macOS Sierra What's new

About this Mac - Storage tab, besides the available connected drives (including optical drives), and you can hover over each colored segment to get a MB size, there is the Manage... button which brings up new options including the Store in iCloud... option. With two sub-options. When available space is low, you can store files from your Desktop and Documents folders in your iCloud Drive. Unfortunately, programs that store files in packages, this process can mess them up. The process could take days. When you turn off the Desktop & Documents Folder feature in iCloud, Sierra recreates empty Desktop and Documents folders in your home folder. It's on you to copy or move your files back from iCloud Drive. However, that assumes that all of your files and folders made it to iCloud in the first place. What if they didn't? **Hopefully** they can still be found in the Desktop and Documents folders in ~/Library/Mobile Documents/com.apple.CloudDocs. If they're not, hope you had other backups because those files and folders may just be completely gone. My advise, never turn it on in the first place. Less troublesome is the second option, Store photos and videos in iCloud Photo Library, which is good for sharing your photos across Macs and iPads. This works in concert with the updated Photos.app version 2, that offers to use iCloud Photo Library when you run it for the first time. With iCloud Photo Library, you can store your entire collection of photos and videos in iCloud and access them from your Mac, iPhone, or iPad, or any web browser on iCloud.com. Photos and videos you take with your iPhone or iPad automatically appear in Photos on all your devices. And all your albums, edits, and favorites are kept up to date everywhere. Of course you have to have enough iCloud storage. The new Photos 2, uses the "Memories" structure like you find on the iPhone or iPad. It also edits those new Live Photos the iPhone SE, 6s and 7 or 9.7" iPad Pro create.

Menu bar - Menu Extras can now be arranged with command key, not just Apple ones. The Notification Center is the exception. Sound control extra now has output selection visible, not just via option key. That of course included an Apple TV if you have one. Option key switch now supports changing input device too. Not really a biggie, but could be useful. You can option click on the Time Machine menu extra to get a new option to verify your backup. Siri menu extra, just click on it and ask away.

System Preferences
 General nothing new
 Desktop & Screen Saver
  Desktop Apple optimized images no options, and it's not just large file size, normal images will have fit, tile etc
  Screen Saver Custom Color... button
 Dock has new Prefer tabs when opening documents. I prefer Manually, meaning no tabs. Always would have all apps showing each document in only a tab, which could save space but you can't compare two without dragging one out to another window
 Language & Region now how Temperature °F/C, affects the weather temps in Notification Center
 Security & Privacy
  General Allow apps downloaded from: Anywhere choice is missing unless you issue a Terminal command to restore the choice.
 Spotlight adds the "Allow Spotlight Suggestions in Look up which refers to the contextual menu when you select a word or phrase, now more options.

Notifications - Notification Center has revised look and you can drag ("pin") Siri results there. As before you can drag the blocks around to re-order them. Today view and Notifications view. Did you know you can option-click on the Notification Center icon in the menu bar to mute the notifications, at least until the next day? Option-click to re-enable notifications. It should be noted that you can control from here the badge on applications that want your attention, like FaceTime or Messages. Many apps offer a option to show notifications on lock screen. That's a security problem. So I'd turn those off assuming you use the lock screen. That was an option in Security & Privacy - General by turning on the Require password after sleep or screen saver begins. Also note that at the top of the app list, there is the Do Not Disturb item where you can specify a quiet period and other settings. System Preferences - Keyboard - Shortcuts, click on Mission Control on the left and check the normally unchecked "Show Notification Center 2nd line item and assign a shortcut. Control-N comes to mind.

Initially the 2nd row was too long, Apple's didn't expect me to have CDs & DVDs, so I customized and removed Trackpad to even it back out. I don't have a Trackpad.

Keyboard

Keyboard tab - Now has Show eject in menu bar and now has open for Show viewers for keyboard, emoji, and symbols in menu bar, where the Emoji & Symbols is a new floating window. Finally we learn what the various faces mean.😇😉😍💩🖥📷

Text tab - Capitalize words automatically will save you from using the shift key at the start of a sentence. Add period with double-space will, when you press the space bar twice, will replace that with a period and a space, thus fixing old bad habits from typewriter days.

Dictation moved to this tab, used to be a separate panel.

Mouse, Printers & Scanners, Sound, & Startup Disk - nothing new

iCloud - Manage... button gets you the Manage Storage window. You can delete the iCloud backups from your iPhone or iPad that are wasting a big chunk of your 5GB default space. Of course you can buy more there. The next step from 5GB is 50GB and just 99 cents a month.

App Store, new option to toggle option for receiving beta software updates.

Siri, the headline new feature, offers a few controls here, most notably choice of male or female voice and option for voice feedback and choice of keyboard shortcut. There is the option of turning off the Siri menu extra. Of course learning what commands you can do, what it understands, will be a bit of a learning process.

Accessibility - Display. This is surely a personal choice, but I prefer to turn on the options for Increase contrast and Reduce transparency. I find the colors a window picks up but retains when moved to be annoying, as its not dynamic. I'm sure the visual effects slow down the Mac with little real value.

Dictation - Useful option for Mute audio output while dictating, you don't want music or an incoming phone call to get in the way.

Finder

Preferences

Advanced - New option for Show warning before removing from iCloud Drive, and new option for Remove items from the Trash after 30 days and something that's been asked for a while - new option for Keep folders on top when sorting by name

View Options now includes iCloud status checkbox

Safari 10

Picture in Picture icon in video player toolbar. Not all videos support this, not even al of Apple's videos. Also works in iTunes.

Photos has new "Advanced Computer Vision" to search for not just faces.

