Neu User Guide

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Quickstart

Neu allows you to create a new document by making a copy of an existing template.

Using it is easy, which begs the question "why do I need to read this manual?".

The answer is simply that different people work in different ways. Neu supports a number of alternatives - hopefully you will find one that suits you.

The [Using Neu](#) section below will take you through the options in detail, but here's a quick way to use Neu:

- If you haven't done so already, launch Neu by double-clicking on it
- Right-click on the Neu icon in the dock[1]
- Navigate to the **Create Document…** menu and select the **Text File** template
- Give the new document a name, and optionally navigate to the place where you want to save the new document
- Click "Create"

Neu should have made a new document called "Text File" (or whatever you named it), and selected it for you in the Finder.

That's really all there is to it.

However, there are other ways to trigger Neu, and a number of options that you can use to configure its behaviour so that it's even quicker to make new documents.

Read on for more details.

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[1] If you don't have a mouse, hold the control key down instead, then click on the icon - this is the equivalent of clicking with the right-hand mouse button.

Using Neu

Neu allows you to create a new document by making a copy of an existing template.

To do this you first need to *trigger* Neu, then you need to answer three questions about the new document that you are going to make:

- Which template do you want to use?
- Where do you want to put the new document?
- What do you want to call the new document?

Triggering

There are a number of ways to trigger Neu, which are described in more detail later in this document.

If Neu is running, you can trigger it:

- Using the **File** menu in Neu's menubar
- From the status menu in the menu bar
- From Neu's menu in the dock
- Using a global keyboard shortcut

If you configure the optional [service commands](#) you can also trigger it:

- By right-clicking on a file or folder in the Finder

Which Template?

Often you answer the first question as part of the triggering process, by choosing a template from a menu.

Alternatively, Neu displays a list of templates and asks you to select one.

What Name And Location?

In some situations, Neu can answer the second and third questions itself, by putting the new document into the Finder's front window (or the desktop if the Finder has no open windows), and giving it a default name.

Alternatively, Neu will ask you where to put the new file, and what to call it.

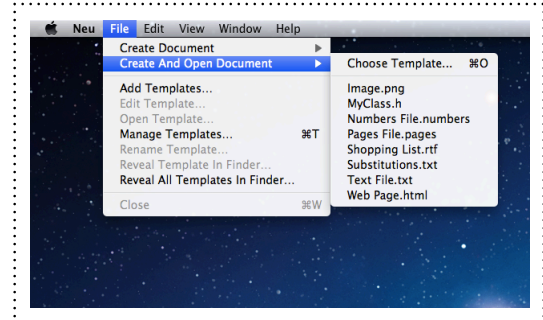Read on for more details on all of these stages...

Triggering Neu

Triggering Normally

The simplest way of triggering Neu is to simply launch it (or bring it to the front) like any other application, then select **Create Document...** or **Create And Open Document...** from the **File** menu.
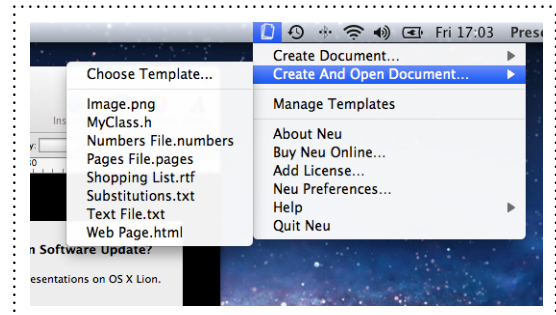

Triggering From The Status Menu

By default, Neu will install a small icon in the status area of the menu bar.

Clicking on this icon shows a menu which gives you access to Neu's functionality, including the **Create Document...** or **Create And Open Document...** menus.

As long as Neu is running, you can use this menu from any application - Neu doesn't have to be at the front.

Triggering From The Dock

Neu also installs a dock menu, which you can see by right-clicking on the Neu icon in the dock.

This menu also gives you access to Neu's functionality, including the **Create Document...** or **Create And Open Document...** menus.

