

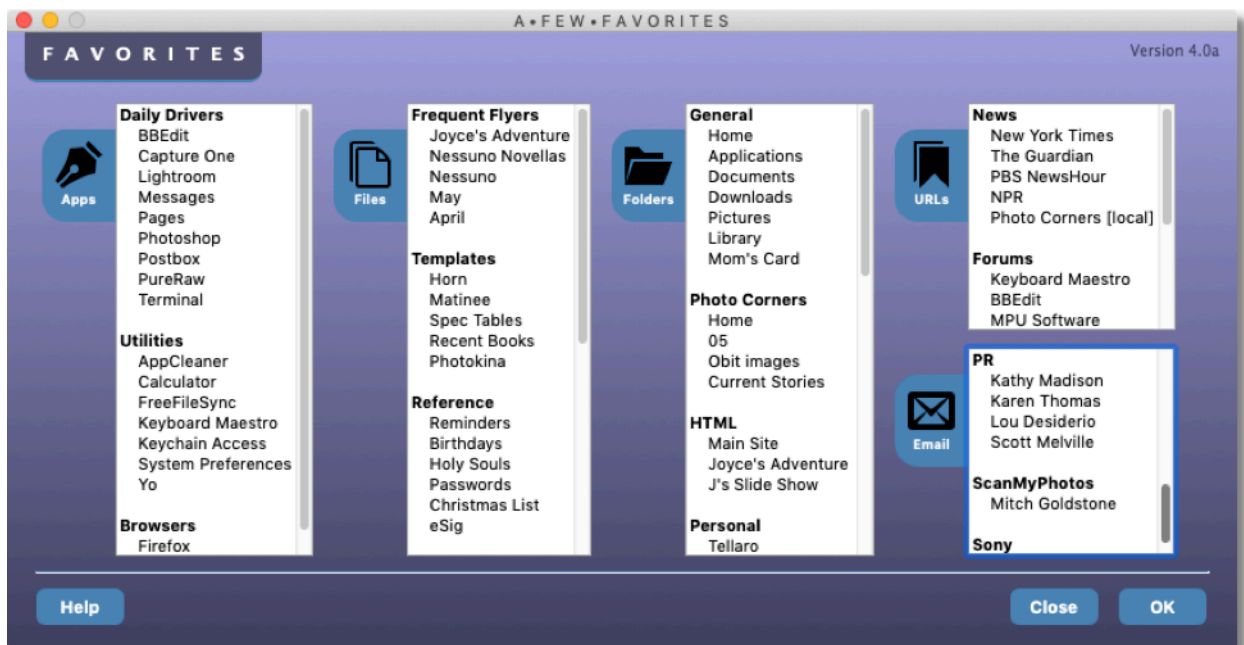
A Few Favorites

Name: **A Few Favorites**

Author: **Mike Pasini**

Version: **4.0a**

Last Update: **18 October 2021**



- Open favorite apps, files, folders (and mounted drives), URLs and paste email addresses
- HTML interface (shown above) or Popup menu
- Add Finder selections
- Easily edit text files for each category
- Group entries in each category

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This macro was inspired by two other macros:

Ccstone: <https://forum.keyboardmaestro.com/t/open-a-folder-in-the-finder-via-a-path-list-in-a-user-prompt/20227/3>

BKramer: <https://forum.keyboardmaestro.com/t/quickly-navigate-to-favorite-finder-directories-via-dictionary-generated-list-prompt/20240>

It has also been inspired by feedback from earlier versions.

It also owes something to my own frustration with other launchers, which I nevertheless call upon for applications less frequently used than my favorites.

Having a select (one might say “curated”) list of applications, files, folders, URLs and email addresses is what makes this launcher my most used after Raycast, Alfred and Spotlight). It’s just the ones I’m always looking for, just a few keystrokes away.

This is surprisingly helpful for email addresses. Sure, Contacts has them, and my email client can find them there, but too often an old one is preferred over the current one, particularly if the email client gets to pick the source. This solves that problem.

And while a browser’s bookmarks are the typical way to remember a site, having a favorites list independent of a browser is a blessing if you move between browsers and/or never do any bookmark housekeeping.

Those two features are the main additions to v4 of **A Few Favorites**.

INSTALLATION

The macro is installed in its own macro group named **MacroApp: A Few Favorites** as **A Few Favorites**, available to all applications all the time. You will have to enable it, however.

