

I'm not a bot



























If you do have an operating system on your mac and it is functioning then you can download El Capitan using this method. How to get old versions of macOS - Apple Support Go to Download OS X El Capitan 10.11 this downloads InstallMacOSX.dmg to your Downloads folder. The next section can only be done on a mac that is capable of running El Capitan. This includes macs that have the potential to run El Capitan but have been upgraded to a newer OS. A mac that came preinstalled with an OS later than El Capitan will refuse to do the next bit. When downloaded open to InstallMacOSX.pkg, double-click on that and an installation window will open, this does not install El Capitan but converts the InstallMacOSX.pkg to the install OS X El Capitan.app which you will find in your Applications folder, it should be 6.2GBs in size (if the installation window asks which disk you want to install to, you must pick the disk that you are booted at the time. Not any internal or external disk that you want to eventually install El Capitan on, that is for later.) To start the installation of El Capitan double click on the Install OS X El Capitan.app. The copy of the install app self deletes after installing El Capitan, so make sure you keep a copy of the InstallMacOSX.dmg if you need it in future, or you could just make a copy of the Install OS X El Capitan.app prior to installing and moving it to an external drive for safe keeping. It is also possible to create a bootable USB installer disk using the Install OS X El Capitan.app in the Applications folder and the createinstallmedia command in the Terminal app. Read the instructions here. How to create a bootable installer for macOS - Apple Support My Mac is running OS X El Capitan 10.11.6. I need to upgrade to at least macOS 10.13 High Sierra but there's no update available. How can I update Mac OS X 10.11.6 to 10.13? - From discussions.apple.com/ you have an old Mac that's currently running OS X 10.11 El Capitan or earlier, you may want to update Mac OS X 10.11.6 to the latest version or update the Mac to El Capitan. This article guides both actions. Can your Mac run OS X El Capitan 10.11 and later? Can a 10-year-old Mac be updated? The answer is YES, for the most part, as the system your Mac supports depends on its model and release date. Open the Apple menu > About This Mac to check your Mac model and its current system. Then open this Google Sheet to check the latest version of your Mac model is compatible with. You can also check which macOS X Can My Mac Run? How Mac can be updated to OS X 10.11 El Capitan or later, follow the steps below to install the update. If not, get OpenCore Patcher to install Mac OS on unsupported Macs. If your Mac is still on OS X 10.10 Yosemite or earlier, take the following steps to upgrade to OS X 10.11.6 El Capitan. (For example, update Mac OS Yosemite 10.10.5 to 10.11.) How to upgrade to OS El Capitan 10.11.6: Similar to any macOS update process, you can update to OS X 10.11 from Software Update, the App Store, or directly from an installer. 3) Update to OS X 10.11 from Software Update/Open System Preferences > Software Updates, then check if it offers updates to OS X El Capitan. If it does, click Update Now to download the installer. After the OS X 10.11 update is downloaded, your Mac will install it automatically. If a newer macOS version is provided rather than 10.11, click More Info... to select the update. 9) Upgrade to OS X 10.11 from the Mac App Store/Open the Mac App Store, and try searching "El Capitan" in the Mac App Store. Then click View > Get to download it. When the download is complete, open the Applications folder to run the installer and update your Mac to OS X 10.11.9 Update Mac to OS X 10.11 with direct El Capitan installer If you can't find the installer with previous methods, download the OS X El Capitan 10.11.6 installer from the link below. Download OS X 10.11 El Capitan DMG & ISO Full Installer After that, you can double-click the DMG file to reveal the PKG file, then open the PKG file and follow the installation assistant to add the installer to the Applications folder. From there, double-click to run the installer and follow the instructions to install the OS X 10.11 upgrade. Share to help others Update Mac to OS X 10.11 El Capitan! If your Mac supports macOS 10.12 Sierra or later versions, you can update Mac OS X 10.11.6 to 10.12, 10.13, 10.14, 10.15, or the latest version available. To download the macOS 10.12 Sierra full installer, refer to this article: macOS 10.12 Sierra Download: DMG & ISO Full Installer To get macOS High Sierra and later versions, use iBoysoft DiskGeeker with the following steps: Step 1: Free download and open iBoysoft DiskGeeker. Download iBoysoft DiskGeeker Step 2: Select an internal volume like Macintosh