

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.

HOW TO Update

Eventually, it is going to happen, you need to update some software! If software publishers would just stop making new versions and let us fully learn to use the ones we have, life would be *sooooo* much easier. But, along comes an update and it has that new feature that you just have to have.

Application or OS software, the upgrade process is similar. Let's take a *worst-case* view of the issue and talk about updating the most important software you have: the operating system (OS). So, to get you in the proper mind set, think of that favorite task: painting your house.

Step 1: Scrape it.

Every piece of commercial software (and most shareware and freeware) comes with a *Read Me* document that will give you important information about the install process. Mac OS usually calls this document: *Before you install*. By reading *Before you install*, you will learn if the updated version has problems with other software that you may have (delete these before you install the update) as well as any hardware or software pre-requisites that need to be met prior to the installation. So, scrape off that funky software, update that firmware and spackle up them holes.

Step 2: Clean it.

You won't need TSP, but you will need to make sure that your Mac has no unsolved, pre-existing problems. If Mac hasn't been behaving properly, find out why and fix the problem. **Do not expect a software update, especially an operating system update, to solve current performance problems.**

Even if everything is working well, you still need to "wash down" your Mac before proceeding. So, if you have Alsoft *DiskWarrior*, start up your Mac with the *DiskWarrior* CD

and use its test and repair functions to replace the directory on your hard disk drive.

Another useful preparation tool is *AppleJack*. With *AppleJack* you can clear caches, check for hard drive errors, find damaged preference files and repair disk permissions. *AppleJack* is free and available at:

<http://applejack.sourceforge.net/>

If you haven't used *AppleJack* to repair disk permissions, use *Disk Utility* (a free part of Mac OS X) to repair wonky permissions on your startup hard drive. If you have more than one hard drive, use *Disk Utility* to find and repair any problems on the other drives. Lastly, use a log cleaner like *MacJanitor*. *MacJanitor* is free and available from:

http://personalpages.tds.net/~brian_hill/macjanitor.html

Step 3: Paint it.

Now, you finally get to install the update. Follow the update's instructions to the letter, as this is no time to be creative. In most cases the basic install procedure, usually called *Easy Install*, is the best way to go.

When installing an update, particularly an operating system update, be sure that no other software is running. Check the Dock and quit all applications, except the Finder (and Dashboard, if you have it); then begin.

When the update is done, the update installer will usually demand that you restart your Mac. It is a good idea to restart even if the installer does not ask you to do so.

Step 4: Clean up.

Even the best installers can leave a few spatters and flakes about. Use *DiskWarrior*, *AppleJack* and *Disk Utility* to clean up the small messes that may be left behind. *Don't forget to repair disk permissions!*

Step 5: *Stand back and admire your work.* Test out that new, updated software. Try the improved features. Experiment with the new capabilities. Is it faster? Does it now do all of the things you always wanted it to do? Does it finally live up to the publisher's advertising hype?

And, wasn't that worth it?

Note for OS upgrades:

Our old friend/enemy, *Software Update*, will offer you operating system upgrades. Don't fall for it! Instead, download the installer and run it from your Desktop. Here's how:

- 1) Go to <http://www.apple.com>
- 2) Click on the **Support** tab.
- 3) On the **Support** page, you will see a search field labeled: Search Support.
- 4) Use the Search Support field to find the update that you want. For example, the latest version of *Mac OS X Tiger* is 10.4.10. This update comes in two versions: 10.4.10 delta and 10.4.10 combo. The delta version is for special circumstances, so search for "10.4.10 combo." When you find it, click the *Download* button. This also applies to all other OS updates. If you want the *Mac OS X 10.3.9* update (the last update made for 10.3), search for the "10.3.9 combo" updater.

New Stuff!

Tuesday, August 7 brought welcome news. Several important Apple products received overdue improvements.

iMacs—

New aluminum case designs, glossy screens, faster processors, more RAM, a cool aluminum keyboard and lower prices. The 17" model is gone; in its place a 20" model at \$1199.00. The *iMac* now straddles the line between consumer and professional grade.

iLife—

Major upgrades to *iPhoto*, *iMovie* and *iWeb*. *iPhone* compatibility has been added. Much controversy about the *iMovie* upgrade! *iMovie* is now much easier for the beginner to use, but has lost many of its advanced tools. \$79.00.

iWork—

iWork gains a spreadsheet application called *Numbers*. *Pages* gets a big improvement and *Keynote* a few new features. *Pages* is much improved for word processing. The new *iWork* finally appears to be the replacement for buggy, old *AppleWorks* that it was supposed to be. \$79.00.

Detailed reviews to come as soon as I get my hands on these new goodies!

August Tip—

Be space conscious.

Your Mac's hard drive can fill up quickly with large, space-consuming picture, music and movie files. An overfilled hard drive will make your Mac slow and inefficient. At worst, files can become corrupted or lost altogether! Don't let this happen.

A good, basic rule is to never allow your hard drive to be over 90% full. Ideally, you want your hard drive no more than 75% full, but a maximum between 75% and 90% is fine.

For example, a 40GB hard drive should always have more than 4GB of available space on it (10GB available would be much better). Remove old, seldom used files by throwing them away, or, if you want to keep them, back up old files to CD, Zip, or another hard drive. *Then toss 'em.*

All Macs can have more than one hard drive. So, if you'd like to add another hard drive, contact us to learn the best way to add space for your Mac and your peace of mind.

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