



Aperture Assistant: user guide

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Preface

This user's guide provides extensive information on using Aperture Assistant 1.0.55. Information on using Apple's Aperture software can be found in the Aperture User's Guide provided by Apple, Inc.

What is Aperture Assistant?

Aperture Assistant is an automation tool specifically designed to help users quickly and easily automate Apple's Aperture software. Although Apple does provide AppleScript support in Aperture, Aperture Assistant allows users to automate Aperture in a visual manner which may provide an easier solution for those Aperture users that have no previous programming, scripting, or automation experience. For those users that are familiar with AppleScript, Aperture Assistant may provide a solution that may take less time than writing an AppleScript. However, Aperture Assistant should not be seen as an absolute Applescript replacement because Aperture Assistant only automates actions found in Aperture and not other applications.

System Requirements

A Macintosh capable of running:

- Mac OS X 10.4.11 (10.5.2 or later is strongly recommended)
- Aperture 1.5.6 or later (Aperture 2.1 is strongly recommended). Due to poor performance, Aperture 2.0 and 2.0.1 is **NOT** recommended.
- QuickTime 7.1 or later.

Application Window

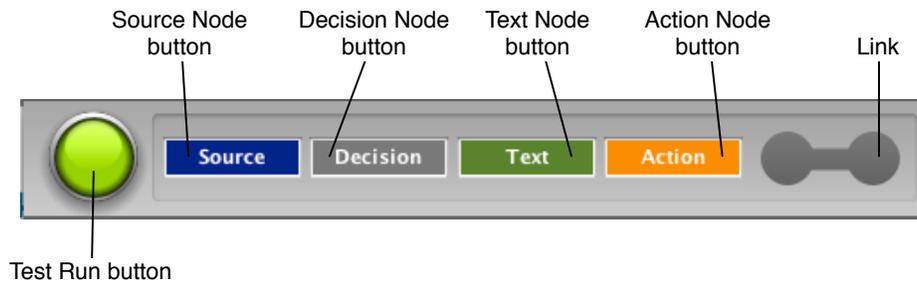
When you first launch Aperture Assistant, you will see the following window. It is referred to as the main application window.



Main Application Window

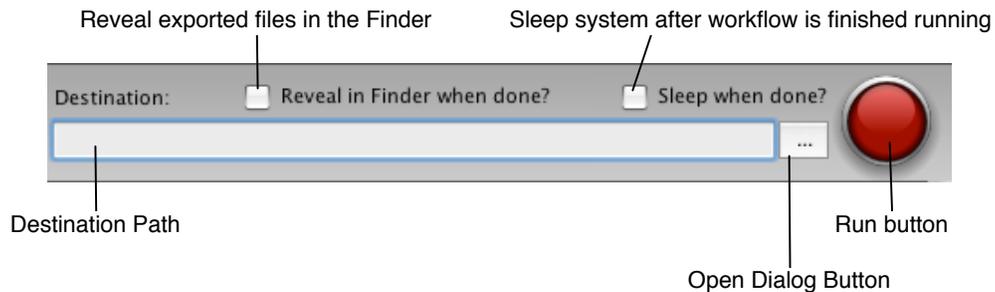
Toolbar

The Aperture Assistant toolbar gives you access to all of the items you will need to construct workflows as well as buttons to execute those workflows and additional options.



Left hand side of the toolbar

In order to add any of the nodes to the workspace, you can either click and drag its button and drop it anywhere within the workspace or simply click the button and the node will be automatically added to the workspace. Links can be added to the workspace by dragging them to the workspace or by clicking them, similar to adding nodes.

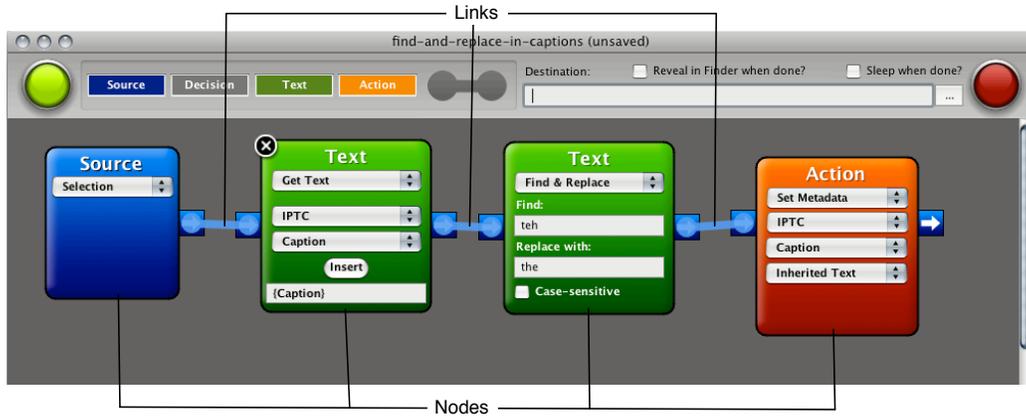


Right hand side of the toolbar

The toolbar is where you specify the destination path of an image export your workflow may produce. Not all workflows will export images and thus the destination path may not be used or need to be specified. Also, you have the option of putting your system to sleep once your workflow is finished running.

