

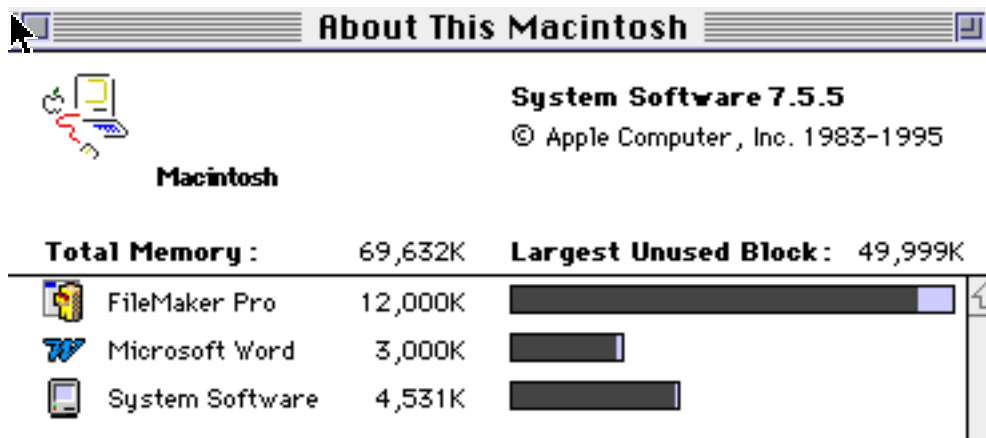
After Hours Macintosh Consulting

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Changing Application RAM memory allocations...

Do you sometimes get out-of-memory error messages, Type 1 or Type 11 errors? These errors can occur due to bugs in the operating system version or program you are using, or a lack of RAM memory installed in the Mac. Sometimes, it has nothing to do with how much actual RAM you have installed on your Mac, but rather how much memory is dedicated to an application. Here's some background: when you double-click on an application, or a file created by that application, the application will launch (or, load into memory). When the application launches, it asks the operating system to reserve a certain amount of RAM just for it and its files. This is a fixed amount of RAM. If the amount is too small, and the application encounters a situation where the file it is working on needs more RAM than is available to the app, you'll (hopefully) receive one of the above error messages and be able to shut down with little or no loss of information. If you aren't so lucky, the Mac may freeze or crash, costing you precious time (or worse: corrupted files). How do you avoid this? There is a simple fix.

First, if the application is launched, you can return to the Finder, then select About This Macintosh from under the Apple menu. The bar graph will illustrate the amount of RAM taken up by the System, and how much is reserved by each launched application and open files. The dark portion of the bar represents the actual amount of RAM being used by each program, and the light remaining portion of the bar is how much free space remains for the app to create new documents, make changes to the open documents, or perform other functions. This is the window from System 7.5.5. Newer operating systems may be cosmetically different, but the information should be the same:



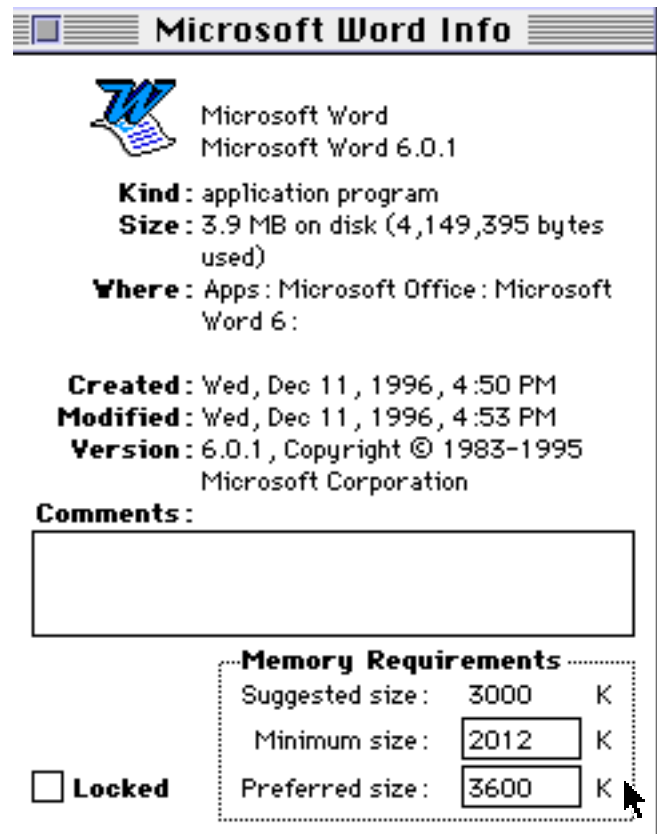
If the bar graph shows less than 20 percent light area for the program in question, consider increasing the RAM allocation. In this example, Microsoft Word needs some additional RAM to work properly. The current amount of RAM allocated for Word is set to 3 Mb, or 3,000 Kilobytes. We'll increase its preferred RAM setting by 20%. Other programs, such as graphics packages, may need significantly more RAM allocated to run well. Returning to the example, we need to adjust the amount of RAM assigned to Word..

