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10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 9:12AM PDT • Submitted by [kitzkiz](#)



Some people have claimed memory or performance problems with Dashboard. In my case, I just don't use it, and dislike having applications running that I don't use or need.

After some searching, I found [this hint](#), but didn't find anything similar on MacOSXHints. So here it is, with thanks to the original poster who found it. Launch Terminal and then enter the following commands...

To turn Dashboard off:

```
defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean YES
```

To turn Dashboard on:

```
defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean NO
```

You have to restart the Dock after making either change for it to take effect:

```
killall Dock
```

[**robj adds:** I'm thinking this might be a pretty popular hint :). I tested the commands, and they definitely work. When I ran `ps ax | grep Dash` with Dashboard active, my three open widgets showed up in the process list. After changing the defaults, F12 no longer worked, and the same `ps` command didn't find any matches for Dashboard (OK, technically, if found the `grep`, but that's because I'm too lazy to add it as an ignored match). When I re-enabled Dashboard, I was somewhat surprised to find that my three open widgets were indeed still open.]

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10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard | 27 comments | [Create New Account](#)

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10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [Pedro Estarque](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 10:13AM PDT

I saw this before and I think it's useless. Widthgets do take lots of RAM (I have more then 3 opened and you are ~20 Mb shorter). But you don't have to disable dashboard to get rid of it, simply restart the dock and all memory is back.

- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [jeaginsky](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 9:57PM PDT

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [gaoshan](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 10:50AM PDT

You could also use [DashOnOff](#). It is a pref pane that turns Dashboard on and off with a click.

I use this (to leave Dashboard off) and am now using [Konfabulator](#) for my widget "needs". It is free, now that it has been purchased by Yahoo, doesn't require me to hit a button to view my widgets, and it is better than Dashboard in other ways.

- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [danieleran](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 12:50PM PDT
 - [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [hargreae](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 1:55PM PDT
 - [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [danieleran](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 5:20PM PDT
 - [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [Pedro Estarque](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 2:21PM PDT
 - [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [danieleran](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 2:21PM PDT

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- Use an unsupported Epson scanner with...
- Add a week number calendar to iCal [+8]
- 10.4: Add iSync 2.2 support for Nokia... [+2]
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- Print multiple photos in iPhoto [+5]
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- 10.4: Backup, restore, resize, and co...
- Start torrent downloads remotely [+3]
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What's New in the Forums?

'05 at 11:24PM PDT

- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [tceylan](#) on Sun, Dec 11 '05 at 6:47PM PST
- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [aranor](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 12:23AM PDT
 - [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [terabolic_radius](#) on Sat, Apr 8 '06 at 8:12AM PDT
- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [gaoshan](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 11:50PM PDT
- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [dkulp](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 1:21PM PDT

enabled + disabled compared

By: [echo](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 4:07PM PDT

From Tiger's beginning, I had closed all widgets, dragged dashboard's icon out of the dock, disabled the fkey+ deleted associated prefs files + caches. In Activity Monitor I couldn't identify any dashboard processes running, but always wondered if there was any overhead from it.

I just compared info from Activity Monitor with dashboard enabled + disabled, both after fresh logins, and memory + cpu usage (+ other data) remains the same. I'm convinced disabling dashboard has no advantage.

- [enabled + disabled compared](#) - By: [jasenko](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 6:36PM PDT
 - [enabled + disabled compared](#) - By: [burntout](#) on Sun, Jul 31 '05 at 10:05AM PDT
- [enabled + disabled compared](#) - By: [ubi](#) on Mon, Aug 1 '05 at 9:14PM PDT

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [vonkas](#) on Fri, Jul 29 '05 at 10:35PM PDT

Great - what I need now, is a way to disable Spotlight and activate Find again!

- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [john7jr](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 10:08AM PDT
- [10.4: How to disable \(and enable\) Dashboard](#) - By: [Gigacorpse](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 10:51PM PDT

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [Nvsos](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 9:59AM PDT

Cool hint!

