

NiftySpell

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v1.1 by Ewen Wannop**

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In memory of Joe Kohn 1947-2010

*Created, Printed and Published entirely
with Apple IIGS computers!*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome to NiftySpell!

Thank you for using NiftySpell, the first and only Universal Spell Checker ever released for the Apple IIGS computer.

NiftySpell is a flexible and easy to use New Desk Accessory (NDA) that automatically loads whenever your system starts up. Once installed, NiftySpell adds a new menu item to the Apple Pull Down menu, allowing you to spell check documents from any standard Apple IIGS program that supports New Desk Accessories. With NiftySpell installed, you can spell check documents right from your Finder Desktop or from within such diverse programs as Teach, Hermes, Freecell, WebWorks GS or HyperStudio.

In addition to the NDA, there is also a special Spectrum XCMD included that seamlessly integrates NiftySpell into the Spectrum telecommunications program, making it very convenient to spell check your outgoing e-mail and forum messages while using Spectrum!

With NiftySpell, you'll never again be embarrassed by sending out important documents with spelling or typographical errors, and you'll always look your best in print when the words you use to convey your thoughts are spelled correctly.

Before NiftySpell, only those who used expensive word processing or desktop publishing software packages like AppleWorks, AppleWorks GS or GraphicWriter III could spell check their work. Now anyone has the convenience of a spell checker within easy reach. If you can use a mouse, you can spell correctly!

1.2 System Requirements

- An Apple IIGS with a minimum of 512K of free and available RAM memory for the U.S. dictionary or 1.25 Megabytes of free and available RAM memory for the U.K. dictionary.
- Apple IIGS System Software 6.0.1.
- A hard drive.

1.3 Installing NiftySpell

NiftySpell is supplied as a GSHK archive. Included in the archive are this documentation, the NiftySpell NDA, the NiftySpell Spectrum XCMD, two main dictionary files (U.S. & U.K.) and a user dictionary.

In order to have NiftySpell loaded each and every time you start your IIGS, simply copy the NiftySpell NDA to the boot partition on your hard drive and place it within the :System:Desk.Accs folder.

The main dictionary files (only one of which needs to be installed) may be placed anywhere on your system. It is suggested that you place the dictionary file in a folder named dictionaries inside the System folder of your boot partition.

In addition to the main dictionary files, NiftySpell requires you to create a User Dictionary, into which you can add words not found in the main dictionary, such as names and other proper nouns. For your convenience, there is a small User Dictionary included that contains a number of different terms, names and proper nouns that relate to the Apple II computer. You are free to use that User Dictionary, or you can have NiftySpell create a new User Dictionary for you.

Be sure to take a look at the NiftySpell distribution folder. If there is an addendum to the printed manual, it will be included in a file named README.1ST.

Due to the size of the dictionary files, they have been compressed as a self-extracting archive. In order to decompress these files, just double-click on the Dictionary archive and follow the on-screen directions. You must have 1.4 Megabytes of free space on your hard drive in order to extract the dictionary files from their compressed state.

1.4 Definitions and Explanations

As you read through this manual, you may encounter some technical terms and procedures that you are unfamiliar with. To assist you to learn how to use NiftySpell efficiently, it is best to spell these terms out.

System Clipboard: GS/OS reserves a special part of the system memory to temporarily store text (or other items) that have

been cut or copied from one application to another. When using cut and paste or copy and paste procedures in GS/OS software, the information that is cut or copied is automatically and invisibly copied to the System Clipboard.

NiftySpell gives you the option to spell check words found in the System Clipboard. You might use this option if you are using, for example, Shareware Solutions II's Contacts GS NDA-based name and address database program, and wanted to spell check an entry in your database. You would simply highlight a word with your mouse, copy it to the System Clipboard using Open Apple-C and then access NiftySpell's "Check Clipboard" method of spell checking. If corrections are made, you can then paste (Open Apple-V) the corrected word from the System Clipboard back into Contacts GS.

TextEdit: Ever since the IIGS was first released, Apple has provided standardized tools that can often shave weeks or months off of programming projects. To end users, the standardized tools are just files that belong in the :System:Tools folder, but to programmers, they can be great timesavers.

