

The Most Comprehensive Guide To System Software Available ANYWHERE!

Version 1.3 - Released January 5, 1997

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Version 1.2 of The InformInit was awarded MacUser's Five-Mice Award.
Featured in Ric Ford's 9/30/96 "Macintouch" column in MacWeek.
Featured in the December, 1996 "Help Folder" column in MacUser.
A MacWorld Online Pick.

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PURPOSE:

This document has several purposes:

- To help users have the "cleanest" and newest System software possible.
- To satisfy curiosity as to what each and every control panel/extension is and does.
- To help Mac users prune their system folders of unnecessary extensions, control panels, etc., in the interests of both RAM consumption and compatibility issues.
- To provide information on the MacOS and System software to help users get to know their Macs better.

The contents of this document relating to specific files include descriptions of items, version numbers, RAM usage figures, incompatibility notes, and a few "secret gems" of info that may surprise you. If you don't see something listed here on your own computer, that's good--it probably doesn't belong there anyway. If it seems from the description that you should have it, go ahead and install it. You may also see some items on your computer even though they aren't needed. That could be because of a number of factors: Some of us have moved files and systems from earlier Macs and/or PowerMacs and haven't been very systematic about transferring stuff from our older system folder to our new one. Also, the Apple software installers often aren't very good about not installing things that aren't needed. This document will help you figure out what should (and shouldn't) be there.

The info here has been gathered from the following sources: Apple Tech Notes, manuals (imagine that...), opening files with ResEdit, various books, members of the Macintosh community, too numerous to mention (you know who you are), and lots and lots of "research" time. Please send all comments, questions, ideas, and requests to Dan Frakes at [<frakes@kagi.com>](mailto:frakes@kagi.com).

This document will be updated periodically, and new versions will be available, along with a list of updates/ revisions, from The InformInit's web site at [<http://www.AmbrosiaSW.com/DEF/InformInit.html>](http://www.AmbrosiaSW.com/DEF/InformInit.html).

The latest version should also be available at your nearest Info-Mac site and on AOL, although it usually takes a while for new files to be processed through these channels. Questions, comments, etc. should be directed to [<frakes@kagi.com>](mailto:frakes@kagi.com). Please be aware that I get over 100 email messages per day, many of them related to these two resources. I read every single one; however, there are times when my responses are a bit slower than others. In addition, over the past few months I've had a few email problems... if you don't get a response in a reasonable amount of time, feel free to re-send your message with the word "RESENT" in the subject. There's a small chance that your message didn't get through the first time.

This document is shareware.
Please see the "Please read this..." chapter for details.

Support shareware... it supports you!

WHY IS IT CALLED "The InformInit"?

Control Panels and Extensions are commonly referred to as "startup files" since they are loaded by the system software at startup. In the days before System 7, Control Panels and Extensions weren't conveniently located in their respective folders. Instead, they were found loose in the System Folder. In order to differentiate between these startup files and other files in the System Folder, they were

commonly referred to as "cdevs" and "inits" ("cdev" is the file type for a Control Panel and "init" is the file type of an Extension). Over time, many people (incorrectly) began to refer to any startup file as an "init." This term is still used by many Mac users today to refer to any extension, control panel, or other similar startup file. Since The InformInit began as a guide to extensions and control panels, the name was a play on the word "informant" which, according to my American Heritage Dictionary, means "one who discloses information." Thus, InformInit means "one who provides information on inits." The InformInit has actually outgrown its name, as it now provides information above and beyond control panels and extensions, but the name is widely known, memorable, and people seem to like it... :-)

FORMAT OF The InformInit:

The content of this document is broken up into chapters based on file type/topic. The chapter pull-down at the bottom of this window and the "Chapters" menu in the menu bar list them. There is also a very detailed table of contents which can be browsed by clicking on the box in the lower left-hand corner or by clicking on The InformInit icon (below). This icon is also located in the top-right corner of every chapter. NOTE: if you can't seem to find an item, make sure you check the "Non-RAM," "Groups" and "Third-Party" sections. Many items are included there based on their file type, functionality and developer.

