

1

Introducing OS X El Capitan

7

About OS X El Capitan	8
Installing OS X El Capitan	9
The OS X Environment	10
About Your Mac	12
About System Preferences	16
Changing the Appearance	17
Changing the Resolution	18
Accessibility	19
The Spoken Word	21
Shutting Down	22

2

Getting Up and Running

23

Introducing the Dock	24
Apps on the Dock	25
Setting Dock Preferences	26
Stacks on the Dock	28
Dock Menus	30
Working with Dock Items	31
Trash	33
System Preferences	34
About iCloud	36
Setting up iCloud	37
About the iCloud Drive	38
Continuity	40
Handoff	41
About Family Sharing	42
Using Family Sharing	44
Desktop Items	48
Ejecting Items	49
Resuming	50

3

Finder

51

Working with the Finder	52
Finder Folders	53
Finder Views	55
Covers	58
Quick Look	59
Finder Toolbar	60

Finder Sidebar	61
Finder Search	62
Copying and Moving Items	63
Working with Folders	64
Selecting Items	65
Finder Tabs	66
Tagging in the Finder	68
Spring-loaded Folders	70
Burnable Folders	71
Actions Button	72
Sharing from the Finder	73
Menus	74

4

Navigating in OS X El Capitan

75

The OS X Way of Navigating	76
OS X Scroll Bars	77
Split View	78
Trackpad Gestures	80
Magic Mouse Gestures	88
Multi-Touch Preferences	91
Mission Control	93
Spaces	94

5

OS X El Capitan Apps

95

Launchpad	96
Full Screen Apps	98
OS X Apps	100
Accessing the App Store	101
Downloading Apps	102
Finding Apps	104
Managing Your Apps	106

6

Getting Productive

107

Spotlight Search	108
Contacts (Address Book)	110
Calendar	112
Taking Notes	114
Setting Reminders	116
Notifications	118
Getting Around with Maps	120
Preview	124

Printing	125
OS X Utilities	126
Creating PDF Documents	128

7

Internet and Email

129

Getting Connected	130
Safari	132
Safari Sidebar	133
Safari Tabbed Browsing	134
Safari Top Sites	135
Safari Reader	136
Adding Bookmarks	137
Mail	138
Using Mail	139
Mail in Full Screen	140
Messaging	142
FaceTime	144

8

Digital Lifestyle

145

Using the Photos App	146
Viewing Photos	147
Editing Photos	149
Starting with iTunes	150
Buying Music with iTunes	151
Using Apple Music	152
Reading with iBooks	154
Movies, Music and Games	156

9

Sharing OS X

157

Adding Users	158
Deleting Users	160
Fast User Switching	161
Parental Controls	162

10

Networking

165

Networking Overview	166
Network Settings	168
File Sharing	169
Connecting to a Network	170

11

Maintaining OS X

173

Time Machine	174
Disk Utility	178
System Information	179
Activity Monitor	180
Updating Software	181
Gatekeeper	182
Privacy	183
Problems with Apps	184
General Troubleshooting	185

Index

187

1

Introducing OS X El Capitan

OS X El Capitan is the latest operating system from Apple, for its range of desktop and laptop computers. This chapter introduces OS X El Capitan and shows how to install it and get started using its wide array of features.

- 8** About OS X El Capitan
- 9** Installing OS X El Capitan
- 10** The OS X Environment
- 12** About Your Mac
- 16** About System Preferences
- 17** Changing the Appearance
- 18** Changing the Resolution
- 19** Accessibility
- 21** The Spoken Word
- 22** Shutting Down



UNIX is an operating system that has traditionally been used for large commercial mainframe computers. It is renowned for its stability and ability to be used within different computing environments.

About OS X El Capitan

OS X El Capitan is the eleventh version (10.11) of the operating system for Apple computers; the iMac, MacBook, Mac Mini and Mac Pro. When OS X (pronounced 'ten') was first introduced it was a major breakthrough in terms of ease of use and stability. It is based on the UNIX programming language, which is a very stable and secure operating environment and ensures that OS X is one of the most stable consumer operating systems that has ever been designed. More importantly for the user, it is also one of the most stylish and user-friendly operating systems available.

