Text Toolbox II

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Table of Contents

Intro
Acknowledgements
What's New
Installation
Description
Notes
Release Notes
Support

INTRO

This macro group includes a set of macros to modify text for publication. Inspired by Evan Gross's Spell Catcher Modify commands (which it replaces entirely), it includes even more transformations, including:

- Smarten, straighten, switches quotes
- Capitalize, lowercase, sentence case, start of line case handling
- Common weight, distance, volume conversions
- Compact Decimal Formatting
- Redact text
- Strip HTML tags, convert plain text to HTML

- Translate text to any language of your choice
- Enter special characters, keyboard glyphs, diacritics
- Copy edit for Associated Press style

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This macro is dedicated to the memory of Evan Goss. It was inspired by the Modify options in Goss's Spell Catcher, seen to the right.

As a 32-bit application, Spell Catcher is not compatible with macOS versions after Mojave, unfortunately.

But this Keyboard Maestro palette provides all of these Spell Catcher functions plus a few more.

WHAT'S NEW

Text Toolbox II is a rewrite of the code in Text Toolbox that also adds a few new functions and behaviors:

- And Undo macro to revert the last change
- Detection of Windows and old Macintosh line endings and standardization to modern macOS newlines
- Switching single or double quotes whether smart or straight
- Quoting a selection
- Common conversions
- Compact Decimal Format conversions
- Improved translation display in built-in browser
- State and month abbreviations and numeral spell outs
- Insertion of special characters, keyboard glyphs and diacritics

INSTALLATION

The macro is installed in its own macro group. You will have to enable it, however.

You may have to enable it in your particular text editing applications as well. A number of common ones are already listed.

Keyboard Maestro 10 vs. 9

With Keyboard Maestro 10, palettes can appear in the menu bar. Very handy.

I've found this particular useful for this palette, saving me the trouble of remembering yet another hot key. So much so that I've rewritten Literary Toolbox, a companion palette, to work the same way.

While the previous distribution included a non-menu bar version for those using Keyboard Maestro 9, I've discontinued distributing that version. You can easily use this version for use with Keyboard Maestro 9, however, because a hot key has been assigned to display the palette as well.

Default Hot Keys

The default hot key for the non-menu bar version is **`Shift-F10`** to complement Literary Toolbox's F10.

None of the macros have any dependencies outside the macro itself. They are primarily Perl scripts acting on a selection.

DESCRIPTION

Select some text in an application for which **`Text Toolbox I`** has been enabled and either use the menu bar or type the hot key to call up the palette.

There are several sections following the **Undo** macro representing different options:
Macros: You can combine individual macros to make more powerful conversions.

For example, **Comet Text Cleaner** followed by **AP Style Starter**.

Modify: You can form paragraphs, compressing spaces, quote paragraphs, strip characters or strip extra white space.

Quotes: You can smarten or straighten quotes and apostrophes. You can also convert other typographical characters like dashes.

Case: You can convert the selection to lowercase, sentence case, title case, uppercase or initial caps at the start of a line.

Convert: You can abbreviate state or month names (or spell them out), spell out numerals, change one measure into another (like grams into ounces or ounces into grams, meters into feet or feet into meters, etc.) and vice versa. You can also redact text and sort lines.

Insert: This option includes macros that insert less accessible characters.

Let's look at each option in detail.

Undo

You can undo any of the macros with the Undo macro at the top of the palette. But, frankly, it's entirely unnecessary if you remember `^Z` does the same thing, which is all this macro does.

Macros

You can combine individual macros to make more powerful conversions. For example, Comet Text Cleaner followed by AP Style Starter.

To do this, use the `Execute a Macro` action and select the existing Text Toolbar macro for each macro you want to use.

AP Style Starter

Every publication has its own house style, watched over by its copy editors. Text Tools can give them a head start by applying some of the simpler rules to the text.
You can use this macro as a starting point for your own house style. It converts the errors of the following paragraph into what follows:

> *On Nov. 1, 2021, this half-baked macro was released irregardless to grownup Grown ups with a frig that was 20% alright but, as its past history would testify, almost never worked as well as the easy going cooler kept towards the basement for passerbies or residents of room 201. Twelve attorney generals who thought it was malarky brought the Case versus the cooler but two who are pretty easy-going and just wear t-shirts thought it fell in a grey area. The whole thing was decided on Veteran's Day.*

Corrected:

> *On Nov. 1, this half-baked macro was released regardless to grown-up grown-ups with a fridge that was 20 percent all right but, as its history would testify, seldom worked as well as the easygoing cooler kept toward the basement for passers-by or residents of Room 201. Twelve attorneys general who thought it was marlarky brought the Case vs. the Cooler but two who are pretty easygoing and just wear T-shirts thought it fell in a gray area. The whole thing was decided on Veterans Day.*

Modify

You can form paragraphs, compressing spaces, quote paragraphs, strip characters or strip extra white space. The convention is that a newline is the Unix linefeed character (/012). Old Macintosh text files using carriage return (/015) or Windows files using carriage return and linefeed (\015\012) are converted to the Unix convention now used by macOS.

