

Supported Systems

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TeX Live 2016 for the Macintosh was compiled on Leopard-PPC, Leopard-Intel, and Snow Leopard-Intel. The system then ran on Leopard, Snow Leopard, Lion, Mountain Lion, Mavericks, Yosemite, El Capitan, and Sierra.

Because the GUI programs did not support this range of systems, several versions of each GUI app had to be packaged in the install package. Testing became a nightmare. Very few of us even have all of these operating systems. In addition, users on recent systems had to run software compiled on much older machines.

After completing last year's distribution, the members of the MacTeX support team discussed various ways to bring some order to the process. Eventually, we decided that the proper approach would be to support those versions of OS X for which Apple still provides security patches. Current Apple policy is to support the three most recent versions of OS X. As of February, 2017, this support extended to Yosemite, El Capitan, and Sierra, and those are the systems we supported in TeX Live 2017.

TeX Live usually appears in June. Apple also conducts its Worldwide Developer Conference, WWDC, in June, where it gives developers their first beta of the next version of OS X. This version is then released in September. The members of the MacTeX working group test this beta as soon as it is released and have always supported it, sometimes by the skin of our teeth.

Thus in practice, our new policy will support the last four versions of the operating system released by Apple. But Apple system software upgrades are free, and Yosemite runs on much older systems. According to Wikipedia, it supports iMacs from Mid 2007 on, MacBooks from 2008 on, the Mac Pro, from 2008 on, and so forth. Thus in practice, we are supporting Macs produced for the last ten years.

Notice carefully that previous versions of MacTeX continue to run. These versions are archived at <ftp://ftp.tug.org/historic/systems/mactex>.

Note: In MacTeX-2018, we supported Yosemite, El Capitan, Sierra, and High Sierra because when we compiled on El Capitan, some computers running El Capitan didn't run

the binaries due to an “undefined instruction.” In 2019, we will return to the above policy, compiling on Sierra and supporting Sierra and above.