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Mac OS and the Year 2000 (6/96)

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TOPIC -----

You may have wondered whether the clock in your Macintosh computer will continue to function into the next (twenty-first) century. Many stories have been circulated about computers not being able to handle dates past a certain year.

This article contains some questions and answers dealing with the Macintosh computer, Power Macintosh computer, and Mac OS and what will happen in the year 2000 and beyond.

- 1) Will the Mac OS have a problem with dates in the year 2000?
- 2) Why can I not set the date in the Date & Time control panel past the year 2019?
- 3) Is the year 2000 a leap year?
- 4) Will my Apple PC or DOS compatibility card be able to handle the year 2000?

DISCUSSION -----

- 1) Question: Will the Mac OS have a problem with the year 2000?

Answer: No. The Mac OS has always correctly handled dates between January 1, 1904 and February 6, 2040. The current Mac OS date and time utilities handle all dates between 30,081 B.C. and 29,940 A.D. All applications and system software which use the supplied Mac OS date and time utilities will have no problems with the year 2000. The only possible issues would come if an application does not use the routines supplied by the Mac OS for manipulating dates and times. If you believe you have such an application, please contact the manufacturer of that application for an update.

- 2) Question: Why can I not set the date in the Date & Time control panel past the year 2019?

Answer: The Date & Time control panel constrains the year to the range 1920 to 2019. This was done because the original Macintosh System 6 General control panel only displayed a 2-digit year. A programmer can set the date beyond 2019 by calling a Mac OS supplied routine. Apple expects to release a revised Date & Time control panel as part of Mac OS 8.

3) Question: Is the year 2000 a leap year?

Answer: The rule for leap years is that all years divisible by 4 are leap years, except those years divisible by 100. The exception is that years divisible by 400 are leap years. This means that 1800 and 1900 were not leap years, but the year 2000 is a leap year.

4) Question: Will my Apple PC or DOS compatibility card be able to handle the year 2000?

Answer: DOS supports years 1980 through 2099. Follow these steps to set the date:

DOS

From DOS, use the date command the DATE command.

Format the date as: mm-dd-yy for years 1980 - 1999, or mm-dd-yyyy for 1980-2099.

Windows 3.x

For Windows 3.x use the Date & Time Control Panel found in the Main Program group, Control Panel icon. Click the numbers and change with the arrows. Note the four digit year format can be selected in the International Control Panel.

Windows 95

For Windows 95 go to Start Menu, Settings, Control Panel, Date/Time and set the date and time there also by selecting the value and changing with arrows.

Newer applications should also not have a problem with full year dates (2xxx), check with the vendor or test the application.

Article Change History:

20 Jan 1997 - Added info about DOS card & combined with another article.

03 Jun 1996 - Made corrections for technical accuracy.

30 May 1996 - Added information on the Date & Time control panel.

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