Tool034 is the TextEdit control tool, and it is that Toolset which many IIGS programs that provide a multiple line text input field most probably use. A TextEdit control is merely a simple text editor that many programs make use of to display text in a window.

NiftySpell has the ability to spell check documents in TextEdit windows. So, if you were using a word processing program that relies on the TextEdit control tool, such as the Teach word processor, you can use NiftySpell's "Check Window" method. Although most GS/OS programs that permit text entry rely upon TextEdit, there are some notable exceptions, including AppleWorks GS and HyperCard IIGS.

If you are using NiftySpell to spell check the text in an open window, try the "Check Window" method first. If you get a message telling you that there are no TextEdit Windows, then you'll have to try one of the other methods.

LineEdit: LineEdit is a standardized tool that permits the entry of one line of text. You've encountered LineEdit whenever you've formatted a new disk; the box where you enter a disk name is a LineEdit input field.

LineEdit is used in the “Check Word” spell check method, so you will see this term in the “Check Word” section.

1.5 Special Thanks / Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following people who gave help and encouragement during the production of this software:

Ewen Wannop: You were the biggest pain. Every time I was happy, you gave me something to change or enhance. Thanks for all your help in finding the major bugs, even the one that almost drove us inSANE.

Richard Bennett: Thanks for early development ideas and the name.

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Thanks to the rest of the beta team (in no particular order):
Tony Ward, Max Jones, David Miller, Jeff Blakeney.

Thanks to *my wife*: She didn’t do anything, but I thought I should include her anyway for putting up with me.

Thanks to *all you Apple IIGS* users out there who just won’t let this machine die. II Infinitum!

2. Using NiftySpell

2.1 The NDA User Interface

NiftySpell can be accessed by selecting the “NiftySpell” menu item under the Apple Pull Down menu from any program that supports New Desk Accessories (NDAs). Upon selecting NiftySpell, you will see the NiftySpell window; from this window, you can select which dictionaries to use, check the spelling of a word, a file, the system clipboard, a TextEdit window or edit the current user dictionary. Each of these options will be explained, so please keep reading.

2.2 Dictionaries

Dictionaries are categorized into two categories: main dictionaries and user dictionaries.

A main dictionary contains a standard set of words that cannot be changed by the user. Two main dictionaries are distributed with NiftySpell: a U.S. dictionary and a U.K. dictionary. While these dictionaries in no-way reflect the complete English language, we believe that they are sufficient to be used in a spell checker environment. The U.S. dictionary has over 47,000 words and can be used on a system with 512K of free and available RAM memory. The U.K. dictionary has more than 125,000 words and requires a system with 1.25 Megabytes of free and available RAM memory.

A user dictionary is a set of words that the NiftySpell user can build to his or her liking as words are encountered that are not found in the currently selected main dictionary. It is very important to remember that words which are added to the user dictionary are case sensitive. So, if you add the word “CHRIS” to the user dictionary and NiftySpell encounters “Chris” while spell checking, then NiftySpell will report it as a unknown word (unless of course you also added “Chris”).

Dictionary files are loaded into memory when you spell check a document or a word. The dictionaries will remain in memory until you close the NiftySpell window.

2.3 Selecting a Main Dictionary

The first time you access the NiftySpell NDA, you will be asked to indicate, via the standard GS/OS file dialog, which dictionary files you wish to use and their location.

Afterwards, you can select another main dictionary by clicking on the yellow “Main Dictionary” Title (which is actually a button) and use the standard GS/OS dialog box to navigate your way through the directory structure to locate another main dictionary file. Upon selecting a main dictionary file and pressing the “Open” button you will be returned to the NiftySpell window.

2.4 Selecting / Creating a User Dictionary

If you wish to use the User Dictionary supplied with NiftySpell,

simply tell NiftySpell where it is located when you first access NiftySpell.

If you wish to select another user dictionary, the process is slightly different than selecting a main dictionary. Since user dictionaries are user defined lists of words, there may be an instance when you want more than one user dictionary; that is why the “Create” button has been added to the standard dialog. When the “Create” button is selected, you will be asked to supply a name for the new dictionary file that you want to create. The new dictionary will be created in the current directory being displayed by the dialog box. After creating a new dictionary file, be sure to select it in the dialog and press the “Open” button.

