

California Computer Care

News,
Views,
Tips and
Cool Techniques
for CCC Members

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We
speak
Geek,
so you
don't
have to.

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It will happen eventually. . .

You hit your Mac's power switch and something goes wrong. Your usually friendly assistant refuses to help you. Here are three nasty situations you may encounter.

Sad Mac

Normally your Mac greets you with a smiling face on a colored background. However, when things go really, really bad, you'll see a frowning Mac on a black background.



The Sad Mac means that broken hardware or massively damaged software has prevented your friend from even beginning the Start-up process. Do this:

- Grab your System install CD-ROM disk.
- Open your CD-ROM drive and pop the disk in. Close the drive.
- Shut down (If your Mac has a true power switch, use the switch to turn it off. If no switch exists, or you don't know where it is, pull the plug and once it is off, plug Mac back in.).
- Now, turn your Mac on and immediately push and hold down the letter c key on your keyboard.

If your problem is caused by bad software, your Mac will now start up using the incorruptible software information on the CD. If you get the Sad Mac again, your problem is caused by broken hardware, please give us a call: (800) 540-8989.

If your Mac did start up, use the System software restore program on the CD-ROM to install a fresh System on your Mac. 90% of the time, this will fix your problem. And, as always, use *DiskFirstAid* to check your hard disk drive.

Flashing question mark

If you see a flashing question mark instead of the familiar Happy Mac, this means that your computer has begun the Start-up process, but it has been stymied by not finding the System software that it expected. This might be a broken hard disk drive or badly damaged software. Proceed as with the Sad Mac. If the software refuses to install, you probably have a dead hard disk drive. Here's a good excuse to get that bigger hard drive.

Error message or freeze during Start-up.

If you get an error message or your Mac stops part way and refuses to continue you may have a damaged component in your System software. Do this:

- Use your left hand to hold down the Apple and Control keys on your keyboard.
- With your right hand, push the power key. With iMacs, just pushing the power button on the face of the iMac will often do the job, or you may have to resort to the paperclip trick. Your Mac will restart.
- As soon as you hear the Start-up tone, hold down the Shift key on your keyboard until you see the *Welcome to Macintosh, Extensions off* (or *Extensions disabled*) screen (if you don't see it, start again).

Your Mac will start normally, but you will not see the marching icons at the bottom of the screen. Those marching icons represent software that you need, so right now your Mac is in a semi-functioning state. Now to determine which of the disabled extensions is causing you grief. Do this:

- Go under the Apple menu and slide down to the Control Panels folder. A sub-menu will pop out. From the sub-menu, choose the Extensions Manager.

Note: The Extensions Manager lists all of the *Extensions*, *Control Panels* and *Start-up Items* that your Mac possesses. You'll notice that they are listed under these headings (if they are not, go to the *View* menu and choose *As Folders*). An X next to an Extension or Control Panel's name indicates that it is turned on (no X? It's turned off.)

Next, do this:

- Click the check box next to the heading *Extensions* to get rid of the X.
- At the bottom of the Extensions Manager window you'll see a Restart button; click it to restart your Mac.

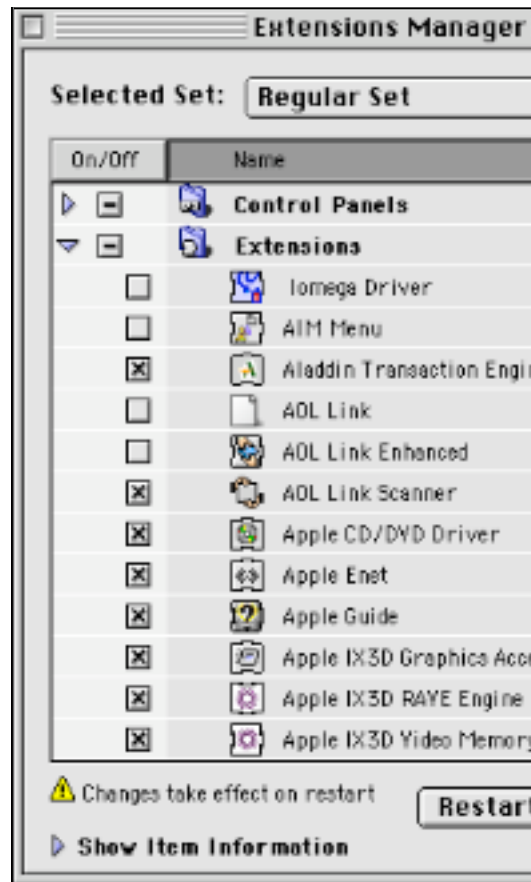
Note: Your Mac now restarts with Control Panels and Start-up Items turned on and Extensions turned off. Did it start up OK? If so, your problem is caused by an Extension. If not, your problem is probably caused by a Control Panel or Start-up item (very rare). Assuming that your Mac started up fine, do this:

- Open the Extensions Manager.
- Count the number of items that appear under the Extensions heading (you may have over 100!) and click the check boxes to turn on the first half of them.
- Click the Restart button.

Note: Did your Mac start up OK? If so,

your problem is in the half of the Extensions that are still off. If not, then the problem is the half that are now on. Assuming that your Mac did start up fine, do this:

- Open the Extensions Manager.
- Count the number of Extensions that are still off and click the check boxes to turn on half of them.
- Click the Restart button.



A few repeats of these last few steps will quickly reveal the culprit. Once identified, determine if the Extension is needed. If you don't use it, throw it away. If you do use it, replace it with a fresh copy from your software install CD, Restart and get back to work. *Whew!*

September Tip—

Have you ever noticed that in many dialog boxes you will see a button that looks like this:



Now buttons usually look like this:



What's with the first button? Well, that first button is trying to tell you that it is the button that your Mac thinks that you will most likely choose. Since it is the button Mac expects to be clicked, Mac gives you an easier way to click it: just type the Return or Enter key on your keyboard. So, when it's easier to hit Return than grab the mouse, you can click these buttons without removing your hands from the keyboard. *Have fun!*

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