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.

Quick Review From Last Month:
Finder Quick Actions – What Are They?

As we discussed last month, the purpose of **Quick Actions** is to let the user work on files directly in the Finder without having to open an app. They allow us to rotate images, markup a file, create PDFs, and more. Some are pre-installed by the macOS; some by other apps.

Quick Actions are part of a family of add-ons listed in the **Extensions pane** in **System Preferences**. They are specific Finder extensions used for editing a file. The image below shows those that I have installed on my iMac:
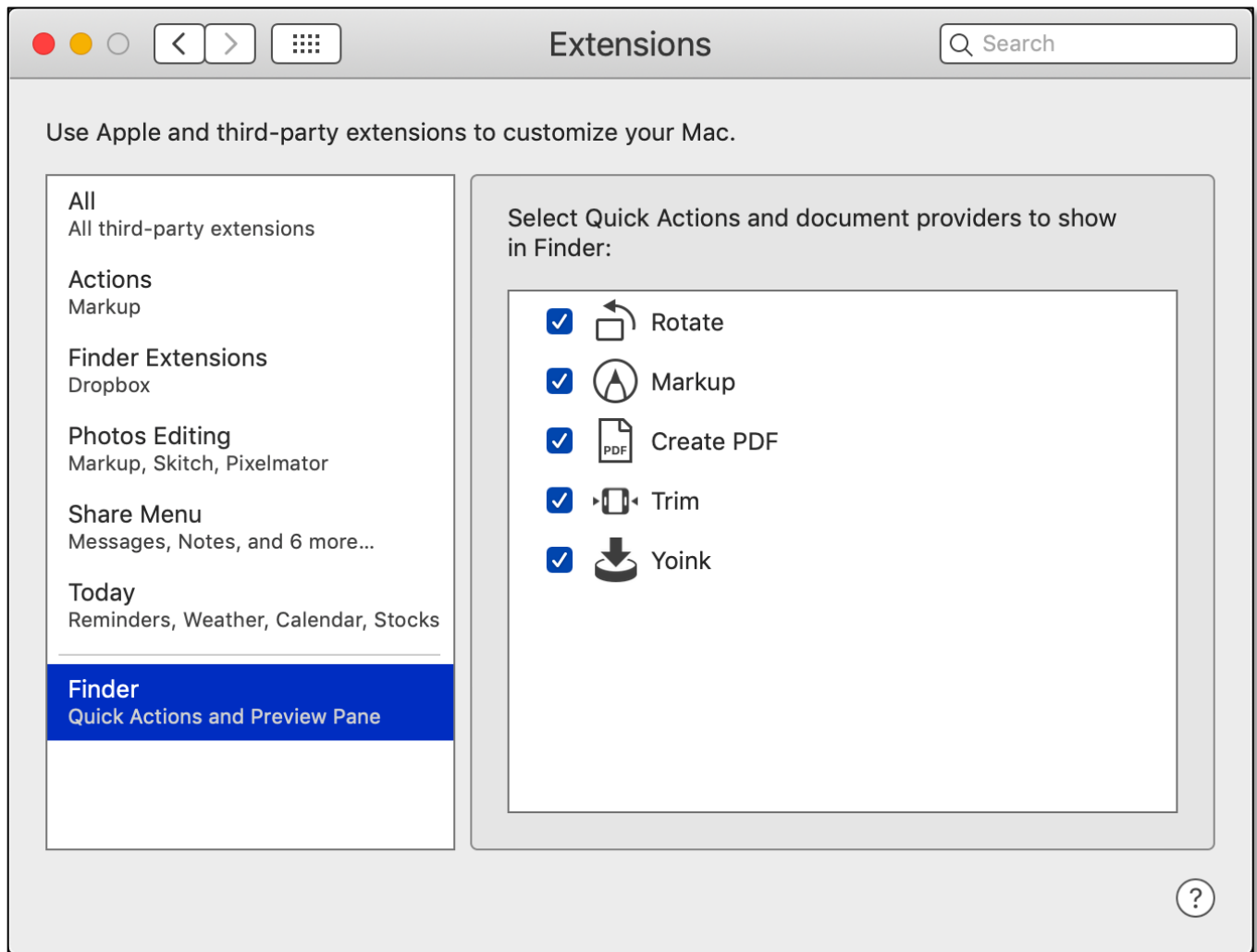

Finder Quick Actions (System Preferences, Extensions)

Using a Quick Action.