HD and click Download Image. Step 3: Choose a macOS version and click Get to download it. Step 4: After the installer is downloaded, open it to perform the update. However, if you can't upgrade OS X 10.11 El Capitan directly or your Mac can't boot to the desktop, use a bootable installer with the steps below instead: Step 1: Download and install iBoysoft DiskGeeker. Download iBoysoft DiskGeeker Step 2: Insert an external drive with 20 or more GB of storage into your Mac. (Ensure important data on the drive is backed up.) Step 3: Open the software, select the external disk, and click Create boot disk. Step 4: Choose a macOS version and click Create boot disk. Step 5: Wait for the bootable USB to be created. Step 6: Boot your Mac from the external drive to install the update. Share how to update Mac OS X El Capitan 10.11.6 to 10.12, 10.13, 10.14, 10.15, or later with others! macOS / Earlier Operating Systems I downloaded 10.11 from here: DMG file is 6.2GB wanted to install on an empty drive. Said 'Mac OS X not present' when empty drive selected so I figured it was an update for older OS versions. I had such so installed Mavericks on the drive and then started it up and proceeded to install the 10.11 file I had downloaded. Completed in just a few minutes and said done so I quit. Re started and it still has Mavericks. Questions: 1) where can I download a 'Full' installer for 10.11.2) was there something I should have done differently using the installer I have Posted on Sep 7, 2020 4:30 PM Reply Posted on Sep 7, 2020 12:30 AM You downloaded the correct full installer contained in the InstallMacOSX.dmg. When you open that to the InstallMacOSX.pkg you then open that to the InstallMacOSX.pkg you then open that to see an installation window. This is where people get confused. The installation window does not install El Capitan, if you read the text it says it will take 7MBs of disk space, no operating system takes up so little room, and why would it take up 7MBs of space when the initial download was 6.2GB. By running the installation you are actually creating the Install OS X El Capitan.app in your Applications folder. Have a look! It is also important to note that when the installation window asks you to select a disk you need to select the disk you are booted up to at the time not any other internal or external disk you want to actually install El Capitan on, that comes later when you are ready to actually install El Capitan. Now that you have the Install OS X El Capitan.app in your Applications folder you are ready to install El Capitan. The installation will take 25-30GBs of disk space and about 15-30 minutes to install. Downloading El Capitan Disk Image is not the correct OS X just downloaded the El Capitan disk image to upgrade a 2010 MacBook Pro running Yosemite. But I think it's mislabeled because I ran the installer and it didn't update the OS, it's still running 10.10.5. When can I get the proper download? EDIT: Sorry, I just discovered an older question asking the same thing. I did not realize the package installed the installer! I thought there was some other reason it was so small. Sorry for the duplicate, if I knew how to delete this I would. 11/73 1) MacBook 4.1 upgrade to OS X 10.11 El Capitan I have read that it is possible to upgrade a MacBook 4.1. I installed based from OS X 10.6 to 10.11 El Capitan. I have followed the suggestion I found on Support for upgrading a Mac Pro 4.1, also Intel based Go to Download OS X El Capitan 10.11 this downloads InstallMacOSX.dmg to your Downloads folder. When downloaded open to InstallMacOSX.pkg, double-click on that and an installation window will open, this does not install El Capitan but converts the InstallMacOSX.pkg to the Install OS X El Capitan.app which you will find in your Applications folder, it should be 6.2GBs in size. However when I tried to open my MacBook 4.1 InstallMacOSX.pkg I got an Alert telling me "This version of OS X 10.11 cannot be installed on this computer". I had assumed that the procedure would work also on a MacBook 4.1, but I must have been wrong. Is anything else I can do to get OS X 10.11.6? Many thanks. Raffaello 1459 1 I need to update my iMac (21.5-inch, Late 2009) from El Capitan to High Sierra Im trying to update my iMac (21.5-inch, Late 2009) from El Capitan to High Sierra (or any newer version) but when I downloaded the newer ones from the app store it told me I needed 10.12 or something! So I backedtrack to just after El Capitan and it will download but when I try to install it tells me "OS X El Capitan update" can't be installed on this disk. This volume does not meet requirements for this update." Does this mean I need to free up space to download it? I updated it last year for the first time in at least 6 years to El Capitan so my con could use it from virtual school and it has worked great. We don't use it much now but I am needing to print out LOTS of paperwork for mother and when we hooked the new printer up it said we needed to update. Any and all help is appreciated, been at this for 15 hours and I'm getting frustrated thanks! 