Through the previous 10 versions of OS X, it has been refined and improved in terms of both performance and functionality. This process continues with OS X El Capitan, which further develops the innovations introduced by its two immediate predecessors, OS X Yosemite and OS X Mountain Lion.

When OS X Mountain Lion was introduced, in 2012, it contained a range of innovative functions that were inspired by Apple's mobile devices: iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. This was continued with the next version of the operating system, OS X Yosemite, and now OS X El Capitan. The two main areas where the functionality of the mobile devices has been transferred to the desktop and laptop operating system are:

- The way apps can be downloaded and installed. Instead of using a disc, OS X El Capitan utilizes the App Store to provide apps, which can be installed in a couple of steps.
- Options for navigating around pages and applications on a trackpad or a Magic Mouse. Instead of having to use a mouse or a traditional laptop trackpad, OS X El Capitan allows Multi-Touch Gestures that provide a range of ways for accessing apps and web pages and navigating around them.



The New icon pictured above indicates a new or enhanced feature introduced with the latest version of OS X – El Capitan.

OS X El Capitan continues the evolution of the operating system, by adding more features and enhancing the ones that were already there. This includes greater functionality for full screen mode in various apps; Split View for improved productivity by being able to view two windows next to each other; added functions for the Notes app; the introduction of transit options for the Maps app; and the availability of Apple Music, the subscription music service from Apple. OS X El Capitan also continues the development of iCloud for backing up and sharing content from your Mac.

Installing OS X El Capitan

When it comes to installing OS X El Capitan you do not need to worry about an installation CD or DVD; it can be downloaded and installed directly from the online App Store. New Macs will have OS X El Capitan installed and the following range is compatible with OS X El Capitan and can be upgraded with it:

- iMac (Mid 2007 or newer)
- MacBook (Late 2008 Aluminum, or Early 2009 or newer)
- MacBook Pro (Mid/Late 2007 or newer)
- MacBook Air (Late 2008 or newer)
- Mac Mini (Early 2009 or newer)
- Mac Pro (Early 2008 or newer)

If you want to install OS X El Capitan on an existing Mac, you will need to have the minimum requirements of:

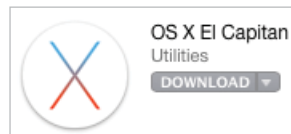
- OS X Snow Leopard (version 10.6.8), OS X Lion, OS X Mountain Lion, OS X Mavericks or OS X Yosemite
- Intel Core 2 Duo, Core i3, Core i5, Core i7, or Xeon processor, or higher
- 2GB of memory and 8GB of available storage for installation

If your Mac meets these requirements, you can download and install OS X El Capitan, for free, as follows:

- 1 Click on this icon on the Dock to access the App Store (or select **Software Update**, see tip)



- 2 Locate the **OS X El Capitan** icon (this will be on the **Featured** page or within the **Productivity** category)



- 3 Click on the **Download** button and follow the installation instructions



OS X El Capitan is a free upgrade from the App Store if you already have the Snow Leopard, Lion, Mountain Lion, Mavericks or Yosemite versions of OS X.



To check your computer's software version and upgrade options, click on **Apple menu > About This Mac** from the main Menu bar. See page 12 for details.



