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Macintosh System 6.0: How Desk Accessories Function

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The following information is relevant only for system software version 6.0.X.

TOPIC -----

I heard that many existing desk accessories (DAs) from previous versions of the system software will not function correctly under System 6.0.X, especially when running MultiFinder.

DISCUSSION -----

Desk accessories function as they always have under previous system versions. A correctly-written DA will function normally under system software 6.0.X. The one exception is when desk accessories are called under MultiFinder.

Desk accessories are DRVr resources and do not have, nor are they, CODE resources. They can exist in open files in the System Folder and be picked up when the drivers are called by an application or the Finder for display in an Apple menu. The Apple menu resides in the System ROMs, and the DA list is created by an application or by the Finder.

A change that may affect a DA is the loading of desk accessories into the System heap. Desk accessories expecting to load into a specific application heap will not function under the new system software. In the cases of these application-specific and application-dependent desk accessories, the DA will not know which application heap called it (since there could be multiple application heaps).

The System has been patched to allow desk accessories to function within an application-like environment belonging to the System. The environment is called DA Handler. The DA Handler is a level of the System that executes desk accessories when called. This is to allow all desk accessories to come to the foreground when a DA is selected, rather than having to select the application the DA belongs to. This also allows the System to control the Apple menu, allowing selection of applications as well as desk accessories.

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