



Tech Info Library

System 7: Opening Documents by Dragging them Over an Application

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Article Change History

08/25/92 - CORRECTED

- To show the correct documentation reference.

TOPIC -----

What rules does System 7 use to decide whether I can drop a document on an application icon to have the application open it?

The System frequently doesn't highlight the icon I'm trying to drop the document onto. This is a potentially useful feature. I don't think I've ever done it with an alias of an application.

DISCUSSION -----

The application determines what documents to open when they are dropped on the application icon. There is an FREF resource which now has two main functions for an application:

- Associates the icons defined with file types used by that application.
- Allows you to drag document icons to an application icon to open the documents from that application.

An application should create an FREF resource for the application file itself, and create separate FREF resources for each file type that the application can open. Each FREF resource specifies a file type. The file type can be defined for:

- Files created by that application only
- Files created by other applications that the application supports
- Files of the existing general types, such as TEXT or PICT

When you drag a document icon to an application icon, the Finder checks a

list of that application's FREF resources. If the document's file type appears in the FREF resource list, the Finder launches that application with a request to open that document. It's up to the application to open the files according to the needs of the user.

An alias should act the same way as the original it was created from, as the file type will be the same. If you're having problems launching a document alias created by the application you're dragging the alias to, rebuild the Desktop.

There is further information in Chapter 9 (Finder Interface) of Inside Macintosh VI.
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