BBAutoComplete 1.4.1 Manual

Michael Tsai

c-command.com

February 7, 2005

Contents

1   Introduction

BBAutoComplete adds word auto-completion to Affrus[1], BBEdit[2], Mailsmith[3], Script Debugger[4], Smile[5], Tex-Edit Plus[6], and TextWrangler[7]. 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. Other auto-completion utilities need to be taught the abbreviations and expansions that you use; BBAutoComplete avoids this hassle by automatically looking for expansions in the program's open documents. This means that it always suggests completions that are relevant to your current task.

BBAutoComplete is probably most useful for programmers, who need to remember and type long variable and method names, but it can also help with prose writing. It's useful any time you need to type long words quickly and accurately.

2   Requirements

BBAutoComplete has been developed and tested on Mac OS X 10.3.7. It also works using Mac OS X 10.2 or later. BBAutoComplete works in the following programs:

- Affrus[8] 1.0 and later

- BBEdit[9] 6.0 and later (not BBEdit Lite)

- Mailsmith[10] 1.5 and later

- Script Debugger[11] 3.0 and later

- Smile[12] 2.6.9 and later

- Tex-Edit Plus[13] 4.5 and later

- TextWrangler[14] 1.5 and later

---

[1] http://www.latenightsw.com/affrus/
[2] http://www.barebones.com/products/bbedit/
[3] http://www.barebones.com/products/mailsmith/
[4] http://latenightsw.com/sd2.0/index.html
[5] http://www.satimage.fr/software/en/index.html
[6] http://www.tex-edit.com
[7] http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/index.shtml
[8] http://www.latenightsw.com/affrus/
[9] http://www.barebones.com/products/bbedit/
[10] http://www.barebones.com/products/mailsmith/
[11] http://latenightsw.com/sd2.0/index.html
[12] http://www.satimage.fr/software/en/index.html
[13] http://www.tex-edit.com
[14] http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/index.shtml

If you know AppleScript, you can hook it up to other scriptable text editors. If you do, please send me your glue script, so that I can include it with the BBAutoComplete distribution.

If you use Mac OS 9 or earlier, you might instead try the Word Completion BBEdit plug-in from FL Package[15].

At present, I know of no Cocoa applications that are AppleScriptable enough to work with BBAutoComplete. However, Cocoa applications can use TextExtras[16], which provides a similar auto-completion feature. (It only looks for completions in the front window, and it doesn't let you choose the word characters.)

3 Installation and Updating

3.1 Updating From a Previous Version

Updating BBAutoComplete is just like installing it. You should replace the application and its associated AppleScripts with the latest versions. If you have made modifications to the AppleScripts, be sure to transfer them when you update the scripts.

3.2 The BBAutoComplete Application

Copy the BBAutoComplete application to your `Applications` folder.

3.3 Integration Scripts

BBAutoComplete includes AppleScripts that let you can invoke it from inside other programs. To access these scripts, choose **Show Scripts** from the **BBAutoComplete** menu.

These scripts need to be installed in particular locations so that they show up in the **Scripts** menus of the aforementioned programs.

- The Affrus scripts go in the **Scripts** folder next to the Affrus application. To open this folder, you can choose **About The Scripts Menu** from Affrus's **Scripts** menu, and then click the **Open Scripts Folder** button.

- BBEdit scripts go in the `Scripts` folder inside `~/Library/Application Support/BBEdit/`. You may need to set the trigger keys after installing the scripts.

- Mailsmith script goes in the `Scripts` folder in `~/Library/Application Support/Mailsmith Support/`.

---

[15]`http://hyperarchive.lcs.mit.edu/HyperArchive/Archive/text/bbe/fl-package-11.hqx`
[16]`http://www.lorax.com/FreeStuff/TextExtras.html`

- Script Debugger scripts go in the `Scripts` folder next to the Script Debugger application.

- To install the Smile scripts, make sure that you have Smile installed and then run the `Installer` program in the `For Smile Users` folder.

- Tex-Edit Plus scripts go in the `Scripts` folder next to the Tex-Edit Plus application.

- TextWrangler scripts go in the folder `~/Library/Application Support/TextWrangler/Scripts` for TextWrangler 2.0 and in `~/Library/Application Support/TextWrangler Support/Scripts` for TextWrangler 1.5.

You may need to create these support folders inside the `~/Library/Application Support/` folder. For more information, see Chapter 2 of the BBEdit, Mailsmith, or TextWrangler manual.

The `Launch and Quit Scripts` folder contains optional scripts that open BBAutoComplete when you open your editor, and quit it when your editor quits. The `Launch BBAutoComplete` script goes in BBEdit, Mailsmith, or TextWrangler's `Startup Items` folder, or in Smile's `~/Library/Application Support/Smile/More stuff/Initialization/` folder (which you may need to create). The `Quit BBAutoComplete` script goes in BBEdit, Mailsmith, or TextWrangler's `Shutdown Items` folder. You might find it inconvenient to use these scripts if you use more than one of the programs.

4   Using BBAutoComplete

To use BBAutoComplete, type the first few letters of a long word in one of the supported applications. Then invoke the **BBAutoComplete** AppleScript from the **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 windows, front to back, in layer order. In Mailsmith, BBAutoComplete also looks in the subject, body, and notes fields of message windows; and in the preview panes of the Mail Browser and mail list windows.

- 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 Emacs[17], 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, Xcode's.

4.1 Changing the Trigger Key

In BBEdit, Mailsmith, or TextWrangler, choose **Scripts** from the **Palettes** submenu of the **Window** menu. Click on **BBAutoComplete** in the palette that opens, and then click the **Set Key...** button.

