iOS 10 & macOS Sierra 10.12

Should you upgrade?

Apple has been very busy in the last couple of months releasing this year's upgrades to iOS (for iPhones and iPads) and macOS (as it has now been rebranded from MacOSX). More recently we have seen the release of new MacBook Pro's with Touch Bar technology and a reorganisation of their laptop range.

The questions to ask with operating system upgrades are do I need it and can my hardware run it? The best way to answer the first one is to take a look at Apple's website and read about the new features. Apple will also provide the answer to the second question, but they won't tell you if it is a good idea to install the upgrade on your hardware even if it will run it. iOS 10 seems to be happy on any iPhone from the 6 upwards (it might be a little slow on a 5), and on all the iPads that can run it. macOS Sierra however looks to be causing some performance issues on older computers. Macs from 2012 or earlier may slow down when running Sierra (go to the Apple menu and choose About this Mac to find the model of your Mac).

Are there any major differences? On an iPhone the Slide to Open action has been replaced by pressing the Home button, but is still there to answer phone calls. There are lots of changes in Messages (for texting) which I'm sure teenagers will enjoy but do nothing for me - oh I'm showing my age!! Sierra brings Siri to the Mac, so you now might get some response from your machine when shouting at it. In iCloud Drive there is now an option to store all the files that you have in your Desktop and Documents folders on your iCloud Drive. This could be useful for some but may require some money being spent on increasing your iCloud storage allocation. There also appear to be a few glitches with the service at the moment so it might be worth waiting awhile before using this feature heavily.

Both upgrades in my view are more evolution than revolution, and are not essential and more designed to just "keep things up-to-date".

Survey Results

Thank you everyone who participated in the Customer Feedback survey. There were some very interesting results and some very encouraging comments. The two most significant issues which came out of the feedback were:

Remote Support: I don't always have to come to your site. Some issues can be addressed by email or by me connecting to your Mac and taking control of it using TeamViewer software. In some situations this may enable me to resolve your issue more quickly.

Workshops: I am now working on putting together a workshop programme to provide tuition on a range subjects at an affordable price. The first workshops will probably be on iCloud and photo books and I am looking at using different locations around town. Watch your InBox!

Away from the desk…

Yours truly, enjoying a cup of tea at the Going West Books & Writers Festival.

Getting to Grips with…Drive Usage Management

Also known as "Why have I run out of space?"

All the data that you keep on your Mac, documents, pictures, movies, music, emails, and yes, even the stuff in your DropBox folder, all take up space on your internal hard disk. In addition, there is essential stuff stored on the hard disk, such as operating system and application software. Like any garage or storage unit, your hard disk has finite capacity, and also needs to have some free space to enable the system to move files around. There are applications which you can buy to find out what is using your hard disk space, but Apple provide a good range of tools built-in.

In the Finder, choose **Home** from the **Go** menu at the top of the screen, and you will get a window similar to the one shown here. Click on the List view icon.

Go to the **View** menu at the top of the screen and choose **Show view Options** and you will get a palette like this one displaying a range of options. Switch on the tick boxes by Calculate all sizes and Show Library Folder.

The Calculate all sizes option gets your Mac to start working through all the folders displayed in the window and calculating how much data they contain. The Library Folder is not normally visible (for good reasons) but for users of Mail and Outlook 2016, it is the folder where emails are stored. For Entourage and Outlook 2011 users, email is stored in the Documents folder.

Clicking on the Size column header sorts the folder in the window in order of size, the little ^ controlling the sort order. To see what is contributing to the folder's size, either click on the triangle by the folder name to expand it, or double-click the folder to open it and then switch on Calculate all sizes again (it is a window specific option).

The other place to look is by choosing **Computer** from the **Go** menu, and then look at the whole of your hard disk (in this instance called Earth).

The figure for the Users folder will be incorrect if you have more than one user account configured on your Mac.
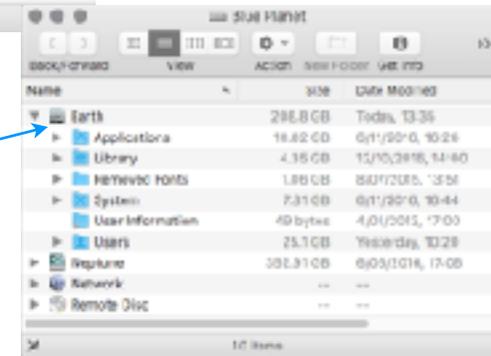
WARNING

Apple hide the Library folder for good reason, as it contains essential peripheral and parameter files that the OS and application software need. Do not start removing things from within the Library folder unless you know exactly what you are doing as chaos and non-starting Macs can result.
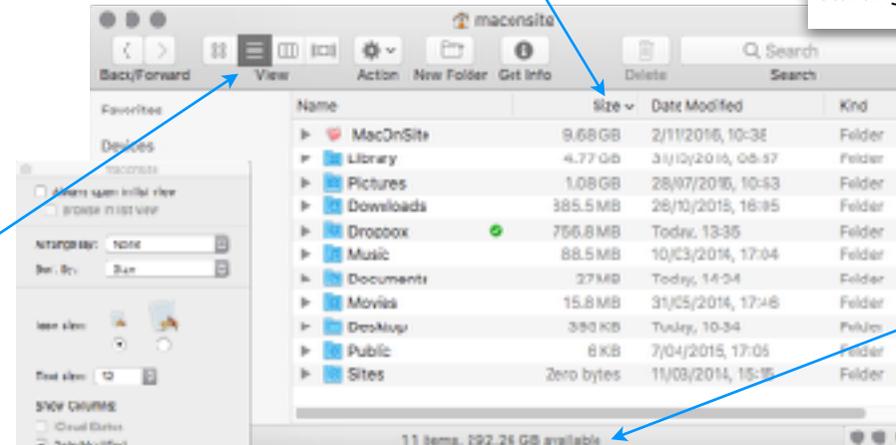
To have a permanent display of how much free space is available on your Mac, in the Finder from the **View** menu choose **Show Status Bar**. That will display the free space available on the hard disk at the bottom of each Finder window. There should always be 10% of the drive available.

Next issue… Why RAM isn't disk space