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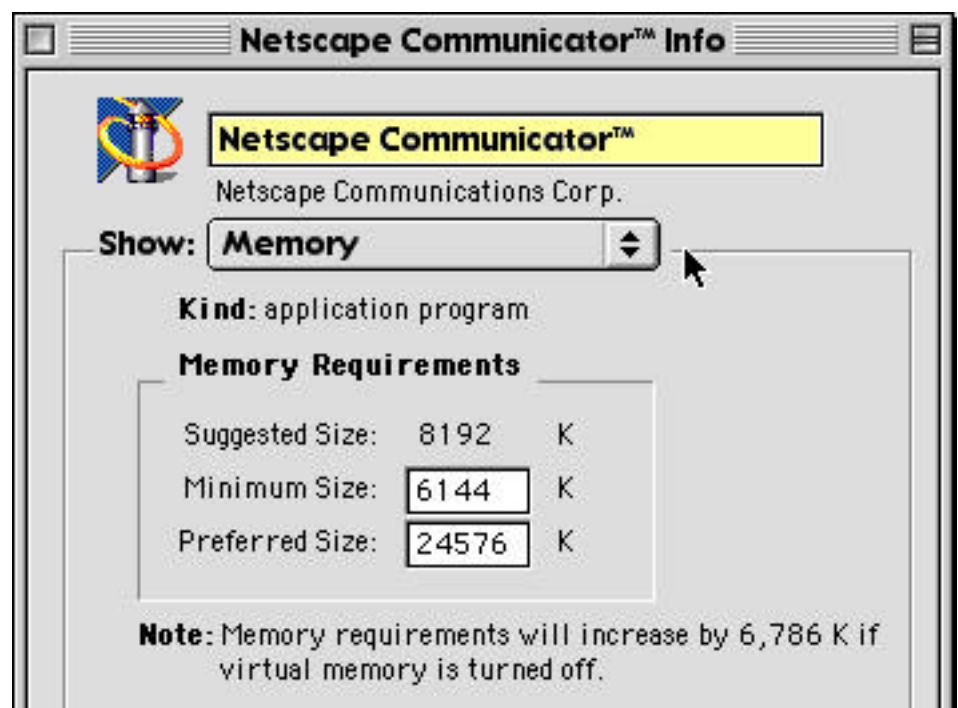
How? First, be sure the application you want to modify is not launched (if so, **quit** out of the application). Then, highlight the application with a single click and use the Get Info command (under the File menu). Finally, select the preferred memory box in the lower right of the screen, and increase it's value by about 25%. Close the box and try using the application again. On particularly large applications, this process may necessarily be repeated several times. Do avoid the temptation of programming far more memory allocated than you really need, as this RAM is not available to other applications simultaneously.

Leave the minimum size setting set to the default (original) value. Close the window.



Note, for users of OS 8.5 and higher, the Get Info window has a pulldown menu rather than a box in the bottom corner for setting the RAM allocation value. Select the menu, then choose the Memory item to display the settings, as shown here.

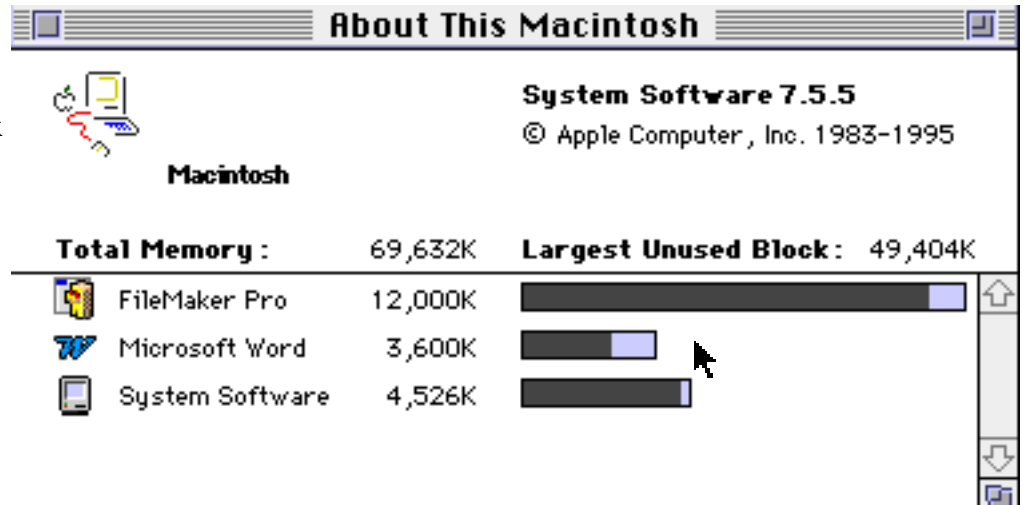
(The values here are given as examples only. Your individual requirements and settings will likely vary.)



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To double-check the new setting, launch the application again, load your desired files, return to the Finder and recheck the About This Mac window.



That's it. If your system crashed due to one of the above errors, be sure to restart the Mac before opening a file. This "flushes" or clears the RAM of old instructions or data. Remember: Virtual Memory or RAM Doubler are no substitutes for real RAM, and never give the performance sufficient RAM can to your Mac.