904 6 Page content loaded Sep 7, 2020 12:30 AM in response to icwvz You downloaded the correct full installer contained in the InstallMacOSX.dmg. When you open that to the InstallMacOSX.pkg you then open that to see an installation window. This is where people get confused. The installation window does not install El Capitan, if you read the text it says it will take 7MBs of disk space, no operating system takes up so little room, and why would it take up 7MBs of space when the initial download was 6.2GB. By running the installation you are actually creating the Install OS X El Capitan.app in your Applications folder. Have a look! It is also important to note that when the installation window asks you to select a disk you need to select the disk you are booted up to at the time not any other internal or external disk you want to actually install El Capitan on, that comes later when you are ready to actually install El Capitan. Now that you have the Install OS X El Capitan.app in your Applications folder you are ready to install El Capitan. The installation will take 25-30GBs of disk space and about 15-30 minutes to install. Sep 7, 2020 9:48 PM in response to icwvz I have given you the full instructions above, have you read them. Sep 7, 2020 11:16 AM in response to icwvz Here is the official Apple article on how to create a bootable macOS USB installer: can use a bootable macOS USB installer on any Mac that is compatible with that particular version of macOS. Sep 7, 2020 10:06 AM in response to Eau Rouge @EauThank You, I poked around the 'net after posting here and found instructions on: createinstallmedia via Terminal so shall use that to have on an external for use w/ other machines. As you mentioned it only takes 20+/- min to install, can I assume it reads from the DMG file, and if so it should be mounted? Sep 7, 2020 1:57 PM in response to HWTech @HWThank You, InstallMacOSX.dmg does not reside on the computer that has Install OS X El Capitan.app within it's application folder. Can I assume the app needs to read from the DMG file and so need to have such mounted? Sep 7, 2020 4:59 PM in response to icwvz As long as the "OS X El Capitan.app" is complete and there is no corruption, then it should be usable to make a USB installer. The .dmg file is not needed once the installer app is in the Applications folder. As @Eau Rouge mentions if you are downloading the El Capitan .dmg installer file there are several steps which must be done before the installer shows up in the Applications folder. The installer must be present in the Applications folder before a USB installer can be created. Carefully read the Apple article you link in your earlier post as it contains all the information needed to download and "install" the installer to the Applications folder. Then if you want to create a bootable macOS USB installer, then follow the instructions in the Apple article I provided previously. Keep in mind the Macs are very picky about the USB sticks used for booting so if you still have problems, the try using another brand of USB stick. The quality of USB sticks is extremely poor, even from the expected name brands. This thread has been closed by the system or the community team. You may vote for any posts you find helpful, or search the Community for additional answers. El Capitan full installer Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit — provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made — You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation. No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. (Image credit: Future) Apple has finally released its new operating system for Macs, OS X 10.11 El Capitan, which is a free download to all Mac users. El Capitan offers many subtle refinements to the Mac experience, such as better window management and enhanced Spotlight search, not to mention significant improvements to system performance and the introduction of a new hardware-accelerated graphics technology called Metal. In this step-by-step guide we're going to show you how to download the OS X 10.11 installation package and — with the help of a simple tool called DiskMaker X — perform a clean install of El Capitan without opening a single Terminal window. You may like A clean start A clean install offers significant benefits over running the automatic upgrade procedure from within OS X. For one, it can rid your Mac of annoying quirks and strange behaviours that have crept into the system over time. A fresh installation also reclaims lost disk space: it gets rid