Default Hot Keys

The default hot key is **Space** with various **modifiers** that do not conflict with Spotlight:

- **Control-Shift-Space** to call the HTML interface
- **Control-Space** to call the Popup interface
- **Option-Shift-Space** to add the Finder selection to a favorites file

Favorites Files

Favorites ships with sample favorite files you can copy to a folder in a convenient location along with a subfolder of icons the HTML interface requires. The macro will ask for the location of that folder on first run.

You can populate those files by selecting apps, folders, files and URLs but you'll want to manually edit them into helpful categories if you use the HTML form.

The five favorites files (**apps.txt**, **files.txt**, **folders.txt**, **urls.txt**, **emails.txt**) use the same data format:

Heading

**[tab]Descriptive Name[tabs]Path[tabs]@shortcut,
@shortcut**

The tilde is supported in the path (eg: **~/Documents** rather than **/Users/username/Documents**).

Lines beginning with **#** are treated as comments.

Headings, which are only used by the HTML interface, are optional and ignored by the Popup list.

The listing can include a tag as a shortcut or even a filter indicating whether the path is to a folder or a file. The macro figures it out itself for the HTML form but the Popup can use a filter for navigating the lengthy list.

One character filters you may find useful include [@a](#) (for apps), [@d](#) (folders), [@f](#) (files), [@u](#) (urls), [@e](#) (emails). By typing just those two characters in the Popup interface, you can filter the list of options to that category.

These shortcuts are optional and disregarded by the HTML form.

Variables

There is only one global variable used ([favshome](#)). It remembers where your text files are. All the other variables are locals that are not saved.

Icons

Icons are from the IcoMoon-Free set from Keyamoon. They are installed with the favorites files in a sub-folder names "images."

CUSTOMIZATION

You can change the way this macro operates in several ways.

Hot Key

You can change the hot key, of course. I choose the **Space** key with modifiers to match other launchers I have used.

Interface

And you can swap which interface requires the **Shift** key by making the **Shift** the pressed modifier and deselecting it in the not pressed row of the appropriate If action.

One possible benefit of having two interfaces is modifying the behavior between them. You might, for example, use one interface to paste an email address and the other to put it on the Clipboard. Or use one interface to open a URL in the default browser and the other to open a new tab in the front browser.

Descriptions

If you use rather long stubs to describe your paths, the width of the HTML "select" field will grow and push the others to a new row, obscuring them. Keep your slugs to no more than 18 characters to avoid this. Alternately, you can widen the window.

Focus

You can pick which of the five HTML "select" lists gets focus by moving the "autofocus" option to the "select" you prefer. The default sets Files to autofocus so Shift-Tab moves to Apps and Tab moves to Folders.

USAGE

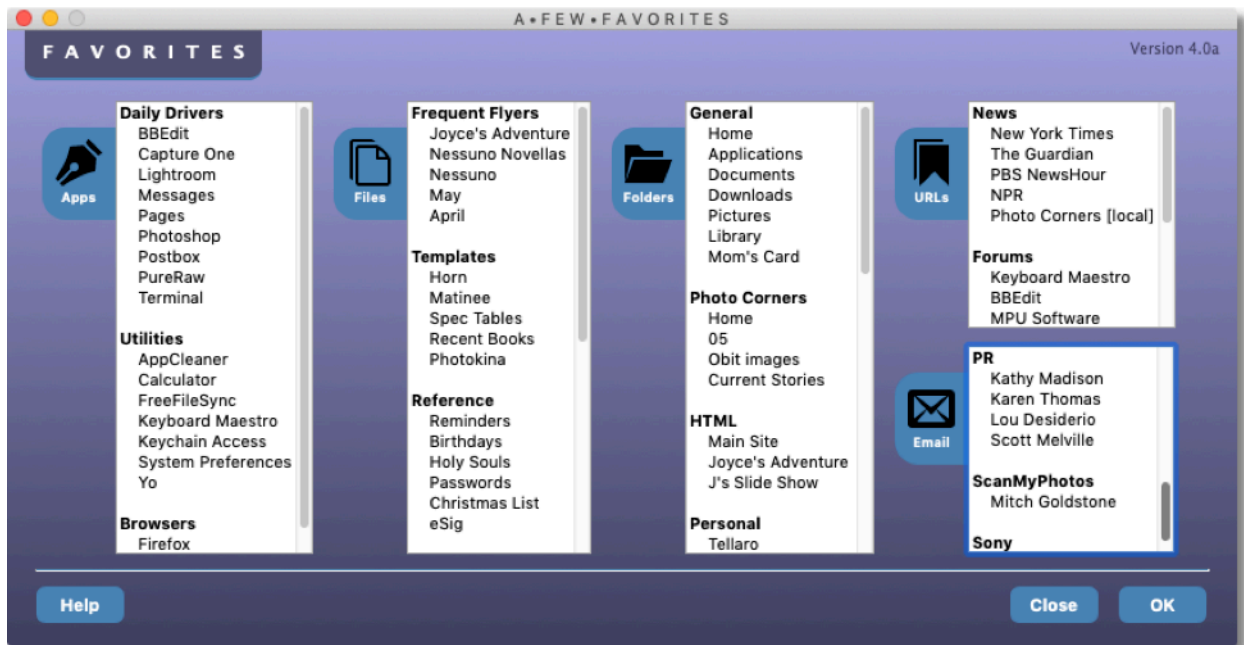
On first run, you'll be prompted for the location of your favorite app, folders, files, URLs and email addresses files, as well as the images subfolder of icons.