- Chapter 1: This introduction page
- Chapter 2: 7.5.3 Info
- Chapter 3: 7.5.5 Info
- Chapter 4: Control Panels (A - L)
- Chapter 5: Control Panels (M - Z)
- Chapter 6: Extensions (A - F)
- Chapter 7: Extensions (G - Z)
- Chapter 8: Non-RAM Inits (items that do not take up System RAM at startup, including shared libraries, documents, components, communication tools, and chooser extensions)
- Chapter 9: Groups (A - OpenDoc) - files that are used together
- Chapter 10: Groups (Open Transport - Z)
- Chapter 11: Third-Party Control Panels
- Chapter 12: Third-Party Extensions
- Chapter 13: Microsoft Files (yes, they're confusing enough to have their own chapter)
- Chapter 14: Miscellaneous System Folder Contents
- Chapter 15: PRAM... What It Is, How to "Zap" It & What Gets Reset (with a few additional notes about "Finder Preferences")
- Chapter 16: Modern Memory Manager Info
- Chapter 17: Please read this... registration info
- Chapter 18: Update/Revision History

IMPORTANT!!!

The location of some files may not be obvious. You can use the "Find" command under the "File" menu to search the entire document for a file. You can also click on the title graphic on each page to access the "Find" dialog. I say this because many people write me with a message like "I couldn't find

'xxx' in The InformInit" when it's really in here. Sometimes a file's location isn't quite where you think it might be (i.e., in the "Groups" or "Non-RAM" chapters).

NOTATION LEGEND/DEFINITIONS OF SOME KEY TERMS:

Throughout this document, various items are contain special notations:

- Items which pertain ONLY to PowerMacs/PowerPC machines are marked by **PM**.
- RAM consumption figures are noted by [**U/R**] (see below).

If you are running Netscape Navigator, clicking on the "GO!" buttons will take you to the corresponding URL.

Also, there are frequent mentions of "PCI Macs," "PowerMacs," "680x0 Macs," "PowerPC- native," etc. Just to clarify for those of you who are unfamiliar with these terms, the following summarizes these terms:

- 680x0 Macs: Macs based on the older Motorola 68K processor. The earliest of these chips was the 68000. As you move up through the 68020, 68030, and, most recently, the 68040 chips (there was no 68010 Mac), clock speeds increase and even the same clock speed is faster (i.e. a 68040 chip running at 33 MHz ['megahertz'] is much faster than a 68030 at 33 MHz). The terms "680x0" and "68K" refer to any/all of these chips. Apple only produces one computer with a 680x0 chip anymore, the PowerBook 190, which uses a 33 MHz 68040.
- PowerMacs/PowerPC Macs/PowerMac clones: newer Macs are based on the "PowerPC" processor chip, developed in cooperation by Motorola, IBM and Apple. The PowerPC chip uses a completely different design and architecture, as well as a different kind of "code" for applications (code is the "language" that a program is written in). This chip is much faster than the 68K chips, and when applications are written in "native" PowerPC code (code specifically written for the new chip's architecture), the speed increase is very noticeable. Over the past couple of years, Apple has been gradually moving all of their systems over to the PowerPC. In order to make the transition from 68K to PowerPC as painless as possible, Apple included "emulators" in the Mac System software which allow the PowerPC chip to run applications written for the 68K chips by "emulating" a 68K chip. Unfortunately, 68K applications running in emulation on PowerPC computers can oftentimes run slower than on an actual 68K Mac. Thus whenever possible it is beneficial to have "PowerPC- native" applications. In 1995 Apple began allowing other computer manufacturers to license the Macintosh architecture and make Macintosh "clones," which are computers not made by Apple, but which run the Macintosh operating system, have Macintosh "ROMs" (the code/ instructions/ information which is actually contained on the computer's logic board), and are basically just Macs with a different name. Nearly all, if not all, of these clones use the PowerPC chip. As with the 68K chips, there are various "models" of the PowerPC chip: 601, 603, 603e, 604, 604e, etc. For the most part, a higher number/ letter means a faster processor, given the same "speed" (i.e. a 100 MHz 604 is much faster than a 100 MHz 601). However, the 603 series is a lower-power and less expensive version of the PowerPC chip (it is used on PowerBooks, Performas, and lower-cost clones), and can at times be slower than the 601 series, given the same clock speed. But this marginal loss in speed has been more than offset by the fact that while the 601 chip topped out at just over 100 MHz, the 603 series has been pushed, at the time of this writing, to 300 MHz.
- PCI Mac: most Macs/Mac clones have "expansion slots" which allow the user to expand the