To use a Quick Action, first open a Finder window containing a file that you want to edit and select it. Then there are two ways to access Quick Actions (**Show Preview** and a **Contextual Menu**):

View > Show Preview. In the Finder's **View menu**, select **Show Preview** (keyboard shortcut: **Shift-Command-P**). **Show Preview** toggles to **Hide Preview** and vice versa.
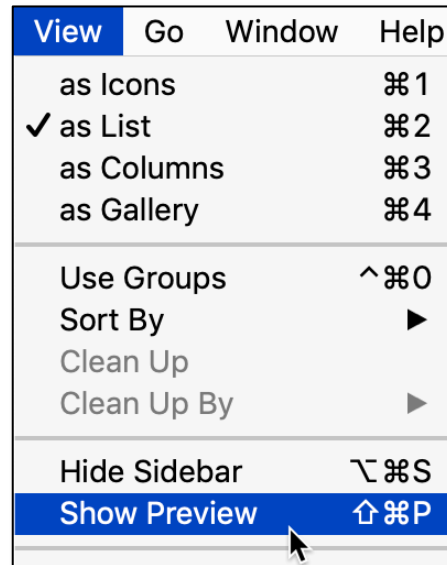
"Show Preview" Menu Item

This will display a sidebar with a small preview of a file along with its metadata (size, creation, modification, last opened dates, etc.).
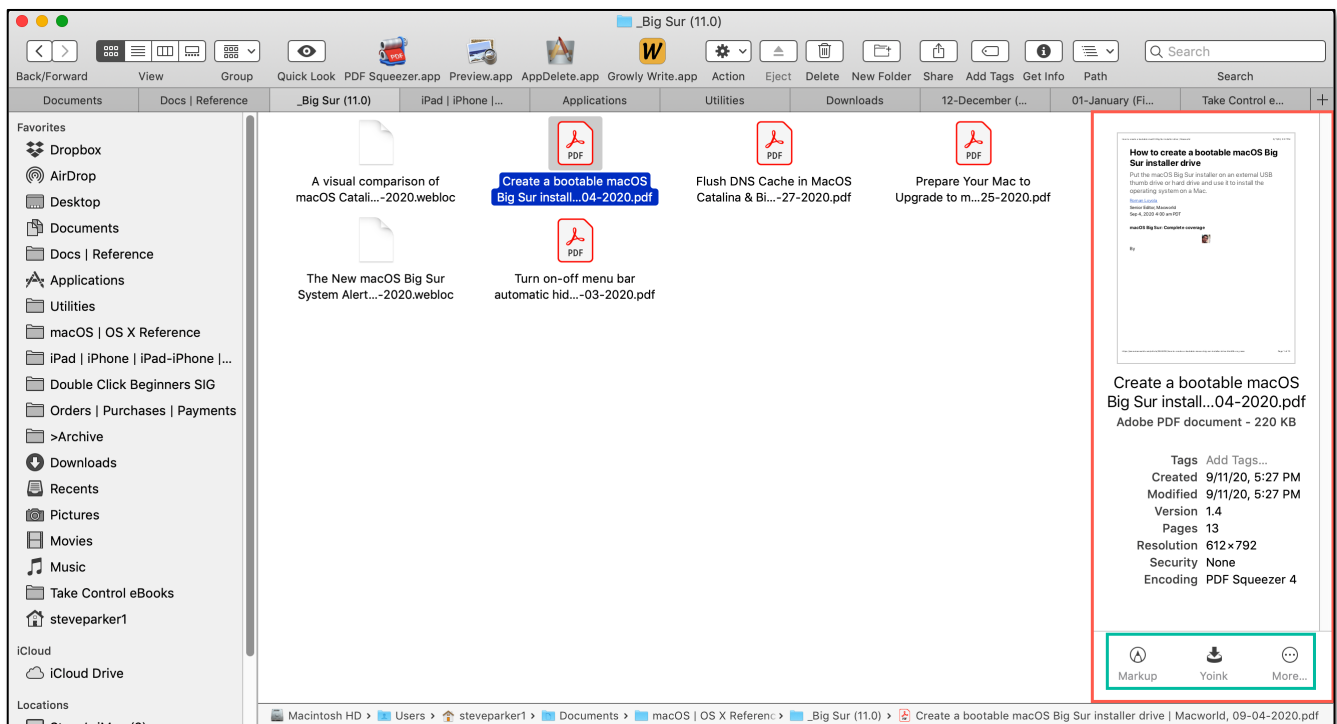