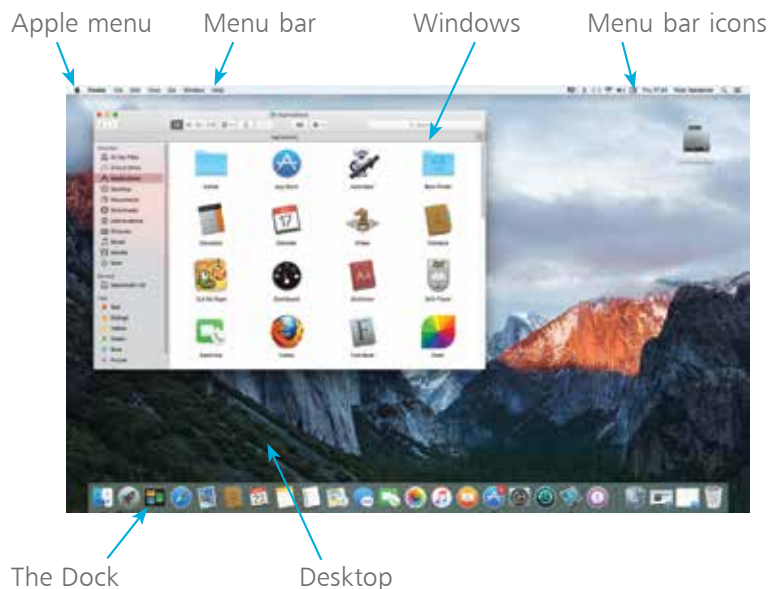
The Dock is designed to help make organizing and opening items as quick and easy as possible. For a detailed look at the Dock, see Chapter Two.



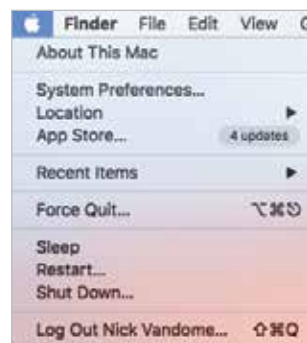
Many of the behind-the-scenes features of OS X El Capitan are aimed at saving power on your Mac. These include time coalescing technologies for saving processing and battery power, features for saving energy when apps are not being used; power saving features in Safari for ignoring additional content provided by web page plug-ins and memory compression to make your Mac quicker and more responsive.

The OS X Environment

The first most noticeable element about OS X is its elegant user interface. This has been designed to create a user friendly graphic overlay to the UNIX operating system at the heart of OS X and it is a combination of rich colors and sharp, original graphics. The main elements that make up the initial OS X environment are:



The **Apple menu** is standardized throughout OS X, regardless of the app in use



Menus

Menus in OS X contain commands for the operating system and any relevant apps. If there is an arrow next to a command it means there are subsequent options for the item. Some menus also incorporate the same transparency as the sidebar so that the background shows through.

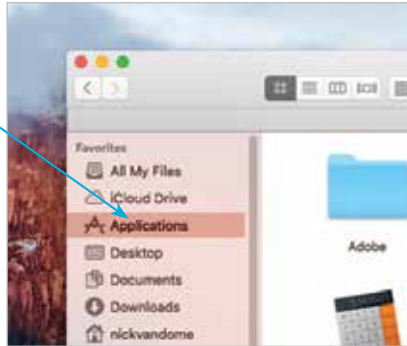


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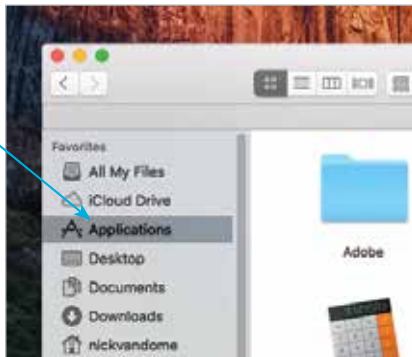
Transparency

One feature in OS X El Capitan is that the sidebar and toolbars in certain apps are transparent so that you can see some of the screen behind it. This also helps the uppermost window blend in with the background:

- 1 In certain apps with a sidebar, such as the Finder or the Safari sidebar, the background appears behind the sidebar



- 2 When you move the window the background behind the sidebar changes accordingly

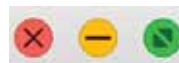


Window buttons

These appear in any open OS X window and can be used to manipulate the window. In OS X El Capitan they include a full screen option. Use the window buttons to, from left to right, close a window, minimize a window or maximize a window.



If an app has full screen functionality, this green button is available:



The red window button is used to close a window and in some cases, such as Notes, Reminders and Calendar, it also closes the app. The amber button is used to minimize a window, so that it appears at the right-hand side of the Dock.

