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Pre-System 7.5 System Folder Files Described (7/96)

Revised: 7/1/96
Security: Everyone

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Article Created: 14 June 1993
Article Reviewed/Updated: 01 July 1996

TOPIC -----

This article gives brief descriptions of the files you'll find in the System Folder of a Macintosh running system software version 7.0 or 7.0.1. The article indicates how the 7.1 System Folder differs.

DISCUSSION -----

System Software

The Macintosh stores system software in two types of memory: Read Only Memory (ROM) and Random Access Memory (RAM). Sections of the operating system are contained permanently in ROM. This type of system software, which is built into the hardware, is called firmware.

The system software that you install provides updates (new routines and corrected versions of old routines) between major ROM revisions. System and Finder files, device drivers, and other resources found in the System Folder provide these updates. When a system starts up, it loads the data from the System Folder on the hard disk into RAM, where it is stored until you shut down the system.

System Folder

You can't open many of the files in the System Folder because most of them are resource files, not applications. Their use is restricted to the system, but you can remove or copy them, and you can add files to the System Folder. The exact content of a System Folder depends on the Macintosh model and other equipment used with the Macintosh. At the top level, the System Folder generally contains:

- The System file
- The Finder file

- A System Enabler (System 7.1)
- Clipboard file
- Note Pad File
- Scrapbook File
- Apple Menu Items folder
- Control Panels folder
- Extensions folder
- Fonts folder (with system software version 7.1)
- Preferences folder
- PrintMonitor Documents folder
- Startup Items folder

Here are descriptions of the top-level files in the System Folder.

System File

This is the most important file on a startup volume, and is the first file loaded during the startup process. It contains the RAM-based portions of the Mac ToolBox and operating system, ROM extensions and patches, fonts, and sounds.

All applications and the operating system share the System file's collection of resources. Every Macintosh startup disk requires this file to start up and run the Macintosh.

Finder File

The Finder is the application that presents and maintains the Macintosh desktop.

The Finder keeps track of what files belong in which folders and where they appear on the desktop. It manages disks and files, and launches other programs.

Every Macintosh startup disk requires this file to start up and run the Macintosh.

Ordinarily, the operating system designates the Finder as the startup application -- that is, the application that takes control when you first start the system. With System 7, the Finder stays open while you run other applications.

System Enabler

All new Macintosh models shipping after the release of system software version 7.1 include System Enabler software specific for that model or a particular family of models, like the Macintosh PowerBook family. System Enablers provide compatibility between Macintosh hardware and system software. You add a System Enabler rather than reinstalling a new system. System Enablers are located at the top level of the System Folder -- not in the Extensions folder.

Clipboard File

The Clipboard stores data that you have cut or copied.

Notepad File

The Notepad desk accessory uses resources in this file.

Scrapbook File

The Scrapbook file stores graphics and text for the Scrapbook desk accessory. The Scrapbook retains information even after the system shuts down.

Note: If you delete the Clipboard, Notepad, or Scrapbook files, the system recreates them, but they'll be empty.

Apple Menu Items Folder

You install files in the Apple menu by dragging them into the Apple Menu Items folder. You can put any file or alias that you double-click to open or launch (applications, documents, server volumes) in the Apple menu. When you install System 7, the Alarm Clock, Calculator, Chooser, Key Caps, Note Pad, and Scrapbook desk accessories and a Control Panels folder alias appear in the Apple menu.

Control Panels Folder

The Control Panels folder contains resources that allow you to set features, such as date and time. The system draws upon data and instructions provided in these control panel files, sometimes called Control Panel Device Resource files (cdev files). The specific control panel files included with the Macintosh system depends on configuration requirements and user preferences.

Here are some of the control panels you may find in this folder:

- Color
If you have a color monitor, you can select highlight and window colors.
- Date & Time
This is for setting date and time for the computer.
- Easy Access
This supports features the Macintosh provides for disabled people: Mouse Keys (a substitute for using the mouse), Slow Keys, and Sticky Keys (a way to input complex key sequences more easily).
- File Sharing Monitor
The File Sharing Monitor control panel lets you monitor file sharing activity. It shows you the name of any connected users, and lets you disconnect any connected users.
- General Controls
You can change features like desktop pattern, and rate of insertion point blinking.
- Keyboard
Select keyboard layout, and key repeat and delay rates.
- Labels
Provides the colors and names for the Finder Label menu. You can

change the colors corresponding to the label names here.