Sierra also supports a Universal Clipboard to and from a iOS 10 device, but only if your Mac supports Bluetooth 4.0 Low Energy. Sadly my home Mac Pro with bluetooth 4.0 upgrade and the user group 2010 MacBook Pro, does not support the Low Energy part. Supported by the following Mac models:

MacBook (Early 2015 or newer)
MacBook Pro (2012 or newer)
MacBook Air (2012 or newer)
Mac mini (2012 or newer)
iMac (2012 or newer)
Mac Pro (Late 2013)

You should also be able to just lift your Apple Watch to unlock the Mac, rather than having to type in your password. Again my equipment is too old to support this, plus or rather minus, I don't have a Apple Watch. MacID for Mac and iOS adds this function as does Knock.

For application compatibility, a first place to look is here: http://roaringapps.com/apps which does not show version numbers, so it's of limited real use. You have to do quite a bit of homework seeking out updates. Some companies have abandoned future upgrades, so you may have to do without or find alternatives. Apple used to support a memory management called Garbage Collection. It was set to be deprecated and now no longer supported. PDFkit has been changed and the new version is buggy. Since Sierra is a possible upgrade for compatible machines that could still be running OS X 10.7.5 Lion, in that case, it's far more likely that your 3rd party applications will also be too old and will require paid upgrades.

AutoCAD 2016 with update 3 not yet compatible, we have to wait for AutoCAD 2107 to be released Fujitsu ScanSnap software is not ready, but they have a schedule posted for fixes.

While older Adobe CS apps, going back as far as CS3 may start under Sierra, if the legacy Java SE 6 is installed, expect problems. Adobe CS6 installer needs trick to install and has several operating problems like crashing when you close a window. PS CC printing crashes for many printers. Officially only Lightroom 2105.7 AKA version 6.7 is supported. Even Photoshop CC 2015.5 has some known minor problems. Even InDesign CC 2015 version 11.4.1 has a problem when running from a RAID drive, but curiously 11.4.0 is better. There is no approved release of Premiere Pro for use with Sierra. I've found running Parallels Desktop 12.0.2 with a virtual Snow Leopard Server and virtual Yosemite is a good way to support older applications. Assuming your printers and scanners work. I had trouble getting by older Xerox color laser printer working, but I think I got it going without crashing a host application. In other Adobe related news, not that it's unique to Sierra, but to new Safari 10, but Adobe Flash player plug-in is disabled by default. You can enable it once or always when you use a web site that uses Flash content. QuarkXPress 2016 with the October 2016 update is compatible with Sierra. Suitcase Fusion 7, the new subscription based version works with Sierra. Also works with QuarkXPress 2016 and latest Adobe software. It should be noted that Suitcase Fusion 7 does not support Creative Cloud 2014 or the old CS6 and QuarkXpress 2016 (and 2015) so it's clear, if you upgrade to Sierra, you have to go all the way with upgrades. Microsoft Office 2011 support is frankly in doubt, perhaps the recent version 14.6.9 update helps, but Office 2016 15.27 is supported as long as Automatic Proxy Configuration is off. I hear one user had Office 2008 working, but perhaps not Entourage. I hear that printing via the IP protocol has problems with some printers,

so offices with printers/copiers that need this could be in trouble. Even with latest Skype 7.37, some people had problems, so they suggest using web.skype.com/en/ The recently released Dragon Professional 6.0.1 should work with Sierra. Some programs rely on the legacy Java 6 runtime environment, so the upgrade to Sierra removes that, so you may find you have to reinstall the old Java and then uninstall and reinstall a affected application. I understand Apache OpenOffice works after this procedure. Synium Chronories and iFinance don't work. QuickBooks Desktop for Mac 2016 works with Sierra, older versions do not. Quicken 2015 and 2016 have been tested and work with Sierra. The latest Quicken 2007 v16.2.4 seems to work for me under Sierra. You should read this: https://www.quicken.com/support/update-quicken-mac-2007-support-policies-may-2016. It seems the end of the line is near and Quicken 2017 has just been released. The old Quicken Essentials does not. I see Epson has introduced Sierra compatible software for their current products. Crossword Forge 7.4.1 works, HyperDock 1.7 works, VMware Fusion 8.5 and Parallels Desktop 12.0.2 works. I use it to virtualize both Snow Leopard Server and Yosemite in order to run older and otherwise incompatible programs. Apple has released updated Pages, Keynote & Numbers for Sierra only. As an aside, I just uncovered that the latest Adobe Flash Player, version 23.0.0.185 needs Mavericks or later according to the Tech Specs. On the other hand, the download page, shows Adobe Flash Player step one, shows it's for Mac OS X 10.6 - 10.12. Considering the security problems Flash Player has had over the years, this is yet another reason to leave Snow Leopard, Lion and Mountain Lion behind. It seems that Flash Player 22 from 7/12/16 was the last for Snow Leopard - Mountain Lion users. Aperture 3.6 has same glitches as under El Capitan. Final Cut Pro X 10.2.3 has minor problems, mostly cosmetic, plenty of audio unit plugin don't work, visual plugins work, like Color Finale 1.6 and iZotope RX4. Davinci Resolve 12.5.2 works, Motion 5.2.3 and Compressor works. AFP connections to Synology NAS crashes, but SMB connections OK. Wacom pen tablet 5.3.7-6 released just today add Sierra compatibility. VueScan Pro 9.5.58 works, TrimEnabler 3.6 works. Check out MacUpdate.com Apple's Pages 4 can't keep up with my typing and Numbers 4 has a annoying problem where a formula that should show a forward slash for division shows a plus sign instead. Even a formula typed correctly in TextEdit and pasted in, shows a plus sign. Maybe it's in fact a tiny division symbol.