

# Neu User Guide

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# Quickstart

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Neu allows you to create a new document by making a copy of an existing template.

Using it is easy, which begs the question “why do I need to read this manual?”.

The answer is simply that different people work in different ways, and Neu supports a number of alternatives - hopefully you will find one that suits you.

The [Using Neu](#) section below will take you through the options in detail, but here’s a quick way to use Neu:

- If you haven’t done so already, launch Neu by double-clicking on it
- Click on the Finder icon in the dock, and navigate to a place where you’d like to make a new document
- Right-click on the Neu icon in the dock<sup>1</sup>
- Navigate to the **Create Document...** menu and select the **Text File** template

Neu should have made a new text file called “Untitled Text File”, and selected it for you in the Finder.

That’s really all there is to it. However, there are other ways to trigger Neu, and a number of options that you can use to configure its behaviour.

Read on for more details.

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<sup>1</sup> If you don’t have a mouse, hold the control key down instead, then click on the icon - this is the equivalent of clicking with the right-hand mouse button.

# Using Neu

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Neu allows you to create a new document by making a copy of an existing template.

To do this it needs to know two things:

- Which template do you want to copy?
- Where do you want to put the new file?

Generally you answer the first question by launching Neu and selecting a template from the window that pops up.

Typically Neu answers the second question itself, by putting the new file into the folder represented by the front window in the Finder - or the desktop if the Finder has no open windows.

There are a number of ways to launch Neu:

- From the status menu in the menu bar
- From the dock
- With a global keyboard shortcut
- By right-clicking on a file or folder in the Finder

## Launching From The Status Menu

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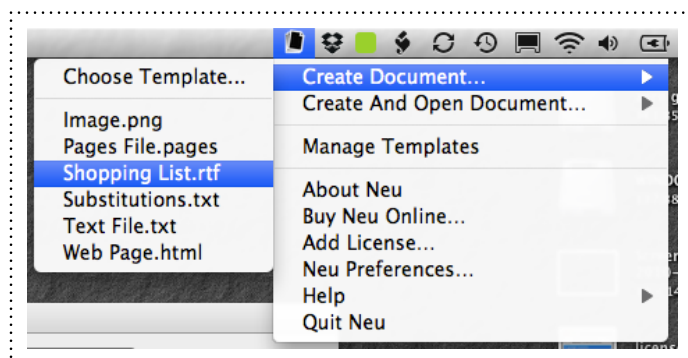
By default, Neu will install a small icon in the status area of the menu bar: 

Clicking on this icon shows a menu which gives you access to Neu's functionality.

Choose **Create Document...** to create a new file.

By default, the file will be placed into the folder that the front window in the Finder is showing. If there are no Finder windows open, it will go onto your desktop.

Once the file has been created, the Finder will come to the front, with the file selected.

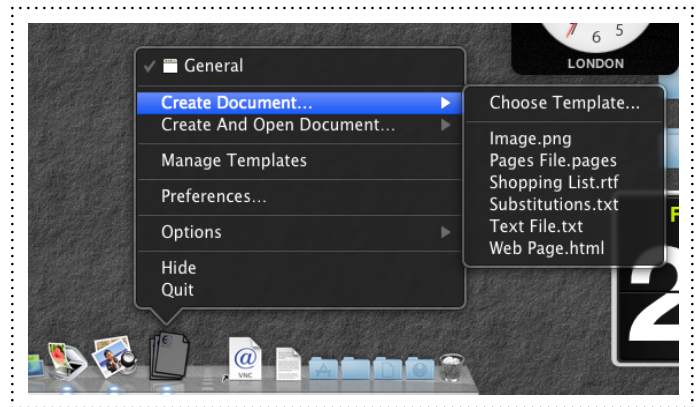


If you choose **Create And Open Document...** instead, the newly created document will then be opened in its default application.

## Launching From The Dock

Neu also installs a dock menu, which you can see by right-clicking on the Neu icon in the dock.

This works in the same way as the status menu described above.