2.5 Checking Words

There are times when you may want to simply look up one word to determine if it is spelled correctly. To do so, just click on the “Check Words” button in the NiftySpell NDA window and you will be shown the “Check Word” Window. Before opening the Check Word window, NiftySpell scans the current open windows for a TextEdit window. If the TextEdit window has a selected word highlighted, then that word is loaded into the Check Word module and is automatically checked against the current dictionaries. If the TextEdit selection contains a non-alphabetic character, then the word check will be aborted. If no word is selected then the “Paste” button will be disabled.

At the top of the Check Word window is a LineEdit input field where you may enter a word that you would like to lookup in the dictionaries. Once you enter the word, select the “Lookup” button and NiftySpell will check to see if the word exists in the dictionary files. If it does not, then you have the option of clicking on the “Suggest” button which brings up a list of possible matches. If a word was previously found to be selected, then you will be able to paste your corrections directly by pressing the “Paste” button.

Once you are done checking words, you must click on the “Done” button to return to the main NiftySpell NDA interface.

2.6 Spell Checking

2.6.1 What does NiftySpell check for?

NiftySpell, when performing File, Clipboard or TextEdit

Window spell checks abides by the following set of rules:

When a word is not found in the main or user dictionary, NiftySpell will allow the user to take appropriate actions.

When a new sentence does not start with a capital letter, NiftySpell will allow the user to capitalize the word. A new sentence is flagged by a previous sentence ending with a period or exclamation point followed by a carriage return, two spaces, or a tab.

A word that begins with a number, such as 1st, 2nd, or 512KB will be considered a legitimate word.

When the word is an initial, NiftySpell will mark this as a legitimate word. An initial is determined by a capital letter followed by a period.

In the case that a word contains a non-alphabetic character (such as a hyphen) in it, then the character up to the non-alphabetic character will be considered one word and the characters after will be considered another word.

2.6.2 Extended Characters

NiftySpell was originally conceived of, and written as, a spell checker for use with documents written in the English language. However, there are many IIGS owners whose native language is not English, and so NiftySpell does provide some support for the Extended Character set that is a part of all IIGS fonts. NiftySpell can therefore be used to spell check documents written in Swedish, Spanish, French, and other languages that include accent marks that are not used in the English language.

To accommodate those IIGS owners who use a language other than English, NiftySpell allows the following Extended Characters to be used in all but the first character of a word:

Ä Å Ç É Ñ Ö Ü á â ã
ä å ç é ê ë ì í î ï ñ
ó ô õ ö ù û ü À Á Ò

2.6.3 Checking Files, The System Clipboard, or a TextEdit Window.

Checking Files: NiftySpell will only check text files (filetype \$04) using standard ASCII text. After making changes, the user may replace the file with the new text or save the text to a new file.

Checking TextEdit Windows: NiftySpell will search through the current open windows until it finds an active TextEdit control. After making changes the user will be able to update the control with the new text. Note: After checking a TextEdit Window, you may choose to update the source TextEdit control. NiftySpell has no way of telling the originator of the TextEdit control that the text has been changed. You may need to make a change to the control in order to be able to save the changes made by NiftySpell.

Checking Clipboard: NiftySpell will check the current text in the system clipboard. No style/font changes are retained. After making changes the user can replace the clipboard data with the changed text.

When invoking NiftySpell to check a File, the System Clipboard, or a TextEdit Window, you will be shown the Spell Check Interface window. NiftySpell will scan the data read in for occurrences that do not follow the NiftySpell rules described in section 2.6.1. Once NiftySpell finds an occurrence, the user will be able to do one or more of the following:

- Replace the text with new text by editing the word.
- Ask NiftySpell to make a list of suggestions that the current misspelled word could be.
- Select a new word from the list of suggestions.
- Add the current word to the user dictionary.
- Ignore this occurrence of the word.
- Ignore this and all remaining occurrences of the same word in the text.

When NiftySpell first finds a bad occurrence, it places the current word into the LineEdit area. The user may change the text in the LineEdit area via the keyboard, or the user may press one of the following buttons:

Suggest: This brings up a list of possible matches.