As long as Neu is running, you can use this menu from any application - Neu doesn't have to be at the front.
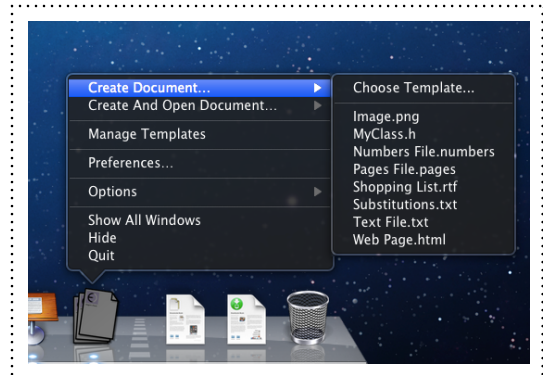
Triggering With A Keyboard Shortcut

You can also set some global key combinations which Neu will respond to from any application.

When you hit one of these key combination, Neu will come to the front and behave as if you had used one of the commands in the **File** menu.

See the Preferences section below for more details on how to set these keyboard shortcuts.
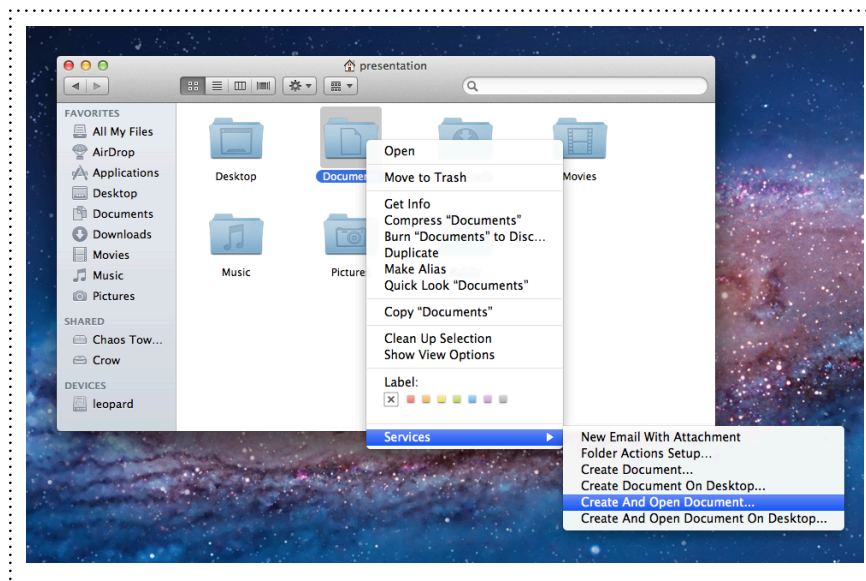
Triggering By Right-Clicking In The Finder

To use Neu directly from the Finder, you need to have enabled the Neu service commands.

Go to the Finder, right-click on any file or folder.

This will bring up a standard Finder menu with some actions that you can perform on the selected item, such as **Open** or **Move To Trash**.

At the bottom of this menu will be some commands supplied by any services that you have installed (if there are a few of them, they may be inside a **Services** menu).

If the Neu services are installed properly, you should see that these services commands include the choose **Create Document...** or **Create And Open Document....** commands, which you can use to trigger Neu.

Note: *that you might quite reasonably expect to be able to right-click on the background of a Finder window, in order to operate on the folder that the window represents.*

Unfortunately the Finder doesn't support doing this as a way of accessing services - you have to click on an item in the window instead.

This is a limitation of the Finder, and not Neu - hopefully it will be removed by Apple in a future revision of the Finder.

Selecting A Template

Once you've triggered Neu, you need to tell it which template you want to use.

There are two ways to do this.

If you trigger Neu using the **Create Document…** or **Create And Open Document…** menus in either the File menu, the status menu or the dock menu, you will notice that they contain menu items for each of the templates.