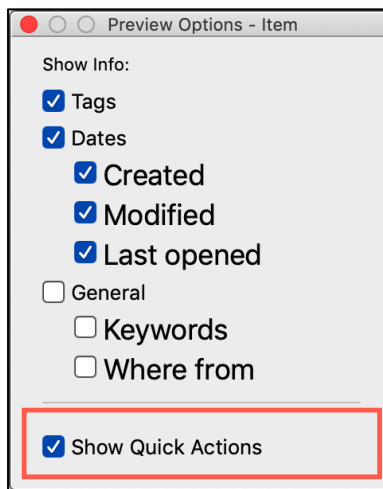**Preview Sidebar (Finder Icon View)**

Quick Actions are added below the preview sidebar of the selected file (as shown in image on the previous page). Available actions will vary depending on the type of file (image, video, audio, etc.).

Note: If you don't see Quick Actions at the bottom of the preview sidebar, the setting to display them may not be turned on. Go to the **View menu** and select the **Show Preview Options** menu item (toggles to **Hide Preview Options** and vice versa):
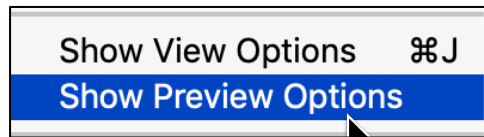
**View Menu – "Show Preview Options" Menu Item**

A pop-up window will appear (size and number of items in its listing will depend on the type of file previously selected). Click the checkbox for **Show Quick Actions** to display them in the preview sidebar:

Show Quick Actions

If you're using the Finder's **Icon**, **List** or **Gallery View** settings, a Preview sidebar is displayed (as shown in the image on the previous page). In **Column View**, the Preview is displayed in the rightmost column (effectively, a sidebar).

Contextual Menu > Quick Actions. Right Click on a Finder file to bring up the Contextual Menu (pop-up). Then choose the **Quick Actions** menu item for a list of available actions:
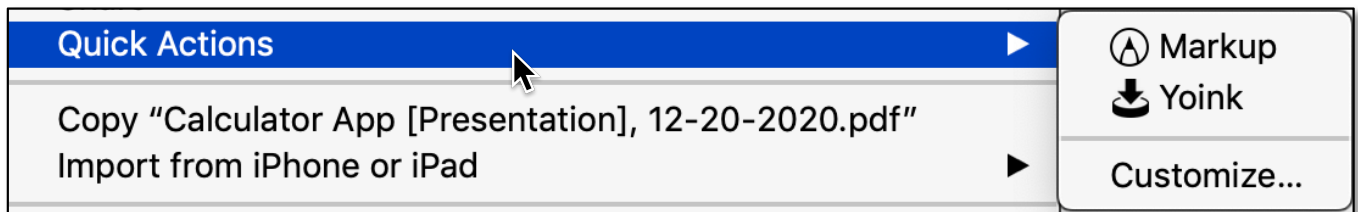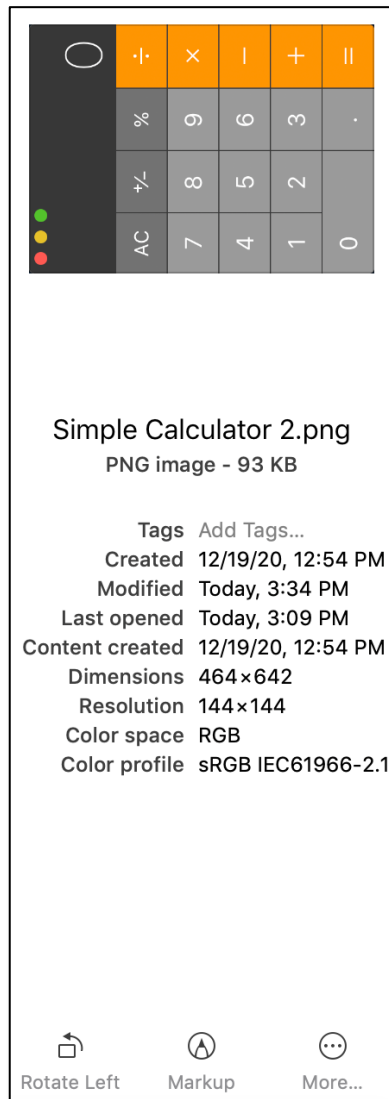

