iPhone Tips – Keyboard Shortcut & Navigation Tricks

Modified from Simon Ng's article on simonblog.com

iPhone provides some sweeties on its "touch" keyboard that let you type a little bit faster and makes you feel a little bit better even without a real keyboard. It also offers some hidden & delightful tricks on its multi-touch screen to help you navigate faster.

Double tap to insert a period and space

When you type a message in SMS, Mail or Notes, you'll probably end your sentence with a full-stop (i.e. period). Normally, you type the period by tapping ".?123″ key and then the "." key. iPhone simplifies this frequent keystroke. When you complete the sentence, just double tap the SPACE button and iPhone will automatically fill in a period and space for you.

If it doesn't work, you may need to enable the "." shortcut in keyboard setting.

Type punctuation with less tap

How do you type punctuation using the touch keyboard? I believe you'll usually tap the ".?123″ key and switch to the punctuation key panel. Then you'll tap the desired punctuation and tap "ABC" key to switch back to the QWERT keyboard. You may not know iPhone offers a way to minimize key tap. When you need to type a punctuation, instead of tap and release the ".?123″ key, hold it. And you'll be brought to punctuation. Still hold your finger and slide your finger to that punctuation (e.g., comma). Okay, now release your finger to type the punctuation. And you'll find that it's automatically switched back to the QWERT keyboard.

Type currency with "$" sign

Hold the "$" sign of the keyboard, it'll pop-up a selection of currency including Euro, Japanese Yen, British Pound and Korean Won.
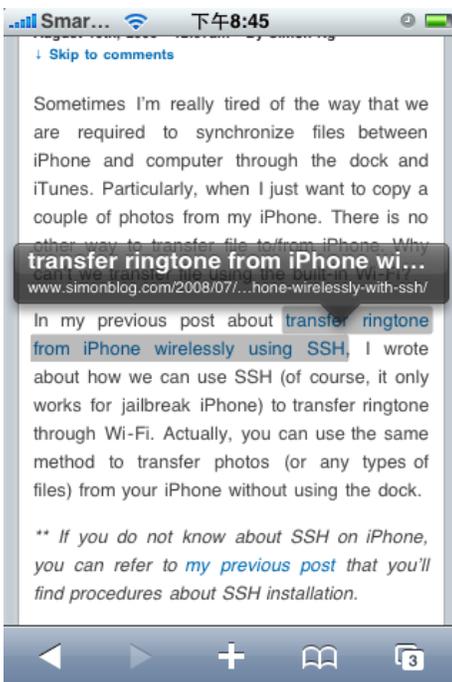
Zoom into your message
When you type your message, try to tap and hold any text in the message. iPhone will pop-up a magnifying lens to zoom into your message

Domain shortcut (for iPhone 2.0 or up)
This tip is only for the new 3G iPhone or if you have upgraded the iPhone to 2.0 firmware. The latest firmware makes a very subtle improvement in the keyboard. When you are using Safari and typing a URL, hold ".com" button and iPhone will pop-up a selection of ".org", ".net" and ".edu" domains for you to tap directly.

The same also works in the Mail. Tap the period (i.e., ".") and hold it. You'll see a selection of ".net", ".edu", ".org" and ".com".

Navigate faster with the top bar
The top bar in iPhone is not just for display of the network signal strength, time or battery life. In Safari, when browsing some lengthy webpage, you may want to find a quicker way to scroll back to the top (i.e., location bar). Just tap on the top bar and iPhone will bring you back to the very top of the web page.

For iPhone firmware 2.0, this feature applies to all other applications such as Mail, Notes and Contacts.

View URL of Hyperlink in Safari
On desktop, to reveal the URL of a hyperlink in the browser, you probably move your cursor onto the hyperlink and the URL is shown in the status bar. So, can we do this on an iPhone? Absolutely. Just press and hold on the hyperlink, and the URL pops up.