Built-In Security in MacOS

Gatekeeper and Firewall

Focus on XProtect

A Look at the Silent Knight application

And XProCheck

Bruce Mitchell - Tom Bonanno September 19,2023





This new Mac malware is stealing passwords, credit card info and more — how to stay safe

Tom's Guide

€News

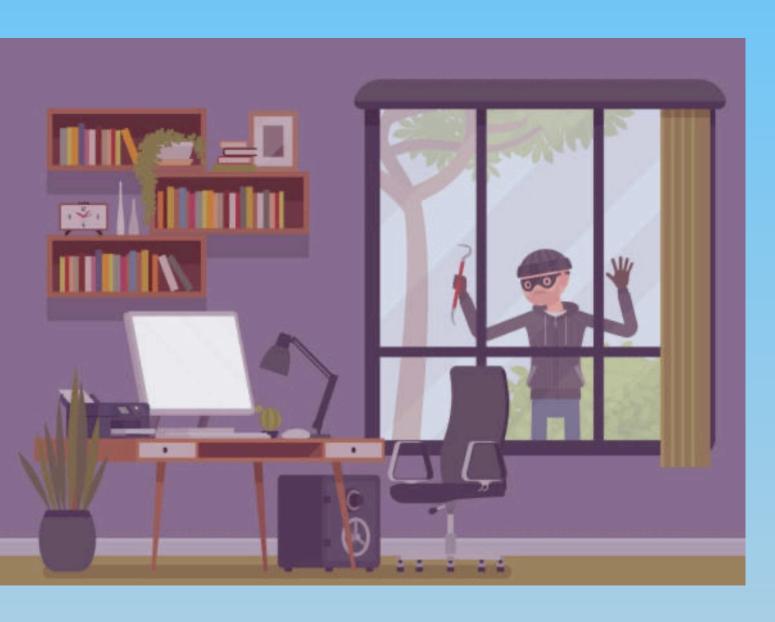
July 2023



This notorious Mac malware has resurfaced as an office productivity app — how to stay safe

tomsguide.com

August 2023



Imagine that your Mac is a house.

XProtect is like a security guard who patrols your house every day, looking for any sign of trouble.

If the security guard sees a burglar, he or she will call the police. XProtect is the same way. If it finds malware on your Mac, it will remove it. It is time to be proactive and be sure everything that you can do has been done to protect your privacy and security.



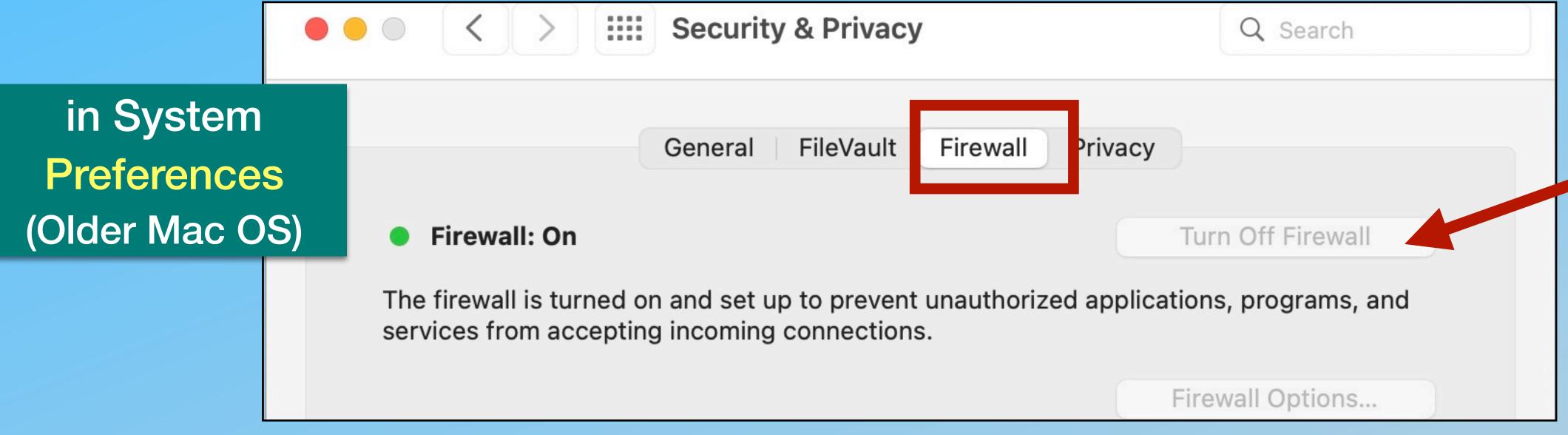
In System Preferences or now in System Settings in our Mac OS