Contextual Menu (Pop-Up) – Quick Actions Menu Item
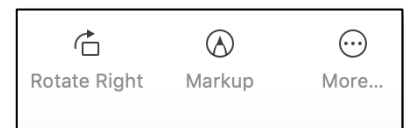
Quick Actions for Images

Rotate. Using the Quick Actions, there's no longer a need to launch Preview or other image editing apps to perform common tasks. For most images (.jpg, .png, etc.), the selected file in the Preview sidebar displays the **Rotate Left** and **Markup** buttons at the bottom. **Rotate Left** flips the image 90° counterclockwise. Hold the **Option** key changes the button to **Rotate Right**. Each additional click rotates the image another 90°. (See the illustrations below.)
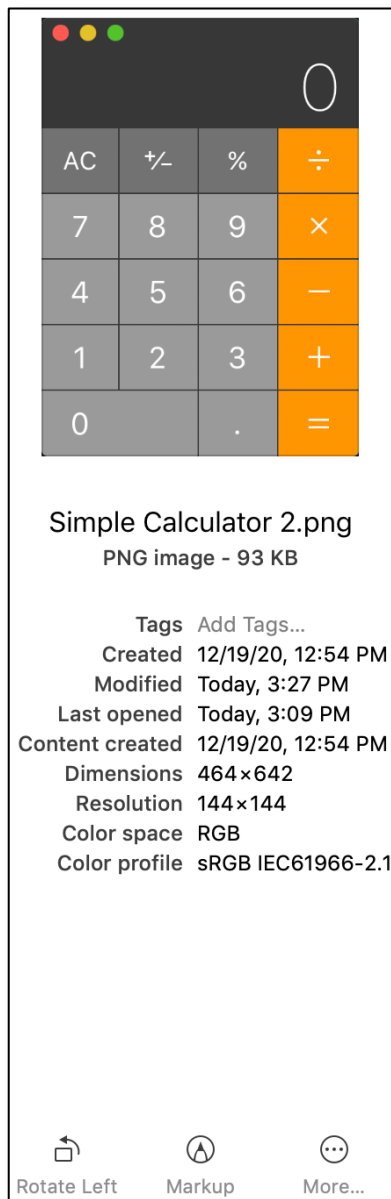
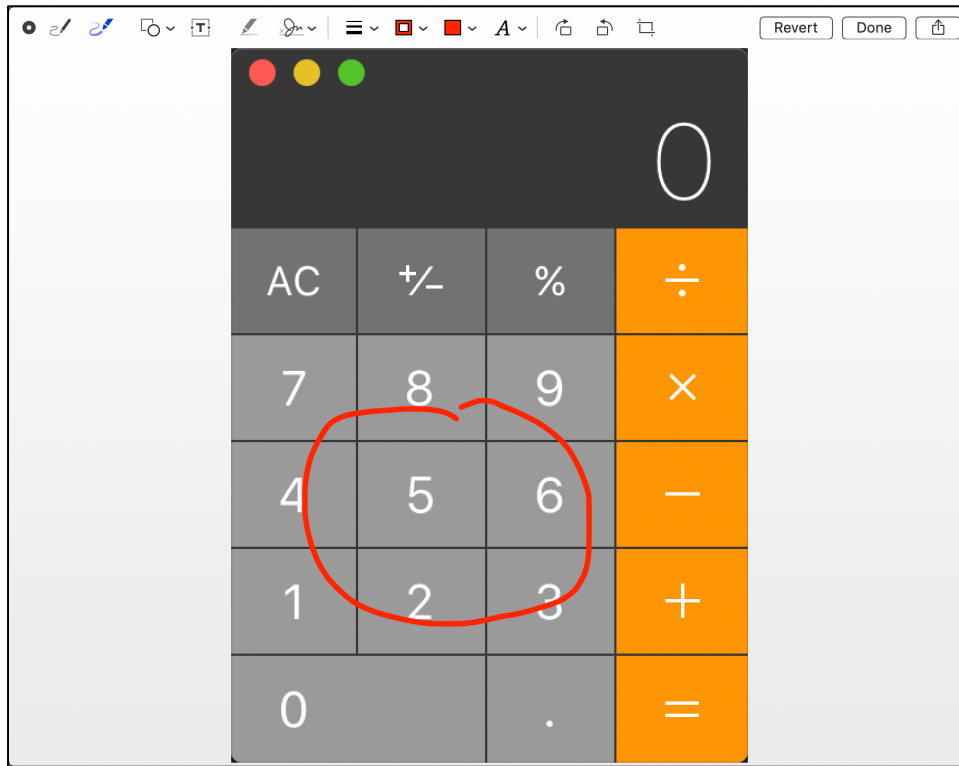| **Preview Sidebar** **Original Image**	**Preview Sidebar** **Image After "Rotate Left"**	**Preview Sidebar** **Option Key: "Rotate Right"**

