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Macintosh: What Causes Total Memory Fluctuations

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TOPIC ---

Why does the total memory amount change back and forth every few seconds?

DISCUSSION ---

Total memory bounces back and forth because the Process Manager makes
synthetic fonts purgeable every time it does a context switch. The Font
Manager creates synthetic fonts to render fonts to a bit depth that doesn't
match the bit depth of the font.

After this, if the synthetic font gets purged, some memory becomes free.
Then the Finder updates the total memory used. But redrawing that number
forces the Font Manager to rebuild the synthetic font, which takes up more
memory. So the Finder updates again, then the Process Manager makes the
font purgeable. This repeating process results in Finder updates for the
total memory used each time a synthetic font is created or purged.
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