Under Privacy and Security be sure these 2 are active:

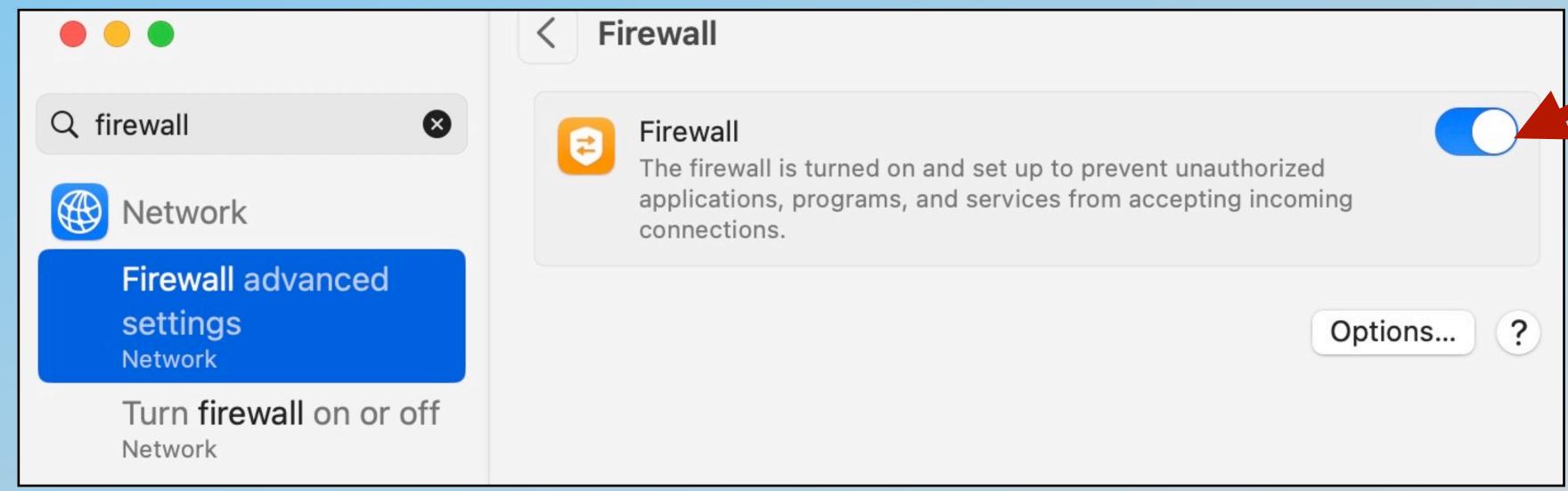
Firewall and GateKeeper

Older macs call it Security and Privacy. Newer Mac OS calls it Privacy and Security.