I packed both script commands into a utility, for easy Desktop/Finder placement : [Stop/start dashboard utility](#)

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [rbanzai](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 7:42PM PDT

I've been much happier with Tiger now that I have successfully turned off the two cripple-ware modules, dashboard and spotlight.

Konfabulator has stepped in smoothly and does exactly what dashboard is supposed to do but more efficiently.

Easyfind is helping to make up for spotlight's hideous bugs, especially the "I'll just index forever and melt your ibook" issue.

But as soon as spotlight is fixed I'll be happy to use it.

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [Makoto](#) on Sat, Jul 30 '05 at 11:46PM PDT

It's probably also a good idea (that if you've disabled Dashboard and/or Spotlight), to remember that you've disabled them and re-enable them (just in case) before applying any system updates. I remember reading that some were having problems with the 10.4.1 update because they had disabled Spotlight beforehand.

Unix Toggle Script

By: [pobs](#) on Wed, Aug 3 '05 at 3:31AM PDT

Hello all,

Thank you for this script... it certainly seems to be useful for those who are wont for power (every process that isn't in use can save a few minutes of juice).

I made this simple bash script that toggles the "defaults write" command based on what it is currently set to. I'd like to share it with you all... for those who would rather use a unix script than another prepane binary to handle this... or for those who like to muck around with unix like me :) . Improvements are welcome and I suppose you could use the same format with other 'defaults' settings.

Thoughts? comments? flames?

Best,
pobs

```
#!/bin/sh
```

```
#function to evaluate whether the widgets are on or off
function evalwidgets {
    domainvar="com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled"
    defaults read $domainvar
```

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The Editor's Corner...

Here are some of my (robg) other projects...

- [The Robservatory](#)
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System 10.4

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The macosxhints Poll

What one piece of Apple hardware do you most hope to see introduced at Macworld Expo?

- Dual quad-core CPU (8x) Mac
 - Gaming console
 - Keyboard with iPod dock
 - LCD display: 17" widescreen
 - LCD display: some other size
 - Mac Tablet with docking station
 - An iPod with the full Beatles catalog
 - Some sort of phone device
 - True video iPod
 - Ultra small and light MacBook Pro
 - Something else entirely (comment!)
-

3,769 votes | 40 comments

```
return ; }

#case statement to decide whether to turn widgets on or off
case $( evalwidgets ) in
  1 )
    echo "TURNING ON WIDGETS"
    evalwidgets
    defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean NO;;
  0 )
    echo "TURNING OFF WIDGETS"
    evalwidgets
    defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean YES;;
  !1 | !0 )
    echo "this is the result of evalwidgets function..."
    evalwidgets
    echo "..."
    echo "sumpin aint workin";;
esac

#kill the dock to put the widget call in effect
killall "Dock"
```

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [Nysos](#) on Fri, Aug 5 '05 at 5:59PM PDT

Ok, I couldn't resist.. :p

Here it is, the only widget you'll ever need: [DisableDashboard-widget](#) :D

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [amcgee](#) on Wed, Aug 17 '05 at 2:01PM PDT

Strangely, disabling Dashboard in my main admin account results in periodic dock crashes. The dock restarts very quickly, but the crash is there nonetheless. Re-enabling Dashboard makes the crashes go away. The crash was immediate and more frequent under 10.4.0, less so on 10.4.2. Thoughts?

Also, it seems that you could also disable Dashboard by simply turning off it's function key in system preferences, and removing the icon from the dock. No memory is used if you never invoke it. That's what I'm doing now, instead of using the hint.

10.4: How to disable (and enable) Dashboard

By: [markformac](#) on Fri, Sep 30 '05 at 2:08AM PDT

I don't know if this was posted yet or not because I was not about to read everyones post....there is a crapload within this topic.

A nice option to turn on/off dashboard is to download the Widget Preference Pane from <http://www.ego-systems.com/Products/widgetsprefpane.html>

This preference pane gives you the option to disable Dashboard. Allows you to activate, deactivate and delete widgets. Also allows you to option to allows widget downloading to the Desktop as well as changing the Dashboard's menu background.

Mark Brooks