that window. You'll need to do the same thing for the other window. You can also use the **Exit Full Screen** menu item or the keyboard shortcut in each app. Yet another way is to use the Mission Control app to exit both apps at once. Hover over the split window icon at the top of the screen, and then click the small double arrow badge that appears on the icon.

Next Presentation

For the next presentation, we'll take a look at more window-positioning features of the macOS.

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 & Reference:

- How To Use Split View On Your Mac
  (https://macmost.com/how-to-use-split-view-on-your-mac.html)