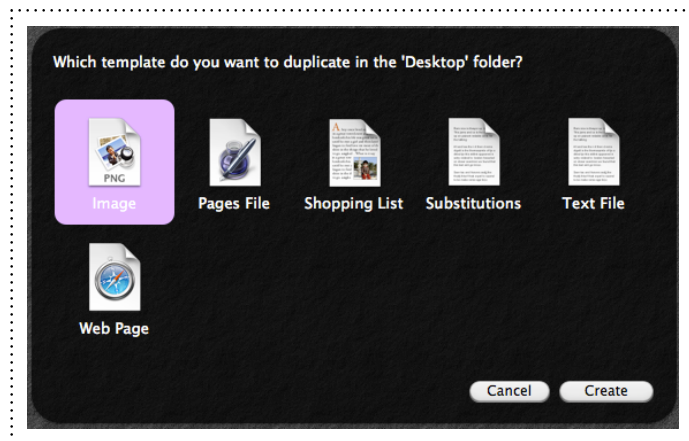
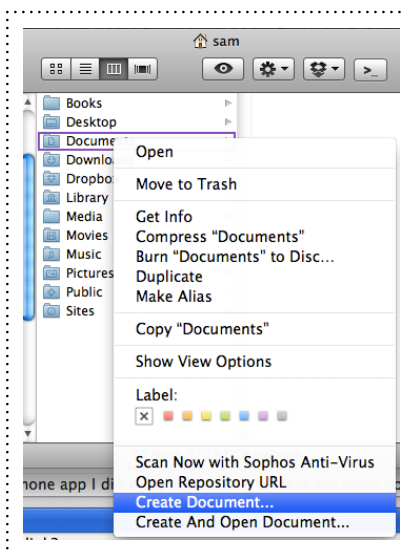


## Launching From The Finder

To use Neu directly from the Finder, you need to have [enabled the Neu service commands](#).

Go to the Finder, right-click on any file or folder and choose **Create Document...** or **Create And Open Document...**

Neu will launch, and present you with a window showing the templates that you can choose from.



Select one and click **Create** or hit the return key.

If you want to cancel the operation without making a file, click **Cancel** or hit the escape key.

## Launching With A Keyboard Shortcut

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You can also set a global key combination which Neu will respond to from any application.

When you hit this key, Neu will come to the front and behave as if you had right-clicked in the front Finder window.

To set the hot-key, choose **Preferences...** from the **Neu** menu, and select the **Behaviour** tab.

You can change the hot keys by clicking on the two buttons in the **Global keyboard shortcuts** section at the bottom of the panel.



# Setting The Name / Location Of The New Files

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Normally, Neu gives the newly created file a default name based on the name of the template, for example "Untitled Text File".

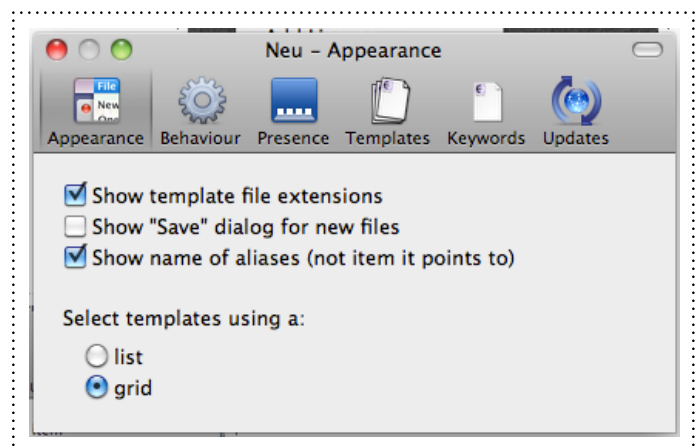
Neu also chooses the location of the new file automatically, based on the front Finder window (if there is no Finder window, Neu will create files on the desktop).

If you want more control over the name or the location of the new file, you can configure Neu to ask you before it is created.

To do this, choose **Preferences...** from the **Neu** menu, and select the **Appearance** tab.

Tick the **Show 'Save' Dialog for new items** option.