Sample files are provided in the distribution, along with the images folder with the HTML interface's icons.

Two Interfaces

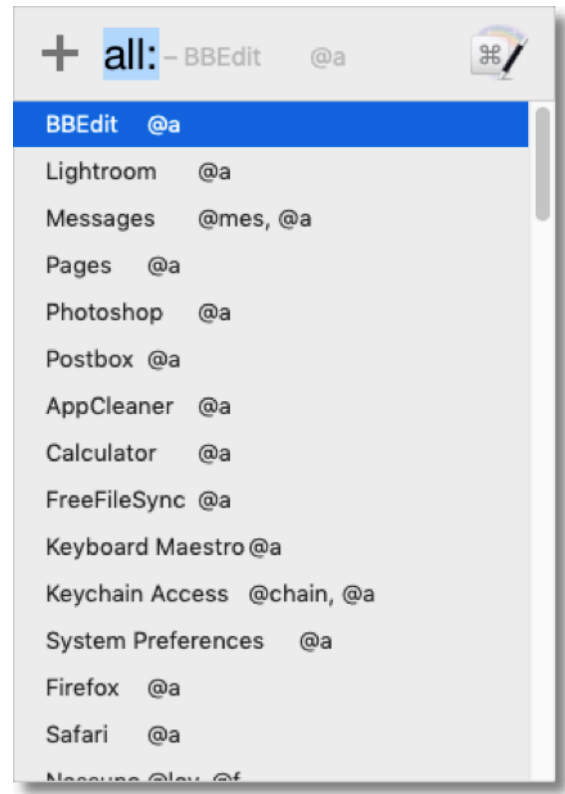
The **HTML interface** displays a separate list for apps, files, folder, URLs and emails with a label that is also a button to edit that list. The active list is indicated by a highlighted border in the HTML form. You can **Tab** and **Shift-Tab** between lists.

By default, you are addressed to Files. **Tab** to address Folders. **Shift-Tab** to address Apps. A Help button displays basic but handy information so you don't have to return here.



You can navigate the HTML form by typing the name of the item you want or repeatedly typing the first letter. When you have arrived at the item you want, just type Return or click the OK button on the HTML form.

The **Popup** simulates the HTML buttons with a **[Text]** convention. It has four options that begin with **[Edit]** at the bottom to edit any of the four source files, as well as a **[Help]** option.



You can navigate the Popup by typing the item's name or its tag to narrow the list. Press Return or double click on the item.

Launching

If you select an **app**, the macro will launch the app or, if it's already running, switch to it.

It will open any favorite **file** in its default application.

If you select a **folder** with an Open/Save dialog is at the front, the macro will redirect the dialog to the appropriate folder, otherwise it will open the selected folder in the Finder.

If you select a **URL** (or bookmark), it will open a new tab in the front browser (unless it's the unscriptable Firefox).

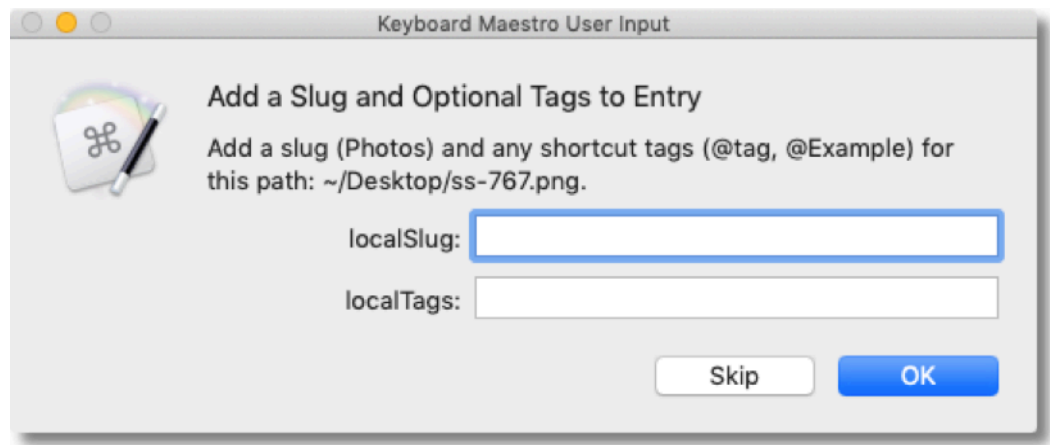
If you select an **email address**, it will be pasted in the front window.