You can select the template directly at this point by choosing on of these items (this is one of the advantages of using these methods of triggering Neu).
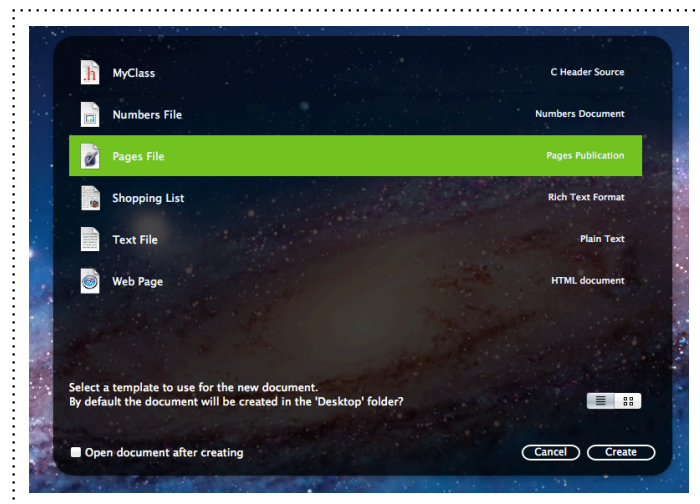
Alternatively, if you trigger Neu with the services menu, or a global keyboard shortcut, or if you selected the **Choose Template…** item, you will be presented with a window containing the templates.

You can choose to view the templates as a list, or a grid of icons.

You can re-arrange the list into your preferred order - it will be remembered next time you use Neu.

To select the template that you want to use, you simply click on it once to highlight it, then click on the **Create** button at the bottom right to create the new document.

As a shortcut, you can also simply double-click on a template. This has the same effect as selecting it then clicking **Create**.
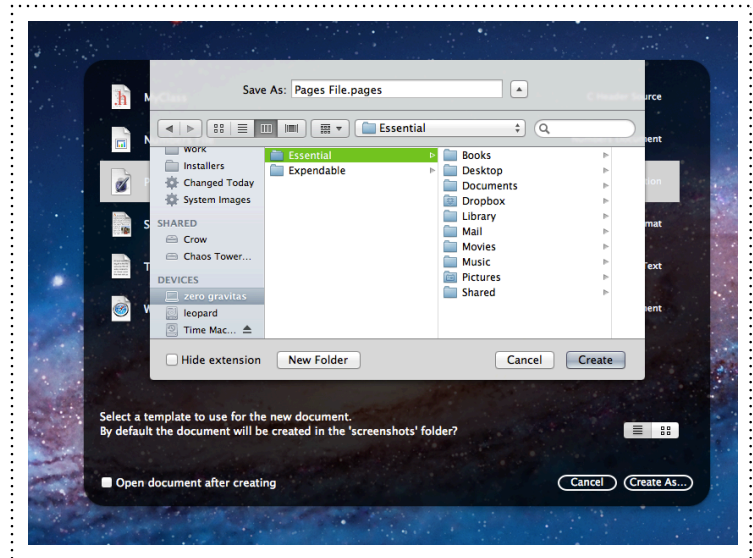
Selecting A Name And Destination

The final thing that you need to do to is tell Neu where you want to save the template, and optionally, what to call it.

Neu does it's best to guess sensible answers to these questions, and in some cases you can configure it to answer them automatically.

However, there are some situations where Neu can't guess, and you also have the option to tell it not to try.

In this situation, once you've chosen a template, Neu will present a standard **Save As...** window.

Defaults

Neu tries to pick sensible defaults for the name and location of the new document.

If you triggered Neu by right-clicking on a folder in the Finder, this will be the destination. If you right-clicked on a file instead, the file's containing folder will be the destination.

If you triggered Neu in some other way, the default destination will be the folder represented by the Finder's front-most window.

If no Finder windows are open, the desktop will be the default destination.