Now, after you've selected the item to use, you'll be presented with a standard "Save As..." dialog asking you where to put it and what to name it.



# Templates

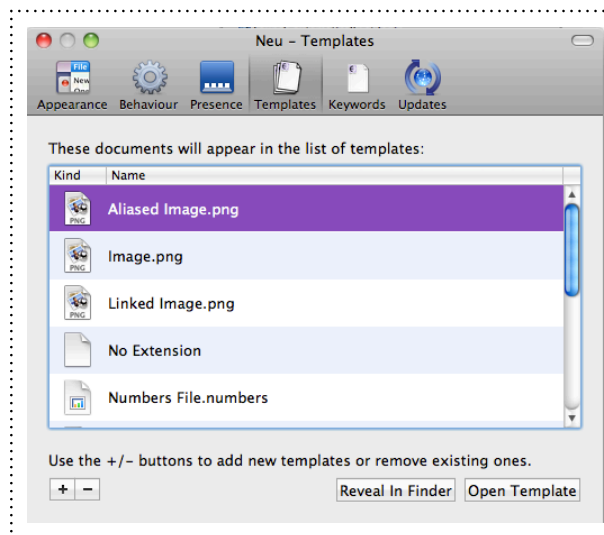
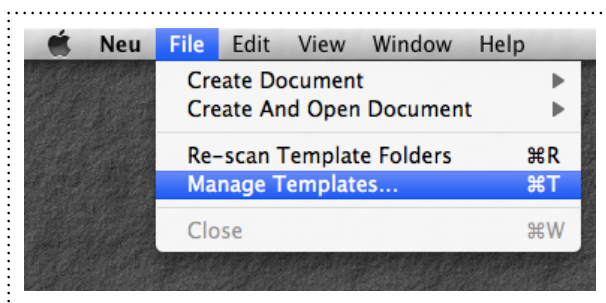
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Neu works by allowing you to create new files, which are copies of one of its templates.

The templates themselves are normal files, and you can edit or remove the existing ones, and add new ones.

To do this, use the **Manage Templates...** command in the **File** menu.

This opens up the preferences window and selects the **Templates** tab.



## Adding Templates

You can use the **+** button in the preference panel to add new templates. It will ask you to select a file, a copy of which will then be added to the list of Neu templates.

## Removing Templates

You can remove a template by selecting it in the list, and clicking the **-** button.

## Editing Templates

You can edit a template by selecting it in the list, and clicking on the **Open Template** button.

What this does is to open the template in whatever application would normally open it if you clicked on it in the Finder.

This may not always be the right application to use for editing - for example the web page template will probably open in a web browser like Safari, but you might want to edit it in a text editor instead.

To edit a template in another application, select it and click on **Reveal In Finder**. This will select the template file in the Finder, from where you can open it using any application that you want.

## Where Templates Live

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The templates live inside your home folder, in

`~/Library/Application Support/com.elegantchaos.neu/Templates/`.

You can select a template in the preferences window and click the **Reveal In Finder** button to see the template in this folder. If you make changes to the files in this folder, Neu will pick them up the next time it launches.

You can force it to spot them sooner by choosing **Re-scan Template Folders** from the **File** menu.

You can also add shared files in: `/Library/Application Support/com.elegantchaos.neu/Templates/`, if you want to share them between users.

Currently there isn't a user interface in Neu for managing shared template files, so you'll need to do it manually.

## Template Substitutions

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When duplicating text-based template files (txt, html, xml, etc), you can get Neu to perform some substitutions - filling in blanks in the document with dynamic values.

See the [Templates](#) section for more details.

# Text Substitution

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When duplicating text-based template files (txt, html, xml, etc), you can get Neu to perform some substitutions - filling in blanks in the document with dynamic values.

The dynamic values can come from three main places:

- information about the command that Neu is performing, such as the name of the template it's duplicating, and where it is putting it
- environment variables that were passed to Neu by the operating system
- commands that return calculated values such as the current date and time

## Information About The Current Command

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You substitute a variable into a Neu template using the following syntax:

```
{{ var }}
```

where *var* is the name of the variable.

