

Reviewer's Guide



textexpander v. 3

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Current Version: 3.4 (released December 7, 2011)

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.6 or later

Pricing: \$34.95 (Family Pack: \$44.95; Office Pack: \$99.95)

Upgrades: \$15 to upgrade from earlier versions of TextExpander (free upgrades for purchases made after November 1, 2009)

Screenshots: <http://www.smilesoftware.com/TE3.zip>



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What is TextExpander?

Winner: 2010 Macworld Editors' Choice Award



TextExpander saves you time and keystrokes with customized abbreviations for things you frequently type. Insert a phrase, an address, a paragraph or even an image by typing a few letters.

- Save thousands of keystrokes by using short abbreviations to insert "snippets" containing frequently-used phrases and images
- Insert standard greetings and signatures — including formatted text and pictures
- Organize snippets into groups; add groups from external files and online sources
- Synchronize snippets via MobileMe and Dropbox
- Insert the current date and time in any format you prefer
- Supports AppleScript and shell script snippets

TextExpander is \$34.95 for a single-user license, \$44.95 for a Family Pack (home use), and \$99.95 for an Office Pack (5 users in an office).

Who uses TextExpander?

An essential Mac utility, TextExpander is valuable to anyone who finds themselves typing the same things over and over, such as:

- Email addresses, telephone numbers, product names
- Boilerplate paragraphs and standard replies
- Images, such as signatures or logos
- Dates (TextExpander can automatically insert the current date)

Advanced users can take advantage of TextExpander's included snippet groups to make work easier

- HTML and CSS tags
- Symbols and accented words
- Autocorrect common misspellings
- URL-shortening AppleScript snippets

What's New in TextExpander 3: Key Features

- Converted from preference pane to application
- Specify multiple blank fields in a snippet for variable content to be filled in manually
- Search snippets from the menu bar or via hotkey
- Insert Tab and Return in snippets
- Enter new abbreviations quickly via hotkey
- Edit the last-used abbreviation via hotkey
- Built-in support for synchronization via Dropbox
- Correct double caps; ensure initial caps at the beginning of a sentence
- Automatic updates within the application (Sparkle)

Getting Started with TextExpander



TextExpander comes with extensive documentation, available under Help in the program. You can also [view the latest help online](#) or [download the Help in PDF format](#). There is also an excellent [video tutorial](#).

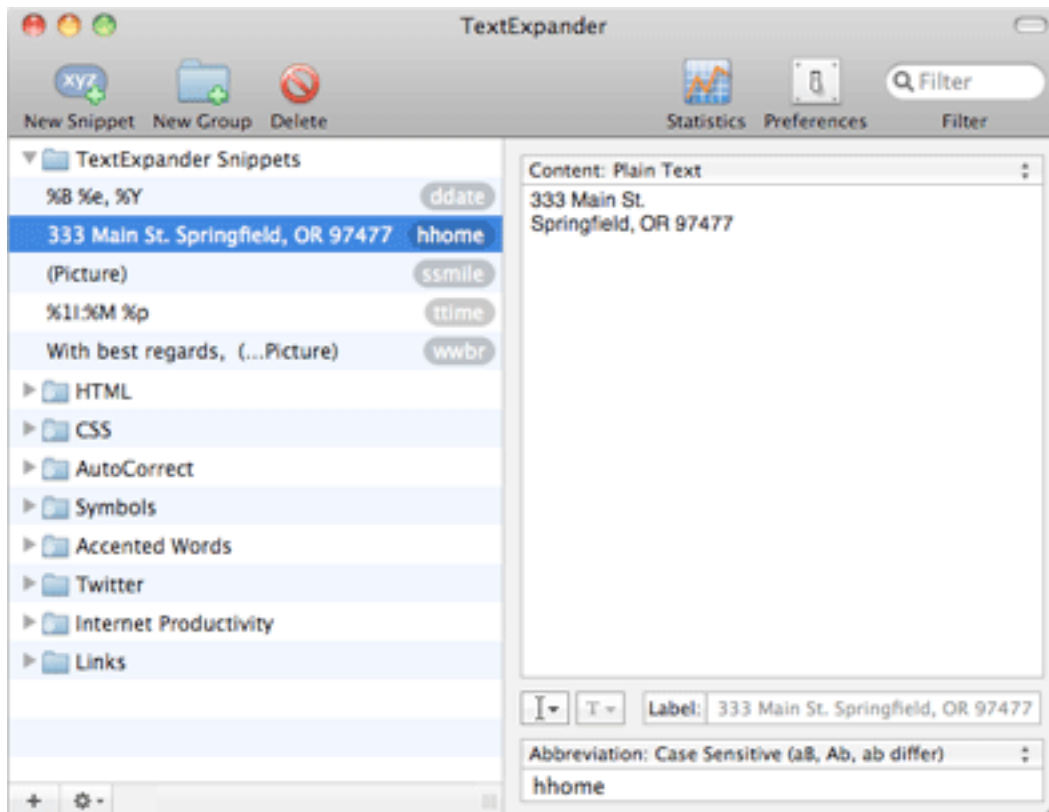
The Help is the best guide to everything that TextExpander can do. For those who don't read manuals or want to jump right in, here are a few tips.

