FireFox

Which version works for you?

FireFox, the very popular alternative web browser to Apple's Safari, is now in version 47.x. Much of what is driving the updates to web browsers these days is security, and it is the lack of those security features that can make older versions of Safari, FireFox and Chrome (Google's web browser) incompatible with some websites.

The only way to upgrade Safari is to upgrade the operating system (MacOSX) itself, as Safari is now delivered by Apple as part of the operating system and not as a stand-alone application. Upgrading the operating system can be quite a process, especially just to get a newer version of Safari, and might not be possible on some older Macs. The solution in the past, particularly for users of Mac OSX 10.6 Snow Leopard or 10.7 Lion, has been to install FireFox. This has resolved the website compatibility issues without having to upgrade the operating system. However, FireFox v47.x needs MacOSX 10.9, 10.10 or 10.11.

It is still possible to download older versions of FireFox from their website which will work with 10.6 and 10.7, and even 10.5, but they are hard to find, so here are some links:

For MacOSX 10.5.x Leopard you need FireFox 16.0.2:
https://ftp.mozilla.org/pub/firefox/releases/16.0.2/mac/en-GB/

For MacOSX 10.6.x Snow Leopard and 10.7.x Lion you need FireFox 37.0.1:
https://ftp.mozilla.org/pub/firefox/releases/37.0.1/mac/en-GB/

Upgrade or Update?

What is the difference, don't they mean the same thing? In computing terms, no they don't. As you will have noticed every piece of software has a version number, such as Word v14. An upgrade to Word v14 would be to Word v15. An update to Word v14 would be Word v14.1. An upgrade is effectively a new product with lots of new features and usually requires purchasing. An update is a smaller incremental change to a piece of software, to fix bugs or correct compatibility issues. They are usually free.

It is usually a good idea to install updates when they become available, but this isn't always the case. Occasionally specific updates should be avoided because they cause more problems than they solve. A software developer will usually try and put out a update to fix the previous update as soon as possible.

Upgrades however require a little more consideration, as they may have specific hardware or software requirements which your current system doesn't meet, or if they are operating system upgrades may stop other pieces of software working.

Away from the desk…

Onehunga Waterfront Reserve. Good place for a Sunday afternoon stroll.

Getting to Grips with…Finder windows

To open a Finder window, either choose New Finder Window from the File menu in the menu bar at the top of the screen, or click on the Finder icon in the dock. To set which window opens by default when doing this, from the Finder menu choose Preferences and in the General section use the pop-up menu for "New Finder windows show" to choose your default location.
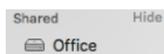
The View icons control the way in which files and folders are displayed in the current Finder window; icons, list, columns and cover flow. These options are also available from the View menu at the top of the screen.

The window name indicates which folder's contents are currently being displayed. You can move the window around the screen by dragging the window name, and you can see the location of the folder by holding down the Command key and clicking on the window name.

The Search filed enables you to search for files and folders by their name. This is different from using Spotlight (the magnifying glass at the top right hand corner of the screen), as that also searches the contents of files and the Internet.

Toolbar

The Toolbar provides quick access to functions which you may use frequently, such as changing the View (the way in which files and folders are displayed). You can add, remove and re-order the icons in the Toolbar by choose Customise Toolbar from the View menu in the menu bar at the top of the screen. The Toolbar can be hidden, along with the Sidebar, by choosing Hide Toolbar from the View menu.

Sidebar

In the *Favourites* section are links to regularly used items. This list can be reordered by dragging the items, and added to by dragging an item into the Sidebar. Items are removed by dragging them out of the sidebar.

The *Devices* section lists drives and other forms of storage.

The *Shared* section lists things available on your local network, such as other computers or shared drives.
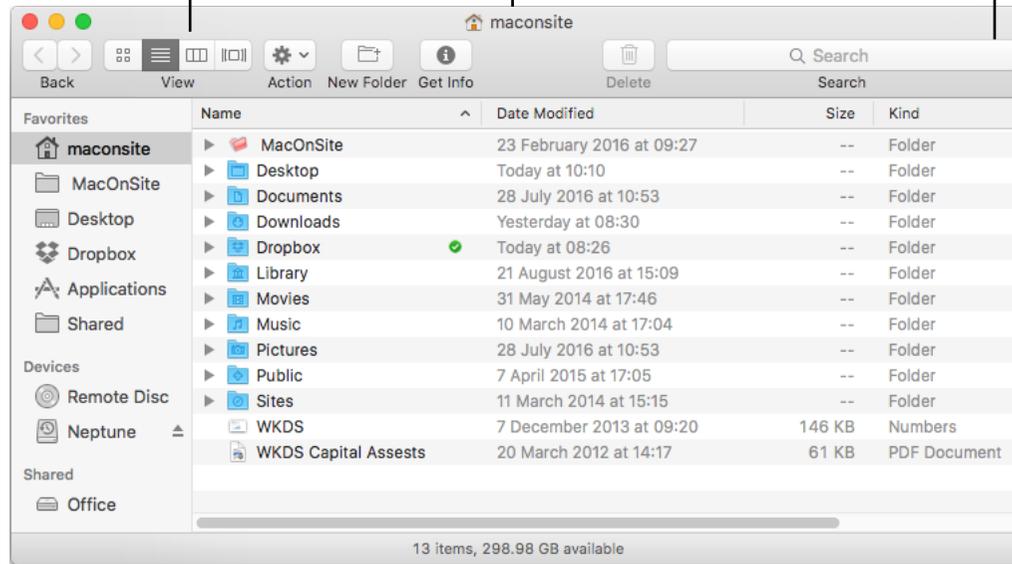
If you hover the cursor next to one of the sidebar headings, the Hide/Show option will appear enabling you hide or show the items in that section.

For further control of what appears in the sidebar, go to the Finder menu and choose Preferences then click on the Sidebar icon.

To change the width of a column, drag the vertical line at its right hand edge. To change the order in which the columns are displayed, click and hold on the name of the column and drag it left or right. To change the sort order in a column, click on the column name and then click on the ^ to toggle the sort order.

Status Bar

This shows the number of items in the currently window, but more useful is the indication of how much free space is left on the drive. You should aim to always have around 10% of your drive free.

Next issue… Where has all my drive space gone?