Neu current supports the following variables:

- **name**: the name of the template that is being duplicated
- **template**: the path to the original template that is being duplicated
- **path**: the path to the new file that is being created from the template

## Environment Variables

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A few environment variables are passed to Neu by the operating system when it is launched. It makes these values available for use in substitutions:

Some of the more useful environment variable values:

- **USER**: the unix login name of the user
- **HOME**: the home directory of the user
- **PATH**: the value of the unix PATH environment variable
- **LOGNAME**: the name that the user logged in as
- **SHELL**: the default shell for the user

Note that this isn't the complete environment that you'd expect to see if you opened a terminal window, it's just the subset that Neu receives.

See [this Apple technical note](#) for more details on how add your own values to this set.

## Commands

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Commands are inserted into a template with the syntax

```
{% command %}
```

Currently Neu supports just one command.

## Command: now

This command inserts the current date/time.

The `date_format` filter (see the discussion on filters below) allows you to specify the exact format that you want, like so:

```
{% now | date_format: "dd MMM yyyy 'at' HH:mm:ss" %}
```

## Filters

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Filters can be combined with a variable or command, to modify it's output, using the syntax `{{ name | filter }}` or `{% command | filter %}`.

Currently Neu supports the following filters:

- **uppercase**: turn the content into upper case
- **lowercase**: turn the content into lower case
- **capitalized**: capitalise each word of the content
- **date\_format**: format a date (the formatting system used is detailed [here](#))

## Examples

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Some examples of how to use substitution can be found in the default templates that Neu makes for you.

## More Information

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The substitution support in Neu is currently based on Matt Gemmell's `MGTemplateEngine`.

You can find some more detailed documentation on it here:

- [Templates With Cocoa](#)
- [MGTemplateEngine Read Me](#)

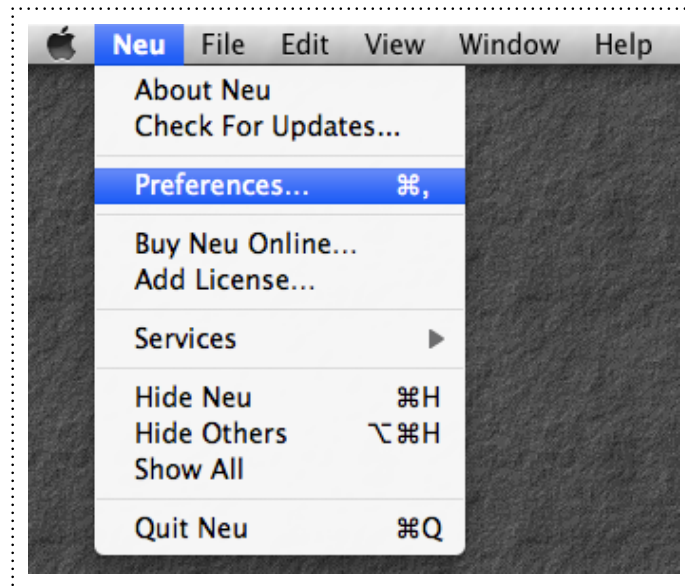
Note that in my documentation above I refer to a "command", which is what Matt calls a "marker".

# Preferences

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Neu has a number of preferences that you can use to customise its behaviour.

These can be accessed from the **Preferences...** item in the **Neu** menu.



## Appearance Preferences

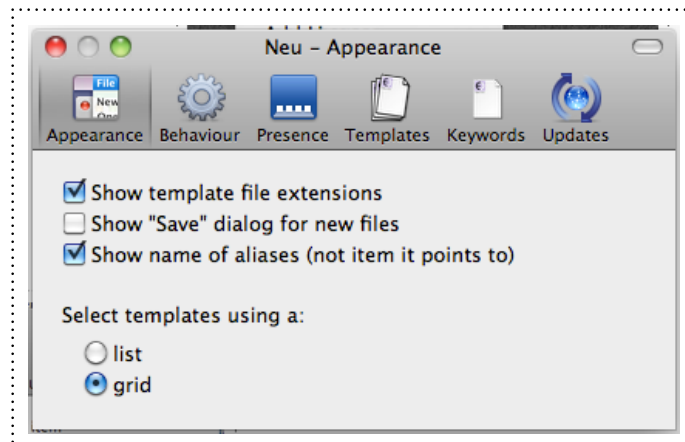
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These settings generally alter the amount of information that Neu shows, or the way that it displays it.