Ignore: This will skip checking of the current word.

Ignore All: This will skip checking this and all future occurrences of the current word.

Add: This will add the current word to the user dictionary. *Stop:* This will exit the current spell checking session and you will be given the option to save or throw away your changes (depending on which method was used to perform the spell check).

If the LineEdit text is changed from the original state then the “Suggest” button will be replaced by a “Replace” button and the “Add” button will be disabled. Changing the LineEdit text back to its original state will change the buttons back to their original state.

2.7 Editing a User Dictionary

You may add or remove words from the user dictionary by selecting the “Edit User Dictionary” button from the NiftySpell main window. Remember that the user dictionary is case sensitive.

By entering a word in the LineEdit location of the Interface, you can select the “Add” button to add that word to your current user dictionary. NiftySpell does not allow you to add a word that contains a non-alphabetic character to the user dictionary. NiftySpell does not check to see if the word already exists in the main or user dictionary.

If you select a word in the dictionary list, you can select the “Delete” button to remove the word from the User Dictionary.

2.8 Keyboard Equivalent Commands

NiftySpell can be used with a mouse, but some IIGS owners prefer using the keyboard. For that reason, NiftySpell has keyboard equivalent commands in case you don’t want to use your mouse.

In the NDA interface, the following keyboard commands will result in the following actions:

Open Apple-W = Check Word
Open Apple-C = Check Clipboard
Open Apple-F = Check File
Open Apple-T = Check Window
Open Apple-E = Edit User Dict

In the spell check interface, the following keyboard commands will result in the following actions:

Open Apple-R = Replace

Open Apple-S = Suggest

Open Apple-I = Ignore

Open Apple-O = Ignore All

Open Apple-A = Add

Open Apple-Z = Stop

3. The NiftySpell XCMD

3.1 What is the NiftySpell XCMD?

The NiftySpell XCMD adds some of the functionality of NiftySpell to Spectrum, a complete telecommunications package written by Ewen Wannop and distributed by Syndicomm™.

For pricing and ordering information, contact Syndicomm™ on the world wide web at:

<http://www.syndicomm.com/>

We are in no way affiliated with Syndicomm™.

The NiftySpell XCMD requires Spectrum 2.1 or greater as well as the memory requirements mentioned in chapter 1.

3.2 Installing the NiftySpell XCMD

Copy the contents of the xcmd folder on the NiftySpell distribution media to the add.ons:xcmds folder of your Spectrum folder.

3.3 Accessing NiftySpell from the Desktop

When you have any TextEdit Window open (such as an editor window) you may select the NiftySpell menu item in the Spectrum extras menu. NiftySpell will attempt to spell check the top most editor window which is similar to choosing “Check Window” from the NiftySpell NDA window. If you select a word containing all alphabetic characters from the top most editor window before selecting the NiftySpell menu item, then the

Check Word dialog will appear. This is similar to selecting “Check Word” from the NiftySpell NDA.

3.4 Using NiftySpell from Scripts

You may call the NiftySpell XCMD from a Spectrum script using the following syntax:

EXT SPELL [command] <command data>

The NiftySpell XCMD subcommands are as follows:

Hello: EXT SPELL 0 <var name>

If the NiftySpell NDA is not in memory then the XCMD will return a set failed. If the NDA is in memory and a variable was specified (optional) then the variable will be set to the current version of the XCMD.

Load Dictionaries: EXT SPELL 1

This will load the NiftySpell dictionaries into memory. If there is a problem loading the dictionaries, then a set failed will be returned. If you fail to call this before using any of the XCMD spelling routines then the dictionaries will be loaded before the command and unloaded after the call. This call has no effect if the dictionaries are already loaded.

Unload Dictionaries: EXT SPELL 2

This will tell NiftySpell to unload the dictionaries from memory. This has no effect if the dictionaries are not loaded. Dictionaries are automatically unloaded when the script exits.

