

# The South Bay Mug

# MACINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, May, 2007

## MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

### System Updates

Each major System release, e.g. OS 10.3 to 10.4, is invariably followed by a series of system updates to correct problems, enhance performance and thwart security threats. Each update is also followed by reports of major problems. I've never had any and you are probably hearing from the few with problems and not from the millions who've installed the update smoothly. Still, it is prudent to exercise caution when installing updates since it's replacing important system components. Re-installing the System is not fun and I occasionally back up my computer to a bootable external hard drive just in case.

Some people recommend rather elaborate procedures: back up before updating; both before and after updating, clear caches, repair permissions, and run Disk-Warrior; and so forth. But if updating is too complicated, users won't do it at all or, even worse, will just be confused. MacFixIt.com has recommended a simple, minimalist procedure for performing system updates and I am basing this article on it. I always wait a while after an update is released. Apple is watching and if serious problems occur they will take steps to correct them.

#### 1. General principles.

1. Leave all Apple-installed components where they are. Don't, for example, move Safari out of /Applications, or move your user Home folder.
2. In System Preferences > Software Update, make certain that "Download important updates in the background" is not checked. If your computer has multiple users, do this for every user. It might also be wise to uncheck "Check for updates"; one user, the administrator, should then be responsible for

checking manually for updates from time to time. (To do so, choose Apple > Software Update.)

**2. When an update is available in Software Update,** do not press the Install button in the Software Update window. Instead, download any desired update packages individually and without actually performing the installation. Software Update allows you to do so, but this feature is not at all obvious, so here are instructions:

1. Make sure there is a check-mark at the left of all and only the packages you want to download.
2. Choose Update > Download Only. After performing the download(s), note the location, on your hard drive, of the downloaded material.

[Alternatively, go to [apple.com/support/downloads/](http://apple.com/support/downloads/) and download the desired package. With major system updates, this is the way to obtain the full "combo update", which is often better than the incremental update offered by Software Update.]

**3. Restart into Safe mode,** by holding down the Shift key from the moment you hear the startup "bong" to the moment the "spinning gear" appears. Expect this startup to take longer than usual. Don't be alarmed if the fans whir loudly during the "spinning gear" display. Eventually you will be presented with the Safe Boot login screen. Log in as the administrator.

**4. Without launching any other applications,** double-click one installer package and perform the installation. Do nothing else; just sit there and wait until the installation is complete.

**5. Repeat step 3** after every installation. Finally, restart normally. This, too, may take longer than usual, and you may experience a "double-restart." Be patient!



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Helping Beginners

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