The default name of the new document will be the name of the template that it was created from. If a file with that name already exists, a unique name will be created by adding a number to the end - so for example "Text File" would become "Text File 1".
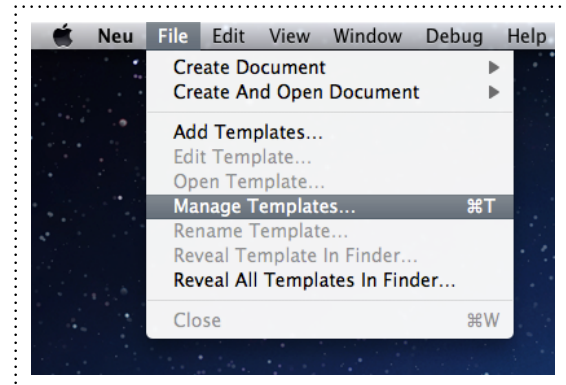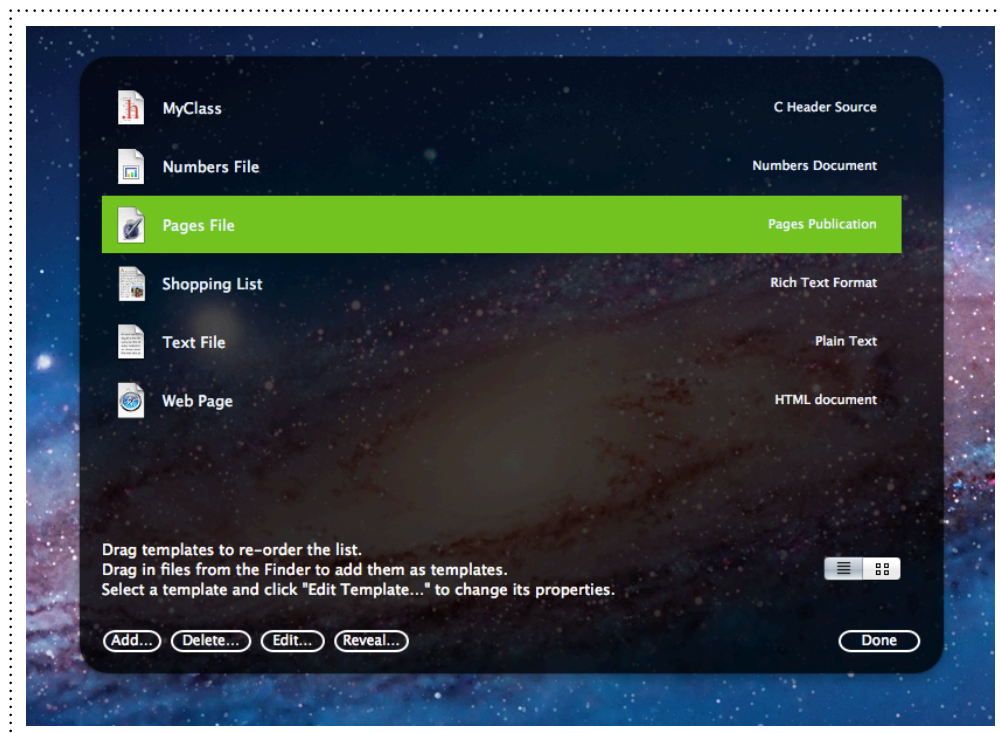
Templates

Neu works by allowing you to create new documents, which are copies of one of its templates.

The templates themselves are normal documents, and you can edit or remove the existing ones, and add new ones.

To do this, use the **Manage Templates...** command in the **File** menu.

This opens up the Templates window in editing mode. Instead of the normal **Cancel** and **Create** buttons, you will see a number of alternative buttons allowing you to edit the template list in various ways.

Adding Templates

You can use the **Add...** button to add new templates. It will ask you to select a document, a copy of which will then be added to the list of Neu templates. You can also do this by simply dragging files from the Finder and dropping them into the list.

Deleting Templates

You can remove a template by selecting it in the list, and clicking the **Delete...** button. Doing this will permanently remove the template, so it's best to be cautious!

Revealing Templates

The templates are actually just normal files that live inside a special folder in your home folder, currently:

`~/Library/Application Support/com.elegantchaos.neu/Templates/.`

You can select a template in the preferences window and click the **Reveal...** button to see the template in this folder. If you make changes to the documents in this folder, Neu will pick them up automatically.

You can also add shared documents in: `/Library/Application Support/ com.elegantchaos.neu/Templates/,` if you want to share them between users.

