

## May 21, 2017, Beginners SIG The Dock (Part 3 of 3)

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- *Note: This discussion is based on MacOS, 10.12.4 (Sierra). Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS or OS X.*
- *Credit: <http://tidbits.com/e/17088> ("macOS Hidden Treasures: Dominate the Dock," 06 Mar 2017)<sup>1</sup> TidBITS is a great site for Mac information and tutorials.*

Over the last couple of months, we've been reviewing the [Dock](#). At Double Click's March meeting, we looked at managing Apps in the Dock, everything to the *left* of the vertical dividing line in the. In April, we reviewed working with items to the *right* of the Dock's vertical dividing line (Documents, Minimized Windows, and Folders). We also reviewed using the various contextual menus for items in the Dock.

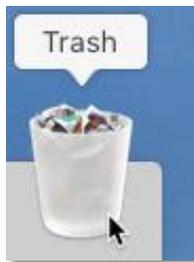
This month in Part 3, we'll finish our review of the Dock with a discussion about working with [Trash in the Dock](#), and [Customizing the Dock's Look and Feel](#).

### Trash in the Dock

Since Mac OS X was first introduced, the Trash icon has been found at the far right end of the Dock. Even the very first Macintosh operating system introduced in 1984 had a trashcan located at the lower right-hand corner of the desktop long before the Dock was introduced in Mac OS X.



**Trash Icon in the Dock (Nothing in Trash)  
Icon Shows an Empty Trashcan**



**Trash Icon in the Dock (Items in Trash)  
Icon Shows a Full Trashcan**

Like all Dock icons, it's an [alias](#) to the [Trash folder](#), a hidden folder in macOS (and previously in Mac OS X). If there's nothing in the Trash, its Dock icon shows an empty trashcan. If there's anything in the Trash, the Dock icon will change to one with items in the trashcan. (See the illustrations above.)

**Using Trash in the Dock.** Using the Trash icon is just like using any folder in the Dock:

- Drag items to the Trash to put them there for future deleting when the Trash is emptied.
- Clicking the Trash icon opens the contents of the Trash in a Finder window. This lets you examine the items in the Trash to decide if there might be something that you don't want to delete.
- Empty the Trash by Right-clicking (Control-clicking) its icon and choosing [Empty Trash](#) from the contextual pop-up menu. (See the illustration on the next page.)

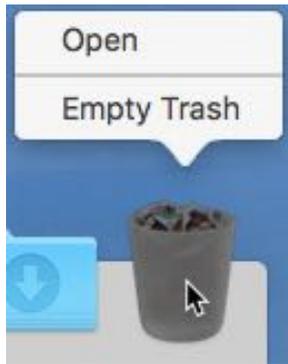
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<sup>1</sup> TidBITS articles may be reprinted by non-profit, non-commercial publications if full credit is given, and my presentation draws heavily from the article credited above.

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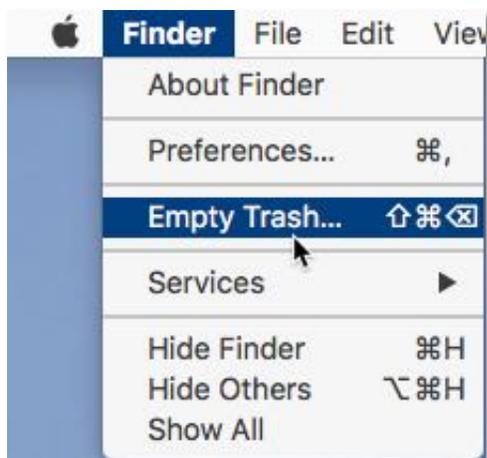
The pop-up menu also has an [Open](#) selection to open the Trash in a Finder window, a nice touch, but it's simpler to just click on the Trash icon to open it.



**Trash Icon Contextual Pop-up Menu**

There are three other ways to empty the Trash. However, *the first two don't let you examine the contents of the Trash before emptying*, so be sure consider this fact before emptying the Trash.

