

Publication



Shumka Centre for
Creative Entrepreneurship

Career Development +
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How to Make Your Tech Look Effortless



How to Make Your Tech Look Effortless

Sean Arden,
Research Technician

Are you that person who forgets to send email attachments and can never find anything on their computer? Do you fake it when people talk about screen resolution because you can't remember what dpi means? Do you have a recurring nightmare that your significant other's texts will pop up on the giant screen while you are giving your artist talk?

Have you wondered how others make their tech look so effortless? Wonder no more! Being proactive about organizing your digital life and knowing the nitty-gritty details about sending or presenting your work digitally will make your tech look effortless.

Organizing Your Digital Files

Just as being disorganized in real life can stop you from achieving your goals, digital clutter can hinder your productivity. Keeping your digital workspace organized can help you become more efficient, keep track of your creative progress, and even let you see your work in a different light.

An important first step in organizing your digital files is to figure out a digital filing system that works for you- your files should be organized in a way that enables you to find them long after their creation. Here are some quick tips on how to get to that point:

File Management

- **Organize:** create folders on your computer as you work on any presentation, application, or project. Save all your versions and relevant files in that folder.
- **Make use of Details List View:** it's a great way to get to know your file types and sizes.
- **Back up your files:** store your files in a cloud-based system (Google Drive, Dropbox, IDrive are common options for most).
- **Create a hierarchy of folders in a way that makes sense to you:** make sure you don't invent any abbreviations you may forget about. Eventually, you can start nesting folders within folders (Have a root folder for all your projects, and then organize them by project name/year/client/medium/or any other filter that resonates to you).
- **Locate lost files:** if you remember the title but lost the file location, you can always do a Finder/Spotlight search (on Mac) to see the file location indicated at the bottom of the Finder window, or a Start Box search (Windows) and right-click Open File Location to relocate your file.
- **Declutter your digital workspace:** make sure to spend some time to delete old folders/files you no longer need.

Organizing Your Digital Files

File Naming

Implement a system for naming your files, all file naming should be done with intent. Your system should follow naming conventions when possible: to ensure files are transferred seamlessly, it is common to use underscores instead of spaces when naming files (Name_Subject.pdf).

On Mac and PC environments, you can always batch rename files.

Document Versions

If you want to update a file but keep the original version, start by using “Save As” option to save the file as FileTitle_V2. This way, you won’t ever accidentally save over your original file.

Use numbers to track your changes so that the largest number will always be the most up to date version. FileTitle_V2 then FileTitle_V3. When something is finished, title it FileTitle_FINAL. (This is especially useful for grant applications so that you can look back and confirm what you proposed to your funder.)

Presenting + Transferring Files Digitally

When presenting/transferring your files, you should be mindful of your file type, dimensions and size. Prior to presenting or sending any files, you should make sure they're screen-friendly and edit them if necessary.

Resolving Resolution

Image resolution is the amount of detail your image holds. When talking about image resolution, you may have heard two key metrics: dpi/ppi (dots/pixels per inch) and pixels. DPI/PPI is an important factor to keep in mind when printing images, whereas pixels relate to displaying images digitally.

For projecting and/or sending images, your image should be at 72 dpi, which is the resolution size for most screens. Any larger number will result in an unnecessarily large file size. Most screens today have a display aspect ratio of 16:9, which translates to 1920 (width) x 1080 (height) pixels. Images scaled proportional to this ratio will provide the best resolution — most of the time, your image dimensions do not need to be any larger than 1920 x 1080. An easy way to remember these dimensions is 2000 x 1000.

Image Files: Which Formats are Screen-Friendly?

File size is determined by compression formats, which organize the data in the image. They are indicated by the three/four letters at the end of your file names: .RAW, .JPG/.JPEG, .PNG, and .TIFF

Raw files (.RAW/.CRW/.NEF/etc.) are unprocessed images taken by a camera or scanner that are not ready to print or publish. Since they have minimal processing, these images have very high resolution and take up maximum storage space. Raw files contain all the colour information (more than what meets the human eye!). It is common for established artists and designers to keep an archive of unprocessed, high resolution images documenting their work and resize these images according to their needs.

