Inside

Sesame ™

The Monthly How-To Guide for Sesame Database Users/Developers

Tom Marcellus

Add a File Finder/Viewer to Any Form

SOMETIMES just for the fun of it I'll cook up something way out of the ordinary in Sesame just to see if I can make it work. *FileFinder* began this way. I got the idea for it while browsing some old *Quick Answers* and coming across an article entitled "Surf Your Drive with Q&A 5." I wondered what it might take to design a Sesame-style combination file finder/viewer that could easily be dropped into any form in any application.

But would anybody ever actually *need* to poke around their file system from inside a Sesame database? Well, I got a pretty emphatic *Yes!* on that when I casually mentioned *FileFinder* to an associate in the middle of designing a law office application. He needed a way to quickly locate and preview document files while working in his Sesame case records, and be able to optionally copy the document filepaths into the records in order to create links to them.

With this bit of necessity to help mother the invention, *FileFinder* got a paint job and stock number and is now part of the *Inside Sesame* line of Sesame add-ins that includes *LabelWiz*, *WordMerge Lite*, *The Crosstabber*, *FaxIt* (last month, with an update in this issue) and *Email-It* (page 8).

How it works

You'll find *FileFinder* in this month's download file. (See the sidebar on page 3 for info on the more advanced *FileFinder Pro*.) Give it a rip — it's fun! It lets you navigate your file system to find a file, then gives you options for previewing it and pasting its filepath into the record. (The **First Use** section on page 12 tells you what to expect when you run *FileFinder* the first time.)

Figure 1 shows what the sample *FileFinder* form looks like. *FileFinder* works by displaying a sequence of drill-down pick-lists.

When you click on the **Find a File** button, *FileFinder* prompts you to choose the type of file to find — *.doc*, *.txt*, *.pdf*, *.htm* and so on. (See Figure 2.)
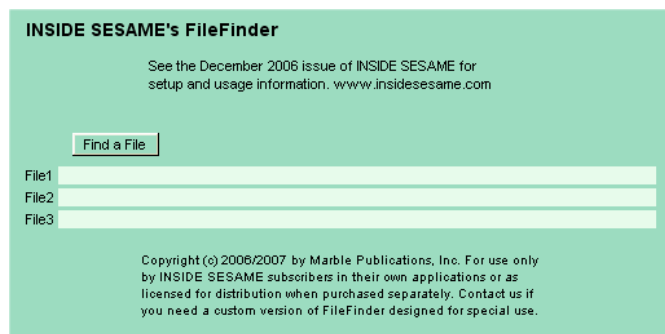
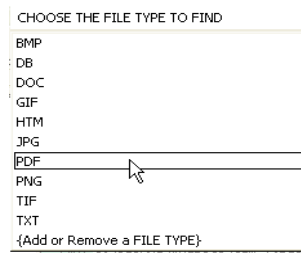It then prompts for the drive to search. Drives can include mapped network drives. The drives list can also include shortcuts to the folders you most frequently access (see the sidebar on page 3) via a **+My Folders** selection. Hovering the mouse pointer over **+My Folders** displays a *flyout* that lets you go straight to the favorite folder. (See Figure 3 on page 3.)

The *File Type* and *Drives* lists give you options to {**Add or Remove a FILE TYPE**} or {**Add or Remove a DRIVE**}. They display the file types or drives list in Notepad where you can simply edit and re-save the file.

Figure 1. The *FileFinder* sample form.

Figure 2. Selecting the file type.

FileFinder

Once you've selected a file type and drive, *FileFinder* displays the files and folders list. (See Figure 4.) If you hover the mouse pointer over the **+FOLDERS** option, you'll get a *flyout* list of all the folders on the drive. The main list shows any files that match the *file type* you specified. In the Figure 4 example, *.pdf* is the file type, the main list shows that there are no PDF files in the root of the *C:* drive, and the *C:\ScannedDocs* folder (in the root of the *C:* drive in this case) is about to be selected.

When you select a folder from the flyout, any files in that folder that match the *file type* you're searching for will then appear on the main (left-hand) list. You can then select the file you want, as Figure 5 shows.

If there are more than 40 folders on the flyout, you'll get a **»»MORE»»** selection at the bottom. **««BACK««** and **»»MORE»»** options are provided depending on the number of folders at that level. (See the sidebar on page 12 for how to set the max number of files and folders per list.)

