= System 6 =

System 6 (also referred to as System Software 6) is a graphical user interface @-@ based operating system for Macintosh computers . It was released in 1988 by Apple Computer and was part of the Mac OS line of operating systems . System 6 was shipped with various Macintosh computers until it was succeeded by System 7 in 1991 . The boxed version of System 6 cost $ 49 when introduced . System 6 is classed as a monolithic operating system . It featured an improved MultiFinder , which allowed for co @-@ operative multitasking .

= = Main features = =

= = = MacroMaker = = =

A new feature called MacroMaker was included with System 6 . When enabled , it allowed users to record mouse and keyboard input as " macros . " MacroMaker had a unique user interface , which aimed to look and act like a tape recorder . MacroMaker was criticized for its lack of features when compared to Microsoft 's AutoMac III , which was already available commercially . As MacroMaker only recorded the locations of mouse @-@ clicks inside windows and not what was being clicked or exactly when , users soon found that it could not be used to automate more sophisticated programs . The pre @-@ recorded clicks would miss buttons if they had moved or failed to appear upon playback . MacroMaker was not compatible with System 7 , which marked the introduction of AppleScript as an alternative .

= = = Multitasking = = =

Cooperative multitasking made its Macintosh debut in March 1985 with a program called Switcher by Andy Hertzfeld , which allowed the user to launch multiple applications and switch between them . Many programs and features did not function correctly with Switcher . Also , Switcher did not display windows of other applications beside the selected one . It was not included with the operating system , but was available from Apple for purchase separately . Both System 5 and System 6 had a feature called MultiFinder instead , which was much more mature and widely used in System 6 . MultiFinder could be enabled or disabled , with a reboot . If disabled , the Finder would quit when the user launched another application , thus freeing RAM for it . If enabled , the system behaved as in the nowadays familiar multitasking tradition , with the desktop and windows of other applications in the screen 's background .

= = = Hardware support = = =

System 6 included support for the Apple ImageWriter LQ and other PostScript laser printers . New software drivers allowed the ImageWriter LQ to be used on AppleTalk local area networks and supports use of tabloid , or B , size paper (11 in × 17 in (280 mm × 430 mm)) . System 6 also included Color QuickDraw , a piece of system software used to accelerate the drawing of color screen images on the Macintosh II . It was licensed to Apple and Radius Inc by its programmer , Andy Hertzfeld .

= = Limitations = =

System 6 's Apple menu cannot be used to launch applications . The current application icon in the upper right @-@ hand corner of the menu bar cycles between open applications ; it is not a menu . System 6 supports 24 bits of addressable random access memory (RAM) , which allowed a maximum of 8 megabytes of RAM with no provision for virtual memory . These limitations were fixed in System 7 . The version of the HFS used by System 6 also has a hard drive capacity limit ; it

supports up to 2 gigabytes (GBs) and 65 @,@ 536 files on a drive . This limitation was not increased until System 7 @.@ 5 which first increased the limit to 4 GB .

The Trash (or " Wastebasket " in the British version) empties when the Finder terminates . If MultiFinder is not running , this occurs as soon as an application launches . Icons on the desktop in System 6 are not organized into a single folder , as in later operating systems . Instead , the system records whether each file is on the desktop or not . This is inefficient and confusing , as the user cannot browse to the desktop in applications besides the Finder , even within the standard Open and Save As dialog boxes . Furthermore , these dialogs are primitive , mostly unchanged since 1984 . The lack of aliases , shortcuts to files , was another limitation of file management on System 6 . Custom file and folder icons are also not supported . These problems were all remedied in System 7 .

A maximum of 15 Desk Accessories may be installed at one time , including the Chooser , Scrapbook , and Control Panel . System 6 uses the Control Panel desk accessory to access all the installed control panels , which imposes severe user interface limitations . Desk Accessories cannot be installed or removed within the Finder ; this requires the Font / DA Mover utility . System 7 also fixed this . Control panels , however , are contained in separate files .

Few methods exist for interface personalization . The Finder allows each icon to be assigned a color , but the desktop background is limited to an 8x8 pixel color tiled pattern (color patterns were introduced in System 5) , and standard window frames are all black and white . However , many " INIT " extension files existed to add color and customization . System 7 later allowed the user to change the color and various other aspects of the user interface . By 1989 , the System 6 user interface was in need of a change . In comparison to the NeXTSTEP operating system of the time , System 6 did not make use of sound , and its user interface presented several limitations in terms of file management and the way windows were displayed .

= = Reception = =

The initial releases of System 6 were unstable ; many third party software developers did not receive copies before its release , resulting in widespread compatibility problems . At first , many common software programs such as Microsoft Excel , Microsoft Works and 4th Dimension were not fully compatible with System 6 . There were also software bugs in the Color Manager , Script Manager , and Sound Manager extension files . Apple announced that 66 bugs were fixed when the 6 @.@ 0 @.@ 1 update was released in September 1988 . However , a major bug involving text spacing of screen fonts was found in 6 @.@ 0 @.@ 1 after distribution began . This led to the quick release of 6 @.@ 0 @.@ 2 , which solved this problem . Some customers waited longer until moving to System 6 because of the poor reputation already gained .

= = Compatibility = =

System 6 was officially supported by Apple for many different machines , some of which were shipped with System 6 . It may be that some Apple computers for which System 6 was not officially supported may nevertheless be able to run it , perhaps with limitations .

= = Version history = =