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nick vandome

macOS Sierra

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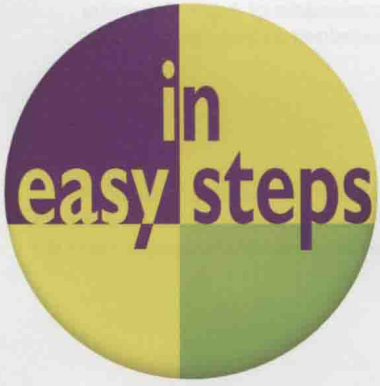
macOS Sierra



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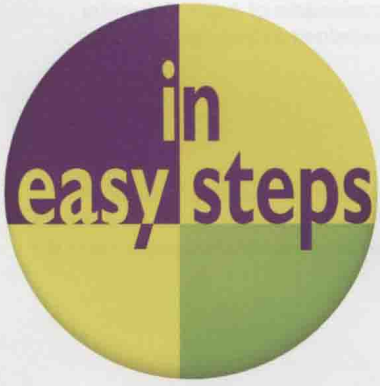

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1 Introducing macOS Sierra

macOS Sierra is the latest operating system from Apple, for its range of desktop and laptop computers. This chapter introduces macOS Sierra, showing how to install it and get started using its array of features including, for the first time, the digital voice assistant, Siri.

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About macOS Sierra

macOS Sierra is the 12th version (10.12) of the operating system for Apple computers; the iMac, MacBook, Mac Mini and Mac Pro. Although it is still a development of the OS X (pronounced 'ten') operating system for Macs, the naming convention has been changed to macOS, to more clearly identify it as belonging to the Mac, rather than a mobile device such as the iPad or iPhone. Like earlier versions, it is based on the UNIX programming language, which is a very stable and secure operating environment and ensures that macOS is one of the most stable consumer operating systems that has ever been designed. More importantly for the user, it is also one of the most stylish and user-friendly operating systems available.

UNIX is an operating system that has traditionally been used for large commercial mainframe computers. It is renowned for its stability and ability to be used within different computing environments.

When one of macOS Sierra's predecessors, OS X Mountain Lion, was introduced in 2012, it contained a range of innovative functions that were inspired by Apple's mobile devices: iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. This was continued with the next versions of the operating system, OS X Yosemite, OS X El Capitan and now macOS Sierra. The three main areas where the functionality of the mobile devices has been transferred to the desktop and laptop operating system are:

- The way apps can be downloaded and installed. Instead of using a disc, macOS Sierra utilizes the App Store to provide apps, which can be installed in a couple of steps.
- Options for navigating around pages and applications on a trackpad or a Magic Mouse. Instead of having to use a mouse or a traditional laptop trackpad, macOS Sierra continues to use Multi-Touch Gestures for navigating apps and web pages.
- Siri, Apple's digital voice assistant, has now made the transition from being only available on mobile devices to being included with macOS Sierra too.

The New icon pictured above indicates a new or enhanced feature introduced with the latest version of macOS – macOS Sierra.

macOS Sierra continues the evolution of the operating system, by adding more features and enhancing the ones that were already there. These include: enhancements to the Photos app, making it easier to find photos according to people and places, and a Memories function for automatically displaying your best photos; improvements to the iCloud Drive for storing files; a wider range of emojis for adding to Messages; and a redesigned interface for iTunes and Apple Music.

Installing macOS Sierra

When it comes to installing macOS Sierra you do not need to worry about an installation CD or DVD; it can be downloaded and installed directly from the online App Store. New Macs will have macOS Sierra installed. The following range is compatible with macOS Sierra, and can be upgraded with it:

- iMac (Late 2009 or newer)
- MacBook (Late 2009 or newer)
- MacBook Pro (2010 or newer)
- MacBook Air (2010 or newer)
- Mac Mini (2010 or newer)
- Mac Pro (2010 or newer)

If you want to install macOS Sierra on an existing Mac, you will need to have the minimum requirements of:

- OS X Lion (10.7.5) or later (see first tip).
- Intel Core 2 Duo, Core i3, Core i5, Core i7 or Xeon processor, or higher.
- 2GB of memory and 8.8GB of available storage for installation.