About Your Mac

When you buy a new Mac, you will almost certainly check the technical specifications before you make a purchase. Once you have your Mac, there will be times when you will want to view these specifications again, such as the version of OS X in use, the amount of memory and the amount of storage. This can be done through the About This Mac option, which can be accessed from the Apple Menu. To do this:

- 1 Click on the **Apple Menu** and click on the **About This Mac** link



- 2 Click on the **Overview** tab



- 3 This window contains information about the version of OS X being used, processor, amount of memory, type of graphics card and serial number

- 4 Click on the **System Report...** button to view full details about the hardware and software on your Mac



The System Report section is also where you can check whether your Mac is compatible with the Handoff functionality, which does not work with most pre-2012 Macs. Click on the **Bluetooth** section in the **System Report** to see if Handoff is supported.



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5

Click on the **Software Update...** button to see available software updates for your Mac

Software Update...

Display information

This gives information about your Mac's display:

1

Click on the **Displays** tab

Displays

2

This window contains information about your Mac's display, including the type, size, resolution and graphics card



3

Click on the **Displays Preferences...**

Displays Preferences...

button to view options for changing the display's resolution, brightness and color



For more information about Software Updates, see page 181.

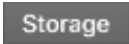


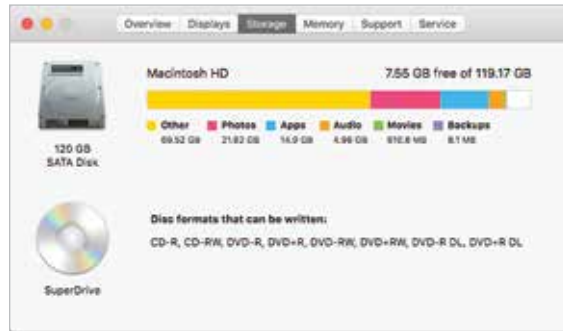
For more information about changing the resolution, see page 18.

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Storage information

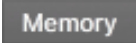
This contains information about your Mac's physical and removable storage:

- 1 Click on the **Storage** tab 
- 2 This window contains information about the used and available storage on your hard disk and also options for writing various types of CDs and DVDs



Memory information

This contains information about your Mac's memory, which is used to run OS X and also the applications on your computer:

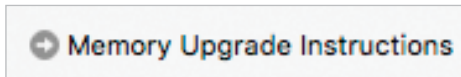
- 1 Click on the **Memory** tab 
- 2 This window contains information about the memory chips that are in your Mac



...cont'd

3

Click on the **Memory Upgrade Instructions** if you want to upgrade your memory



4

A page on the Apple website opens, and gives instructions for upgrading memory chips for different makes and models of Macs



Always wear an anti-static wristband if you are opening your Mac to insert new memory chips, or any other time when you are working on the components of your Mac. This will prevent a build-up of static electricity which could short-circuit the parts and cause permanent damage.

Support

The **Support** tab provides links to a range of help options for your Mac and OS X.



Service

The **Service** tab provides links to service and repair options and also the AppleCare Protection Plan, for extending the initial one-year warranty for your Mac.



About System Preferences

OS X El Capitan has a wide range of options for customizing and configuring the way that your Mac operates. These are located within the System Preferences section. To access this:



For more detailed information about the Dock, see Chapter Two.

- 1 Click on this button on the Dock (the bar of icons that appears along the bottom of the screen), or from the Applications folder



- 2 All of the options are shown in the **System Preferences** window



For a detailed look at the System Preferences, see pages 34-35.

- 3 Click once on an item to open it in the main System Preferences window. Each item will have a number of options for customization



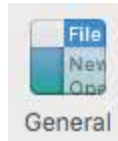
- 4 Click on the **Show All** button to return to the main System Preferences window



Changing the Appearance

The general appearance of items within OS X El Capitan can be changed within the General System Preferences. This includes the color of buttons, menus and windows, highlight colors and the size of icons in the sidebar. To make these changes:

- 1 Click on this button in the **System Preferences** folder



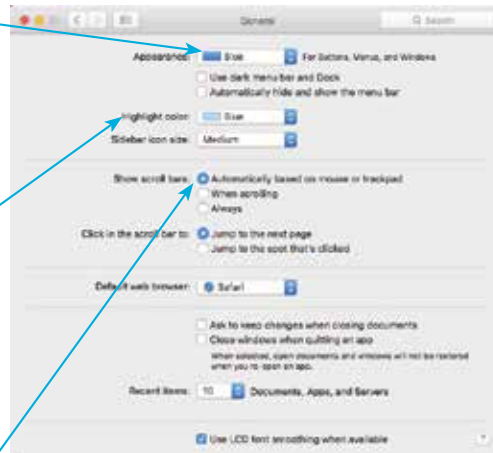
- 2 The default options are displayed

- 3 Click here to select a color for buttons, menus and windows

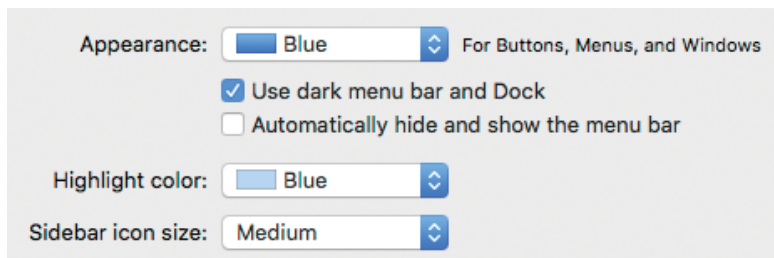
- 4 Click here to select a highlight color for items

- 5 Click here for options for the scroll bars in OS X El Capitan

- 6 The general appearance of OS X El Capitan can be customized to your own style



Another option in System Preferences is for **Desktop & Screensaver**. This has tabs for these items, from which you can select a background wallpaper for your Mac and also a screensaver for when it is inactive.





A higher resolution makes items appear sharper on the screen, even though they appear physically smaller.

Changing the Resolution

For most computer users the size at which items are displayed on the screen is a crucial issue: if items are too small this can make them hard to read and lead to eye strain; too large and you have to spend a lot of time scrolling around to see everything.

The size of items on the screen is controlled by the screen's resolution, i.e. the number of colored dots displayed in an area of the screen. The higher the resolution, the smaller the items on the screen; the lower the resolution, the larger the items. To change the screen resolution:

- 1 Click on this button in the **System Preferences** folder



- 2 Click on the **Display** tab

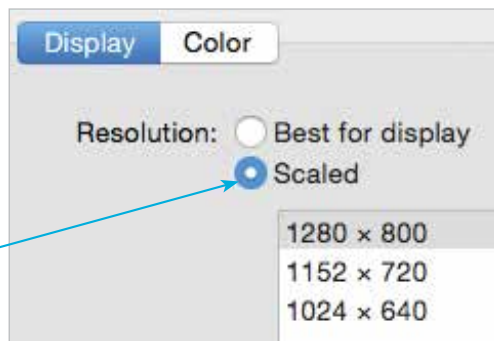


- 3 Click on the **Best for display** button to let your Mac select the most appropriate resolution



- 4 Drag this slider to change the screen brightness. Check on the box underneath it to have this done automatically

- 5 Click on the **Scaled** button and select a resolution setting to change the overall screen resolution



- 6 Click on the **Color** tab to select options for using different color profiles and also calibrating your monitor

Color

Accessibility

In all areas of computing it is important to give as many people access to the system as possible. This includes users with visual impairments and also people who have problems using the mouse and keyboard. In OS X this is achieved through the functions of the Accessibility System Preferences. To use these:

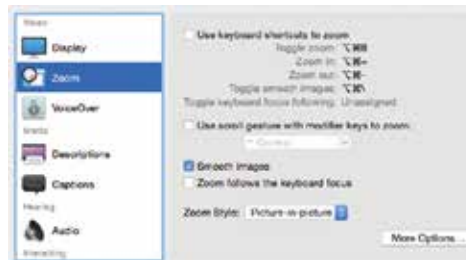
- 1 Click on this button in the **System Preferences** folder