When you select a folder from the flyout, a new main list will display for that folder with a new flyout of *that* folder's subfolders, if any. Any files of the selected type found in the selected folder will appear on the main list where you can click on the one you want.

Flyouts show only folders. The main list shows the matching files in the current folder. The list header always shows the current drive and folder.

From any main list you can go **((BACK))** to the parent folder one level up — all the way back to the drives list if you want.

If there are more than 40 files in the current folder that match the file type, the first 40 will show and you'll get a **»»MORE»»** selection at the bottom of the main list. Click on it, and subsequent lists showing the next 40 will include **««BACK««** and **»»MORE»»** options depending on the total number of files that match the *file type*.

To cancel a *FileFinder* operation at any time, you simply click outside the list or press ESC.

FileFinder Pro Does Even More

FileFinder Pro supports an optional *include* file that restricts each user to just the drives and folder paths specified in their own *FileFinder_includes.txt* file. This lets you provide users with plain English *descriptions* as starting points instead of arcane drives and folder names, making it easier for them to click directly to the folders containing the files they need.

FileFinder Pro also supports **ALL** as a file type which, when selected, displays files of all types.

FileFinder Pro also lets *authorized* users create new folders on-the-fly. (*You* decide which users are authorized.)

Contact us at *Inside Sesame* if you're interested in purchasing this advanced version of *FileFinder*.

Add Shortcuts to 'My Folders'

If you store your created files in just few locations, you can add a *FileFinder* shortcut to them. For example, if you're big on *My Documents* and want to have a shortcut to it, start Notepad and type in the path to *My Documents* on *your* computer. It'll probably be something like this:

```
C:\Documents and Settings\tedsmith\My Documents
```

Replace *tedsmith* with whatever yours is.

If you have a second folder to add a shortcut for, type it on the second line. For example:

```
P:\Cases\Pleadings\Civil\2006\Bill_Jones
```

Add another line for each shortcut you want, then save the file to your Sesame working directory (the *Start in* directory in your Sesame shortcut properties) as *FileFinder_myfolders.txt*. This way, your favorite locations will then appear on your drives list flyout where you can get to them with a single mouse click..
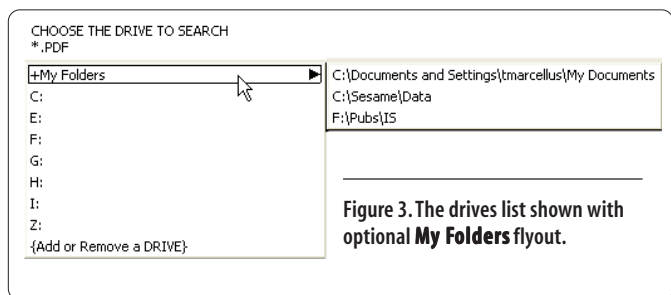

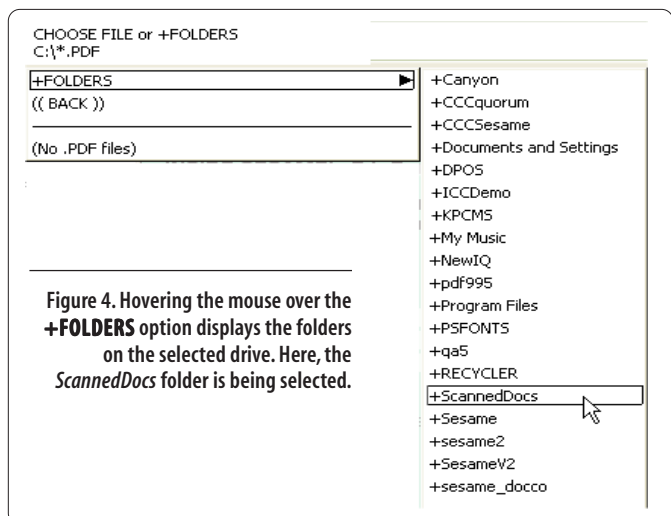**Figure 3. The drives list shown with optional My Folders flyout.**

Figure 4. Hovering the mouse over the +FOLDERS option displays the folders on the selected drive. Here, the ScannedDocs folder is being selected.
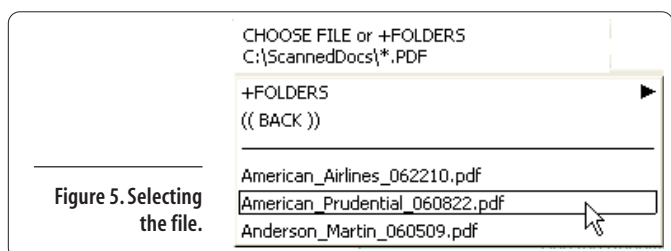

Figure 5. Selecting the file.