The best file formats for screens are .PNG and .JPG/.JPEG. Due to their compression, these file formats stay small and can be easily circulated and/or presented.

Presenting + Transferring Files Digitally

Resizing + Reformatting Images for Screens

If you do not know your file size you can use details list view on both Mac or PC to find this information, or use two fingers/control + click (Mac) right click (PC) the file to view file properties.

There are many applications you can use on both Mac and PC environments to resize and reformat your images from Photoshop to Preview on Mac and Microsoft Paint on PC.

Always make sure to scale your image proportionally and be attentive to how your image reads in terms of length and width. For example, a portrait (vertical) image should be adjusted to have a height/length of 1080, with the width scaling proportionally.

When saving a screen-friendly image, use the naming convention "ImageTitle_web". This way, you'll always know what file name to search for when you prepare a presentation/transfer an image file.

Packaging and Sending Files

Packaging Files

Whether you're responding to an open call or applying for a job, a rule of thumb is to package your files in a single PDF and send a single file— scrolling up and down through a single PDF is always more convenient for the person on the receiving end.

If you're not tech-savvy enough (or simply cannot afford) to use Adobe InDesign or Illustrator to design and export a multiple page document containing text and images, fret not! Here are some low-fi ways to package your files:

If you Have Adobe Acrobat Pro

Adobe Acrobat pro is a great tool to package your documents into a PDF file. Its built-in file compression function can also be used to make the file smaller.

If you're using PDF to package images, ensure that you've resized & reformatted your images prior to prevent errors.

How to combine multiple files in a PDF:

1. File → Create → Combine Files into a Single PDF → Drag & Drop Files (.docx + images)
2. Once your files are converted, you can drag pages to rearrange them using page thumbnails icon near the top corner of the navigation pane on the left
3. If you opt to "Save As Other", you can reduce your file size or save an optimized version for screens or for printing.

Packaging and Sending Files

If you Do Not Have Adobe Acrobat Pro

You can package your files using Microsoft Word, Pages (Mac) or Open-Source/Web-based apps (Open Office, Google Docs).

If you're adding image files to your document, check that you've resized & reformatted your images to ensure your final document remains small. Certain applications (like Microsoft Word) have image compression options under formatting, but not every application will present this option.

Once you're done with your document use Save As option to save it as a single .PDF.

If you need to send multiple files, you can put them all into one folder and compress them into a .zip file on a mac (Control + Click > Compress) or PC (right click > compress).

Sending Files—General Tips

- **Always empathize with whoever is receiving your file**— would they understand what you're talking about? Is it easy to navigate?
- **Use universal file types as attachments.** Especially when responding to an open call or applying for an opportunity, use PDF file format— do not send other file types.
- **Make sure you follow best practices for file naming.** If you're applying for a job/open call, there's a high chance your recruiter will be receiving multiple applications for the same position with the exact same title, e.g. "application.pdf". Always include your full name and the position/title of open call to make your application distinguishable (unless there are specific instructions): e.g. "SeanArden_TechnicianApplication.pdf".
- **Keep your attachments small.** 1 or 2 MBs (1000KBs - 2000KBs) are reasonable file sizes to send as images. Any file over 5MB is too large.
- **Use a third-party service for large attachments.** If you need to send large files, instead of attaching them to an email, use a service such as Dropbox or WeTransfer to transfer your files as a link.

Presentations—Tips for Smooth Tech Runs

When preparing a presentation, you should always be mindful of screen resolution and reformat your slide deck (if you're not using Google Slides or Powerpoint) to 1920 × 1080 and reformat all the images you're using as web versions (72 dpi and scaled to 1920 x 1080) to avoid crashing software.

You can always get in touch with the venue to inquire what they use to display presentations and the types of cables and adaptors your computer can accommodate in case you have trouble connecting to their presentation system. As a fail-safe, always make sure you have a USB stick with your presentation.