Note: *Currently there isn't a user interface in Neu for managing shared template documents, so if you use this ability to share templates, you'll need to do it manually in the Finder.*
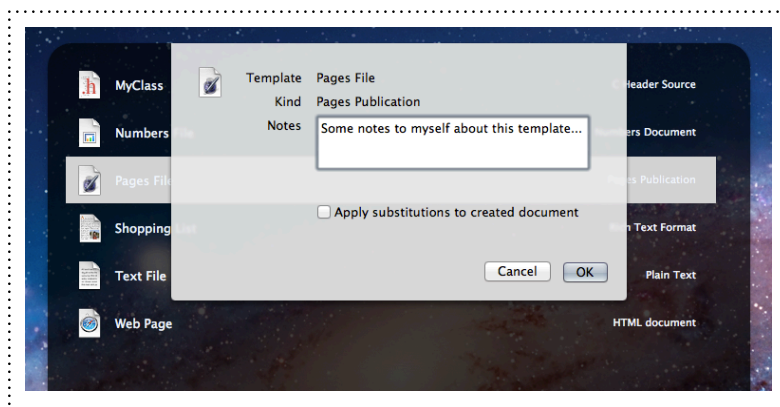
Editing Templates

You can edit some properties of a template by selecting it in the list, and clicking on the **Edit...** button.

This shows a small sub-panel for the template.

Using this panel you can add some notes about the template - these are purely for your own use and don't get included in any documents that you make with the template.

You can also enable automatic text substitution on a template. This works by filling in blanks in template with values that are calculated dynamically at the time that the new document is created. See the Text Substitution section below for more details.

Text Substitution

When duplicating text documents, you can get Neu to perform some substitutions - filling in blanks in the document with dynamic values.

The dynamic values can come from three main places:
- information about the document being created
- environment variables that were passed to Neu by the operating system
- commands that return calculated values such as the current date and time

Information About The Document

You substitute a variable into a Neu template using the following syntax:

```
{{ var }}
```

where *var* is the name of the variable.

Neu currently supports the following variables:
- **filePath** the path to the new document that is being created from the template
- **fileName** the name of the new document, without the file extension
- **fileType** the file extension of the new document
- **fileFullName** the name of the new document, including the file extension
- **templateName** the name of the template that is being duplicated, without the file extension
- **templateFullName** the name of the template that is being duplicated, including the file extension
- **templatePath**: the path to the original template that is being duplicated
- **templateType** the file extension for the template
- **templateActualName** if the template is an alias or symbolic link this variable will contain the name of the file that the alias/link points to, otherwise it will be the same as `templateName`
- **userName** the unix name of the current user - e.g. "samdeane"
- **userFullName** the full name of the current user - e.g. "Sam Deane"

The following variables are also supported for compatibility with old versions of Neu:
- **name** contains the same value as `templateFullName`
- **path** contains the same value as `filePath`
- **template** contains the same value as `templatePath`

Environment Variables

A few environment variables are passed to Neu by the operating system when it is launched. It makes these values available for use in substitutions:

Some of the more useful environment variable values:

- **USER** the unix login name of the user
- **HOME** the home directory of the user
- **PATH** the value of the unix PATH environment variable
- **LOGNAME** the name that the user logged in as
- **SHELL** the default shell for the user

Note: this isn't the complete environment that you'd expect to see if you opened a terminal window, it's just the subset that Neu receives. See [this Apple technical note](#) for more details on how add your own values to this set.

Commands

Commands are inserted into a template with the syntax

```
{% command %}
```

Currently Neu supports just one command: `now`.

This command inserts the current date/time. The date_format filter (see the discussion on filters below) allows you to specify the exact format that you want, like so:

```
{% now | date_format: "dd MMM yyyy 'at' HH:mm:ss" %}
```

Filters

Filters can be combined with a variable or command, to modify it's output, using the syntax `{{ name | filter }}` or `{% command | filter %}`.

Currently Neu supports the following filters:

- **uppercase** e.g. "abc" becomes "ABC"
- **lowercase** e.g. "ABC" becomes "abc"
- **mixedToCaps** e.g. "MyClass" becomes "MY_CLASS"
- **mixedToUnderscore** e.g. "MyClass" becomes "my_class"
- **mixedToLowerMixed** e.g. "MyClass" becomes "myClass"
- **capitalized** e.g. "one two" becomes "One Two"
- **date_format** format a date (the formatting system used is detailed [here](#))

Examples

Some examples of how to use substitution can be found in the default templates that Neu makes for you.