TextExpander is now an application, not a system preference pane

If you currently use TextExpander 2, this will be the biggest change you will notice about TextExpander 3. Rather than installing a system preference pane, you'll just drop the application into your Applications folder after downloading and unzipping it. The interface will be familiar.

The benefits of being an application include a more modern interface, horizontal window resizing, an improved preferences interface, and greater long-term flexibility for development. For more details on the differences between version 2 and 3, see [Transitioning to TextExpander 3](#) on the Smile website.

TextExpander 3 application: Main Window



Getting Started with TextExpander

(continued)



Creating a Simple Snippet

1. Click **New Snippet** in the toolbar; press **⌘N**; or choose *File > New Snippet* from the menu.
2. Enter the snippet content (e.g. your address) in the Content field on the right of the main window.
3. Enter the abbreviation for your snippet (e.g. hhome) in the Abbreviation field below. Your snippet is ready to be inserted. Type the abbreviation wherever you want to insert the snippet content.

Snippet Format Options

Set the format in the drop down menu at the top of the Content field.

- **Plain Text**

When expanded, the snippet content conforms to the current text style.

- **Formatted Text, Pictures**

Color, size, font and alignment can be specified for text. Images can be used.

- **AppleScript, Shell Script**

The snippet content can be an AppleScript or a shell script. When the abbreviation is typed, the script is triggered.

Using Formatted Text in Snippets

1. Set the content format to Formatted Text, Pictures.
2. Add snippet content in the Content box.
3. Select text to be formatted.
4. Click on the Text button (T) below the Content window to access Font and Text options for fonts, size, color, and alignment.

Adding Images to Snippets

1. Set the content format to Formatted Text, Pictures.
2. Drag your image into the Content box or copy it to the Clipboard and use **Command + V** to paste it into TextExpander.
3. To remove an image, use the Delete key.
4. A default content format is set in *TextExpander > Preferences* under the Expansion tab.

Hotkey Shortcuts for Snippet Creation and Editing

In *Preferences > Hotkeys*, you can define various keyboard combinations that will open a quick entry window for creating or editing snippets:

- Create New Snippet
- Create Snippet from Selection
- Create Snippet from Clipboard
- Edit Last Expanded Snippet

With hotkeys, you can add snippets without opening TextExpander's main window.

Getting Started with TextExpander

(continued)



Creating Snippet Groups

As your snippet library grows, it is helpful to organize your snippets in groups, e.g. Work, Home, Web.

1. Click **New Group** in the toolbar; press `⌘N`; or choose *File > New Group* from the menu.
2. Enter the group's name in the field on the right.
3. Set group-wide preferences for expansion behavior. (See TextExpander Help for more details about these options.)

Importing Snippet Groups from Other Sources

You can import snippets from other files by choosing *File > Add Group from File...*

The allowable snippet file formats are:

- TextExpander
- Typelt4Me (v2 and v3)
- Text files (comma- and tab-separated)
- RTF files (comma- and tab-separated)
- RTFD files (comma- and tab-separated)
- SpellCatcher shorthand files (exported in XML format)

Note: Typinator does not use an open standard format for its snippet files; it is therefore not possible to import Typinator snippets into TextExpander or any other program.

Add Snippet Groups via URL

TextExpander can use a snippet group file that is hosted online. Choose *File > Add Group from URL...* and enter the URL of the snippet group you want to use.

This is a good resource for companies or organizations who want to publish and maintain a standard group of snippets. TextExpander also supports password-protected online snippet groups, so specialized snippet libraries can be developed and marketed.

Predefined Snippet Groups

TextExpander comes with a number of predefined snippet groups that users can add.