If after rotating the image, you wish to further edit it with an app (default is usually Preview), you can open the image in the Finder window or double-click on it in the Preview sidebar.

Markup. Choosing the Markup tool displays a new **Quick Look** window with an extensive selection of tools (such as drawing on an image, adding text, adding a shape or arrow, etc.) for marking up images, similar to those offered by the Preview app. In the illustration below, the **Draw** tool was used to mark the image:


Quick Look Window (After Choosing "Markup" in the Preview Sidebar)
(The "Draw" tool was used to mark the Image)

There is a **Revert** button to undo any changes made to the image.

When finished with the image, you have several options:

- If you haven't made any changes to the image, there will be a small black button at the far left of the markup toolbar (has an **X** in it) to close the window without saving any changes (keyboard shortcut: **Command-W**).

- If you have made changes to the image, the small black button at the far left of the markup toolbar will change to a small circular button. Clicking it will cause a dropdown menu to appear with options to **Don't Save**, **Cancel** or **Save** the marked-up image:
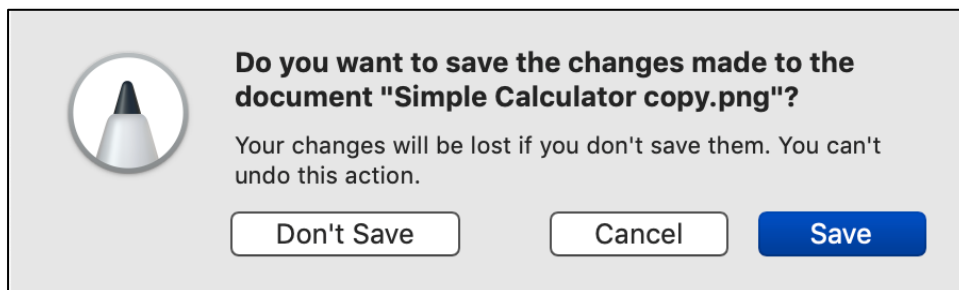
Quick Look Window – Dropdown Menu

- Clicking the **Done** button in the Quick Look window will cause it to change to **Open With Preview**. Clicking this button will open the image in the Preview app, allowing for further editing and to save the edited image.