More Information

The substitution support in Neu is currently based on Matt Gemmell's MGTemplateEngine. You can find some more detailed documentation on it here:

- [Templates With Cocoa](#)
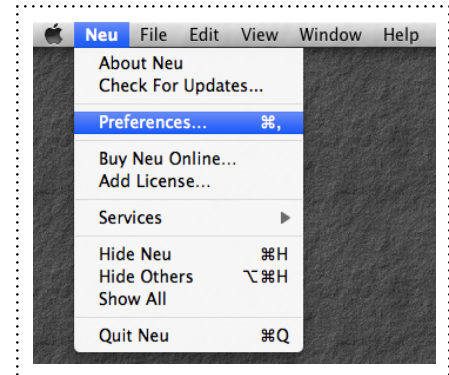- [MGTemplateEngine Read Me](#)

Note: in the documentation above I refer to a "command", which is what Matt calls a "marker".

Preferences

Neu has a number of preferences that you can use to customize its behaviour.

These can be accessed from the **Preferences...** item in the **Neu** menu.

General Preferences

These settings generally alter the amount of information that Neu shows, or how it behaves.

Keep window centered

If this setting is ticked, the template window will automatically be centered whenever you trigger it.

You can still drag it to move it around and/or resize it, but the next time it is opened, it will return the center of the screen.
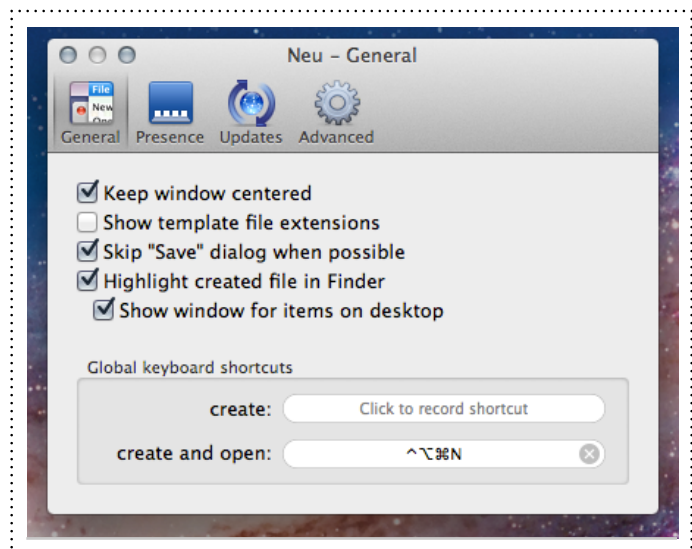
Show template file extensions

If this setting isn't ticked, when Neu asks you to select from its list of its templates, it just shows the template names (for example "Shopping List").

You can tick this setting if you want it to also show the file extension (for example "Shopping List.rtf").

Skip "Save" dialog when possible

By default, when you make a new document, Neu asks you where you want to put it, and what you want to call it.

In some cases it can guess these details for you, allowing you to skip the "Save" dialog completely. If this setting is ticked, it will do so when it can.

Note: *when the templates window is visible, you can temporarily toggle the value of this setting by holding down the alt key. You will see that the button at the bottom-right change name to either* ***Create*** *or* ***Create...*** *- the second version indicates that a "Save" dialog will be displayed when the button is clicked.*

Highlight created files in Finder

When this setting is ticked, after Neu has created a new file it will switch focus to the Finder and highlight the file - possibly opening up a new Finder window in the process.

Show window for items on the desktop

Highlighting an item on the desktop isn't always that useful, since other windows will often obscure the desktop.

When this setting is ticked, if Neu creates a document on the desktop it will open a new Finder window and select the document in that.

Global keyboard shortcuts

You can set global keyboard shortcuts which Neu will respond to from any application.

When you hit these shortcuts, Neu will come to the front and behave as if you had chosen **Choose Template...** from either the **Create Document...** or **Create and Open Document...** menus.

You can change the shortcuts by clicking on the two buttons to the right of the labels **create:** and **create and open:** at the bottom of the panel, and typing the shortcut that you want.