- Map
Type in a city name to see geographic location information.
- Memory
You can set the disk cache size, and turn on or off virtual memory and 32-bit addressing.
- Monitors
You can select monitor characteristics (number of grays or colors). You can also set monitor orientation when you have more than one monitor connected to your computer.
- Mouse
Select tracking and double-click speeds for your mouse device.
- Network
The Network control panel shows the available data links (LocalTalk, EtherTalk, TokenTalk). These resources are called adevs (AppleTalk Devices). You select which data link to use for network operations. Switching data links causes a temporary loss of network connections.
- Numbers
This is where you set the format for displaying numbers.
- Sharing Setup
You can start File Sharing or Program Linking, and you enter information here to identify your computer on the network.
- Sound
Specify the type and volume of sound for your computer.
- Startup Disk
If you have more than one hard disk attached to your computer, you can specify which of them is the startup disk.
- Token Ring
This is used to set transmission speed of the Apple Token Ring 4/16 NB card, to set other operational timers, and to assign a locally administered address used for network management instead of the default hardware address.
- Users & Groups
Designate who has access privileges to your computer.
- Views
Select the font, icon arrangement, and list information shown on the desktop.

Extensions Folder

The Extensions folder contains:

- System extensions, called INITs in System 6, (for example, network drivers)
- Chooser extensions, sometimes called rdevs, which stands for Remote Devices (examples include AppleShare, CD-ROM, and printer drivers)
- System applications (for example, PrintMonitor)
- PostScript fonts.

The Extensions folder is the first place the System looks when loading system extensions at startup time.

Printer Software

Printer drivers, sometimes called printer resources, provide the interface to specific printers. You indicate your choice of printers in the Chooser. When you select a printer with the Chooser, the system draws upon the resources in these files. A system must have the resource files corresponding to the printers used with the system.

Here's a list of some printer drivers included with system software version 7.1:

- AppleTalk ImageWriter
- ImageWriter
- LaserWriter
This is for all LaserWriters except the LaserWriter Pro series.
- LQ AppleTalk ImageWriter
- LQ ImageWriter
- Personal LaserWriter SC
- Personal LW LS
- StyleWriter
- Laser Prep
This file works with the LaserWriter driver to provide PostScript, the language most LaserWriters use to print text and graphics. The Laser Prep file is rolled into LaserWriter driver version 6.1 and later. The Laser Prep file is required with LaserWriter driver versions 6.0 and earlier, and with AppleShare Print Server 2.0.
- Printer Share
Printer Share is part of GrayShare, and the extension allows sharing of the StyleWriter II, LaserWriter Select 300, Personal LaserWriter 300, and the Apple Color Printer.

Other Chooser Extensions

Foreign File Access handles the conversion of File Manager calls to ISO 9660 and High Sierra discs. If you have a CD-ROM drive, you need the appropriate software to access it. In addition to Foreign File Access, you need High Sierra File Access and ISO 9660 File Access files.

Network Software

Network software provides the interface to network data links (for example, EtherTalk or TokenTalk).

- A/ROSE
A/ROSE stands for Apple Real-Time Operating System Environment. It's a system extension that runs as a driver in the standard Macintosh operating system. It downloads, starts, stops, sets priorities, and communicates with real-time processes that run on any A/ROSE-compatible NuBus card.
- EtherTalk Phase 2
EtherTalk software allows communication with AppleTalk network services over Ethernet networking interface cards and media.
- Network Extension
The Network control panel uses resources in this extension.
- TokenTalk Phase 2
TokenTalk software allows communication with AppleTalk network services over Token Ring networking interface cards and media.
- File Sharing Extension
This allows you to share your Macintosh on the network.

AppleShare

This rdev, or Chooser extension allows you to connect to any Apple File Protocol (AFP) device such as an AppleShare Server, or a Macintosh running File Sharing.

PrintMonitor

This application runs in the background to send spooled information to the printer when you turn on Background Printing in the Chooser. Spooling means that the computer temporarily stores the file on the hard disk. PrintMonitor communicates with the printer in the background, makes a connection with the printer, and sends the file to the printer. When printing is complete, PrintMonitor empties the PrintMonitor Documents folder. System 6 also requires Backgrounder for background printing.

Fonts Folder

If you install System 7.1, you'll have a Fonts Folder that provides a single location for fonts, including TrueType, Adobe Type 1, and bitmap fonts. System software earlier than version 7.1 stores TrueType and bitmap fonts in the System file.

Preferences Folder

The Preferences Folder stores preference files that keep default or current settings for programs. Examples include Word Settings, MsWorksPref, PM4 Defaults, and Excel Settings. It also contains

Dictionary and Help files. System 7-compatible applications create and maintain these files automatically.

PrintMonitor Documents Folder

With System 7, you can print to a LaserWriter or a StyleWriter while you do other work with your Macintosh. For instance, you can print and continue working on a document at the same time. This is called "background printing."

When you turn on Background Printing for printers in the Chooser, files waiting to be printed are temporarily stored in the PrintMonitor Documents folder until the printer is ready to print them. This is all done in the background.

Startup Items Folder

Place in this folder the aliases of all applications and documents that you'd like to have opened automatically when you start the computer. Don't put system extensions in this folder.

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Article Change History:

- 01 Jul 1996 - Added Fax Doc Word
- 04 Oct 1994 - Added Note Pad to contents of Apple menu.
- 07 Sep 1994 - Removed QRG from title, retitled to reflect contents.
- 18 May 1994 - Added more info about AppleShare.

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Tech Info Library Article Number:12314