of the waste that can accumulate from third-party apps, removes junk files, and overall it leaves you with an optimised blank slate and that 'new Mac' feeling again. Plus, you need a spare 8GB (or larger) USB thumb drive and a couple of hours spare to complete the process. So click Next and let's get your Mac running a super-optimised El Capitan installation. Check compatibility (Image credit: Future) First up, make sure your Mac is compatible with Apple's new OS. If you're currently running OS X Yosemite then you're good to go. Otherwise, El Capitan supports the following: Sign up to the TechRadar Pro newsletter to get all the top news, opinion, features and guidance your business needs to succeed! You also need to make sure you have at least 6GB free space (preferably more) on your system disk, so be sure to check before continuing to the next step. Back up your Mac (Image credit: Future) Before you do anything else perform a full backup of your system, and running Time Machine is the simplest way to do this. In the unlikely event that something goes catastrophically wrong, you'll need this backup to restore your system to its original state, using the 'Restore from Time Machine' option when you reinstall OS X from the Recovery partition (accessed by holding Option at startup). Alternatively, use SuperDuper! or Carbon Copy Cloner to save a mirror image of your system state to an external drive from which you can boot if required. Take stock of your setup (Image credit: Future) If you're happy not to use Migration Assistant (this is a clean install guide after all), then you should manually copy any important media, documents and files on your system to an external drive (remember to check your Downloads folder as well). Meanwhile, allow any cloud services to fully sync your files, and it's also worth making a record of how you like your desktop set up. One way of doing this is to take a screenshot (Command+Shift+3, saved to your desktop) showing your dock arrangement and menu bar items. Screen grab, save out or otherwise note down on paper any custom system preferences, settings, Wi-Fi passwords and app-specific profiles you use, too. Make a note of your apps (Image credit: Future) Make a record of your installed apps so you can re-install them later. Open the Applications folder, press Command+A to select all apps, then press Command+C. Now open up a text editor and press Command+V to paste a list of application names, and save this list externally. Make sure you know where to download any non-Mac App Store apps from, and have any serial numbers safely stored. Lastly, remember to de-authorise any services on your Mac, such as your iTunes account (iTunes menu > Store > Deauthorise this Computer), as these are usually limited to a set number of systems. Download OS X 10.11 and DiskMaker X 5 (Image credit: Future) You're now ready to download the El Capitan final public release installation package (not the GM candidate that we're using, shown above). Open the Mac App Store and search for the OS if you don't see it in the Featured section. Click the El Capitan icon and press the download button. The download could take some time depending on the speed of your internet connection, so while you're waiting, open a browser window, and download DiskMaker X 5 from its website. Once it's downloaded (it's a really small file) drag the icon into your Applications folder. When El Capitan is fully downloaded from the Mac App Store, launch DiskMaker X 5. Create the El Capitan USB drive (Image credit: Future) DiskMaker X will open a boot disk options dialog window; select El Capitan. The tool should then inform you that it has located your copy of El Capitan in the Applications folder. Select 'Use this copy'. You'll now be asked which kind of disk you want to use. Plug in your spare USB thumb drive, select the 8GB thumb drive option and choose the drive when it appears in the next dialog — but make sure that no other apps are trying to access the USB drive, otherwise the process will fail. A final warning that the thumb drive will be erased should appear — click 'Erase then create the disk'. The USB drive will be unmounted; input your administrator password when asked, sit back, ignore the flurry of window action on your screen and let DiskMaker X do its work. Install El Capitan (Image credit: Future) A big cat's roar from DiskMaker X signals that your OS X boot disk is ready — you should see it on your desktop named 'OS X Install ES2'. If you're ready to install El Capitan, DiskMaker X offers one of two options: reboot your Mac and hold down the Option key, or select the USB drive in the Startup Disk preference pane for it to launch automatically on restart. Don't forget that you can make a donation to the creator of DiskMaker X for their efforts by pressing the