If your Mac meets these requirements, you can download and install macOS Sierra, for free, as follows:

1. Click on this icon on the Dock to access the App Store (or select **Software Update**, see tip)

2. Locate the **macOS Sierra** icon (this will be on the **Featured** page or within the **Utilities** category)

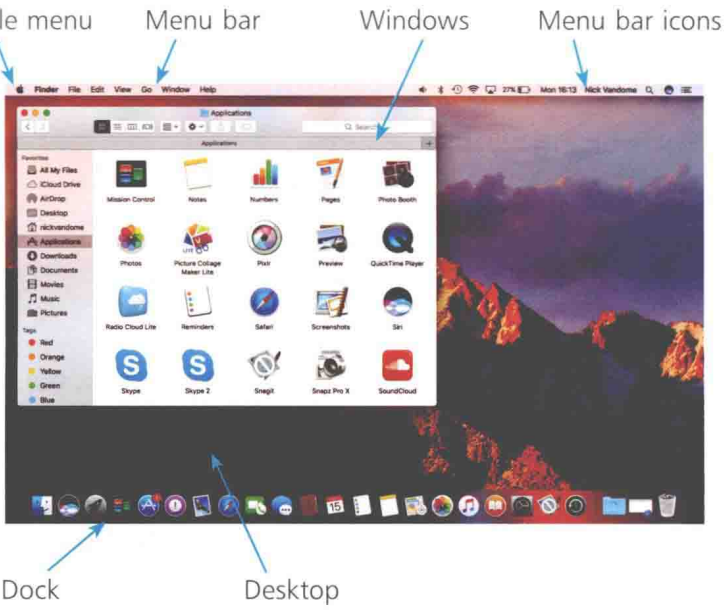
3. Click on the **Download** button and follow the installation instructions

macOS Sierra is a free upgrade from the App Store if you already have the Lion, Mountain Lion, Mavericks, Yosemite or El Capitan versions of OS X on your Mac.

To check your computer's software version and upgrade options, click on **Apple menu** > **About This Mac** from the main Menu bar. Click on the **Overview** tab and click on the **Software Update** button. See page 13 for details.

The macOS Environment

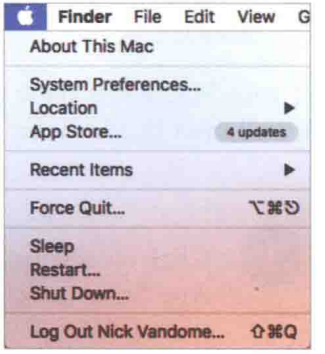
The first most noticeable element about macOS is its elegant user interface. This has been designed to create a user friendly graphic overlay to the UNIX operating system at the heart of macOS, and it is a combination of rich colors and sharp, original graphics. The main elements that make up the initial macOS environment are:



The Dock is designed to help make organizing and opening items as quick and easy as possible. For a detailed look at the Dock, see Chapter Two.

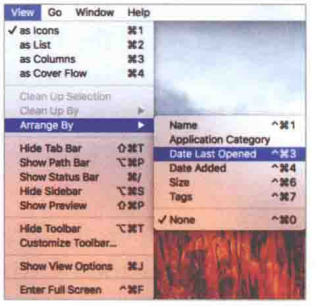
Many of the behind-the-scenes features of macOS Sierra are aimed at saving power on your Mac. These include time coalescing technologies for saving processing and battery power; features for saving energy when apps are not being used; power saving features in Safari for ignoring additional content provided by web page plug-ins; and memory compression to make your Mac quicker and more responsive.

The **Apple menu** is standardized throughout macOS, regardless of the app in use.



Menus

Menus in macOS contain commands for the operating system and any relevant apps. If there is an arrow next to a command it means there are subsequent options for the item. Some menus also incorporate the same transparency as the sidebar so that the background shows through.



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