capabilities of their computer. Some examples of these enhancements include video and graphics cards, hard drive interfaces and accelerators, and "MIDI" interfaces. Older Macs use an expansion architecture, called NuBus, which few other computers used (these expansion cards are called "NuBus cards"). Much of the rest of the computer world uses another standard for expansion, called "PCI" (these expansion cards are called "PCI cards"). While both the NuBus and PCI architectures have their advantages, the much larger number of PCI cards available, as well as a desire to be less "non-standard" with the rest of the computer world, led Apple to begin using PCI expansion slots in their computers. The PCI architecture debuted on the PowerMac 9500, then appeared on the 7200/7500/8500 series. Apple is gradually implementing the PCI bus (the hardware system which uses PCI cards) in all of their models. Currently only a few Performa models still use the NuBus architecture. Most Mac clones also use PCI. There are a few differences with respect to hardware operation and System software because of this different architecture; it is sometimes necessary to refer specifically to these computers. Thus, Macs which use the newer PCI bus are often referred to as "PCI Macs." In addition, since every Mac or Mac clone which uses the PCI architecture also uses the PowerPC chip, all "PCI Macs" are also "PowerMacs" (or PowerMac clones).

TIPS ON TRANSFERRING FILES / INSTALLING A NEW SYSTEM:

The best way to transfer files over from an older system to your new system folder is this: Don't! For the most problem-free installation, do a clean install of the latest system for your Mac, apply the appropriate updates (see the next two chapters), then re-install all of your peripheral stuff from the original disks. Then, if you don't have fresh copies, transfer over the random inits you can't live without. Finally, go through this list and remove/disable the stuff that the System installer installs that you don't need. This is the only way you're assured that you haven't taken something out that you need, nor have you put something in that you don't.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the "clean install process," the trick is to hold down Command-Shift-K from the initial installer dialog box. You will be prompted for either a new system folder or a replacement system folder. If you want the complete, thorough, and extremely loooong instructions, refer to Apple's Clean Install Tech Note, which is available from the Tech Info Library (see "Resources," below). Some people don't believe in doing a clean install unless you have problems. I usually take a more pro-active approach, and believe that you avoid problems in the first place by doing a clean install. Your mileage may vary.

It has been suggested by many people that more conflicts can be avoided by performing a low-level reformat of your hard drive before you settle in. Personally, I do this whenever I get a new drive, whether it be a hard drive, Zip disk, Jaz disk, etc. On an Apple drive, this can be done using the Drive Setup (the latest version at the time of this writing is 1.2) or HDSC setup programs; for third-party drives, use the latest version of the software that came with the drive.

Finally, it is also a good idea not to transfer over all of your preferences. If at all possible, start anew and set your preferences running off of the new system.

TIPS/WARNINGS ON "TRASHING" FILES:

As you go through The InformInit, there will be many times you will read the description of a file, and think that it's obvious that you don't need it. You may even have a pressing urge to put the file in the trash and delete it :-). However, if you're ever the least bit unsure, it's always a good idea to keep a copy of the file around. For example, make a folder called "Not Needed?" and put all of the questionable files in there. If your machine runs fine for a while without them, then go ahead and get

rid of them. This process will save you a lot of trouble if it turns out you really did need a file, but got rid of it.

RAM INFO:

Throughout this document, I have included RAM info to help you reduce the size of your system file's RAM consumption. This info has been gathered from Conflict Catcher. The figures following each item are presented in the form of [U/R]. "U" is the RAM (in K) actually used by the item at startup on my system. "R" is the maximum amount requested by the item. There are actually two types of RAM for startup files to use: "system" memory and "high" memory. Since the implications of the two types of memory are the same for most people, I haven't differentiated between the two. At any given time, depending upon the configuration of your system, the amount used can vary. For example, Adobe Type Manager 3.9 will take up more or less memory depending upon how many fonts you have installed. So... "your mileage may vary" -- although for some items, you'll probably never use the full amount "requested." If an item is followed by "LB," it means that RAM info on this item isn't discernible due to the fact that it loads, and therefore has allocated memory, before memory statistics can be gathered. If an item is followed by "NA," it means that the file does not allocate memory at startup. PLEA FOR HELP: This info is a pain to compile, so your help is appreciated. If any readers can provide help with this info, please email me.

HELP!

The following are inits that people have requested info about. If you have any info on them (What do they do? What installs them? What happens if they aren't installed? What, if any, conflicts do they cause?), please let me know. Also, if the name of an item indicates part of its functionality, I usually figure that much out on my own ("The QuickTime Conferencing extension is needed to do QuickTime Conferencing"). I'm usually looking for what the item does specifically to/for your system.