Workflow Example

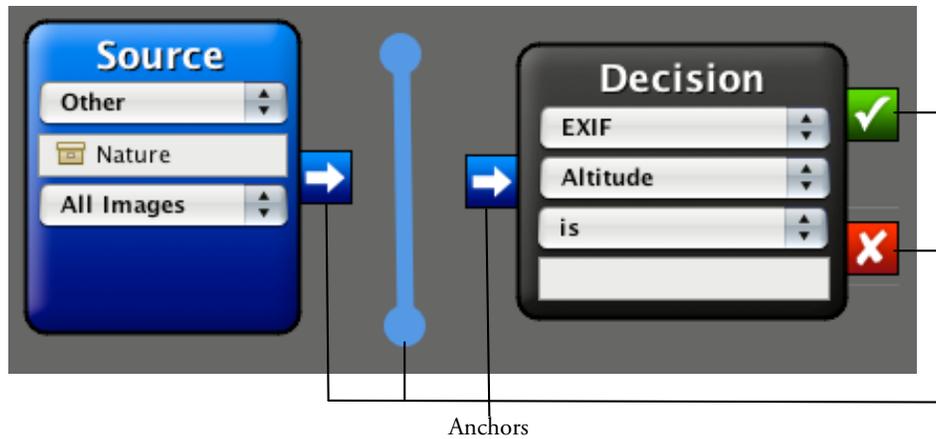
A typical workflow has nodes which are then connected together using links.



A workflow example

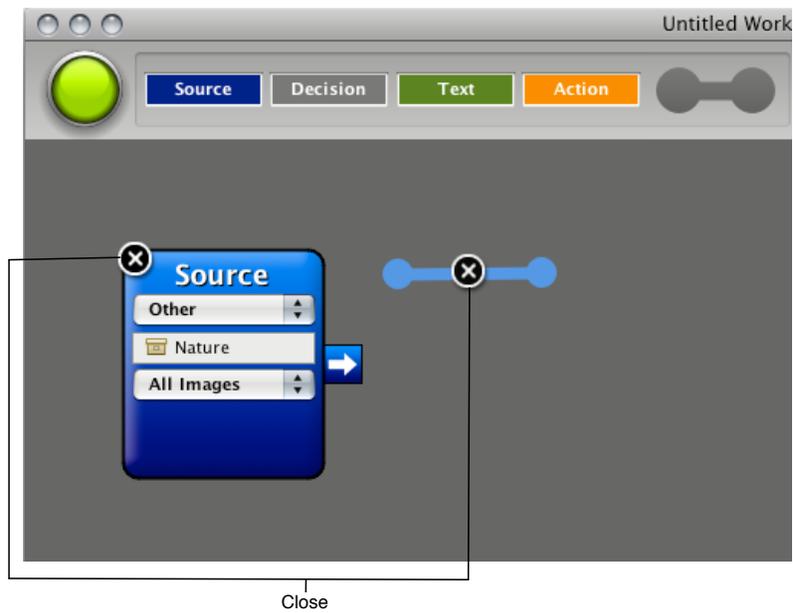
Nodes and Links

Each node and link has specific parts that will aid you in constructing your workflow.



Node and link anchors

Once links are added to the workflow you can connect them to node anchors. Once an anchor of a link comes in close proximity to a node anchor, the two anchors will snap together automatically. Anchors come in two different forms: input and output anchors. Links are only able to connect an input anchor of one node with an output anchor of another node. This allows processing to flow in one direction through your workflow.



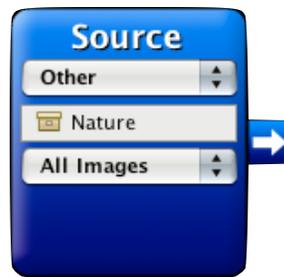
Remove nodes and links by clicking their X button

Place the pointer over any of the nodes or links and a close button will appear as a white X inside of a black filled circle. The close button allow you to remove the node or link from the workspace.