- In the Finder, use the [Finder](#) menu and choose [Empty Trash](#):



**"Empty Trash" Selection in the Finder (No Option to View Files Before Deleting)**

- You can also use the keyboard shortcut, [Shift-Command-Delete](#). (Again, no option to view the files before deleting.)
- Open the contents of the Trash in a Finder window, and click the Empty button in the upper right-hand corner of the window:



**Empty Button in the Finder Window for the Trash**

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Since the Trash contents are shown in a Finder window, you can examine them before deleting and move items out if you don't want them deleted.

**Unmount an External Drive.** If you have an external drive that you want to unmount (also works for various forms of removable storage, like a flash drive or DVD, that you want to eject), start dragging it, and the Trash icon becomes an [Eject](#) icon:



### Trash Icon Changes to an Eject Icon

This dragging action/icon change action isn't all that intuitive, but it does match the classic Mac behavior of dragging the icon of a floppy disk to the Trash to eject it.

For reference, there are also two more ways to unmount a drive:

- Click on the drive's icon and choose [Eject](#) from the Finder's [File](#) menu.



### Eject <disk name> Menu Item From the Finder's File Menu

- Click on the drive's icon and then use the keyboard shortcut, [Command-E](#).

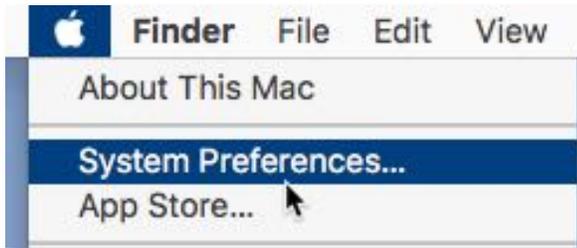
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**Customizing the Dock's Look and Feel**

There are a number of ways that you can customize how the Dock as a whole looks and works.

**Dock System Preferences.** Open the Dock's preference pane in the [System Preferences App](#) by (1) selecting [System Preferences](#) from the [Apple Menu](#) or (2) selecting the System Preferences icon in the Dock if you've placed it there:



**Select "System Preferences" Menu Item From the Finder's File Menu**



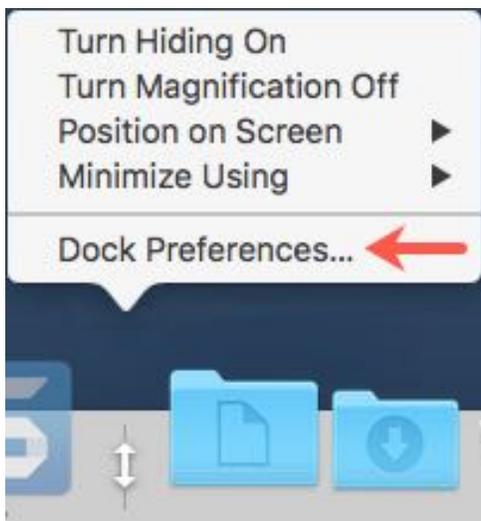
**Choose the System Preferences Icon From the Dock**

From the System Preferences App, choose the [Dock](#) preference pane:



