

Why You May Want to Delay Upgrading Your Mac to Lion

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Apple's long-awaited Mac operating system upgrade, OS X Lion, was released today. Are you planning to upgrade? It's tempting to grab the latest updates as soon as you can, but being a first adopter can be dangerous. There are two important reasons why you might want to wait, and a number of things to be aware of before beginning.

Bugs

Historically, when major OS upgrades became available, companies would wait until a package of fixes, typically called a "service pack," was released before rolling out the upgrade to its **employees**. As more computers have high-speed connections to the Internet, this has become less important. Large bundles of fixes have given way to more frequent, smaller updates that fix the bugs as they are found. Despite a quicker fix, you may still want to wait and let others work out the big bugs so your upgrade is smoother.

Compatibility

A bigger issue is compatibility, of which there are many measures.

Hardware

With [Lion](#), your Mac must have an Intel Core 2 Duo, Core i3, Core i5, Core i7 or Xeon processor. If you purchased your Mac after late 2006, you're probably fine. But if you want to double-check your processor, click the Apple icon at the top left of your screen and choose "About This Mac."

Operating System

You must be running "Snow Leopard" 10.6.x (which is available on disc from Apple for \$29) to upgrade to Lion. There is no direct upgrade from Leopard 10.5.x to Lion because Lion can only be downloaded through the [Mac App Store](#), which only runs in Snow Leopard. The Lion download is around 4 GB in size, so if you don't have a reasonably fast Internet connection, you'll need one.

Software

Major OS upgrades generally make changes that can break some software. As an example, Lion no longer includes "Rosetta," which was a translator program that enabled PowerPC native apps to run on Intel chips. Programs such as Microsoft **Office** 2004 and earlier, and Intuit Quicken 2007 require Rosetta, and will not work in Lion.

It's important to know beforehand if your most crucial apps will work in Lion. To find out, go to the Apple menu, select "About This Mac," and click on "More Info." Under the Software section on the left side, click on "Applications" and you'll see a list of all your apps. If you see any with "PowerPC" in the "Kind" column, it's unlikely they'll work in Lion. Check with your software vendors for more details about updates and compatibility. You can also check the wiki at [RoaringApps](#) that has info on the compatibility of many apps. Keep in mind that even if a vendor says their **app** is Lion-ready, there could be bugs that may take time to fix. If you have critical work, it is advisable to wait until it's certain that the app is working before upgrading.

No Matter What

- First and foremost, make sure you back up of all your data. There's no telling what can go wrong during an upgrade. Make sure you have the original operating system restore media. If something goes wrong, you may need to reinstall your OS from scratch.
- Gather everything you'd need to reinstall your software, and have the software's technical support contact info handy so if something does go wrong, you're ready to handle it.