NOTE: Nodes are further discussed in greater detail in [Chapter 2](#).

Nodes are at the center of Aperture Assistant. They are similar to actions found in Apple's Automator software. In Aperture Assistant there are four possible nodes: Source, Decision, Text, and Action.

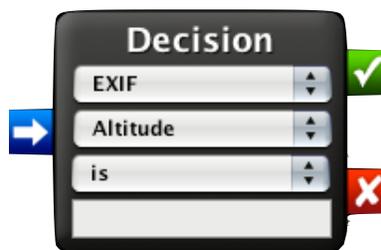
Source Nodes



Source Node

Source Nodes allow a user to select a source of image versions which are then made available for further processing. For example, say you want to export every image within a project named "Nature". In Aperture Assistant, you create a source node to select the project, "Nature". Those images will be processed in a node further in the workflow and in this particular example, exported.

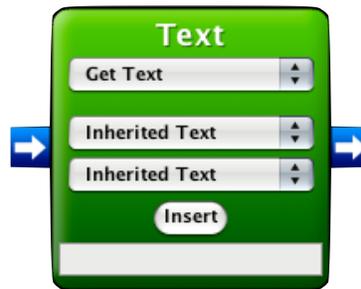
Decision Nodes



Decision Node

While an image version traverses through your workflow, Decision Nodes present a choice of possible paths of which the image could potentially take. The path the image version takes is dependent on the condition you specify in the Decision Node. For example, you want to export only those images that have an ISO value of 400 or greater. Using a Decision Node you can ignore those that do not fit that condition and export only those images that satisfy that condition. Those that are familiar with programming will recognize Decision Nodes as If, Then statements.

Text Nodes



Text Node

Text Nodes are used to retrieve metadata and manipulate text. If your workflow needs to be able to handle text in anyway, a Text Node will be needed.

Action Nodes



Action Node

Action Nodes perform particular actions in your workflow such as exporting images or setting metadata values. Workflows will end with this type of node, however it is possible to have multiple Action Nodes connected together at the end of a workflow.

Find Duplicate Masters

This tool is designed to find duplicate master images within the entire Aperture Library and is reachable at: Workflow > Find Duplicate Masters.

There are two ways in which the tool can be used. If you run the tool in “Test Run” mode, Aperture Assistant will look through the entire library of images for suspected duplicates. It will then show you a list of version names that it believes are duplicates. This mode of operation is useful if you would prefer to inspect the list of version names before actually deeming all of the images on the list as a duplicate.

The other mode of operation is “Run”. Using this mode, Aperture Assistant will do the same as the “Test Mode” mode as well as tag each duplicate image with a custom metadata tag named “ApAssist Duplicate”. The assigned value for the tag will be a checksum or the file size of the master file. You then search for all images with this tag and then evaluate whether what it found is in fact a duplicate.

Note: In Aperture 1.5.6, it will look for the checksum that Aperture stores for each master. In Aperture 2.0 and later, the original file size is used instead.

This chapter describes how you construct, test, and run your automation workflow. This chapter also provides a simple example workflow that gives a step-by-step description of what each node does.

Before you start constructing a workflow, you first must think about the task you would like to automate. As you work in Aperture, you will begin to notice some of the tasks you do over and over again. For example, say you need to provide someone else a collection of small jpegs of the 5 star rated images you have in your library. You begin to notice that you send the other person a different collection of images on a regular basis. By automating the task, you will be able to save time and free yourself from performing the task manually.

After establishing the task you would like to automate, you must think about the necessary steps you take in order to complete the task. The planning of your steps to complete the task is key to a successfully constructed and designed workflow in Aperture Assistant.

Constructing A Workflow

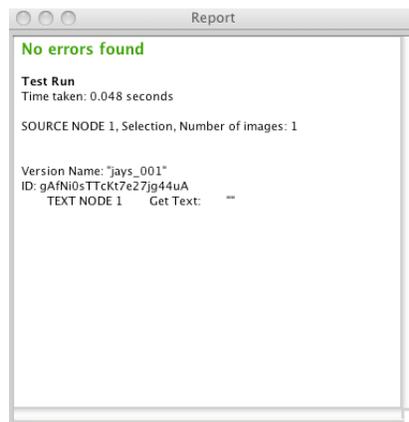
Choose which node you want to use in your workflow in the toolbar. You can either click the node button or drag it onto the workspace for it to appear and ready to be used. Once the node has been created, you are free to drag and drop the node anywhere within the workspace. The next step is to configure the node you just added using the appropriate parameters. Nodes are then linked together using links.

