

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.

OK, NOW... *Mac OS X 10.4 "Tiger" is ready (if you must)*

With the recent release of the Mac OS X 10.4.3 updater, Mac OS X 10.4 (Tiger) appears to be ready for the rest of us. I have installed 10.4.3 on several Macs with excellent results. Of course there are still problems, but these are the problems that plague all operating system upgrades (there is always *pain* with operating system upgrades!). If you are curious about these, see the Mac OS X 10.4 pages at *MacFixIt*:

<http://www.macfixit.com/search.php?productID=8848>

Don't be overly alarmed by the stories that you see there. These are "worst case" reports by people who push their Macs far beyond what we do.



So now that Mac OS X 10.4 (Tiger) is reliable, is it what you need? If you recall the September 2005 issue of *CCC News*, I suggested three questions to ask about upgrades:

- 1) Can I do everything that I want to do as easily as it can be done?
- 2) Do I need to use new hardware or software that my current Mac can't handle?
- 3) Do I have new goals and projects that my current Mac wasn't designed to do?

Here is some clarification specific to asking these questions about an operating system upgrade. Because of that, the questions will need to be rephrased a bit.

- 1) Can I (now) do everything that I want to do as *easily* as it can be done?

Mac OS X 10.4 offers some ease of use advantages over previous Mac OSes. While I am not a fan of the two most touted improvements, the *Spotlight* search feature and the *Dashboard* widget environment, many folks find these useful and fun. Even curmudgeonly me has found a couple of indispensable *Dashboard* widgets:

- *AccuWeather.com*'s weather widget. Instant six-day forecasts customizable for any location in the U.S.
- *RabbitRadio* plays live NPR broadcasts with the click of a single button.

Other niceties include the new *Mail 2.0.5* feature that allows you to see mail on your ISP's mail server before you download it (great for deleting spam or poison emails that kill *Mail* when they are downloaded). *Safari 2.0.2* offers several cool, new uses including the ability to email web page content or a link to a web page to a friend with one mouse click, *Private Browsing* that prevents your web habits from being saved for prying eyes to see and *Import* and *Export* bookmarks functions. Printing is also improved and printing setup simplified. You will experience a small speed increase on newer Macs though 10.4 may be difficult for older Macs to swallow.

- 2) Do I need to use new hardware or software that my current OS can't handle?

As yet, there is little software or hardware that will only run on 10.4 (excluding Macs that come with 10.4 factory installed). But, such hardware and software will inevitably appear. It is impossible to know when. If you are running a Mac OS older than 10.3 (*Panther*), then this may be an issue for you as there are several products that need, at minimum, 10.3 to run.

- 3) Do I have new goals and projects that my current OS wasn't designed to do?

If you suddenly get the urge to develop *Dashboard* widgets or take a full time job as

a professional photographer, Mac OS X 10.4 may be essential to you. For most of us, 10.3 can do everything we want and need.

If you choose to upgrade, keep these tips in mind:

- 1) **Back up your hard drive.** If things go wrong, you need to be able to recover easily. Mr. Murphy can make you life miserable in a moment. Back ups keep him at bay.
- 2) **Clean up existing problems.** A new operating system is not going to fix what ails your Mac. Be sure to use the *Disk Utility* to repair your Mac's hard drive and repair disk permissions. Once your Mac is healthy and happy, then you can upgrade.
- 3) **Disconnect all external hard disk drives (including iPods).** If convenient, disconnect all peripherals.
- 4) **Don't run any other software during the installation.** Quit all open applications and remove any OS hacks that you may have installed (if you don't know what this means, it probably doesn't apply to you).
- 5) **Install without customizing.** Unless you know exactly what you are doing, don't fiddle with the installer. Be prepared for a long wait on older Macs.

6) **Download and install the free-standing Mac OS X 10.4.3 Combo updater** (do not use *Software Update*, very important). Updater is available here:

<http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/macosexupdate1043combo.html>

7) **Bring out the *Disk Utility* and repair permissions again.** Don't skip this step!

8) **Check this list for incompatible software and if you are using any of them, update to compatible versions or delete the old versions:**

<http://www.macintouch.com/tiger-review/incompatibility.html>

9) **Run *Software Update* (under the Apple menu) and use it to install any items that appear.** As you know, I usually discourage this behavior, but your new operating system requires this extraordinary step.

After all of this, go do something nice for yourself and then enjoy your *Tiger*.

As usual, the CCC Newsletter will take a break in December. Look for the traditional *MacWorld Expo* report mid January.

Happy Holidays

to all!

November Tip

If you are a movie or TV fan, you should know about one of the most fun sites on the World Wide Web: IMDb. IMDb is the *Internet Movie Database* and is found at:

<http://www.imdb.com>

On the IMDb, you will find information on thousands of films and television shows of all types. You can easily search on stars, directors, writers, even grips and gaffers. Did you know that Dick Foran made 95 movies? That there are 14 different versions of the *Scarlet Letter* including one in Japanese? Or that only one movie has ever been made in the Esperanto language (*Incubus*, starring William Shatner)? There doesn't seem to be anything too obscure for the IMDb to know.

You can also find professional and amateur reviews and write your own reviews to share with others.

So, the next time you want to remember what movie starred Sean Penn, Robert Duvall and Don Cheadle (*Colors*, 1988); drop by the IMDb and look it up for free.

California Computer Care

P.O. Box 9445

Santa Rosa, CA 95405

(800) 540-8989

help@calcompcare.com

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