appropriate button in the tool's final dialog window. Wipe your system disk (Image credit: Future) Once you've restarted and booted into your USB drive the first thing the El Capitan installation setup will present you with is the OS X Utilities menu. Now, select the Disk Utility option to launch the app. Then in Disk Utility, select your Macintosh HD system drive in the disks column and click the Erase button located in the menu running along the top of the Disk Utility window. Confirm that you want to wipe your system drive using the default drive format (Mac OS, journaled), wait for the process to complete and then close Disk Utility to return to the OS X Utilities menu. Initiate installation (Image credit: Future) Select OS X from the OS X Utilities menu to start the El Capitan installation process. Choose your language and keyboard settings for your region, accept the licence terms and select your Mac's system drive on which to install the new OS. When the new OS files have been copied off the USB to your system drive (which may take up to an hour), follow the instructions for setting up a new Mac, select your Wi-Fi network, but be sure to skip the option to transfer information from another Mac — you can gain more control over what gets copied by doing this manually later. (Image credit: Future) Once setup is complete, your Mac should boot into a shiny new clean install of OS X 10.11 El Capitan. Enjoy it! All that's left to do is copy over your files and apps. Be ruthless — appraise each item and only copy what you actually use. Allow any cloud-based folders to re-sync with your system. Once you're all done, it's a good idea to make a fresh Time Machine backup — or better yet, make a clone of your system using one of the utilities mentioned back in step 2, so that you can revert your Mac to this pure state if things get messy in a short while. To maintain your computer's security, stability, and compatibility, Apple recommends using the latest macOS that is compatible with your Mac. macOS updates and upgrades also include the latest features and built-in apps such as Safari and Apple Music. Software Update is the fastest and easiest way to get macOS updates and upgrades, and it can use less storage space to download and install them. Software Update shows only software that is compatible with your Mac. If Software Update says that your Mac is up to date, then no new software is currently available for your Mac model. How to update or upgrade macOS using Software Update If you want to reinstall macOS, or your Mac doesn't start up all the way because it doesn't have a working operating system, you can start up from macOS Recovery, then reinstall macOS from there. How to reinstall macOS from macOS Recovery To download macOS from the App Store, you must download from a Mac that is compatible with that macOS. If your Mac isn't compatible, the App Store dims the Get button, says that the macOS is not compatible with this device, or says that the requested version of macOS is not available. Use these links to find macOS in the App Store. If these links don't work as expected, try again using Safari, which is in your Applications folder. Click the Get button in the App Store to begin downloading. Software Update might open and ask you to download from there. After downloading to your Applications folder, the installer opens automatically. Follow the onscreen installation instructions. Or quit without installing to leave the installer in your Applications folder for later use. Older macOS versions are available as disk images that you can download using your web browser. To get the installer from the disk image, you must use a Mac that is compatible with that macOS. Use these links to download a macOS disk image (.dmg) file. If these links don't work as expected, try again using Safari, which is in your Applications folder. Sierra 10.12 El Capitan 10.11 Yosemite 10.10 Mountain Lion 10.8 Lion 10.7 By default, Safari downloads the disk image to your Downloads folder, which you can open from the Dock or by choosing Go > Downloads from the menu bar in the Finder. Double-click the .dmg file to open it and see the package (.pkg) file within. Double-click the .pkg file, then follow the onscreen instructions to install the macOS installer into your Applications folder. Open your Applications folder and double-click the macOS installer, named [Version Name]. Follow the onscreen installation instructions. A bootable installer can be useful if you want to install macOS on multiple computers without downloading the installer each time, or when you can't install using macOS Recovery or the other methods. To download an installer suitable for creating a bootable installer, use the App Store or use a web browser to download from a compatible Mac. The Mac must also be using