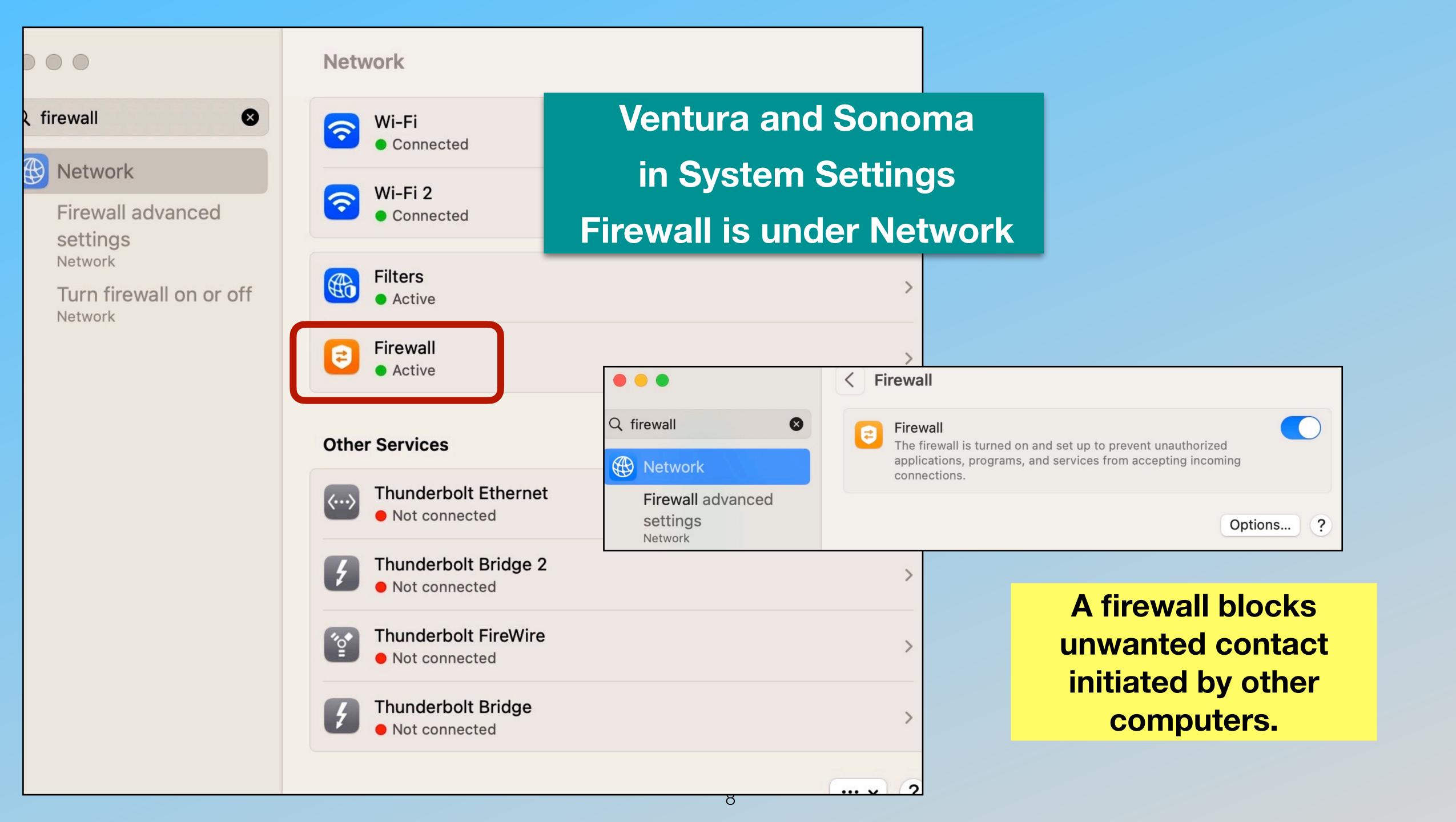
Firewall



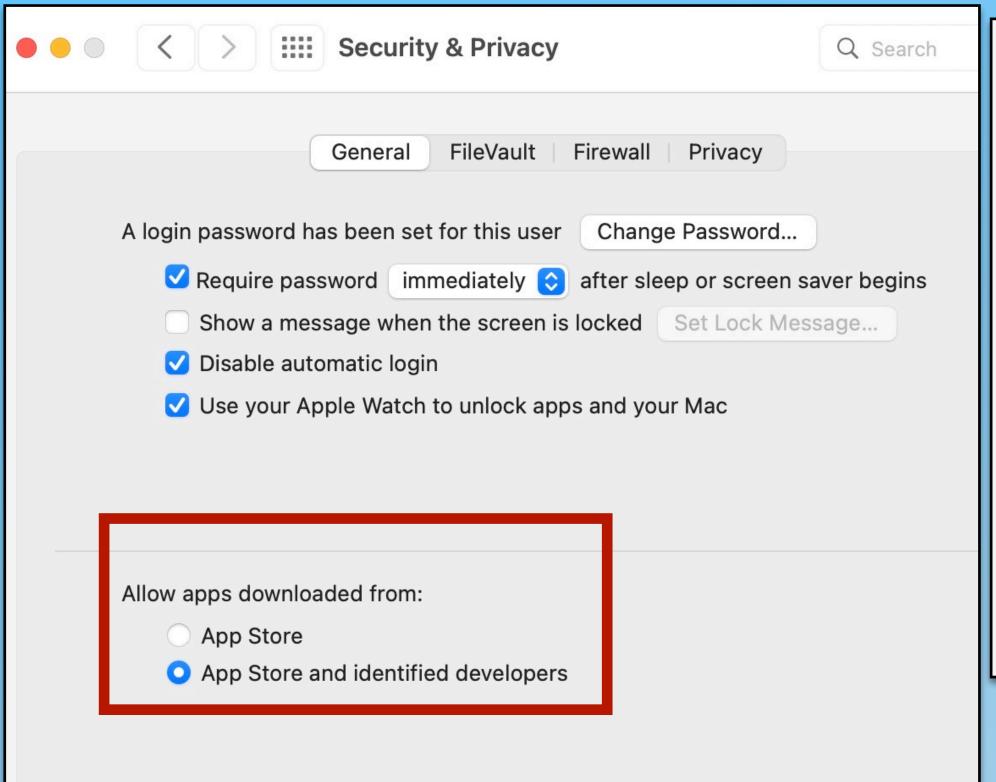
in System
Settings
under Network
(Ventura and
later)