**Choose the Dock Preference Pane (System Preferences App)**

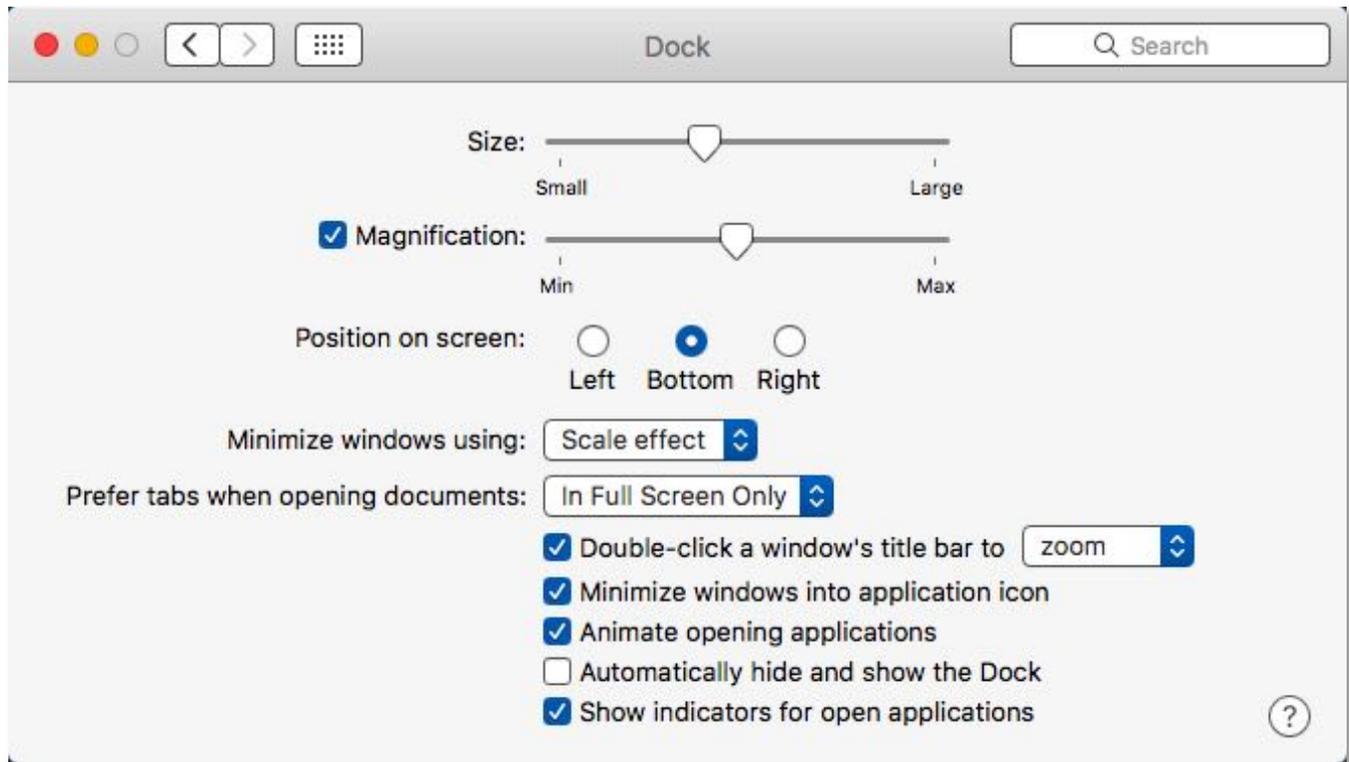
You can also access the Dock preference pane by Right-clicking (Control-clicking) on the divider between the app and document sections of the Dock. (The mouse pointer turns into a double-ended arrow.) Then choose [Dock Preferences](#) from the pop-up menu:



**Choose "Dock Preferences" From the Pop-up Menu After Right-Clicking on the Dock Divider Line**

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Here's the Dock preferences window:



### Dock Preference Pane Window

**Dock Preferences Settings.** As you can see in the illustration above, there are several ways to customize the Dock.

Size Slider. This changes the size of your Dock icons.

- Generally, a large setting is better since larger icons are easier to view and distinguish. However, larger icons do use up more potentially valuable vertical screen space.
- Depending on the number of icons that you place in the Dock and the Magnification setting, it will expand to accommodate them.
- Once the Dock expands to the full width (or height if you've placed the Dock on either side of your screen, per the [Position on screen](#) setting), moving the slider further toward the "Large" end will make no difference in icon size since they will already be as large as the space on your screen allows.
- At its largest setting (Large) and depending on the number of icons that you place in there, the Dock will automatically scale to the width (or height) of the screen.
- You can also resize the Dock directly. Move the mouse pointer over the divider between the app and document sections until it becomes a double-ended arrow. Click and drag to adjust the Dock size (left for smaller, right for larger), but you may the drag action may be a bit awkward.

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Magnification Slider. Click the checkbox to turn on magnification when you mouse over Dock icons. Drag the slider to set how large you want the magnified icons to be.



