

Understanding the Help! Report

About the Help! Report

The Help! report is the result of intelligently cross-referencing collected system information against the Help! knowledgebase. Each problem found is listed next to a typical alert icon, representing the problem's severity:

A stop icon means that you should discontinue use of the indicated item until you have corrected the associated problem. Failure to do so could result in eventual system crashing and data loss.

A caution icon suggests that the indicated problem is not critical, but could affect system performance in ways that could lead to more serious problems. You should attempt to correct these when it is practical to do so.

A note icon identifies a condition of which you should be aware, even though it may not have any adverse effects. Always review these messages as they may be related to a problem Help! is unable to detect.

Following the recommendations of the Help! report will dramatically improve the reliability of your Macintosh. It will also make your Macintosh much more receptive to the introduction of new hardware and software by warning you of preexisting conditions.

Navigating the Report Window

The report window displays the contents of the Help! report. It is a standard resizable document window with both horizontal and vertical scroll bars.

Use the vertical scroll bar to scroll between different sections of the report. If the report window is not wide enough to display the entire report, use the horizontal scroll bar to view the left and right sides of the report.

To scroll to a specific section of the report, use the table of contents pop-up menu,

located in the bottom left corner of the report window. Click on the downward pointing arrow, then select the section you want to view from the menu that appears; there will be a “•” to the left of the current section. After making a choice, the report window will automatically scroll to the new section.

Title Page

The title page, which is always the first page of the report, contains important information about the report, including a table of contents. Refer to this page if you are tracking several different reports, or need to locate a specific section within the report.

Summary Section

The summary section is an overview of the number of problems that Help! found, categorized using the Stop, Caution, and Note icons. Detailed descriptions of these problems are listed in the sections that follow.

Conflicts Section

A conflict happens when two or more software and/or hardware items refuse to co-exist on the same system, although they may work flawlessly when used separately. Conflicts are most commonly caused by a design flaw or some limitation of the system architecture. In other cases, they happen because two items are competing to perform the same function. The end result is inevitably system crashing and data loss.

The only way to correct a conflict is to discontinue using one of the conflicting items; usually the one which is less desirable. However, it is usually possible to continue using these items separately as long as they are never active at the same time.

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To disable a conflicting extension (INIT), move it outside of the Extensions folder or System Folder .

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To disable a conflicting control panel (cdev), move it outside of the Control Panels folder or System Folder .

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Conflicting applications do not necessarily need to be removed, but you must make sure not to use them when their conflicting counterparts are active.

- Conflicting hardware may need to be physically removed, or in some cases just turned off, while their conflicting counterparts are active. You should never attempt to add or remove hardware while your machine is turned on or plugged in.

(Note:

Extension and control panel conflicts are always reported, regardless of whether or not they have been resolved by altering their loading order.)

Incompatibilities Section

Incompatibilities occur when software and/or hardware items were not designed to be used together, or interfere with each other's functionality. As a result, the incompatible items may

- not work at all
- appear to work, but exhibit erratic behavior
- continue to work flawlessly while inadvertently affecting the behavior of other items

Incompatibilities are usually more of a nuisance than a danger, but should be taken seriously as they can sometimes contribute to more serious problems. They can usually be resolved using the same methods as conflicts (see Conflicts Section). However, some incompatible items simply cannot be used, and should be removed permanently.

Environmental Section

The Macintosh environment refers to the current system configuration, which includes

- system software
- processor
- amount of installed memory (RAM)
- available hard drive space
-

installed software

Items listed in this section generally give information about the environment and suggests ways to improve its use and reliability.

Damaged Files Section

While Help! is scanning for information on the hard drives, it checks the integrity of the software files. Files listed in this section have been found to be damaged and may exhibit abnormal behavior if used. In most cases, damaged files are useless and should be removed. If an important file is found to be damaged, you may want to use a data recovery utility to repair it.

Uninstalled Files Section

There are special types of system files that need to be installed in specific folders for them to work properly. With System 7 or later, dedicated folders inside the System Folder are available to organize these files:

- the Extensions folder, for extensions, printer drivers, and chooser documents
- the Control Panels folder, for control panels
- the Fonts folder (beginning with System 7.1), for font files and suitcases

Whenever one of these files is found out of place, it is reported; even if it has been moved by extension manager software.

Duplicate Files Section

Help! records information about every software file it finds and warns you if it sees more than one copy of a file with the same creator, and version. If this information matches another file, the files are more than likely to be identical and redundant. Removing duplicate files can free up available hard drive space for more important needs.

Current Versions Section

This section lists current information about software it found during the scan. Grouped by software type, the Current Versions section lists

- the version that is currently installed
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the latest known version of the software in the knowledgebase

- notes about the version information that was found

Reviewing this section regularly will keep you up to date on all of the latest products you are already using. You can benefit from using the latest versions of software in that

- new features are frequently available
- they are usually more compatible with other software products
- they most always have bug fixes which make them more reliable
- discounts are sometimes available on the price of future upgrades

Printing the Report Window

To print a high quality image of thereport to a printer

1.
Make sure the correct printer is selected with the Chooser.
2.
Choose Page Setup... from the File menu to select printing options such as paper size and orientation.

3.
Click OK if any settings were altered. The report will be re-imaged to reflect the changes if necessary.

4.
Choose Print... from the File menu.

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Click the Print button.

The report will be printed to the selected printer.

Closing the Report Window

The report window may be closed at any time by

- clicking the close box of the report window
- choosing Close from the File menu
- quitting the application