### Show template file extensions

If this setting isn't ticked, when Neu asks you to select from its list of its templates, it just shows the template names (for example "Shopping List").

You can tick this setting if you want it to also show the file extension (for example "Shopping List.rtf").



### Show "Save" dialog for new files

By default, Neu automatically gives files a new name, and places them in the location represented by the Finder's front window (or the Desktop, if the Finder has no windows open).

You can tick this setting if you would like Neu to instead ask you where to save the new file, and what to call it.

## Show name of alias (not item it points to)

This is an advanced option relating to how Neu behaves if you use a symbolic link or Finder alias as a template\*.

If you tick this preference, when Neu displays the template in any of its windows, it will label it using the name of the alias or symbolic link file, rather than the name of the file that it points to.

## Select templates using a:

When Neu asks you to choose a template to duplicate, it displays them in a window.

The preference allows you to choose whether to view the templates as a list or a grid.

## Behaviour Preferences

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These preferences relate to the way that Neu behaves when you create new files.

### Stay running after making a new item

When you use Neu from the Finder's Services menu, the Finder may have to launch Neu first.

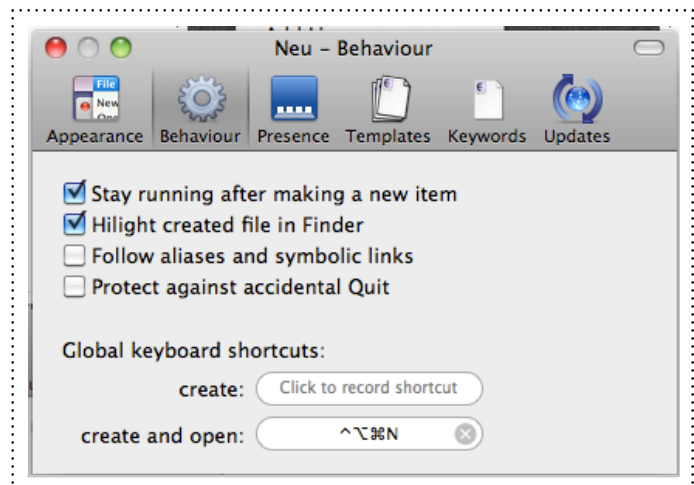
In that situation, if this preference is ticked, Neu will stay running after you've duplicated an item. If the preference is not ticked, Neu will quit after performing the duplication.

### Hilight created files in Finder

When this preference is ticked, after Neu has created a new file it will switch focus to the Finder and hilight the file - possibly opening up a new Finder window in the process.

### Follow aliases and symbolic links

This is an advanced option relating to how Neu behaves if you use a symbolic link or Finder alias as a template\*.



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\* If you don't know what these are, don't worry - you can safely ignore this option in that case!

If you tick this option, when you use a template that is an alias or symbolic link, Neu will make a copy of *the file that the alias points to*.

If you don't tick the option, Neu will simply make a copy of the alias or symbolic link file.

## Protect against accidental Quit

By default, the **Quit** command in Neu has the standard keyboard shortcut Cmd-Q.

You can tick this setting to change this shortcut to Cmd-Shift-Q, to make it harder to accidentally quit Neu. This can be useful if you use the global keyboard shortcuts and want to ensure that Neu is always running in the background.

## Global keyboard shortcuts

You can set global keyboard shortcuts which Neu will respond to from any application.

When you hit these shortcuts, Neu will come to the front and behave as if you had chosen **Create Document...** or **Create and Open Document...**

You can change the shortcuts by clicking on the two buttons to the right of the labels "create:" and "create & open:" at the bottom of the panel.

