Mac OS X Part 4

There are several ways to install applications and updates in Mac OS X. For updating Mac OS X itself, its components, or Apple software, Mac OS X uses the included Software Update. One method for third-party upgrades or any initial installation is through a disk image — .dmg — a virtual disk that mounts like normal, removable media. The application can either be dragged from there to the destination, or an installer program can be run from the virtual disk. Real removable media can also be used this way.

Installers themselves come in several varieties. Packages use the Installer.app program included with Mac OS X to install themselves. Installer VISE is a common, third-party installer that has been around since before Mac OS X — so some VISE installations will run through Classic. InstallAnywhere is used to install programs written in Java.

Several file compression and encoding formats are available on the Macintosh. BinHex — .hqx — is a common encoding scheme from before Mac OS X. StuffIt — .sit — is the most common, Macintosh compression format. Zip — .zip — a common compression format on Windows computers, is also supported in Mac OS X, as is GZip — .gz or .tgz. All of these formats can be decompressed and decoded by StuffIt Expanded, included with Mac OS X.

Classic is an emulation environment to allow Mac OS X to run the older, Mac OS programs. (Realize that Mac OS X is a brand-new operating system, with only a superficial resemblance to the older Mac OS.) Classic essentially runs a version of Mac OS 9 — 9.1.x is required, but 9.2.2, the final version, is recommended — within Mac OS X.

Printers are a very common, and useful, computer peripheral. Mac OS X makes setting up and configuring printers relatively painless. A host of drivers are included with Mac OS X, and setting up, configuring, and managing printers is all handled from one, convenient location: Print Center. Mac OS X also has the useful ability to share a printer connected to a computer through USB on a local network.

Other classes in this series:

Mac OS X Part 5, Friday October 31, 2003, 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM, MMC 1745
In-depth look at the Mac OS X file system, and an overview of data storage options.

For more information, see: http://www.macos.utah.edu