1. **Come at least half an hour early** to the venue so you test the display in advance.
2. **Have your power cord** with you and plug it in.
3. **Clean and organize your desktop.** If you need to do this quickly, create a folder and drag everything into it. Voila! Tidy digital desk.
4. **If you're using an internet browser,** clean your history to prevent embarrassing drop downs.
5. **Turn off all apps and notifications** on your computer.
6. **Restart your computer** before your presentation.

Mirroring Your Screen

Most software like Powerpoint (Mac and PC) or Keynote (Mac Only) have tools when you go full screen to orient your presentation to be on the correct screen. What they don't tell you is that you have to have your system set up to be ready for the two basic scenarios you might need for a presentation.

Scenario 1 : Mirrored Desktop

If all you care about is showing the individual slides within your slide presentation then this simple set up is the way to go.

For Mac: First make sure your computer is plugged into the device like the projector or screen. Choose the Apple > System Preferences > Displays

This will bring up a window with 4 tabs. Choose Arrangement. Under Arrangement there is a radial checkbox that reads - Mirror Displays in the bottom left corner. Once you check this box everything you see on your screen will be mirrored on the attached screen.

From there go to your presentation and choose full screen, and you are off to the races!

Note: the Arrangement will not appear unless a screen is detected. If Arrangement does not appear, wiggle the cable, plug and unplug the cable or restart your computer with the display plugged in.

For PC: Make sure you are plugged into the external display to start. The displays will be mirrored by default. If, for some reason, they are not, type 'display' on the Cortana search bar or Windows start button on the bottom left side of your screen then choose Display Settings.

Display settings will bring up the following. Make sure "Duplicate these displays" is checked under Multiple displays:

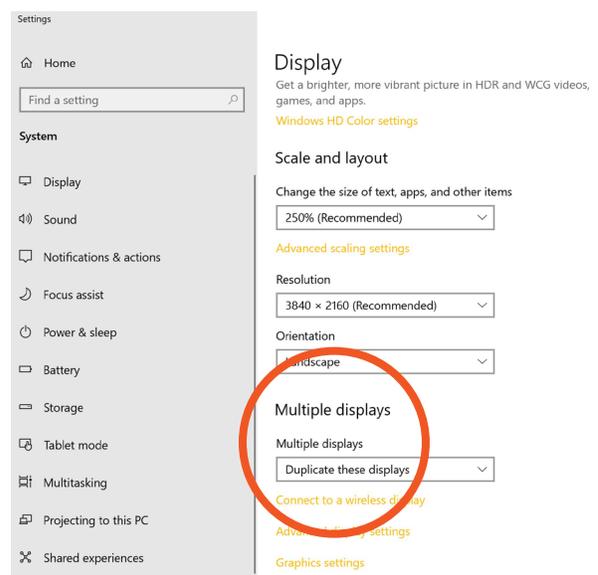
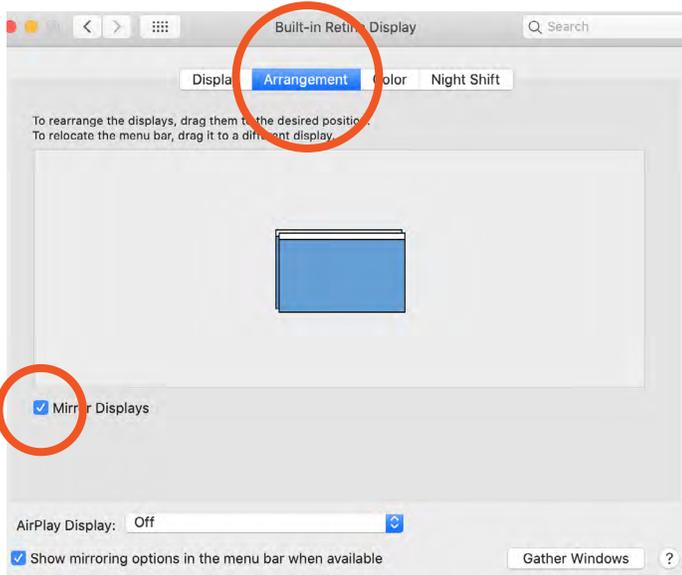
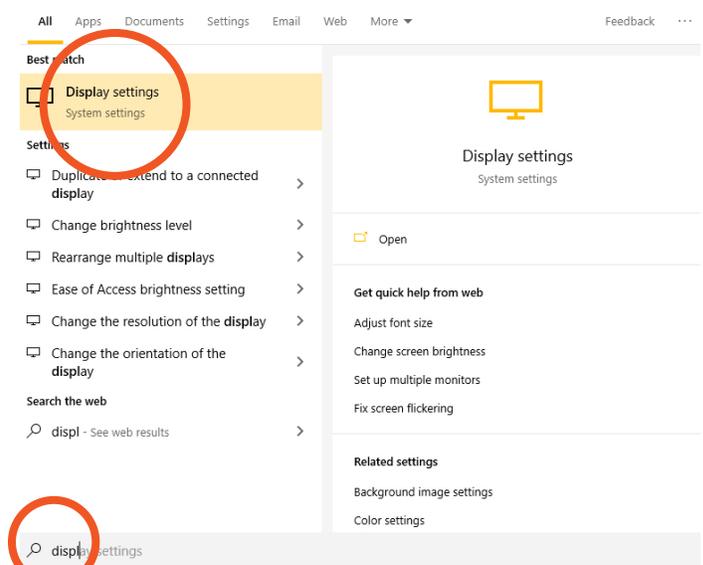
Don't forget: In this mode the crowd can see everything, so make sure to simulate a tidy digital desk!

