Finder Tip (Groups), 07-19-2020

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.

To effectively use the Finder, it's important to be able to sort items quickly and easily. There are lots of options available. Probably the most familiar one is to use the **Finder toolbar** or the **View menu** to view items as **Icons**, in a **List**, as **Columns**, or as a **Gallery**.

However, there's another way to sort items in Finder that doesn't seem to get discussed much but can be very useful — **Groups**.
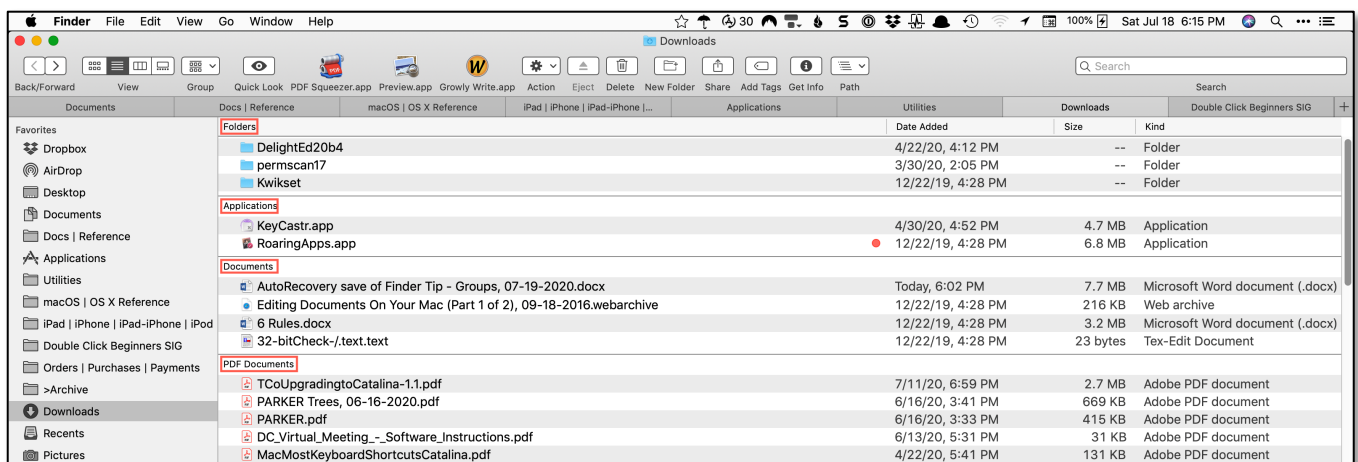
About Groups in the Finder

Using Groups in the Finder sorts items in a folder in a unique way — by **Type (Kind)**. For example: Folders, Applications, Documents, PDF Documents, Images, Spreadsheets, etc. So, using Groups is useful for folders that contain multiple kinds of items, not just a couple, and preferable many of them.

In addition, you can also change how the groups are sorted.

Note: Using Groups only applies to the current folder you are viewing, which gives you the flexibility to only use groupings when you find it helpful.

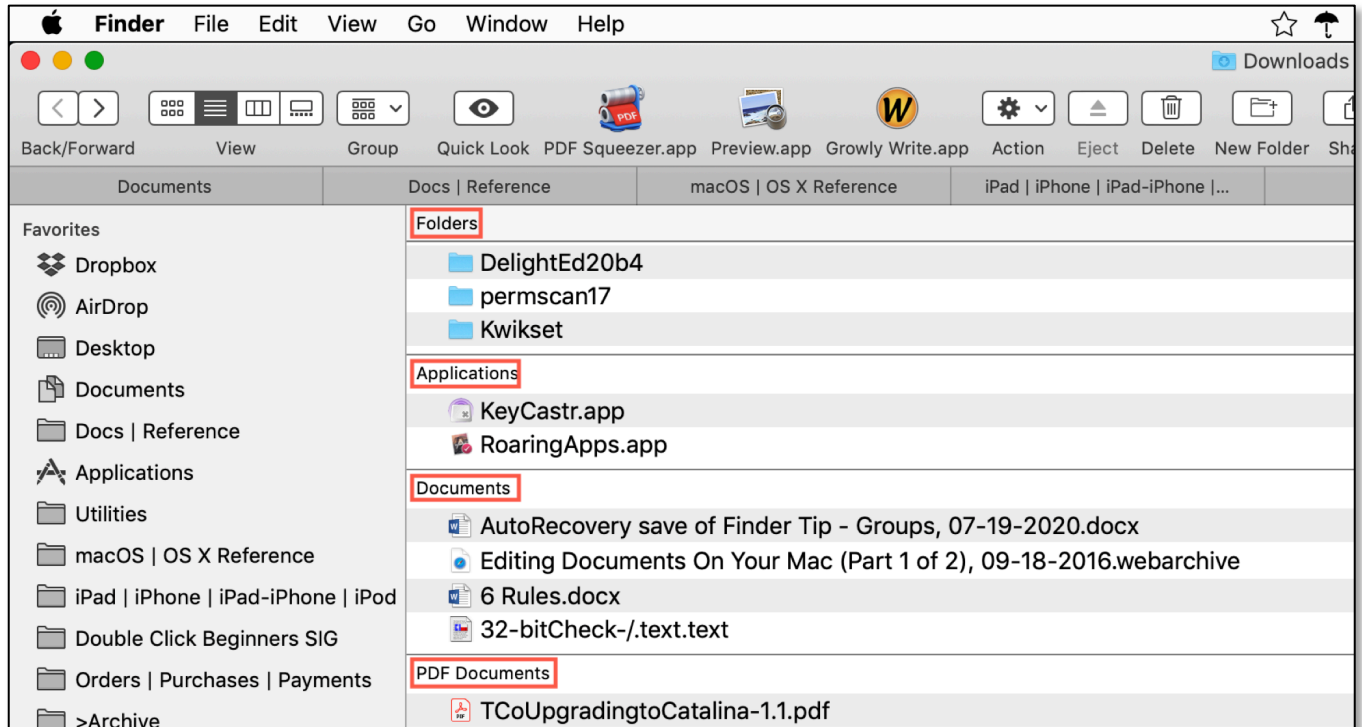*Note: The use of Groups is not available in the Finder's Gallery view.*