Form Paragraphs...

You are prompted for either **`Block`** or **`Tab-Indented`** paragraph styles. Press **`OK`** and the selected text will be reformatted.

Compress Multiple Spaces...

You are prompted for the number of spaces to convert into a **`tab`** character (typically 3 or 4). If you enter zero, runs of multiple spaces (like two after a sentence) will be compressed into a single space.

Quote Paragraphs...

Text quoting is useful in email correspondence when referencing original text in a reply. You are prompted for either CSS quoting using a Dark Turquoise dotted left border or the tradition `>` character for text quoting.

You can edit the macro to change the appearance of either option suit your own taste, of course.

Strip Characters...

You are prompted for the characters you want to strip from the beginning and/or end of lines (paragraphs). These can be regexes so if you want to remove line numbers, you might enter `\d+[.)]\s+` in the first field. And if you want to remove trailing space, you might enter `\s+` in the second field.

There is also an option to strip HTML tags. It's not foolproof, but will save a good deal of time cleaning up text from HTML files.

Strip Extra White Space

This option is a more automated form of the Multiple Spaces and the Strip Characters options, eliminating white space at the beginning and end of paragraphs and compressing spaces within a paragraph.

Comet Cleaner

This option performs several of the above optimizations at the same time. It forms block style paragraphs, compresses multiple spaces and strips extraneous white space from before and after paragraphs. Try this first on problematic text.

Quotes

Smarten Quotes

Converts straight double and single quotes as well as apostrophes into typographer's marks. It also converts two hyphens into an em dash, leaving surrounding characters alone.

Straighten Quotes

Converts typographer's marks into the appropriate double or single quote characters. Em dashes are converted into two hyphens and en dashes into a single hyphen.

Switch Quotes

If you are quoting some text that itself uses quotes, it can be laborious to switch the quotes from, say, double to single quotes. This module automatically switches from double to single or single to double for either Straight Quotes or Smart Quotes, while protecting apostrophes.

Quote Selection

A popup window offers a choice of six different quote types to place around a selection. If you are in Scrivener, it will select the current sentence if there is no selection.

Case

Lowercase

Drops the selection to lower case using Keyboard Maestro's built-in filter.

Sentence Case

Capitalizes the first word of a sentence while preserving any acronyms identified in the `Execute Shell Script` action. Add your own.

Title Case

Capitalizes the selection without capitalizing small words (like “in of on,” etc.) while preserving other odd usage like camel case and Twitter handles. Intended primarily for headlines. It’s a little more aggressive that Keyboard Maestro v10’s new algorithm but it’s based on exactly the same code.

Uppercase

Capitalizes the seleaction using Keyboard Maestro’s built-in filter.

Start of Line

Capitalizes the first letter of each line whether it begins with a letter, a number, a bullet or any other list item.

Convert

Abbreviations

Spell out an abbreviated state or month name, abbreviate to AP style or to ZIP code style (two digits for months). Convert numerals from 1 to 9 (for those listicles) to uppercase or lowercase text.

Common Conversions

If a mathematical operator (`+ - * /`) is included in the selection, this macro will perform the math.

If it finds the degree sign and FC immediately following it, it converts to the Fahrenheit or Celsius equivalent.

It also converts back and forth between centimeters and inches, millimeters and inches, kilograms and ounces or pounds, meters or kilometers and feet or yards.

Redact Text...

Prompts for redacting whitespace in addition to the characters in words themselves. That makes it harder to decode the redacted text but may interfere with text flow.

Compact Decimal Format

Select any large number (with or without commas but exclude the currency sign) to return the compact decimal format. So 1,000,000 returns 1B. This is handy for headline writers.

Sort Lines...

Prompts to sort the selection in either ascending, descending, reverse or shuffled order.

Text to HTML

This option simply puts HTML paragraph tags around paragraphs and converts bullets, bold, italics, quotes and dashes to HTML. It also converts Markdown links in the format `[text](URL)` to HTML links.

Translate...

This option uses Google's translation service to translate the selection into one of the languages available in the prompt. You can add more languages, of course.