Mirroring Your Screen

Scenario 1: For Mac



Scenario 1: For PC



Mirroring Your Screen

Scenario 2: SlideShow with Presenter Notes

In this scenario, you will have presenter notes and want to use them during your presentation. Both Keynote and PowerPoint have settings to adjust which screen will show the notes and which will show the slides; however, you first need to make sure you extend your desktop. Here's how:

For Mac: First make sure your computer is plugged into the device like the projector or screen. Choose the Apple > System Preferences > Displays.

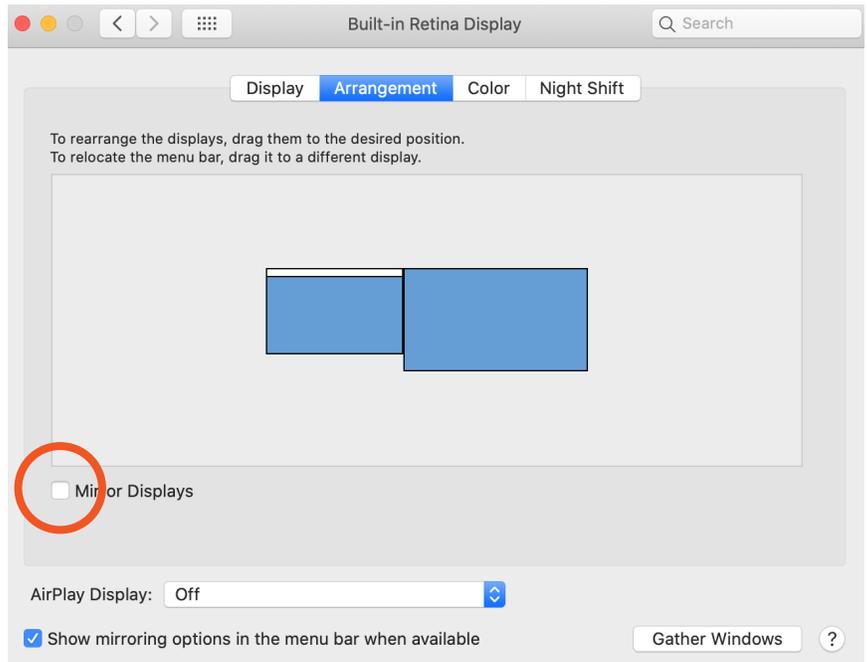
In this scenario, under the Arrangement tab, make sure the Mirror Displays radial checkbox is unchecked.