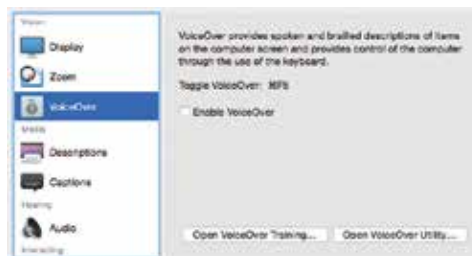
- 2 Click on the **Display** button for options to change the display colors, contrast and increase the cursor size



- 3 Click on the **Zoom** button for options to zoom in on the screen



- 4 Click on the **VoiceOver** button to enable VoiceOver, which provides a spoken description of what is on the screen



Experiment with the VoiceOver function, if only to see how it operates. This will give you a better idea of how visually impaired users access information on a computer.



In OS X El Capitan, the VoiceOver function has support for iBooks.



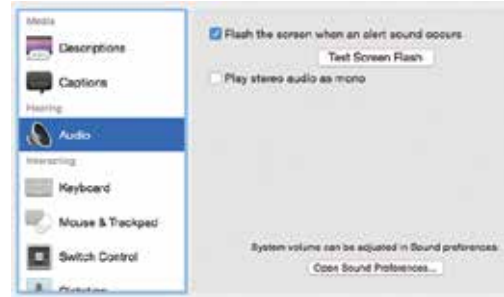
The Audio, Keyboard and Mouse & Trackpad accessibility options have links to additional options within their own System Preferences.



Another option in the Accessibility window is for **Switch Control**, which enables a Mac to be controlled by a variety of devices, including the mouse, keypad and gamepad devices.

...cont'd

- 5 Click on the **Audio** button to select an on-screen flash for alerts and how sound is played



- 6 Click on the **Keyboard** button to access options for customizing the keyboard



- 7 Click on the **Mouse & Trackpad** button to access options for customizing these devices



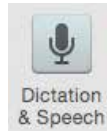
- 8 Click on the **Dictation** button to select options for using spoken commands



The Spoken Word

OS X El Capitan not only has numerous options for adding text to documents, emails and messages; it also has a dictation function so that you can speak what you want to appear on screen. To set up and use the dictation feature:

- 1 Click on this button in the **System Preferences** folder

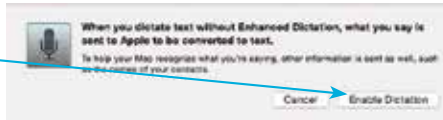


- 2 By default, Dictation is **off**



- 3 Click on the **On** button to enable dictation

- 4 Click on the **Enable Dictation** button



- 5 Once Dictation has been turned On, it can be accessed in relevant apps by selecting **Edit > Start Dictation** from the menu bar



- 6 Start talking when the microphone icon appears. Click **Done** when you have finished recording your text

- 7 Click on the **Text to Speech** tab to make selections for dictation



Punctuation can be added with the dictation function, by speaking commands such as 'comma' or 'question mark'. These will then be converted into the appropriate symbols.



When shutting down, make sure you have saved all of your open documents, although OS X will prompt you to do this if you have forgotten.

Shutting Down

The Apple menu (which can be accessed by clicking on the Apple icon at the top left corner of the Desktop or any subsequent OS X window) has been standardized in OS X. This means that it has the same options regardless of the app in which you are working. This has a number of advantages, not least is the fact that it makes it easier to shut down your Mac. When shutting down, there are three options that can be selected:

- **Sleep.** This puts the Mac into hibernation mode, i.e. the screen goes blank and the hard drive becomes inactive. This state is maintained until the mouse is moved or a key is pressed on the keyboard. This then wakes up the Mac and it is ready to continue work.
- **Restart.** This closes down the Mac and then restarts it again. This can be useful if you have added new software and your computer requires a restart to make it active.
- **Shut Down.** This closes down the Mac completely once you have finished working.



OS X El Capitan has a **Resume** function where your Mac opens up in the same state as when you shut it down. See page 50 for details.

Click here to access the **Apple menu**

Click here to access one of the shut down options