the latest version of macOS Sierra or later. How to create a bootable installer for macOS Tell us more about what's happening, and we'll suggest what you can do next. Get suggestions Published Date: April 30, 2025 Apple recently released its latest operating system for its Macintosh lineup of systems, OS X 10.11 El Capitan, which, as all the recent previous versions of OS X have been, is free for all users to download and install. El Capitan offers many improvements and refinements to the OS X experience, such as better window management, enhanced Spotlight search, subtle improvements to system performance and more. So, if your Mac is compatible (more on that later), you'll want to get El Capitan up and running on your Mac. You can either install El Capitan over your current version of OS X, not disrupting your programs/data, or you can perform a clean install. A clean install will offer you significant benefits over running the automatic upgrade procedure, as it gives your Mac a complete new fresh state. It gets rid of the annoying waste from third-party apps and removes junk files, as well as the annoying quirks. We'll be showing you how to perform a clean install of OS X 10.11 El Capitan (the easy way) in this guide. You first need to make sure that your Mac supports OS X El Capitan. If your Mac is already running OS X Yosemite, then you're good to go. The full list of supported devices is as follows: iMac (Mid-2009 or later) MacBook (13-inch Aluminum, Late 2008), (13-inch, Early 2009 or later) MacBook Pro (13-inch, Mid-2009 or later), (15-inch, Mid/Late 2007 or later), (17-inch, Late 2007 or later) MacBook Air (Late 2008 or later) Mac Mini (Early 2009 or later) Mac Pro (Early 2008 or later) Xserve (Early 2009) All you need to perform the installation is a spare 8GB or larger USB thumb drive, an external drive to back up all your data to (if you have any), and a copy of OS X 10.11 El Capitan. OS X 10.11 El Capitan can be downloaded from You'll also need to download DiskMaker X, which can be found on their official website. We always recommend you have a backup of all your data, particularly when you're about to update to a new operating system. While the chances of anything going wrong are slim, it's always better to be safe than sorry. The best apps to use to create a bootable installer are SuperDuper and Carbon Copy Cloner, or obviously Apple's built-in Time Machine. Be sure to check our list of the five best free backup apps for your Mac. Since we'll be performing a clean install, the hard drive(s) will be erased and formatted, so again, make sure you have a backup of all of your precious data! Once you have done all of the steps above, it's time to create a bootable USB that we'll be using to install El Capitan. For this, open up Diskmaker X; it should ask you what version of OS X you are using to create a bootable drive. Once you've selected the OS X version, it should automatically locate the installer file in your Applications folder. If not, manually guide the app to the El Capitan installer you downloaded from the Mac App Store. Diskmaker will ask you the type of drive you'll be using to create your bootable disk. Select an 8GB Thumb Drive (or larger) USB (provided you are in fact using a USB thumb drive instead of an external disk). Select the disk from the list. Once done, Diskmaker X will format the disk and start creating the bootable USB. This might take some time; it took about fifteen minutes on my Mac to create the bootable disk, so patience will be required. There's also no indication of how much progress has been done or is left, so that's another downside as well. Once done, you'll be notified by Diskmaker X, and you'll have your bootable disk on your screen in front of you. Now it's time to get to the actual install. Restart your computer, and while you hear the Apple startup sound chime, hold down the "Option" key on your keyboard. You should be presented with a screen similar to the one below. Choose the El Capitan bootable disk, and you'll be led to the following screen. Select Disk Utility which will open up the app. Carefully select your Mac's system hard drive, and click the Erase button. Once that's done, close Disk Utility, and click on In the menu bar in the Utilities window will be presented again. Select the Install OS X option this time and click Continue. This is the hard drive that you've formatted and made ready as per the official website. A bootable installer can be useful if you want to install macOS on multiple computers without downloading the installer each time, or when you can't install using macOS Recovery or the other methods. To download an installer suitable for creating a bootable installer, use the App Store or use a web browser to download from a compatible Mac. The Mac must also be using the latest