In Script Debugger or Affrus, choose **Show Scripts** from the **Palettes** submenu of the **Window** menu. Click on **BBAutoComplete** in the palette that opens, and then choose **Set Keystroke...** from the down-pointing triangle menu opposite from the **Edit** button.

In Smile and Tex-Edit Plus, you can change the key by modifying the letters at the end of the script file's name. For the details of how this works, please consult the Smile and Tex-Edit Plus documentation.

4.2 Ignoring Background Windows

By default, BBAutoComplete looks for completions in all of front program'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 (Front Only)** script instead of the **BBAutoComplete** script.

4.3 Adding Word Characters

Depending on the kind of words that you type, you may want to adjust BBAutoComplete's list of word characters. The effects of doing this can be surprising. For example, if you add `.` (period) as a word character, and your document contains:

```
foo.html
www.apple.com
```

Then you will be able to complete:

```
f
```

to:

---

[17]`http://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/emacs.html`

```
foo.html
```

or:

```
w
```

to:

```
www.apple.com
```

On the other hand, if your document contains:

```
foo.method()
```

you would not be able to complete:

```
bar.m
```

to:

```
bar.method
```

because BBAutoComplete will see the `foo.method` as a single word. When `.` is not a word character, the `method` is seen as a separate word, and so it can be used for completion.

4.4   Hiding the Dock Icon

You can remove BBAutoComplete from the Dock using the free Dockless[18] utility. You'll need to make the Dock icon visible again in order to configure BBAutoComplete's preferences or view its help pages.

If Dockless doesn't work on your system, you can also hide BBAutoComplete's Dock icon manually. Hold down the Control key and click on the BBAutoComplete icon in the Finder. Choose **Show Package Contents** from the menu. Open the `Contents` folder, and then open the `Info.plist` file. At the bottom of `Info.plist`, change:

```
<key>LSUIElement</key>
<string>0</string>
```

---

[18]http://homepage.mac.com/fahrenba/dockless/dockless.html

to:

```
<key>LSUIElement</key>
<string>1</string>
```

Then save the `Info.plist` file and relaunch BBAutoComplete. To make BBAutoComplete's Dock icon visible again, change the `Info.plist` file back; that is, change the `1` back to a `0`.

5   Purchasing and Support

5.1   Contact Information

You can download the latest version of BBAutoComplete from the BBAutoComplete Web site[19]. Questions about BBAutoComplete may be sent to bbautocomplete@c-command.com[20]. I'm always looking to improve BBAutoComplete, so please feel free to send any feature requests to that address.

To make sure that you have the latest version of BBAutoComplete, you may wish to subscribe to the BBAutoComplete News mailing list[21]. The traffic on this list is very low, only one message per new version of BBAutoComplete.

5.2   Freeware Information

BBAutoComplete is freeware. You do not need to pay to use it. If you like BBAutoComplete, you may optionally show your appreciation by making a donation to support future product development[22].

5.3   Legal Stuff

BBAutoComplete and this manual are copyright © 2002–2005 by Michael J. Tsai[23]. All rights reserved.

Please distribute the unmodified `BBAutoComplete-1.4.1.dmg` file on the Web, LANs, compilation CD-ROMs, etc. Please do not charge for it (beyond a reasonable cost for media), or distribute the contents of the image file in isolation. Do not distribute your serial number.

The software is provided "as is," without warranty of any kind, express or implied, including but not limited to the warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and noninfringement.

---

[19] http://www.c-command.com/bbautocomplete/
[20] mailto:bbautocomplete@c-command.com
[21] http://www.c-command.com/bbautocomplete/support.shtml
[22] http://store.eSellerate.net/mt/store
[23] mailto:mjt@c-command.com

In no event shall the authors or copyright holders be liable for any claim, damages or other liability, whether in an action of contract, tort or otherwise, arising from, out of or in connection with the software or the use or other dealings in the software.

BBAutoComplete is a trademark of Michael Tsai. Mac is a registered trademark of Apple Computer. All other products mentioned are trademarks of their respective owners.

The following open-source components are used in BBAutoComplete:

Regular expression support is provided by the PCRE[24] library package, which is open source software, written by Philip Hazel, and copyright by the University of Cambridge, England.

6 Version History

1.4.1—February 7, 2005

- Now supports TextWrangler[25] 2.0's documents drawer.
- The `Front Only` Smile[26] script now works with European keyboards.
- Added example of changing the word characters.

1.4—January 10, 2005

- Now works with Smile[27].
- Fixed bug where BBAutoComplete sometimes didn't realize that the front window's text had changed, and so it returned the wrong completion.

1.3—September 21, 2004

- Now works with Affrus[28].
- In BBEdit[29] 8, now supports shell worksheets and multiple documents in the same window.
- The AppleScripts are now packaged inside the application; they can be accessed using the **Show Scripts** command in the **BBAutoComplete** menu.
- Added software update checker and crash reporter.
- Added **Close All Windows** and **Minimize All Windows** commands.
- Now requires Mac OS X 10.2 or later.

1.2—August 13, 2003

---

[24] http://www.pcre.org
[25] http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/index.shtml
[26] http://www.satimage.fr/software/en/index.html
[27] http://www.satimage.fr/software/en/index.html
[28] http://www.latenightsw.com/affrus/
[29] http://www.barebones.com/products/bbedit/

- Now works with Script Debugger[30], Tex-Edit Plus[31], and TextWrangler[32].
- Added new icon.
- Refined and updated the interface.
- Added Apple Help.
- Fixed bug in Mailsmith script.
- The Quit script no longer cancels logout.

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.

---

[30] http://latenightsw.com/sd2.0/index.html

[31] http://www.tex-edit.com

[32] http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/index.shtml