

Managing Extensions

More extensions (or control panels) are not always better. Most extensions require at least some system resources, often slowing the Mac down a bit. And it is not unknown for different extensions to clash, causing errors and sometimes even crashes.

It is, therefore, advisable to use only those extensions that are currently needed and disable all which are not required at the moment. For example, when you only scan once in a while, you may want to normally disable the scanner driver until you need it.

Because of the way extensions work, activating or deactivating them requires you to restart your Macintosh.

Disabling control panels or extensions

When you disable control panels or extensions, you should proceed with care in order not to get unwanted results. There are several potential problems of which you should be aware:

- * Some extensions or control panels may be required for certain parts of your computer to operate. For example, when you disable the CD-ROM driver, you cannot use your CD-ROM drive until you re-enable the driver again.
- * In certain, although rare, circumstances, disabling certain extensions may prevent your computer from booting. For example, disabling the Text Encoding Converter under Mac OS 8.5 and 8.6 causes the system folder to become unusable and you cannot boot any more from this volume.
- * Some extensions may require others to be usable. For example, the ISO 9660 File Access extension is only used when the Foreign File Access extension is also activated. If you are not aware of these dependencies, you may activate or deactivate extensions without getting the desired effect.

In most cases, these potential problems are noted in Extension Overload's description of the extensions. If you are not very familiar with a particular control panel or extension, we therefore recommend that you read this description to make sure you do not miss anything important.

Depending on what kind of files you want to disable, click the Control Panels or the Extensions button in Extension Overload's main window. The Control Panels window or the Extensions window opens.

oth windows are very similar; while in the following we will talk about the Control Panels window, everything said applies to the Extensions window as well.

The window is divided into two parts, the list of all control panels in the upper part and the information display in the lower part.

In the list, you find all control panels in your system folder, both active and disabled. For each file, its status is noted (on/off), its name, its version, the package to which it belongs, its size, its type code, and its creator code.

Packages are groups of files which are installed together to perform a common function or set of functions. Some well-known packages are: Mac OS 8.5, QuickTime 3.0, StuffIt Deluxe 4.5. Not all files are part of a package.

You can sort the list by each information item simply by clicking the appropriate column header - much like in the Finder of Mac OS 8. For example, to sort by version, click on the Version column header. To change the sort direction (i.e. ascending or descending), click the triangular shape at the upper right corner of the list.

Active control panels are indicated by a check mark in front of their names, deactivated by an empty check box. To deactivate an active control panel or vice versa, click the check box.

Remember that, potentially, problems can be caused by improperly activating or deactivating control panels and extensions. Unless you are familiar with a particular extension, we recommend that you look at the information available before you change its status.

To view the information for a control panel or extension, click on its name in the list. This displays its icon, kind, created and modified dates and its location in the middle section of the window. The information which Extension Overload's database contains for this file is displayed in the lower part of the window. (As in the Search Database window, the vendors e-mail and web addresses are also displayed. See the description of the Search Database window in the Getting Information section of this manual for details.)

When you are done activating or deactivating control panels and extensions, click Done to close the window and restart the Macintosh. If you want to close the window without changing the status of any control panel or extension, click Cancel.

Restarting the Macintosh is essential; before you do that, deactivating or activating an extension normally has no effect.

Activating control panels or extensions

Activating control panels or extensions is done exactly like deactivating them. See the preceding section for details.

What Extension Overload does when deactivating extensions

Extension Overload works like Apples Extension Manager when activating or deactivating extensions and is even compatible with it; i.e., you can deactivate an extension with one application and reactivate it with the other.

A deactivated extension is put into a special folder inside the system folder. The name of this folder depends on the language of the active operating system; for the US system, these folders are named "Control Panels (Disabled)" and "Extensions (Disabled)". When a file is re-enabled, it is simply moved back into its normal folder (i.e., "Control Panels" or "Extensions").