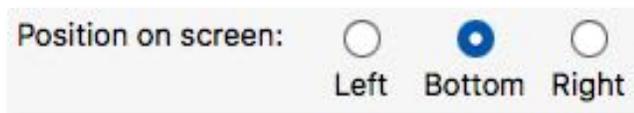
### Dock Icon Magnification Setting Slider

Magnification makes it easy to see icons that would otherwise be small:



### Dock Icon Magnification in Action

Position on screen. This setting lets you change the position of the Dock on your screen ([left](#), [bottom](#) or [right](#)).

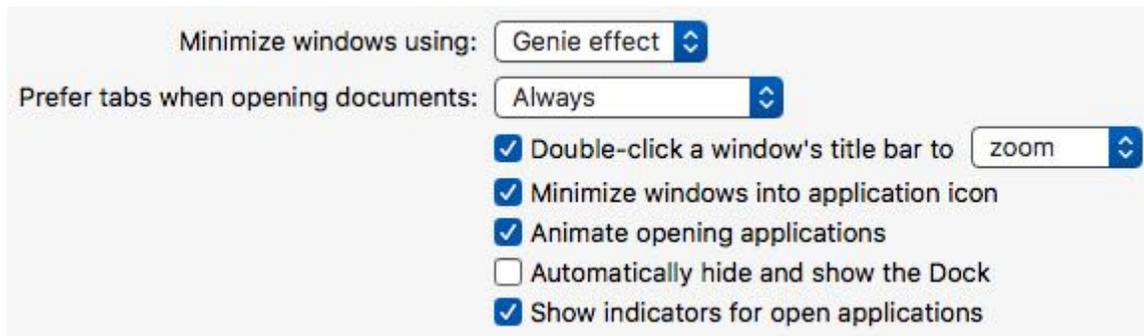


### Dock Icon Position Setting

- By default, the Dock is displayed horizontally along the bottom of the screen, and many of us have become accustomed to this position.
- There's an argument, however, that positioning the Dock on the bottom of the screen is a poor use of screen space. Most screens are wider than they are tall, and most document windows are taller than they are wide. So, maximizing vertical space is valuable in displaying the content of documents.
- It may make sense to position the Dock vertically on the right or left side of the screen. The downside is that if you have a large number of Dock icons, a vertical Dock orientation results in smaller, harder to see, icons than if they were positioned on the bottom. However, you can compensate for this by using the Magnification setting to enlarge the icons when you mouse over them. The icon labels that are displayed when you mouse over an icon can help, too.
- If you use two monitors, you have the choice of positioning the Dock vertically on either side of one of the two monitors. It would probably be clumsy to have the Dock in the "middle" of the combined two-monitor desktop (right side of the left monitor or left side of the right one). So with two monitors, moving the Dock to the left side of the left monitor or the right side of the right monitor makes the most sense.

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**Remaining Dock Preferences.** These are mostly cosmetic adjustments:



### Other Dock Preferences

**Minimize windows using:** When minimizing windows to the Dock, you have a choice of using either the **Genie** or **Scale** animation effect by selecting one from the pop-up menu. Both are purely cosmetic. Try them both to see which one that you prefer.

- With the **Genie** effect, a window appears to be sucked into the Dock becoming an icon there:



### Genie Animation Effect (Credit: TekRevue.com)

- The **Scale** effect is less dramatic as the window is rapidly reduced in size while maintaining the same shape as it's being moved to become a Dock icon.

The two animations can be fun to watch, at least for a few times, but they happen quickly. You can slow down either effect by holding down the **Shift** key as you minimize a window to see it moved into the Dock in slow motion. Similarly, holding **Shift** as you click a minimized window expands it slowly. This works for folders, too.

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Prefer tabs when opening documents: This setting has nothing to do with the Dock, so why it's included in Dock preferences is unclear. It seems better suited as an additional setting option in General preference pane.

According to Dock Help: "Choose when you want documents to open in a tab (instead of in a new window): always, only when you're working in full screen, or manually (only when you open a document that way)."

