

Getting Ready For Leopard!

Take the time to assess your computer and make crucial preparations for the upgrade to OSX 10.5 Leopard.

As the new Mac OSX 10.5 Leopard operating system is becoming available, you need to make a decision as to whether or not to upgrade. There are certainly many compelling reasons to take advantage of the new features in Leopard - the “Spaces” virtual desktops, the “Time Machine” visual backup and version maintenance program, the new finder, more powerful Spotlight searching, and many more new features and improvements (go to www.apple.com for more information).

However, there are some critical questions you must satisfy before making the leap:

1. Can your Mac take it?

As always, a new operating system will have some hefty new requirements in order to run properly and efficiently. Apple’s *minimum recommendations* are:

- PowerPC-based G4 Power Macintosh (minimum 867MHz processor)
- 512 MB RAM memory
- 9 GB of available disk space
- DVD drive needed for the installation discs

Leopard will really scream on the newer Intel Macs, so if you have the minimum system or older machine, now is a good excuse to go out and purchase a new Mac!

2. Will your software programs be Leopard-compatible?.

Two things about this: Some current applications may either break under Leopard or they will work but not be able to take advantage of some new features in Leopard. It is rather likely, however, that most applications will work fine, but it is important that you verify this - especially for your must-work, “mission-critical” applications! Check your software’s support website and, if necessary, download and install any updates. In most cases, unless you have very old versions, the updates will be free. Additionally, I recommend going to www.versiontracker.com as a clearinghouse for quality Mac software and updates.

Readiness at a glance...

- Hardware Minimums Met?
- Software Compatibility
- Backups



3. Verify that your backups are current.

You *are* making regular backups of your document files, right? This becomes even more critical when you are about to make such a major change to your system. Aside from whatever form of backups you make, I suggest that you “clone” your Macs internal drive to an external Firewire drive - making an identical startup drive with all your data, programs and operating system. My favorite cloning program is “SuperDuper!” (www.shirt-pocket.com). You should clone your drive right before upgrading to Leopard just in case Leopard doesn’t work out for you and you need to revert back to the way things were just before you launched the Leopard installer.



Should you upgrade?

Even though your system is ready, and you have current backups, should you plunge right in or should you wait? If you like being on the very cutting edge of your technology, enjoy tinkering with computers and software, AND you have met all the qualifications for upgrading, then *go for it!!* However, like many typical Mac users, you may want to take the “wait-and-see” approach, and let the early adopters take on any early Leopard issues that may arise. Apple typically releases an update within a month of a new OS introduction. This update contains bug fixes for the inevitable problems that crop up during the early days of an OS’ wide distribution.

If you are interested in monitoring how things are going with Leopard once it is released, visit www.MacFixit.com.