For PC: Make sure you are plugged into the external display to start. Scroll down to the drop down menu under Multiple Displays.

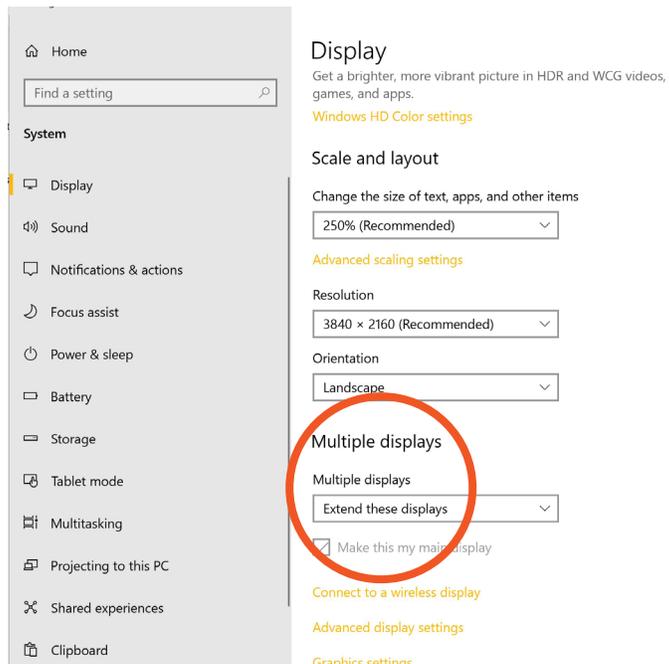
Under Multiple Displays, choose the option "Extend these displays".

Mirroring Your Screen

Scenario 2: For Mac



Scenario 2: For PC



Last but not Least: Know Your Tech

Technicians spend time reading every boring manual that comes with the equipment and always read the notifications that pop up.

While you don't need to know every specification relating to your tech, if you know the basics, you'll always feel prepared!

Appendix

This document is based on the Skill Up Session taught by **Sean Arden**, Research Technician, Mixed Reality Lab at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Fall 2019. Skill Up Series are co-hosted and co-produced by Career Development + Work Integrated Learning Office and the Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. These resources are produced with the generous support of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training.

Sean Arden is an artist and filmmaker holding a Master of Applied Arts in Media from Emily Carr University. He has over 15 years experience implementing experimental technologies for the arts. Virtual Reality, animation, video installation and photography are Sean's focus. His work has been exhibited internationally and locally at the Western Front, New Forms Festival, Charles H Scott Gallery and Your Kontinent Media Arts Festival. Sean runs the Mixed Reality Lab located within Emily Carr University of Art and Design. As a consulting technician, Sean has provided support for several notable contemporary artists including Stan Douglas, Marian Penner Bancroft, Rimini Protokol and Atelier VanLieshout.

The Career Development + Work Integrated Learning Office connects students and alumni with local, national and international employers in the creative industries and beyond. We offer career advising, clinics and strategy sessions, drop-in and individual advising, access to work integrated learning opportunities such as co-ops and internships, co-curricular programming, and industry networking events, as well as the Artswork career portal.

The Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship launched in 2018 to create programs and partnerships that help artists and designers realize their ideas in the world. The Centre is a place where creative practitioners can find the community, knowledge, and resources they need to launch, fund, and organize projects across the spectrum of contemporary art and design activities- products, projects, curatorial initiatives, platforms, companies, organizations, and more. We believe that tactical support specifically designed for the needs of artists and designers is the first step in achieving a systemic change to empower creative people. The Centre is operated by Living Labs.



The Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship
Emily Carr University of Art + Design

shumka@ecuad.ca
[@shumkacentre](https://www.instagram.com/shumkacentre)

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