Results are returned to the HTML Prompt window rather than a browser window.

Insert

Special Characters

This transparent popup palette will display close to your cursor and drop in any of the special characters it displays. You can add any others to the palette by modifying the Custom HTML Prompt.

If you hover the mouse over a character, a tool tip will appear explaining what the special character is. Pressing the Escape key dismisses the popup.

Keyboard Glyphs

This transparent popup palette will display near your cursor to add any of the Macintosh keyboard glyphs. It does not draw a keycap around them, but if you are working in HTML, you can add a `<kbd>` tag which you can style with CSS to do that.

If you hover the mouse over a character, a tool tip will appear explaining what the special character is. Pressing the Escape key dismisses the popup.

Diacritics

The macOS method of inserting an accented character into your text is to hold down the unaccented character (an "e" for example) until a popup window presents the choices for you.

This works very well and is the preferred method but some applications (like InDesign and Scrivener) don't recognize the method and simply repeat the key as long as you hold it down.

The alternative method of entering a diacritic is to type a dead key for the particular accent (say, `⌥e`) and then the unaccented key to get the diacritic (**è**, in this case). But the problem with that approach is remembering which key represents the dead key for that particular mark.

So this macro runs to the rescue with an approach as efficient as the macOS methods that works in stubborn applications too but doesn't require you to remember anything more than a hot key.

Type the unaccented letter first and then the hot key. A popup close to your cursor will display any options for that letter (or convert letters and punctuation with no options). Click on one and it's entered. Or press Escape to dismiss the option.

Here you can see the popup has been drawn just above the word where an "a" has been typed before the hot key. The display, like the other palettes, enlarges the characters for visibility and adds a slight engraving effect to make them more readable.

NOTES

Following are a few further if random notes on using **`Text Toolbox`**.

History

While based on Spell Catcher's Modify options, these tools are more properly described as evolved from them.

They provide text cleaning and conversion tools that are sometimes best used in concert. And, in fact, I use a much more complicated Perl program to clean up text for publication that also applies AP style.

There is enough Perl here to put your own such macro together. The Comet Cleaner option shows how.

Modifications

I haven't isolated variables like the CSS style for quoting text so you can easily modify it on the fly. Instead, it's a constant in the code itself. Which you can easily change to suite your own preferences.

Updates

Rather than redistribute the entire palette for a new module or an update to an existing module, I've been releasing individual modules. When you double click on them, they

are added to the palette alongside the previous one, which you can delete (or export if you aren't sure about the new module).

Only major releases (like this one) that affect all the modules are released as a complete palette.

Literary Toolbox

The original release of Text Toolbox included a link to Literary Toolbox, which does all sorts of textual analysis include counts, readability scores, spell checking, grammar checking, emotion and opinion parsing, part of speech parsing, concordance and links to several dictionaries and thesauri.

But the companion release of the new version of Literary Toolbox functions like Text Toolbox with an icon on the menu bar so it's never out-of-sight and therefore more likely to be used. Given that efficiency, the link In Text Toolbox was simply redundant and has been eliminated.

Menu Bar Congestion

If you work on a small screen (welcome to the club), you've probably wrestled with menu bar congestion already. These two small icons do add to the problem.

But I've used the free and open source Hidden Bar from Dwarves Foundation to solve that problem on my 2011 13-inch MacBook. It lets you hide whatever menu bar items you don't need and shows them all with a click that can briefly access the entire menu bar.

URL about:blank Error

When trying to get a Translation, if Google reports, "There is no application set to open the URL about:blank," download WebApp.app from https://github.com/szhu/AboutWeb. Copy the app to your Applications folder, point Google to it and that's that.

Feedback

While this collection itself has its roots in some time-tested code and has undergone comprehensive if not complete testing, I'm happy to hear about any issues and promise a prompt fix.

You can reach me on the Keyboard Maestro forum as `@mrpasini`.

RELEASE NOTES

Text Tools II on Oct. 26

- Redesigned **Abbreviations** menu for clarity, noting the capability to do month as well as state names (which had been there all along, actually)

Text Tools II on Sept. 26

- New: **Sort** adds Reverse and Shuffle options

Text Tools II on Sept. 8

- New **Abbreviations**: added the function to click on a menu option
- **Special Characters**: added the Japanese Yen ¥

Text Tools II on 20 August 2022

- Initial release

Text Tools I on 22 November

- 2020 Initial release

CONTACT

I'm happy to promptly address any concerns you may have. I can't do anything about the modules themselves but I can address interface issues.

You can reach me at http://mikepasini.com or on the Keyboard Maestro forum as mrpasini.