## Presence Preferences

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These preferences determine how Neu is launched, and how you can access its functionality.

### Launch automatically at login

You can use this setting to automatically start Neu whenever you login to your computer.

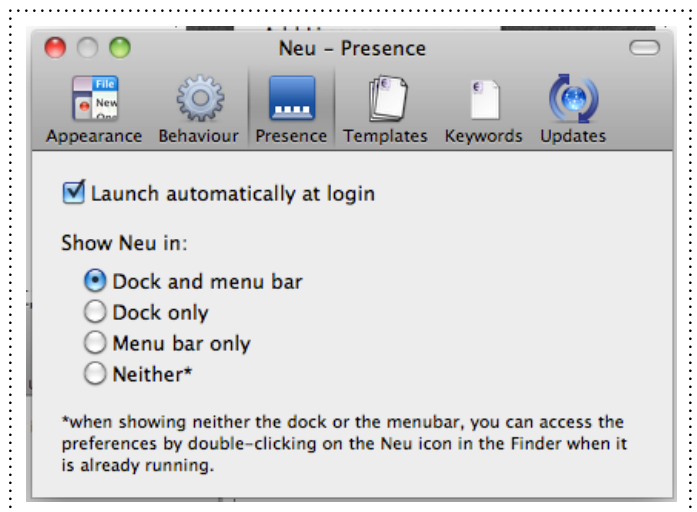
### Show Neu in

By default Neu works like any other application - it will have a normal menu bar, it will show up in the Dock like any other application. It will also install a small menu item on the top-right of your menu bar.

If you wish, you can modify this behaviour.

If you want to hide the small status menu, you can choose **Dock only**.

If you want to hide the dock icon, you can choose **Menu bar only**.



If you want to hide both, you can choose **Neither**<sup>2</sup>.

## Template Preferences

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The templates preferences panel is described in the [Templates section](#) of this document, as part of a general discussion of Neu templates.

## Keyword Preferences

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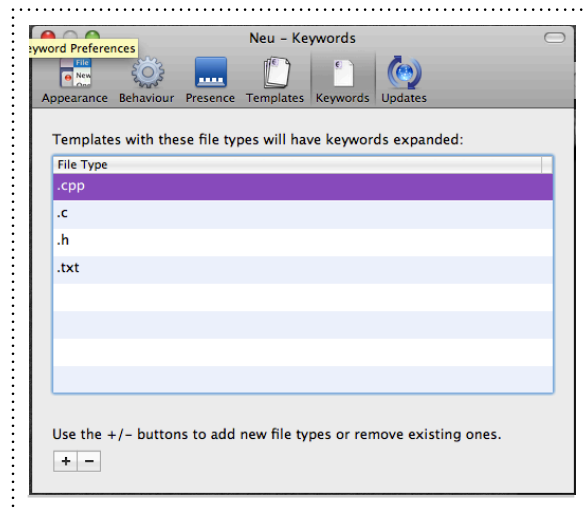
Neu can automatically [substitute text into templates](#) when it makes new files.

It does this only for certain file types.

You can determine which types using the Keywords preference panel.

Click on the + button to add a new file type to the list.

Select a type and click on the - button to remove it from the list.



## Update Preferences

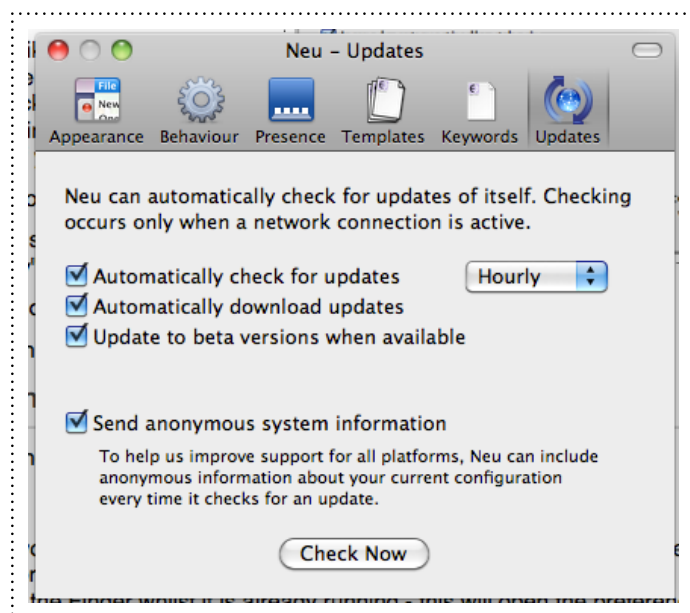
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Neu can automatically check for updates of itself.