- **Accented Words**: Over 50 English words of non-English origin that are spelled using diacritical accent marks.
- **AutoCorrect Snippets**: Over 100 of the most commonly-misspelled words in English.
- **CSS Snippets**: CSS selectors and declarations.
- **HTML Snippets**: HTML tags and special character codes.
- **Internet Productivity Snippets**: Shorten URLs automatically using services like bit.ly; validate URLs.
- **Symbol Snippets**: Insert common symbols, such as ®, ©, and €.
- **TidBITS AutoCorrect Dictionary**: 2400+ English-language misspellings based on the exhaustive AutoCorrect Dictionary created by TidBITS publisher Adam Engst and collaborator Micah Alpern. (For more details, go to <http://db.tidbits.com/article/6103>.)

Text Expansion Software Comparison Chart	TextExpander 3	Typelt4Me 4.2.1	Typinator 3.7
Price	\$34.95	\$27.00	€19.99 (~\$27.00)
Snippets with formatted text & pictures	✓	✓	✓
Case entered affects snippet	✓	✓	✓
Auto date expansion	✓	✓	✓
Limit usage to application list	✓	✓	✓
Hotkey to enable/disable	✓	✓	✓
Hotkey to create new snippet	✓	✓	✓
Hotkeys for snippet creation from selection or clipboard	✓	✓	-
Hotkey to edit last expanded snippet	✓	-	-
Hotkey for suggestions of matching abbreviations	✓	-	-
Search snippets from menu bar	✓	-	✓
Snippet nesting (use snippet abbreviations in other snippets)	✓	✓	-
Reposition cursor on expansion	✓	✓	✓
Fill-in snippets (multiple custom fields that prompt for variable input)	✓	✓	-
Organize snippets into groups	✓	✓	✓
Add snippet groups from external files	✓	✓	✓
Add snippet groups via URL (incl. password-protected URLs)	✓	-	-

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Text Expansion Software Comparison Chart (continued)	TextExpander 3	TypeIt4Me 4.2.1	Typinator 3.7
Sync snippets via MobileMe and Dropbox	✓	-	✓
Export snippets for use in other typing utilities	✓	✓	-
Import comma- and tab-delimited text, RTF, and RTFD files	✓	✓	only comma- and tab-delimited
Import Spellcatcher shorthand files	✓	✓	
English autocorrect dictionaries included	✓	-	✓
French, German autocorrect dictionaries included	-	-	✓
HTML snippet library included	✓	-	✓
Use OS X spellchecker for autocorrect	-	-	✓
Snippet libraries for CSS, symbols, accented words, URL shortening included	✓	-	-
Date and time math	✓	-	-
Use Tab and Return in snippets	✓	✓	-
FileMaker functions set	Available from Camp Software	-	✓
AppleScriptable	✓	-	-
AppleScript snippets	✓	✓	-
Shell script snippets	✓	-	-
iPhone app available	✓	✓	-

TextExpander touch

Smile released its first iPhone app, TextExpander touch. The app makes typing easier to type on an iPhone or an iPad.



Features:

- Integrated with over 120 apps including WriteRoom, Elements, Twittelator, Circus Ponies NoteBook, Nebulous Notes, iA Writer, BusyToDo, Things, Zendesk, and others
- Compose notes quickly and easily that contain frequently-used text, addresses, phone numbers, email signatures, URLs, etc.
- Automatically insert your notes into Mail and SMS, or copy-and-paste into other apps on your iPhone and iPad.
- Sync snippets between Macs and iOS devices with Dropbox
- Add Predefined Groups such as accented words, symbols, HTML, and CSS.

Given the current feature set of the iPhone OS, TextExpander touch cannot work in the background (as it does in Mac OS X), expanding text snippets while you work in other apps. Smile offers a [free SDK](#) so that iPhone app developers can integrate TextExpander functionality in their apps. ([List of TextExpander-integrated apps.](#))

TextExpander touch is \$4.99 on the [iTunes App Store](#).

What People Say About TextExpander

What makes TextExpander a great app isn't just that it's so handy and so capable, but also the fact that it's constantly evolving—refining its core tools, adding new ones, and adapting to an ever-changing technology landscape. That's how a venerable utility like TextExpander remains fresh and vital, and why it's one of our favorite apps of the year.
— **Macworld, 2010 Editors' Choice Award**

If you like doing things the long hard way, do not install TextExpander! But if you could use a few extra minutes each day to get more done on your Mac, add this app to your productivity toolbox. (5/5, Awesome, Editors' Choice)
— **Mac|Life**

The single best productivity tool for the Mac, right after Quicksilver.
— **Leo Laporte, host of MacBreak**

I spend a lot of my day inserting standard clauses, graphics and photo images into operating policies, procedures and work instructions. With TextExpander I just have to enter a couple of memorised text shortcuts and I significantly shorten my workload and speed up the preparation of my documents. It is a great application.
— **Richard Smith, Port Moody, BC**