Presence Preferences

These preferences determine how Neu is launched, how long it stays running, and how you can access its functionality.
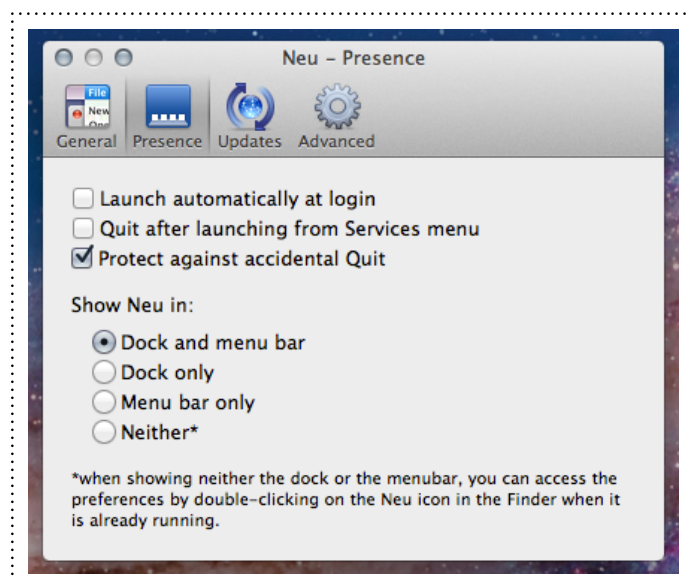
Launch automatically at login

You can use this setting to automatically start Neu whenever you login to your computer.

Quit after launching from Services menu

When you use the Services menu to trigger Neu, it may be launched first if it wasn't already running.

If you tick this setting, Neu will

automatically quit again in this situation, once it has created a new document.

Protect against accidental Quit

By default, the **Quit** command in Neu has the standard keyboard shortcut Cmd-Q.

You can tick this setting to change the shortcut to Cmd-Shift-Q, to make it harder to accidentally quit Neu. This can be useful if you use the global keyboard shortcuts and want to ensure that Neu is always running in the background.

Show Neu in:

By default Neu works like any other application - it will have a normal menu bar, it will show up in the Dock like any other application. It will also install a small menu item on the top-right of your menu bar.

If you wish, you can modify this behaviour.

If you want to hide the small status menu, you can choose **Dock only**.

If you want to hide the dock icon, you can choose **Menu bar only**. This can be useful if you leave Neu running all the time, but don't want it to take up space in the dock.

If you want to hide both, you can choose **Neither**[2].

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[2] In this situation you won't be able to bring Neu to the front and so won't be able to access its menubar to open the preferences if you change your mind. To get around this, you can double-click on Neu in the Finder whilst it is already running - this will open the preferences for you.

Advanced Preferences

These preferences allow you to change some advanced settings relating to the way that Neu behaves with aliases and symbolic links. If you don't know what these are, don't worry - you can safely ignore this section in that case!
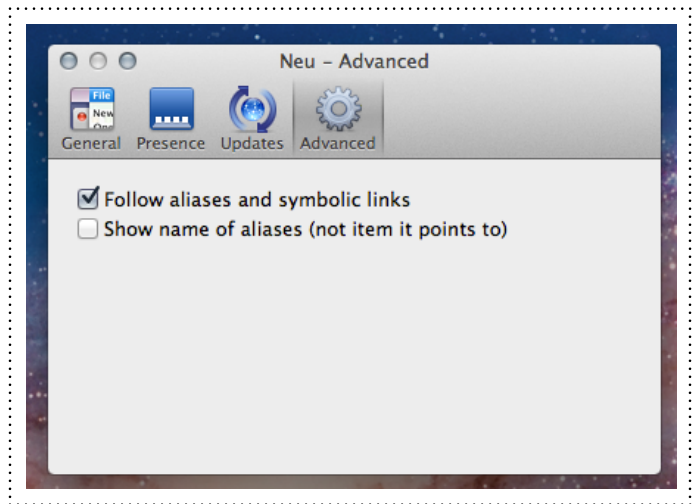
Follow aliases and symbolic links

If you tick this setting, when you use a template that is an alias or symbolic link, Neu will make a copy of *the file that the alias points to.*

If you don't tick the setting, Neu will simply make a copy of the alias or symbolic link file.

