

The importance of closing out applications in Mac OS X

Computer applications use system resources (Memory/RAM). The more system resources used (Applications open), the computer performance will be negatively affected. In our experience, we found many Mac users neglecting to close out of applications fully. If the applications are not fully closed, they will continue to reside in memory and consume system resources.

In Microsoft Windows, clicking on the “X” on the application’s top right corner typically closes (Shuts down) the application. Unlike Windows, pressing the  button on a Mac only closes the active window of an application and does not fully shut it down. In a few applications, such as the Calculator program will fully close by clicking the  button but typically is not the case.

In the case of Safari and most other applications, clicking the  button closes the active window but the application will still be running. This may be verified by checking the **Dock** to see if a small white dot is illuminating under the application icon. If a white dot is visible under the application icon, the application is still active and has not shut down.



An example of an application actively running

This behavior may cause some confusion among MS Windows and Mac users equally. In Windows each window represents separate instances of an application but on the Mac, each window is best seen as an open document for a single instance of one running application.

So why fully close out an application?

When an application is fully closed, the computer frees up system resources (Memory/RAM) that were in use by the application making the computer operate more efficiently. If you suspect an application has not quit, the best way to see if the application has closed is to see if a white dot is visible under the Application Icon on the **Dock**.

How to fully close out of an application.

To fully close out of an application, click on the Application menu and choose “Quit” as shown on the image to the right. The application menu will be the same name as the active application. It is located to the right of the Apple menu at the top left of your corner screen.

You may also use the shortcut key command to quit by pressing the **Command**  and the **Q** keys together.