Move the nodes and links around in the workspace in order to organize them so that if there is a problem with running the workflow, you can easily and quickly resolve any errors that may occur.

Testing Your Workflow

Once you have constructed your workflow it is a good idea to test it before actually running it with an actual Aperture Library. However, testing your workflow is not mandatory. Testing your workflow could prevent accidental changes to your Aperture Library. Testing allows you to see problems with your workflow and then correct them without actually making changes to your Aperture Library. Click the Test Run button in the toolbar to test run your workflow.

After you click the Test Run button, Aperture Assistant will then test run your workflow. Once Aperture Assistant is finished, it will open a Report window displaying information relevant to the test run.



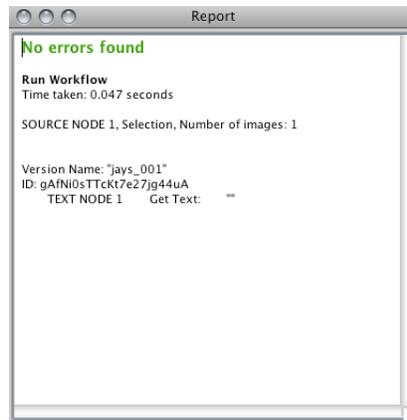
Test Run Report window

The information found in the report window includes errors, execution time, and information related to the images affected by your workflow. The Report window will let you know whether your workflow has any problems and whether the workflow ran according to your design.

Running Your Workflow

Once you have constructed your workflow you can then run it by clicking the Run button in the toolbar. Aperture Assistant will run your workflow according to which nodes you used, how they are configured, and the connections between them.

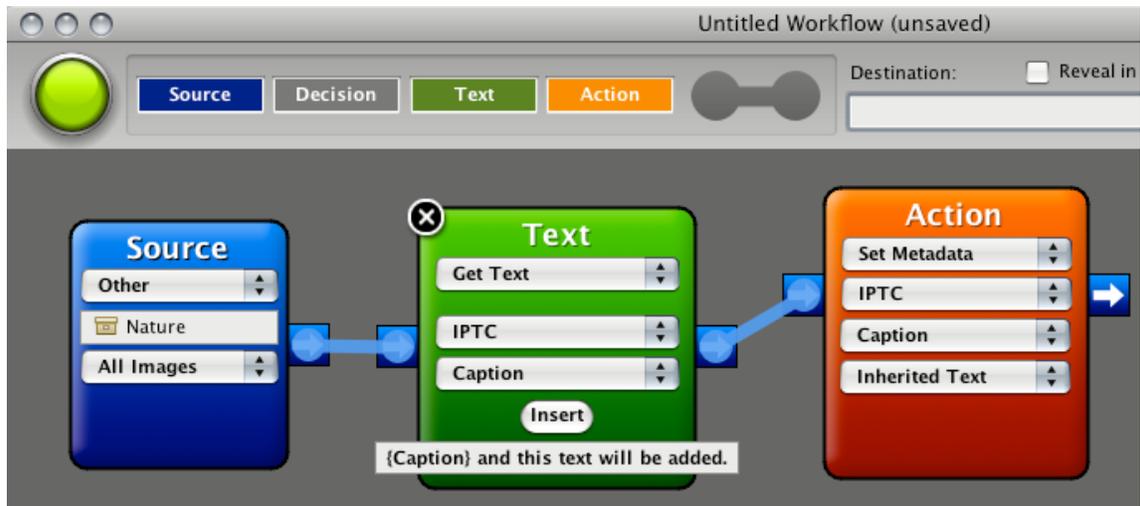
After your workflow finishes running, Aperture Assistant will open a Report window displaying related information.



Run Report window

The information found in the report window includes errors, execution time, and the version name and ID affected by your workflow. The Report window will let you know whether your workflow has any problems and whether the workflow ran according to your design.

Example Workflow



An example workflow

This workflow will append text to the Caption field of all images residing in the “Nature” project. As you can see, a Source Node, Text Node, and Action Node were added to the workspace. And each of those nodes are connected together using links.

The step by step description of what happens at each node is explained as follows:

1. The project “Nature” is selected as the source of images. Those images are then passed to a Text Node.
2. The Text Node gets the current Caption of each image and appends “ and this text will be added.” to the end of the text string. That text string is then passed to the Action Node.
3. The Action Node then sets the text string as the new Caption for each image version. The Action Node is what actually modifies the images’ Caption field.

