

BBAutoComplete 1.1.2 Manual

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1 Introduction

BBAutoComplete adds word-level auto-completion to BBEdit on Mac OS X. You type the start of a word, press a key, and BBAutoComplete types the letters to complete the word. If BBAutoComplete guessed wrong, you can keep pressing the key to cycle through other possible completions, which are gathered from the open BBEdit windows. BBAutoComplete is probably most useful for programmers, who need to remember and type long variable and method names, but I've also used it for normal writing. It's useful any time you need to type long words quickly and accurately.

2 Requirements and Installation

BBAutoComplete has been developed and tested on Mac OS X 10.1.3. I do not have the resources to test it on older systems, although I suspect it will work fine on Mac OS X 10.0 or later. If you use Mac OS 9 or earlier, you might instead try the Word Completion BBEdit plug-in from FL Package¹.

BBAutoComplete is designed to work with BBEdit² from Bare Bones software. I recommend the latest version (6.5.2 as of this writing), but any non-Lite version after 6.0 should work. Note that BBAutoComplete does not *require* BBEdit; if you know AppleScript, you can hook it up to other scriptable text editors³.

To install, copy the BBAutoComplete application to your hard disk, e.g. into `/Applications`. The `Put in 'BBEdit Support'` folder contains AppleScripts that let BBEdit talk to BBAutoComplete. The names of the folders tell you where to install the scripts.

To use BBAutoComplete with Mailsmith, you must have Mailsmith 1.5 or later.

There's no need to copy this manual to your hard disk. A copy of it is built-into BBAutoComplete, and you can access it by choosing **BBAutoComplete Help** from the **Help** menu.

¹<http://hyperarchive.lcs.mit.edu/HyperArchive/Archive/text/bbe/fl-package-11.hqx>

²<http://www.barebones.com/products/bbedit.html>

³If you do, please send me your glue script, so that I can include it with the BBAutoComplete distribution.

3 Using BBAutoComplete

To use BBAutoComplete, type the first few letters of a long word in BBEdit. Then invoke the BBAutoComplete AppleScript from BBEdit's **Scripts** menu, or use a keyboard shortcut (**Command-/** by default). BBAutoComplete will insert the letters to complete the word. If you aren't happy with the completion BBAutoComplete chose, invoke the BBAutoComplete AppleScript again. You can do this repeatedly to cycle through possible completions.

The order in which BBAutoComplete suggests completions is deterministic. With a little practice you'll be able to predict what BBAutoComplete will suggest, and how many completions you'll need to cycle through to get the one you want. Here are the rules:

- First, BBAutoComplete looks backwards, from the current insertion point to the beginning of the document. That is, the first completion it suggests is the last word you typed (that matches).
- Next, BBAutoComplete looks forwards, from the current insertion point to the end of the document.
- Finally, it looks in the other BBEdit windows, front to back, in layer order.
- Completions are case-sensitive. Letters and numbers are considered word characters; whitespace, punctuation, and other symbols are not. You can add more word characters in the Preferences window.

Note that this auto-completion algorithm is the same as `dabbrev-expand (M-/)` in GNU Emacs⁴, except for being case-sensitive. If you don't know what Emacs is, stick with BBEdit; if you do, well, that explains why the auto-completion works differently than, say, Project-Builder's.

3.1 Changing the Trigger Key

Choose **Scripts** from the **Palettes** submenu of BBEdit's **Window** menu. Click on BBAutoComplete in the palette that opens, and then click the **Set Key...** button.

3.2 Ignoring Background Windows

By default, BBAutoComplete looks for completions in all of BBEdit's open text windows. However, background windows containing lots of text will slow down BBAutoComplete. To make BBAutoComplete look for completions in only a single window, use the included BBAutoComplete 1 script instead of the BBAutoComplete script.

⁴<http://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/emacs.html>

3.3 Mailsmith

BBAutoComplete also works with Mailsmith. It looks for completions in Mailsmith's text windows; in the subject, body, and notes fields of message windows; and in the preview panes of the Mail Browser and mail list windows. BBAutoComplete only works in Mailsmith when a text window or message window is frontmost and the main text area has focus. As with BBEdit, window layer order determines precedence; and message window subjects have precedence over their bodies.

4 Contact Information

The BBAutoComplete Web site is located at <http://www.c-command.com/bbautocomplete/>. Questions about BBAutoComplete may be sent to <mailto:support@c-command.com>. I'm always looking to improve BBAutoComplete, so please feel free to send any feature requests to that address.

5 Notes and Limitations

- At this time, BBAutoComplete does not support completion of words with accented characters.

6 Version History

1.1.2—March 26, 2002

- Now works with Mailsmith 1.5.

1.1.1—March 18, 2002

- Removed profiling code, so no longer creates `gmon.out` files at root of the boot volume.

1.1—March 16, 2002

- Parsing words is between 20 and 70 times faster than in 1.0.1 (for an 80KB window), with greater improvements on low-memory systems.
- The new word cache further speeds processing.
- BBAutoComplete can optionally ignore background BBEdit windows.
- Includes an `Open BBAutoComplete` script for BBEdit's `Startup Items` folder.

1.0.1—February 27, 2002

- The Quit AppleScript is saved as an application now—so it works.

1.0—February 26, 2002

- First public release.

7 Legal Stuff

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