Apple MacOS Big Sur – 4 New Features to Try

January 2021 by Steven Dunwell

On November the 12th 2020, Apple released a big update to its computer operating system. Called **"MacOS Big Sur"** (named after a section of dramatic coastline in California), it brings a host of new features to your computer, including a totally redesigned user interface and new functionality. It will work on most modern Mac computers in use today, however, check on the link below for the official Apple website to ensure your computer is capable of running it:

https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT211238

There are many exciting changes, but here are four highlights that you can try on macOS Big Sur.

Use the New Control Centre

Big Sur now has its own Control Center, which displays icons for commonly used features. On the top menu bar, click the Control Center icon (it looks like two horizontal bars). You can quickly access controls for Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, AirDrop, Do Not Disturb mode, Keyboard Brightness, Screen Mirroring, Display, Sound, and Music. Click on a control option to expand and use it.

You can add more options to Control Center under **System Preferences > Dock & Menu Bar**. In the left pane, scroll down to the section for Other Modules. You can then select Accessibility Shortcuts, Battery, or Fast User Switching, and check the box for "Show in Control Center."

View Notifications and Widgets

Borrowing one of the features from the IPad, Big Sur now displays notifications and widgets in the same section. Click the date and time on the Menu bar to view any notifications and see the default widgets, such as date, weather, World Clock, and Screen Time. Click on a widget to open the corresponding application.

Check Your Mac's Battery

Big Sur now offers more information and options about your battery. Click the battery icon on the Menu bar to see the percentage of charge left in it. Then select the option for Battery Preferences to determine when the display shuts off battery power, even better, you can take certain measures to preserve your battery life. Make sure the option for "Optimized battery charging" is on. This feature learns how you use your computer, so that it won't be charged past 80%, until you need that extra kick. Click the button for Battery Health and be sure the option for "Manage battery longevity" is on. This should help prolong the life of your battery.

Hear What You Type

If you have problems seeing the screen, you can now hear letters and words spoken aloud as you type them. To set this up, go to **System Preferences > Accessibility**. In the Spoken Content section, check the box for "Speak typing feedback." Now open any app which you can type. As you type a letter, it is read aloud. Once you've typed a word, that word is read aloud too.