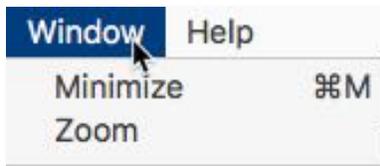
You have three options: [Always](#), [Full Screen Only](#) and [Manually](#). The default is [Always](#), but you can set it to In [Full Screen Only](#) or [Manually](#). If you find app tabs useful in Sierra, then you can choose [Always](#) or [Full Screen Only](#). Otherwise, avoid using tabs by choosing [Manually](#).

Double-click a window's title bar to: This is another setting that's unclear why it's included in Dock preferences. There are two options here: [Zoom](#) and [Minimize](#). The default setting, [Zoom](#), zooms the window, just as if you clicked the green [Zoom](#) button in the upper left hand of a window.

The other option, [Minimize](#) triggers the same action as clicking the yellow [Minimize](#) button. Alternatively, you can choose [Zoom](#) and [Minimize](#) from an app's [Window](#) menu or use their keyboard shortcuts if available.



**Window Close, Minimize and Zoom Buttons  
(Minimize Button Being Selected)**



**Window Menu (Preview App)**

Minimize Windows into Application Icon: Select this checkbox to make a minimized window disappear into their associated app instead of showing up as an icon in the document and folder section of the Dock.

You may find this option useful if you find that you've got too many icons in the Dock, particularly those from minimized windows, and the icons have gotten small and hard to distinguish.

The downside is that windows minimized into an app's icon no longer show up as separate icons in the Dock. However, you can still find which windows have been minimized into an app by Right-clicking (Control-clicking) or clicking and holding on an app's Dock icon and noting the minimized windows in the pop-up menu.

The illustration on the next page shows an example of how the list of windows that were minimized into an app (Safari in this case) are shown in the pop-up menu. The active window is marked with a checkmark (✓) while minimized windows are marked with a diamond (◆).

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**Safari – Pop-up Menu Showing Windows Minimized Into the Application (Active Window Has a ✓ Next to It. Minimized Windows Have a ♦ Next to Them.)**

Animate Opening Applications: Select this checkbox to turn on the animation where icons bounce in the Dock while opening. If an app takes longer than expected to launch, this may be an indication of a problem.

Automatically Hide and Show the Dock: Choose this option if you want to keep the Dock hidden until you move the mouse pointer to the edge of the screen where the Dock is located. It can be helpful if you have a small display (limited vertical screen space) since keeps the Dock out of the way at the bottom until you need it. You can also hide and show the Dock with a keyboard shortcut ([Command-Option-D](#)), discussed later.

Show Indicators for Open Applications: This option turns on the little “dots” that show up under open apps. It’s a handy visual indicator and is on by default. So, unless you don’t like the dots, you may as well leave it on.

**Other Dock Preference Settings.** There are a few more settings for the Dock found in the System Preferences app (but not in the Dock preference settings).

Icon Badges. An [Icon Badge](#) is a small [red circle](#) in the upper-right corner of an app’s Dock icon. A badge indicates something about the app. For example, in the Mail app, the badge shows how many unread messages Mail there are:



**Dock Icon Badge (Mail App, 179 Messages Marked as Unread)**

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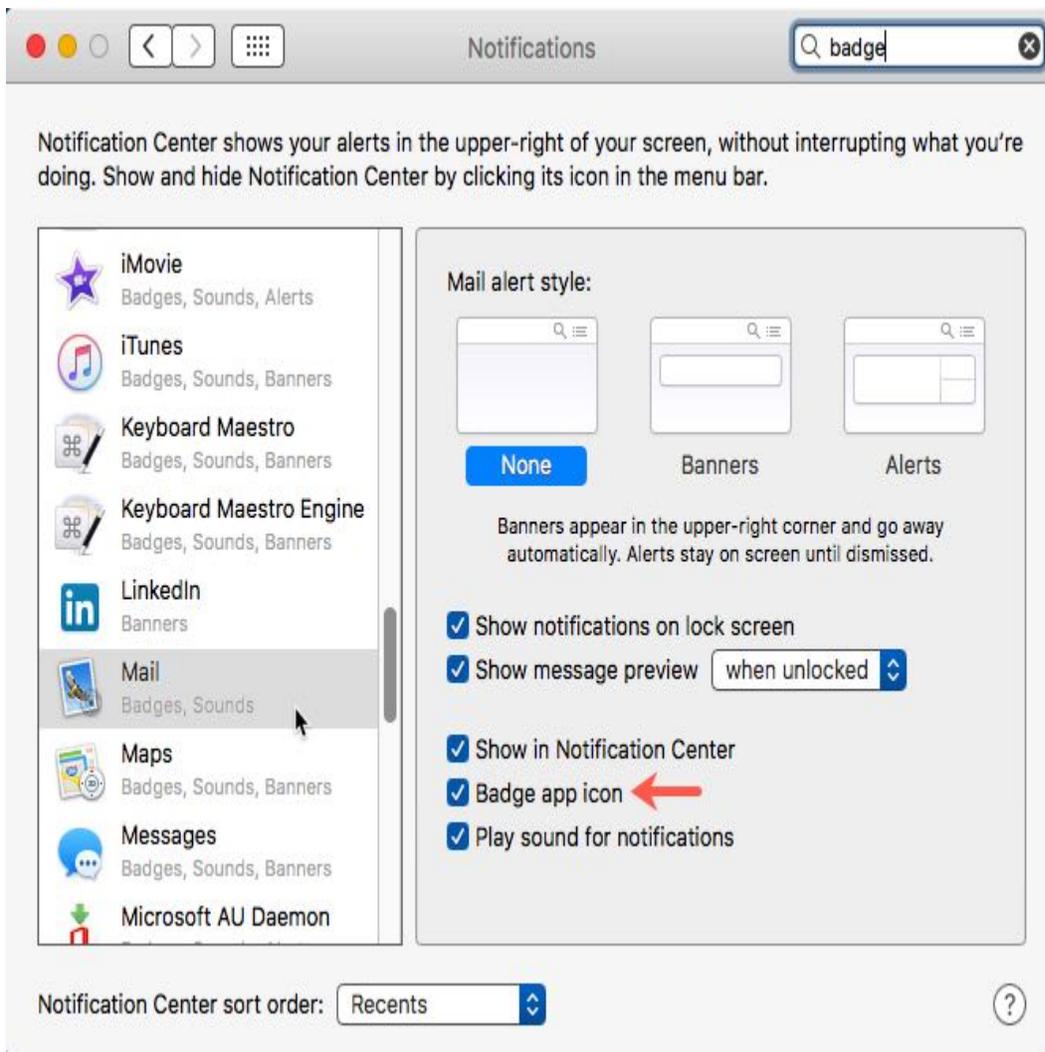
To turn badges off or back on (default) for an app, open the System Preferences app and do the following:

- Choose the [Notifications](#) preference pane (see below). If you want to search for the badging option in apps, use the Search box as shown below which will highlight the [Notifications](#) preference pane for you.



### Select the Notifications Preference Pane

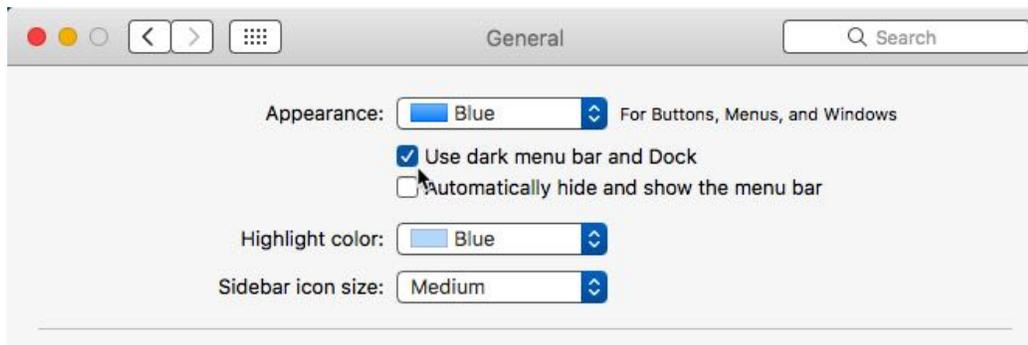
- Open the [Notifications](#) preference pane, select an app from the list on the left (Mail in this example) for which you want to set badging, and finally decide on whether you wish to use badging or not (checkbox):