Quick Actions for Video and Audio Files

Quick Actions available change based on the file type. When a video or audio file is selected in the Finder, **Markup** disappears and is replaced by **Trim**. Click **Trim**, and a new Quick Look window appears with an editing ribbon for trimming the beginning and end of the file:

Quick Look Window with Trim Tool for Video

"More" Button

Regardless of the width of the Preview sidebar, only three buttons are displayed. So, if you're editing an image, the default will be **Rotate Left**, **Markup** and **More...**. If editing a video or audio file, Markup changes to **Trim**, but **Rotate Left** and **More...** remain (still three buttons).

Click the **More...** button to reveal additional Quick Actions if they're available. As shown in the illustration below, I have two to choose from:
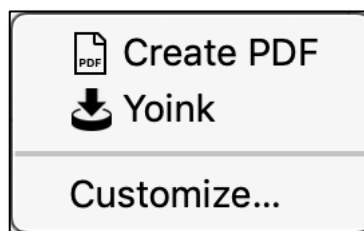
More Button – Additional Quick Actions

Even if there are no additional Quick Actions, there will always be a **Customize** option.

Customize. Selecting the **Customize** option will take you to the System Preferences/Extensions (specifically, the Finder Quick Actions section noted at the beginning of this presentation). Here may be found the specific Finder extensions that you have installed for editing a file. There are several actions that you can take for using these:

- Click on the checkboxes for the Quick Actions to choose to use/display them or not. For example, if you decide that you're not going to trim any video or audio files, you can uncheck **Trim** so it isn't displayed in the Preview sidebar.

- Drag on Quick Actions to reorder them. Perhaps you decide that you don't plan to **Rotate Left** (or **Rotate Right** using the **Option** key) very much but might prefer to see **Create PDF** first in the Preview Sidebar. If so, just drag **Create PDF** to the top of the list

- If you're interested in where a Quick Action plug-in file is located, **Right-Click** on it to display a pop-up menu, and select **Show in Finder**. For those Quick Actions included in macOS, you'll be taken to the Plugins folder which is buried deep in your System Folder.

- If the Quick Action is provided by a third party (for example, the **Yoink** Quick Action that I use), **Right-Click** on it to display the pop-up menu. There will now be two items: **Show in Finder** and **Move to Trash** (in case you want to remove it).

Create a Custom Quick Action. If you are familiar with the macOS Automator app, you can use it to create custom Quick Actions. That's beyond this Mac Basics discussion. However, it involves choosing the Automator Quick Action document type and then creating a workflow (sequence of tasks) for the Quick Action.

Summary

As discussed previously, **Quick Actions** allow you to work on files directly in the Finder without the need to use another app. They allow you to rotate images, create PDFs, and more. Simply open a Finder window containing the file to be edited and select it, use the **Show Preview** menu item to display the Preview sidebar, and then choose a Quick Action from the options at the bottom of the sidebar.

- **Rotate** is used with an image to rotate it left or right.

- **Markup** gives you virtually all the capabilities of the features of Preview without having to open the app.

- **Trim** allows you to edit the beginning and end of video and audio files.

- If you have more available Quick Actions, the **More** button allows you to access them.

- You can customize the Quick Actions that you wish to use, including which ones are shown and the order in which they're shown.

- Although beyond the scope of this presentation, it's possible to create custom Quick Actions using the Automator app.

Next Presentation

For the next presentation, we'll explore another Mac Basics topic.

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:

- Guide to Quick Actions in macOS Mojave
  (https://eshop.macsales.com/blog/45303-a-guide-to-quick-actions-in-macos-mojave/)
- Power and the limits of the new Finder features
  (https://appleinsider.com/articles/18/10/11/inside-macos-mojave-the-power-and-the-limits-of-the-new-finder-features)