You can double click an entry to select it.

Listings are not sorted by the macro. You can order them however you like and that's how they'll appear.

Adding Finder Selections

You can add a selected app, file, folder or URL webloc in the Finder, by using the **Option-Shift-Space** hot key. The macro will ask how you want to add it to the appropriate source file. If you add it, you'll be asked if you want to edit the file so you can move the new listing.



A URL webloc is simply a URL dragged from your browser's URL field to the Desktop. A typical webloc might, for example, appear as "**https--en.wikipedia.org-wiki-List_of_URI_schemes**" on the Desktop. The macro reformats that file name into a legal URL.

You can also add **Keyboard Maestro macros** to the URL list if they are activated with a URL hot key.

It can be simpler to add URLs by pasting them directly into the **urls.txt** file.

And you can only add **email address** manually to emails.txt since a selection would not be made in the Finder. They are pasted using the email convention of **Recipient Name <email@address>** so email clients show a readable name but use the email address.

NOTES

Following are a few further if random notes on using **A Few Favorites**.

Tags, Modifiers, Help

I've established a different tag for apps, files, folders and URLs so I can filter the list in the Popup interface: @a is for apps, @f for files, @d for folders (directories), @u for URLs and @e for email addresses. And buttons all begin with "[". That can provide a similar function to the four "select" lists in the HTML form.

I've set variables to check for the Shift and Option keys to avoid any processing delay caused by the initial code that would miss the key press.

I've also put the Help text (based on this document) in a variable because it appears twice in the macro. This way the text is stored only once and, as a local variable, not remembered outside the macro.

File Types

The macro distinguishes file types by the extension. It knows .app is used for .apps and any other three or four character extension is a file. URLs are distinguished by the URL protocol delimiter (://). Email addresses are rather simply identified by the @ character, which is unlikely to appear in the other listings (but beware). Anything else is assumed to be a folder. This has worked reliably in my testing.

You can also add multiple selections to a variety of files, too. You'll be prompted for each one.

And you can add external and internal drives to the folders list as well.

Adobe Open/Save dialogs are unmoved by this macro. Otherwise it has worked well with the applications we've used.

Scrivener

This documentation is the second time I've used Scrivener to produce a PDF for my macro projects. It relies on a custom Scrivener compile format.

It's been a big advance over using Pages for PDF generation, loading faster and behaving as expected.

Feedback

While A Few Favorites itself has undergone many redesigns and revisions and 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

4.0a on 18 October 2021

Added support for URLs as a fourth list type. Any URL protocol will open a new tab in the front browser (unless it's the unscriptable Firefox).

3.4a on 5 October 2021

Changed just one character from a space to an underscore of the global macro name that remembers what you last ran so it does indeed remember what you last ran. The previous version seemed to remember with the space in the name, but it should properly be an underscore. So now it is.

I've also added a title tab and version number in the HTML interface, a convention I've adopted for more recent MacroApps.

3.3a on 13 February 2021

Support for double clicking options in the HTML form added.

3.2a on 29 December 2020

Added popup File menu to Add an Entry (Option-F4) which defaults to best guess so you can set the correct file for odd file extensions. Revised the local variable names to clean up the form a bit, too.

Included prompt to edit favorite file in Add Entry loop. If you click Yes, the file will open but the macro will continue to process any other Finder selections. So if you have a mix of apps, files and folders selected, you can add them and open the files as you work through the list.

3.1f on 29 December 2020 [not released]

Changed Add Finder Selection List option to recognize BBEdit project filenames and text clippings as files using `\.[a-zA-Z]{3,4}|bbprojectd|textClipping)$` as the regexp instead of `\.[a-zA-Z]{3,4}$` You can add any other atypical extension using the same trick (a vertical bar and the extension inside the closing parenthesis).

3.1e on 17 December 2020

Initial release