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System 6.0.3: Incompatible with Macintosh 512Ke and HD20

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Macintosh 512Ke users (some also running HD-20s have reported the following scenario:

After updating the System on the startup hard disk to System 6.0.3, the system would not start. Attempts to start up from a startup disk with System 6.0.3 gave the same symptoms. That is, the Happy Macintosh face appears. Then, the dialog box appears and stays blank. At that point, the system hangs. Restarting from a System 6.0.1 floppy works.

There are a couple of things that could cause this lack of compatibility. One is the lack of support for the HD-20, which was dropped with System 6.0. Another is that System 6.0.3 requires XPRAM (256 bytes versus 20 bytes) in the Macintosh. A Macintosh Plus does not have XPRAM, and System 6.0.3 relies on it. This is probably the reason the Macintosh 512Ke hangs when starting up. It is looking for information from XPRAM and cannot find it. Starting up from an HD-20 may be compounding the problem.

According to the System Software manual that came with System 6.0, the latest version of system software recommended for a Macintosh 512Ke is System 4.1, Finder 5.5. It doesn't seem to matter whether an HD-20 is in use or not. Macintosh 512Ke users would do well to re-install Finder 5.5 and System 4.1 on their machines.

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