**Notifications Preference Pane (Mail App Selected) – Note the “Badge app icon” Checkbox**

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**Dark Mode.** To darken up your Dock—the menu bar, too—open the System Preferences app, choose the [General preference pane](#), and then select the [Use dark menu bar and Dock](#) checkbox:



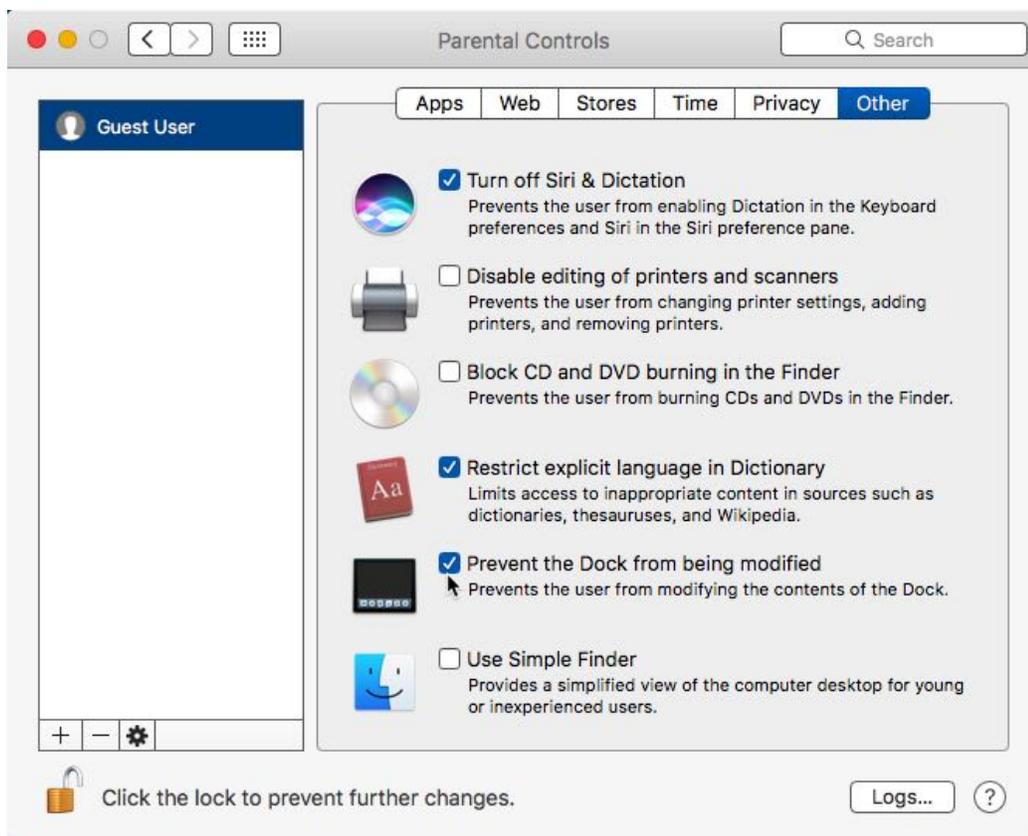
### Dark Mode Setting (Checkbox) in the General Preference Pane

The result is a dark background for the Dock:



### Dock (Left End) Under the Dark Mode Setting

**Parental Controls.** If you have [another user](#) (child, guest, etc.) who is using a [non-administrator account](#), you can limit how they can use certain account features (like the Dock) by managing it under the Parental Controls preference pane:



### Parental Controls Preference Pane (Other Tab) – Control Dock Modification

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To keep any changes being made to the Dock, check the [Prevent the Dock from Being Modified](#) checkbox (as shown in the previous illustration).

As you can see from this brief glimpse of the Parental Controls preference pane, you have extensive control over users that you choose to manage.

### **Next Presentation**

Next month, we'll discuss another Mac Basics topic. If you have any suggestions for presentation topics, please contact me at [slp4668@gmail.com](mailto:slp4668@gmail.com).

*-Steve Parker*