- AccuSoft (shared library)
- Apple QD3D Driver[<1]
- Apple QD3D Plug-In [<1]
- cineMac Helper
- Control Panel Handler (extension)
- DisplayLib
- Dongles Peace Init
- Karma Extension (installed by Metrowerks CW9)
- Link Tools Manager
- Menu Manager Update
- Palomar Print Queue Kit (v2.0)
- PC Net Exchange (v1.0.1) pre-System 7.5
- Presenter INIT 1.9
- QuickDraw 3D IR
- SCSI Update extension (included with the AppleShare IP 5.0 beta)
- Serial Tool - the communications tool
- Serial Update 406 (which was eliminated by the 7.5 Update 2.0, and was part of the Apple Personal Modem package)
- More information on what all the Microsoft inits do
- Text Encoding Converter (v1.0.3): part of the CyberDog installation

RESOURCES:

Some other great resources/info can be found at the following sites; if Netscape is running, click on the "GO!" button to go to the corresponding URL; otherwise, copy and paste:

- Apple Computer, Inc.
<<http://www.apple.com/>>
- Apple Tech Info Library (standard web page):
<<http://til.info.apple.com/til/til.html>>
- Apple Tech Info Library (browsable gopher site):
<<gopher://info.apple.com/11/TIL>>
- Apple Technical Support Online:
<<http://support.info.apple.com/tso/tso-home.html>>
- Complete Conflict Compendium:
<<http://www.quillserv.com/www/c3/c3.html>>
- Evangelist Web Site:
<<http://www.evangelist.macaddict.com/>>
- Green Mountain Software: makers of DocMaker, which is what The InformInit is created with:
<<http://www.hsv.tis.net/~greenmtn>>
- Internet Starter Kit for Macintosh: the reference for the Internet on a Mac:
<<http://www.tidbits.com/iskm/default.html>>
- Macintosh Resource Page:
<<http://www.macresource.pair.com/>>
- MacFixIt - by Ted Landau (formerly the Sad Macs Home Page):
<<http://www.macfixit.com/>>
- MacInTouch - by Ric Ford:
<<http://www.macintouch.com/>>
- Mark Sproul's Info Pages:
<<http://msproul.rutgers.edu/>>
- Open Transport 101 - from MacUser (an older article, but still good info):
<http://www.zdnet.com/macuser/mu_0796/handson/hotech.html>
- Performance Tuning Your Mac for Games - a sort of "Mini-InformInit" for gamers:
<<http://www.ambrosiasw.com/netgames/performance.html>>
- Power Macintosh Resource Page:
<<http://rampages.onramp.net/~stevent/powermac.html>>
- PowerPC Faq Page:
<http://www.mot.com/SPS/PowerPC/library/ppc_faq/ppc_faq.html>
- "Unofficial" Information Alley Home Page:
<<http://www.wire.net.au/~czar/InfoAlley/infhome.html>>

DISCLAIMER:

Yes, I eventually had to put one of these in.

I am providing this product for your use and information. At the time of this writing everything in here was accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have taken considerable time and care to make sure that the information contained herein is as accurate and comprehensive as possible. However, be aware that there are times when no "official" documentation exists for an item. In addition, even when documentation does exist, sometimes the developers (including Apple) and their documentation are either unclear, contradictory, or just plain wrong. I assume no responsibility for what you, the reader, does with this information. I assume no responsibility for your computer, your data, your hardware, your software, you, or your mental well-being. By reading and using this product, you agree not to hold

me liable for anything. If you do not agree to these terms, go to the "File" menu and select "Quit." Then throw this file away and forget you ever had it.

Did that cover everything? :-)

FINAL NOTES AND HOW TO CONTACT ME:

Please email me with requests; I'll see what I can do. I'd also like to point out that if you want to make this whole issue simpler and easier, I would highly recommend purchasing a commercial startup manager, such as Now Startup Manager or Casady & Greene's Conflict Catcher. There is also a shareware startup manager, ExAminer, which is quite a step up from Apple's Extensions Manager. These, like Apple's Extensions Manager, allow you to "turn off" inits without actually "trashing" them (so they're always there if you ever need them), and they also allow you to set up different "sets" of inits which you can load in different circumstances. I personally would recommend Conflict Catcher. Not only does it allow you to see and manage the loading of all the files in your system folder (including fonts, Apple Menu items, invisible files, etc.), but it also gives complete descriptions of many and useful information such as RAM consumption. It's conflict-solving abilities are unmatched (no, I don't work for them...).

Casady & Greene (Conflict Catcher):

<http://www.casadyg.com/>>

Now Software (Now Utilities, including Now Startup Manager):

<<http://www.Nowsoft.com/>>

ExAminer:

<<http://members.aol.com/mweasner/examiner.html>>

Dan Frakes

he Pruning Pages & Home of The Informlinit:

<http://www.AmbrosiaSW.com/DEF/>>

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