Resources | **appendix 1**

Books

AppleScript

AppleScript: The Definitive Guide, 2nd Edition by Matt Neuberg

Web Sites

[Aperture Assistant](#)

AppleScript

[Apple's AppleScript Web Page](#)

The starting point for all topics relating to AppleScript. Also provides a resources page pointing users to other web sites, tools, and training. Provides a web page devoted to AppleScript and Aperture.

[Automating Aperture](#)

A great resource of new features as it applies to Applescript and Aperture and several sample scripts to get Aperture users started with automating Aperture using Applescript.

[AUTOMATOR.US](#)

A great resource for automating Aperture using Automator. Provides several sample workflows that are quite useful as is.

[Script Debugger](#)

Script Debugger is a very powerful AppleScript editor created by Late Night Software. If you find yourself writing several AppleScripts, Script Debugger may serve as a great tool.

Online Forums

[Apple Discussion Forum](#)

[Aperture Users Professional Network](#)

[Aperture-Assistant Forum](#)

Action Node	A specific node type used to perform actions such as setting metadata values or exporting images.
Blue folder	A type of folder within Aperture used to contain other containers. Blue folders can contain projects, albums, and additional blue folders.
Brown folder	A type of folder within Aperture used to contain albums. The parent container of brown folders are projects.
Container	A generic term used to describe organizational objects within Aperture such as projects, albums, and folders.
Decision Node	A specific node type used to control the flow of a workflow based on specific criteria.
Depth	Term used to describe the level within the library hierarchal structure found in Aperture.
Anchor	The points on nodes and links that that allow nodes and links to be connected together.
Fixed Text	Text that stays constant throughout a workflow and is defined by the user of Aperture Assistant. See <i>Inherited Text</i> .
Inherited Text	Text that is passed on from a previous Text Node that is uses a “Get Text” operation on a particular image. See <i>Fixed Text</i> .
Link	Logical connections between nodes that actually create a workflow. Links connect the inputs and outputs of the various nodes found in Aperture Assistant.
Node	A logical construct that is the foundation of the workflows found in Aperture Assistant. These are similar to actions found in Apple’s Automator software. The 4 node types are: Action, Source, Text, and Decision.
Project	A specific container found in Aperture that contain images. See the documentation for Aperture for more information.
Run	Refers to the normal run mode of operation. Running the workflow will result in an interaction with your Aperture Library.
Source Node	A specific node type used for selecting images in Aperture.
Test Run	Using Test Run, the user can test drive the workflow without actual interaction with their Aperture Library to ensure the workflow runs as the user had intended.
Text Node	A specific node type used to handle and manipulate text.
Token	Placeholder text surrounded by curly brackets that will be replaced with another value when a workflow is actually ran. Tokens are often used if the specific text varies from one image to the next such as version names and capture dates. For a list of available tokens, see Appendix 3 .

- Tree Structure** Refers to the hierarchy of containers found in Aperture.
- Version** A version of an image found in Aperture.
- Workflow** An Aperture Assistant file and is similar to a script or set of instructions.

Tokens | appendix 3

Tokens are used to represent an actual text value. For example, you can use {CapDD} in a Text Node to represent an image's capture day value, expressed using two digits. The advantage of using tokens is you can process multiple images without using static text.

Tokens

{CapDD}	Refers to a version's capture day value and is expressed using two digits.
{CapMM}	Refers to a version's capture month value and is expressed using two digits.
{CapThh}	Refers to a version's capture hour value and is expressed using two digits.
{CapTmm}	Refers to a version's capture minute value and is expressed using two digits.
{CapTss}	Refers to a version's capture second value and is expressed using two digits.
{CapYYYY}	Refers to a version's capture year value and is expressed using four digits.
{CapYY}	Refers to a version's capture year value and is expressed using two digits.
{CR}	Refers to the carriage return character. Aperture Assistant automatically places a carriage return at the end of a text string when exporting text.
{CurrDD}	Refers to the current day of the month and is expressed using two digits.
{CurrMM}	Refers to the current month of the year and is expressed using two digits.
{CurrThh}	Refers to the current hour and is expressed using two digits.
{CurrTmm}	Refers to the current minute and is expressed using two digits.
{CurrTss}	Refers to the current second and is expressed using two digits..
{CurrYYYY}	Refers to the current year and is expressed using four digits.
{CurrYY}	Refers to the current year and is expressed using two digits.
{Path}	Refers to the path of the export folder.
{Tab}	Refers to the tab character.
{Text}	Refers to the text found in previous nodes.

Note: Aperture Assistant also makes available every Exif, IPTC, and custom metadata tag found in Aperture using tokens such as {ISOSpeedRating}, {FocalLength}, {Caption/Abstract}, and {Keywords}.