Below is a partial view of my Downloads folder (group labels highlighted):

Downloads Folder, Sorted by Groups (Partial View)

Here's a closer view that shows some of the Groups, again with labels highlighted:
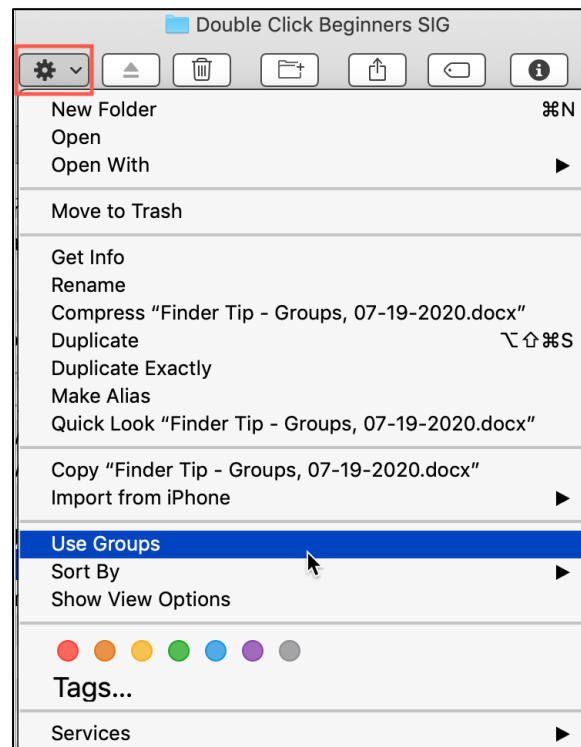

Downloads Folder, Sorted by Groups (Partial View)

Using Groups in the Finder

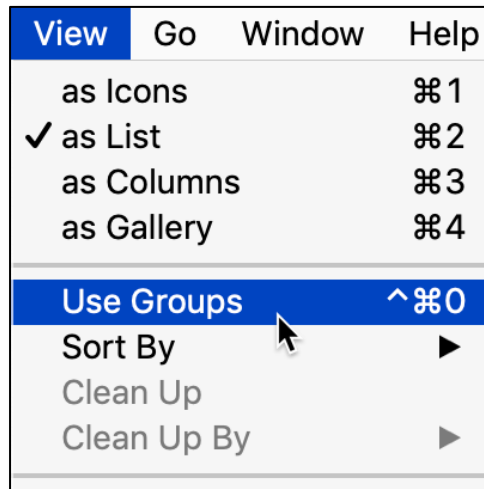Three Ways to Use Groups. There are three ways to use Groups in the Finder:

• Click the **Gear icon** in the **Finder toolbar** and select **Use Groups**:
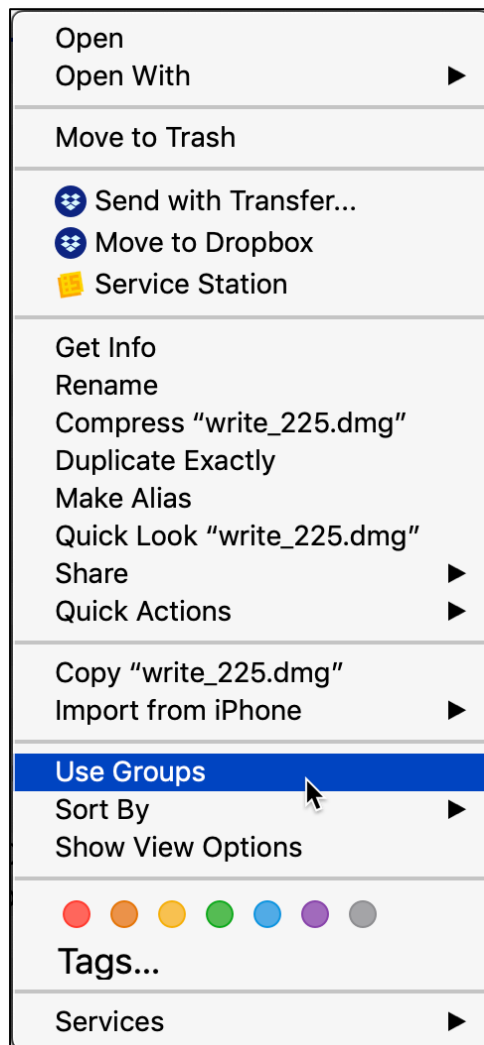

Gear Icon > Use Groups

• Choose **View** from the menu bar and select **Use Groups** (Keyboard Shortcut: Control-Command-0, ^-⌘-0). (That's a "zero", not an "O".)
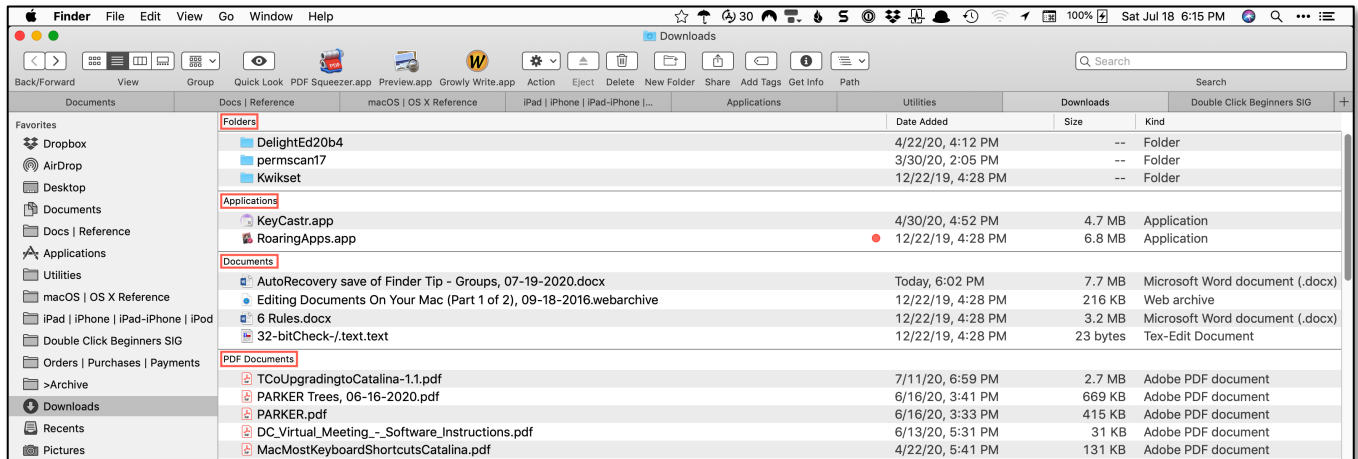

View > Use Groups

• **Right-click** within the folder and select **Use Groups**:

Right-Click in Folder > Use Groups
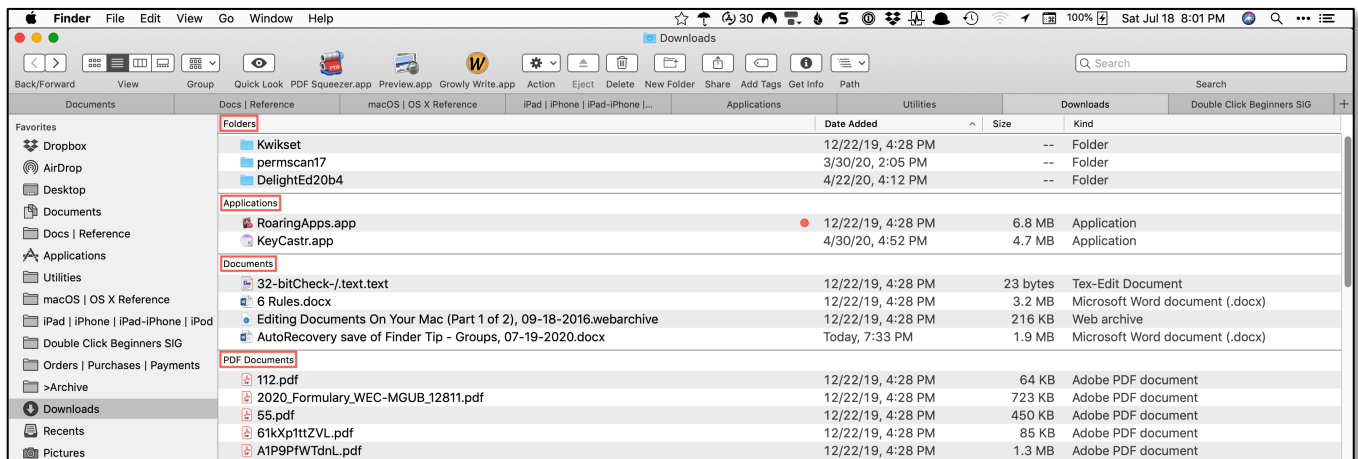
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As soon as you decide on an option and select **Use Groups**, the folder will immediately adjust and group your items:

Downloads Folder, Sorted by Groups (Partial View)

Additional Sorting. Once a folder is sorted by Groups, it's still possible to further sort what's displayed by clicking on one of the Finder window column headers. For example, in the previous Finder window images, each sorted group has been further sorted by **Date Added** (in this case, by the **latest to oldest**).

Click on a column header to reverse the sorting. For example, click on the **Date Added** column again to reverse the sort (**oldest to newest**):

Downloads Folder, Sorted by Groups (Partial View)
"Date Added" Column Now Sorted Oldest to Newest (was Newest to Oldest)
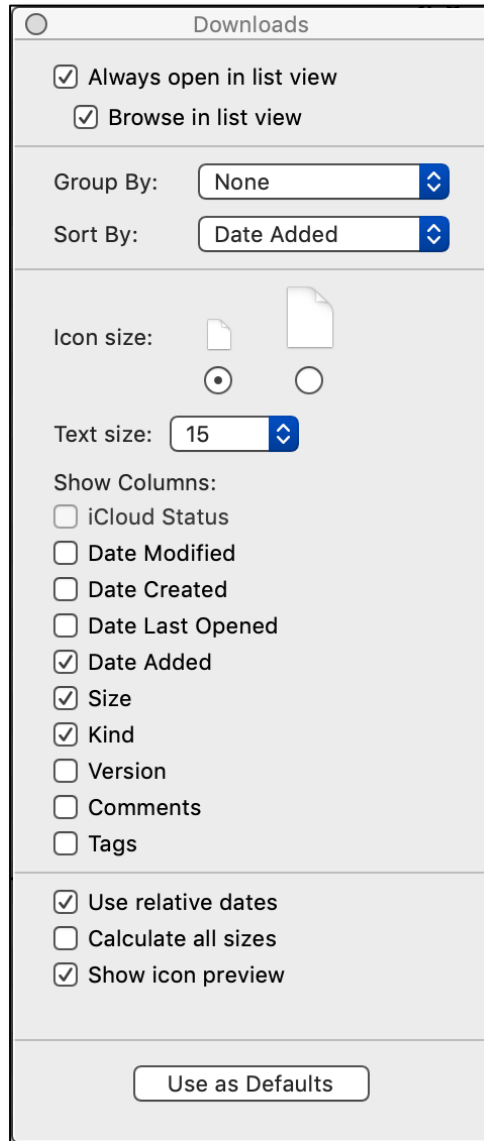
Review: Finder Window Columns

Choose which columns are displayed in a Finder window by clicking on the **View** menu and then selecting **View Options** (Keyboard Shortcut: Command-J, ⌘-J):

View > Show View Options

Then a pop-up menu is displayed from which you can choose among various features for the Finder window (such as Icon Size, Text Size, etc.).

Choose the columns that you want to be displayed in the Finder window from the **Show Columns** group by clicking on the checkbox next to them. (See the illustration on the next page.)

View Options

You can also right-click in the Finder window column label area and then choose columns to display from the pop-up menu:

Select Columns Pop-up Menu

Summary

Using Groups in Finder can very handy when there are a lot of different type of items (files, folders, apps, documents, etc.) in a folder. Once you choose to use Groups, you can further sort by date, size, etc. to arrange the items in the Finder window to your liking.

Next Presentation

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

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 Groups for simpler sorting in Finder on Mac
(https://www.idownloadblog.com/2020/07/13/use-groups-finder-sorting-mac/)