What you can do with the selected file

Once you've drilled down to the file you want, *FileFinder* gives you the three options shown in Figure 6.

- Paste the filepath into the first available **File** field.

- View the file only.

- View the file, then decide whether to paste its filepath.

If your option includes *previewing* the file, *FileFinder* will open it in whatever program it's associated with. A *.doc* file will open in Word or WordPad; a *.pdf* file in Acrobat Reader; an *.htm* file in your browser, and so forth. If you try to "preview" a risky executable type file, you'll get a warning message. If you try to preview a file that isn't associated with a program, you'll get this message:

> *This file does not have a program associated with it for performing this action. Create an association in the Folder Options control panel.*

(Just for fun, associate the *.db* file extension in Windows with *sesame.exe*, add *DB* to your file types list, then use *FileFinder* to find and select a Sesame *.db* file.)

If your option includes *pasting* the filepath into an LE, and there's more than one target LE to paste to, you'll get a final picklist to choose the tartet LE. Otherwise, *FileFinder* will paste to the sole target LE.

Two more things happen when you select any of the four options: the full filepath is written to a Global Value named *gvFile* as well as to a text file named *FileFinder_file.txt* in your Sesame working directory (the *Start in* directory specified in your Sesame shortcut properties). This way, you can retrieve the filepath from any form or report within the same application:

```
var vMyFile as String
vMyFile = @GlobalValue("gvFile")
```

Or, you can get the filepath from anywhere in Sesame:

```
var vMyFile as String
vMyFile = @Insert("FileFinder_file.txt")
```

The latter is always the safer option in a shared application as Global Values can be overwritten by others.

First use

The first time you use *FileFinder*, you'll be prompted to supply the drive letters available on your computer, including any mapped drives you may want to access. (*My Computer* will tell you what they are.) *FileFinder* will also prompt you for the types of files you might want to find. The most common types (*pdf*, *doc*, *htm*, *txt*, *jpg*, *bmp*, *png*) are supplied as defaults.

Setting the Number of Files and Folders Per List

You can set the maximum number of files and folders displayed on a *FileFinder* list by changing the *vMaxList* variable at the beginning of the *FileFinder* program. Try 50 for a 1280 x 1068 screen, 40 (the default) for a 1024 x 768 screen, or 30 for a (*yech!*) 800 x 600 screen. The idea is to limit the list length so you don't have to keep moving your mouse pointer down past the bottom of the screen to bring any remaining list items into view.

You can optionally store the two-digit setting (*50*, *40*, *30* or whatever) in a file named *FileFinder_maxlist.txt* in your Sesame working directory (the *Start in* directory in your Sesame shortcut properties) and *FileFinder* will automatically read it in and use it.

FileFinder saves these settings in little initialization files named *FileFinder_drives.txt* and *FileFinder_filetypes.txt*, respectively, in your Sesame working directory.

Dropping *FileFinder* into a form

To add *FileFinder* to another form, follow these steps:

1. Place a button on the form with a name like **Find File**, along with one or more LE's to store the filepath(s) of any selected file(s).

2. Copy the program from the sample *FileFinder* app and paste it into the *On Element Entry* slot for the new button on your form.

3. Locate the line near the top of the program that reads:

```
var vTargetLEs as String = "File1,File2,File3"
```

Replace these LE names with your own LE name (or names) from step 1 above, separating each one with a comma.

FileFinder was designed and tested in Windows XP. If you find a bug in it, please let us know. Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

The *FileFinder* program can be customized in a variety of ways. If you'd like a custom version of *FileFinder* for a particular application, feel free to contact us about it.
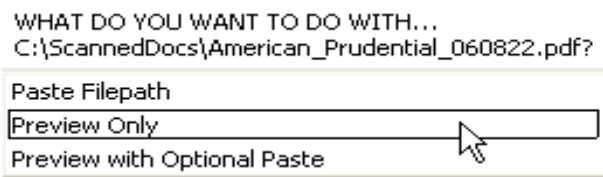

Figure 6. Telling FileFinder what to do with the selected file.