Spell Check TextEdit Window: EXT SPELL 3 <TE Handle>

This will tell NiftySpell to check a TextEdit window. If no TextEdit handle is specified, then NiftySpell will attempt to check the top most TextEdit window. This call is similar to choosing Check Window from the NiftySpell NDA window. NiftySpell will scan the document until a word that is not in the current dictionaries is encountered. At that time, the window to allow changes will be displayed. If all the words are found in the current dictionaries then the window to allow changes will not be displayed.

Check Word: EXT SPELL 4 "[word]" <var name>

This will tell NiftySpell to check the validity of a word. If the word is not found or a non-alphabetic character is sent, then a set failed will be returned. If you specify the optional variable then a value will be loaded into that variable (0=word not found, 1=word found in main dictionary, 2=word found in custom dictionary).

Match Word: EXT SPELL 5 "[word]" [var name]

This will find possible matches for the word. The variable will be loaded with space delimited words that are possible matches for the word passed. If the word passed is found in the dictionaries then a set failed will be returned.

3.5 Installing / Using the !Help! Files

Section 3.4 of the NiftySpell manual – Using NiftySpell from Scripts – has been added to the NiftySpell distribution disk for use with the !Help! New Desk Accessory that was written by Spectrum author Ewen Wannop. We have done that for the convenience of those of you who want to use the NiftySpell Spectrum XCMD in your own Spectrum scripts.

If you have the !Help! NDA installed on your system, you can easily add the NiftySpell Spectrum XCMD online help files. Located on the NiftySpell distribution disk is a folder named Help. Within that folder is a second folder entitled NiftySpell. Simply copy that NiftySpell folder to the Help.Files folder that is located within the Desk.Accts folder, which in turn is located within the System folder on your Startup partition. The information will then become viewable from the !Help! NDA.

4. Additional Information

4.1 Customer Support

We believe that we have assembled a top-quality product. In the case that you find a defect in the product, please notify us so that we may correct it. When bugs are fixed, newer versions containing only bug fixes will be released at “No Charge” (A small charge for media and postage may be assessed).

We want you to be completely satisfied with our product. If you ever have a question or problem with one of our products and you can't find an answer in the manual, contact us for a solution. We can be contacted through Electronic Mail on the Internet at:

spectrumdaddy@mac.com

4.2 Problems

NiftySpell has been put through vigorous alpha and beta testing to try and deliver a product that is free from defects. In the case that you do experience a problem while using NiftySpell, please let us know so that we may fix it.

It is more than likely that if you do encounter any problems with NiftySpell that the cause could very well be an errant IIGS Desk Accessory or Init File that is conflicting with the NiftySpell NDA.

Generally, when a DA or Init conflict is suspected, the first course of action is to hold down the Shift key as GS/OS starts to load, and this simple procedure will disable all of your Desk Accessories and Inits. Unfortunately, this will also disable the NiftySpell NDA, so another method must be used to determine which DA or Init is conflicting with NiftySpell.

The commonly accepted method of determining which Desk Accessory or Init is causing a problem on your system is to remove all of them, and then add them back one at a time. After each file is added, re-boot your system and run NiftySpell again. The last Desk Accessory or Init added before the problem reappears is most likely the cause of the problem.

Of course it's tedious to do that, but if an errant Desk Accessory is causing problems with NiftySpell, chances are that it is also causing conflicts with other programs as well. It will be time well spent figuring out just which Desk Accessory is problematic on your system.

Another method for tracking down problematic Desk Accessories or Init files is suggested by Spectrum author Ewen Wannop: "Remove all of the non-system Inits and Desk Accessories, and then put NiftySpell back first. Add half of your Inits and DAs and see if the problem persists. If so, then remove half of the ones you have just added. If the problem has

gone away, then add half of the remaining ones. By repeating this process, it should only take a few steps to find the problem Init or Desk Accessory.”

If you still have problems after following the above procedures, please contact Speccie (Ewen Wannop) and provide as many details as possible about the problem you have experienced. It is also very important that you provide details about your particular IIGS setup, including a listing of all Desk Accessories, Init files and Finder Extras you may have installed and a complete listing of all hardware connected to your IIGS. You cannot provide too many details.

4.3 Additional Technical Information

Please contact us if you would like technical information about including some or all of the functionality of the Spectrum XCMD into your program.

Speccie: spectrumdaddy@mac.com