Show name of alias (not item it points to)

If you tick this setting, when Neu displays the template in any of its windows, it will label it using the name of the alias or symbolic link file, rather than the name of the file that it points to.
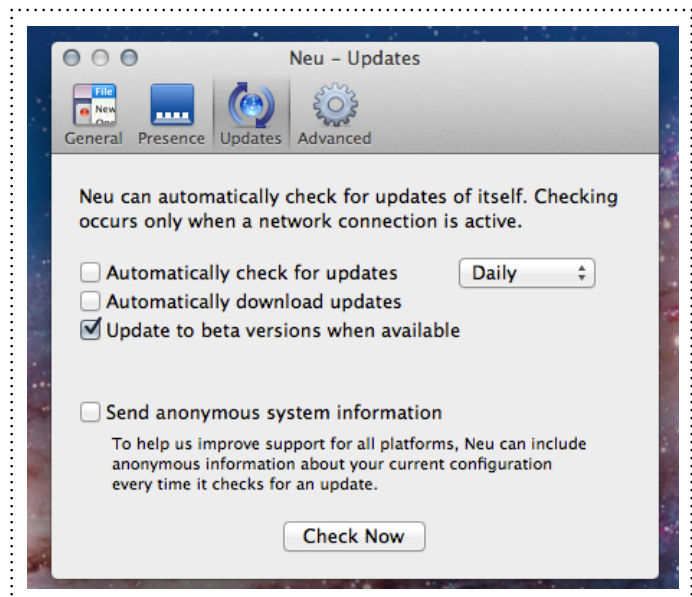
Update Preferences

Neu can automatically check for updates of itself.

Checking occurs only when a network connection is active.

You can use the Updates preference panel to customize or disable this checking.

Note*: this panel is not available in the Mac App Store version of Neu, which uses the Mac App Store's built-in update mechanism.*
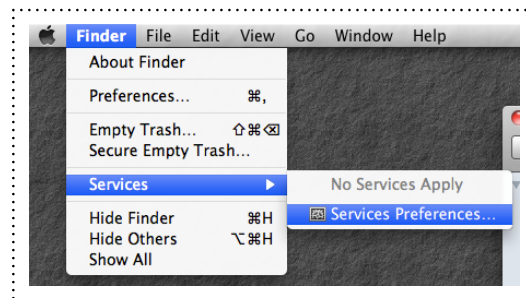
Enabling The Service Menus

Neu makes the **Create Document…** and **Create And Open Document…** menus available in certain places.

When Neu is running, you can find them in Neu's menubar, and also from the small menu it installs at the top-right of the menubar, or from the menu that you see which you right-click on the Neu icon in the Dock.

Neu also uses a Mac OS X facility called Services to add its menu commands to the Finder. This allows you to use Neu even when it isn't running.

However, Apple require that users explicitly enable Services commands before they can use them (presumably to prevent applications from cluttering up the user's menus with services that they don't want).

To do this, choose **Services/Services Preferences…** from the Apple menu.
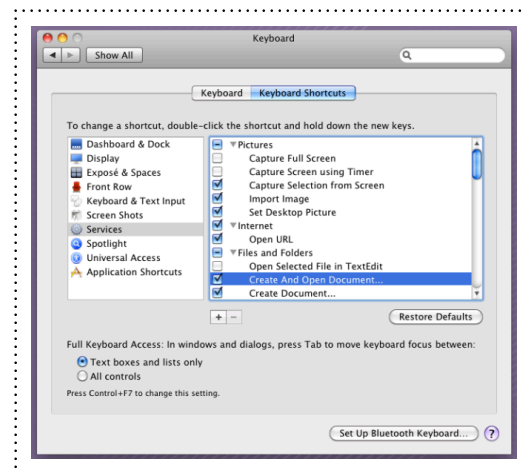
You will see a list of services (there are lots of them, supplied by many different applications).

Find the commands in the **Files and Folders** section that are called **Create Document…** and **Create And Open Document…**, and tick them.

If you wish, you can also tick **Create Document On Desktop…** and **Create And Open Document On Desktop…** which provide a quick way to create documents on the desktop, regardless of which Finder window is currently showing.

Once you've ticked the commands that you want to use, close the System Preferences window.

You should be good to go now.

If you can't find the commands mentioned above in the Services preferences, try logging out and back in again - this should refresh the list of commands that the Finder displays.

One More Thing...

For More Information

For the latest news and updates, please visit the [Neu website](#).

You can also visit the Neu [support forum](#) if you have a question, or contact us directly at [support@elegantchaos.com](#).

Copyright & Credits

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See the [credits page](#) for full details.

Thanks for using Neu!