



Tech Info Library

Macintosh: Turning It Off Versus Leaving It On (8/94)

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TOPIC -----

I noticed that many of my fellow employees leave their Macintosh computers on overnight and on weekends. Is this good or bad? Is there a fire risk, or excessive energy waste?

DISCUSSION -----

These are controversial issues compounded by numerous variables.

The energy issue is left up to your conscience or company controller. However, it typically takes more energy to power up a system than may be consumed by leaving a system on. Read the Tech Info Library article, "Monitors Draw Extra Power at Startup."

As for fire risk, it is very low -- as mandated and enforced by various governmental agencies. Refer to the Tech Info Library article on "Certificate of Occupancy" for additional information on specific fire retardant materials, agency approvals, and so on, that our systems have. Service documentation explains the fuse protection that our systems contain.

Experts are strongly polarized as to whether power cycles are stresses beyond what the electronics were designed for, but there are other variables, including "sticktion", quality of power, and so on.

For instance, if you have personally encountered hard disk "sticktion" problems, you may have a strong opinion that hard disks should not be powered off. However, if you are in a region plagued by power outages or lightning-induced spikes or surges and so on, experience may have taught you that electronics should always remain off whenever they are not in use. A/UX users and AppleShare Administrators, of course, will also take into account the amount of time it takes to bring up their systems.

Knowing any particular idiosyncrasies of your system, weighted with any risks in your environment, should help you make the most intelligent decision.

In general though, if you are not going to use the system for 8 hours or more, powering it off is the wise choice.

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01 Aug 1994 - Revised and shortened Topic, revised formatting, checked for technical accuracy.

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