version of macOS Sierra or later. How to create a bootable installer for macOS Tell us more about what's happening, and we'll suggest what you can do next. Get suggestions Published Date: April 30, 2025 Apple recently released its latest operating system for its Macintosh lineup of systems, OS X 10.11 El Capitan, which, as all the recent previous versions of OS X have been, is free for all users to download and install. El Capitan offers many improvements and refinements to the OS X experience, such as better window management, enhanced Spotlight search, subtle improvements to system performance and more. So, if your Mac is compatible (more on that later), you'll want to get El Capitan up and running on your Mac. You can either install El Capitan over your current version of OS X, not disrupting your programs/data, or you can perform a clean install. A clean install will offer you significant benefits over running the automatic upgrade procedure, as it gives your Mac a complete new fresh state. It gets rid of the annoying waste from third-party apps and removes junk files, as well as the annoying quirks. We'll be showing you how to perform a clean install of OS X 10.11 El Capitan (the easy way) in this guide. You first need to make sure that your Mac supports OS X El Capitan. If your Mac is already running OS X Yosemite, then you're good to go. The full list of supported devices is as follows: iMac (Mid-2009 or later) MacBook (13-inch Aluminum, Late 2008), (13-inch, Early 2009 or later) MacBook Pro (13-inch, Mid-2009 or later), (15-inch, Mid/Late 2007 or later), (17-inch, Late 2007 or later) MacBook Air (Late 2008 or later) Mac Mini (Early 2009 or later) Mac Pro (Early 2008 or later) Xserve (Early 2009) All you need to perform the installation is a spare 8GB or larger USB thumb drive, an external drive to back up all your data to (if you have any), and a copy of OS X 10.11 El Capitan. OS X 10.11 El Capitan can be downloaded from You'll also need to download DiskMaker X, which can be found on their official website. We always recommend you have a backup of all your data, particularly when you're about to update to a new operating system. While the chances of anything going wrong are slim, it's always better to be safe than sorry. The best apps to use to create a bootable installer are SuperDuper and Carbon Copy Cloner, or obviously Apple's built-in Time Machine. Be sure to check our list of the five best free backup apps for your Mac. Since we'll be performing a clean install, the hard drive(s) will be erased and formatted, so again, make sure you have a backup of all of your precious data! Once you have done all of the steps above, it's time to create a bootable USB that we'll be using to install El Capitan. For this, open up Diskmaker X; it should ask you what version of OS X you are using to create a bootable drive. Once you've selected the OS X version, it should automatically locate the installer file in your Applications folder. If not, manually guide the app to the El Capitan installer you downloaded from the Mac App Store. Diskmaker will ask you the type of drive you'll be using to create your bootable disk. Select an 8GB Thumb Drive (or larger) USB (provided you are in fact using a USB thumb drive instead of an external disk). Select the disk from the list. Once done, Diskmaker X will format the disk and start creating the bootable USB. This might take some time; it took about fifteen minutes on my Mac to create the bootable disk, so patience will be required. There's also no indication of how much progress has been done or is left, so that's another downside as well. Once done, you'll be notified by Diskmaker X, and you'll have your bootable disk on your screen in front of you. Now it's time to get to the actual install. Restart your computer, and while you hear the Apple startup sound chime, hold down the "Option" key on your keyboard. You should be presented with a screen similar to the one below. Choose the El Capitan bootable disk, and you'll be led to the following screen. Select Disk Utility which will open up the app. Carefully select your Mac's system hard drive, and click the Erase button. Once that's done, close Disk Utility, and click on In the menu bar in the Utilities window will be presented again. Select the Install OS X option this time and click Continue. This is the hard drive that you've formatted and made ready as per the official website. A bootable installer can be useful if you want to install macOS on multiple computers without downloading the installer each time, or when you can't install using macOS Recovery or the other methods. To download an installer suitable for creating a bootable installer, use the App Store or use a web browser to download from a compatible Mac. 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