Checking occurs only when a network connection is active.

You can use the Updates preference panel to customise or disable this checking.

**Please note:** this panel is not available in the App Store version of Neu, which uses the App Store's built-in update mechanism.



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<sup>2</sup> In this situation you won't be able to bring Neu to the front and so won't be able to access its menubar to open the preferences if you change your mind. To get around this, you can double-click on Neu in the Finder whilst it is already running - this will open the preferences for you.

## Enabling The Service Menus

Neu makes the **Create Document...** and **Create And Open Document...** menus available in certain places.

When Neu is running, you can find them in Neu's menubar, and also from the small menu it installs at the top-right of the menubar, or from the menu that you see which you right-click on the Neu icon in the Dock.

Neu also uses a Mac OS X facility called Services to add its menu commands to the Finder. This allows you to use Neu even when it isn't running.

However, Apple make users explicitly enable Services commands before they can use them (presumably to prevent applications from cluttering up the user's menus with services that they don't want).

To do this, choose **Services/Services Preferences...** from the Apple menu.

You will see a list of services (there are lots of them, supplied by many different applications).

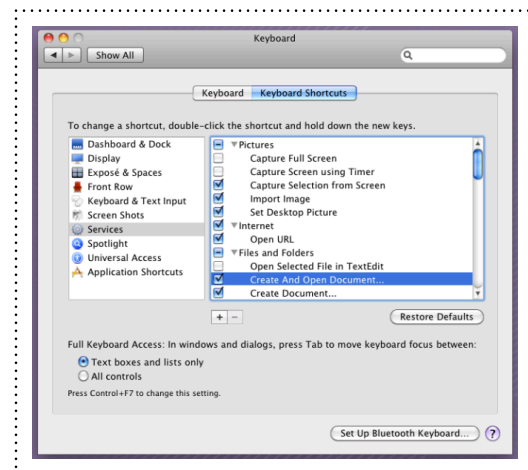
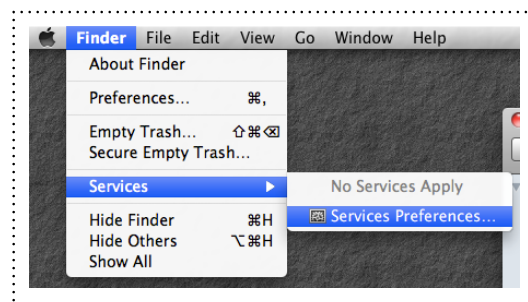
Find the two commands in the **Files and Folders** section that are called **Create Document...** and **Create And Open Document...**, and tick them.

If you wish, you can also tick **Create Document On Desktop...** and **Create And Open Document On Desktop...** which provide a quick way to create documents on the desktop, regardless of which Finder window is currently showing.

Once you've ticked the commands that you want to use, close the System Preferences window.

You should be good to go now.

If you can't find the commands mentioned above in the Services preferences, try logging out and back in again - this should refresh the list of commands that the Finder displays.



# One More Thing...

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## For More Information

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For the latest news and updates, please visit the [Neu website](#).

You can also visit the Neu [support forum](#) if you have a question, or contact us directly at [support@elegantchaos.com](mailto:support@elegantchaos.com).

## Copyright & Credits

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Neu was created by Sam Deane, and is Copyright 2010-2011 Sam Deane, Elegant Chaos.

See the [credits page](#) for full details.

Thanks for using Neu!