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Macintosh Operating System: Maximum Volume Size (10/96)

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TOPIC -----

We have been seeing some strange results when trying to use volumes larger than 2 GB. What is the maximum volume size supported by the Macintosh operating system?

DISCUSSION -----

Prior to System 7.5, the Macintosh operating system did not support volume (not drive) sizes greater than 2 GB. System 7.5 increased that limit to 4 GB and System 7.5.2 (and later) increases that limit to 2 terabytes on some computers, including:

- PowerBook 190, 1400, 5300 series and Duo 2300c/100.
- Macintosh Performa 5400 and 6400 series and 6360/160
- Power Macintosh 5400, 6400, 7200, 7500, 7600, 8500, and 9500 series
- Workgroup Server 7250/120 and Workgroup Server 8550 series

With versions of the Macintosh operating system previous to System 7.5 we recommend making the volume sizes slightly less than 2 GB to ensure that you do not run into any limitations.

This means that if you have a hard disk drive with a formatted capacity larger than the 2 GB, you must partition it into multiple volumes smaller than 2 GB. Currently, we have found that a partition size at least 1 MB smaller than 2 GB seems to work acceptably.

Possible symptoms of volumes equal to, or larger than the 2 GB limit include:

- Negative file sizes
- Inability to copy files because "More space is needed" even though plenty of space is available.
- Similar symptoms on Novell (or other) servers when the volumes published over the network are larger than 2 GB.

This is a hard limitation. There are no workarounds other than partitioning the drive into multiple volumes or updating your computer and any client computers that may log on to the volume to System 7.5.x.

Article Change History:

- 31 Oct 1996 - Noted which computers supported 2 terabytes.
- 10 Oct 1995 - Reviewed for technical accuracy.
- 08 Sep 1995 - Added System 7.5.x information.

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