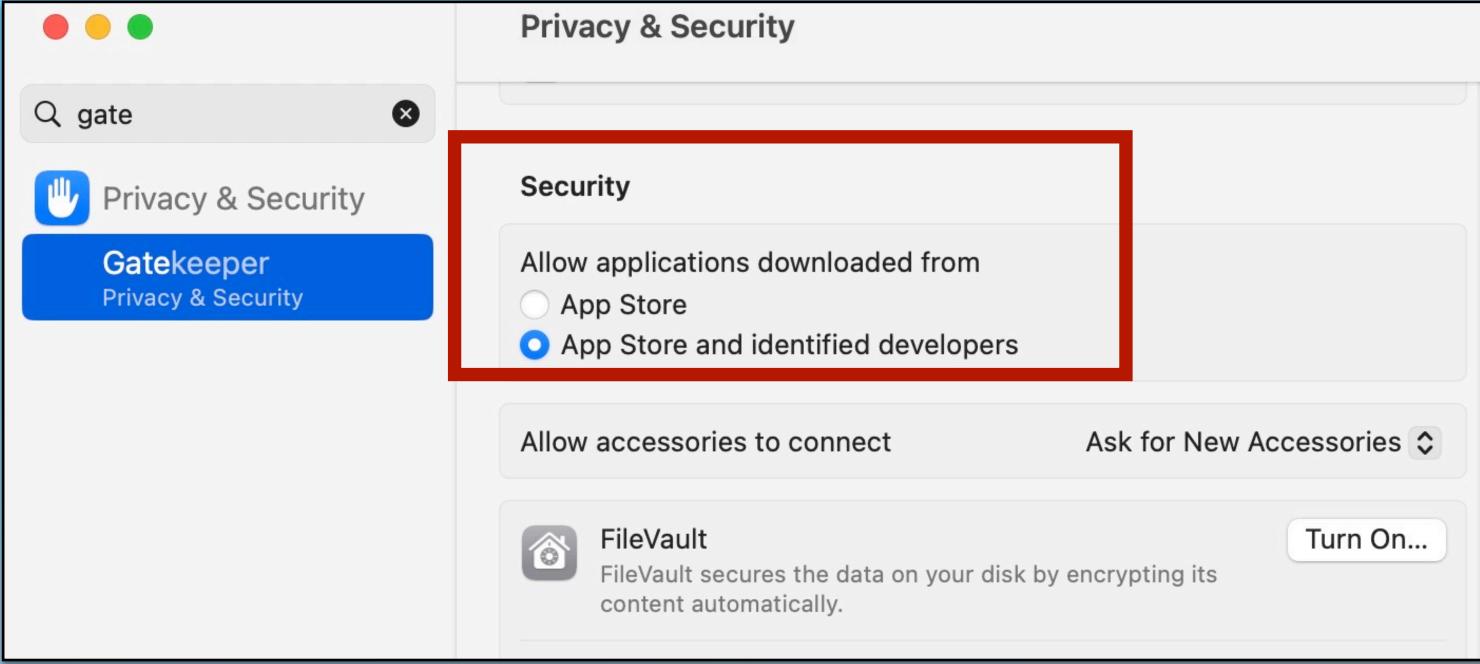


Make sure this is turned on in System Preferences or in System Settings



Gatekeeper





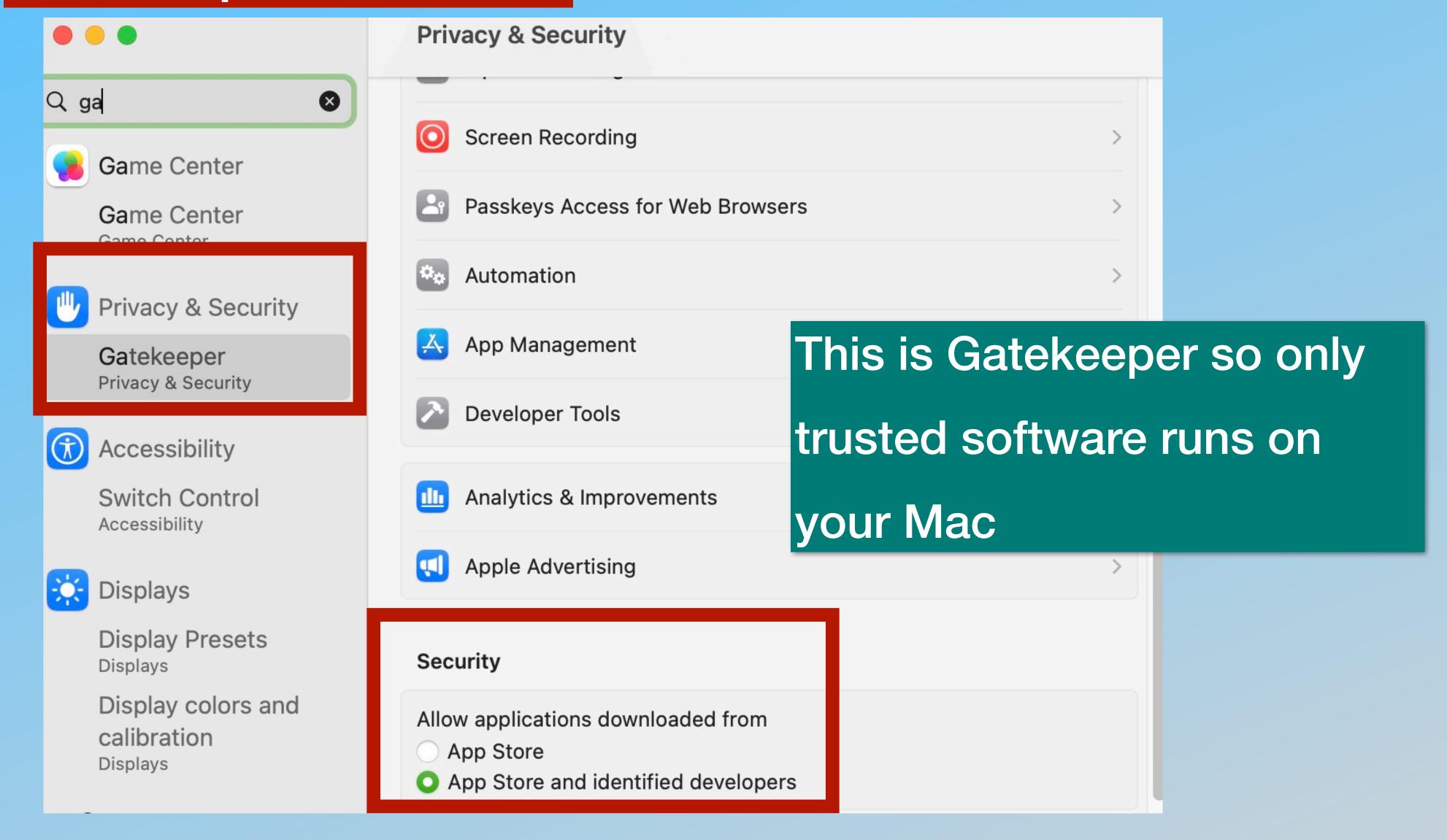
in System Preferences (Older Mac OS)

in System Settings (Ventura and later)

macOS includes a technology called Gatekeeper, that's designed to

ensure that only trusted software runs on your Mac.

Gatekeeper In Ventura



System Settings > Privacy & Security > Security





If you have any questions just ask.



Featured Presentation

XProtect and Silent Knight

XProtect

It only works on Macs running Catalina or later. That was 2019.

It doesn't totally replace the need for antivirus software.

Antivirus software can provide additional protection against

malware that XProtect might not detect.

XProtect really started in 2009 with Snow Leopard, but

features are less advanced.

released in 2001

macOS Software Since 2001



- Mac OS X 10.0 code named "Cheetah", released to end users on Saturday, March 24, 2001
- Mac OS X 10.1 code named "Puma", released to end users on Tuesday, September 25, 2001
- Mac OS X Jaguar version 10.2, released to end users on Friday, August 23, 2002
- Mac OS X Panther version 10.3, released to end users on Friday, October 24, 2003
- Mac OS X Tiger version 10.4, released to end users on Friday, April 29, 2005
- Mac OS X Leopard version 10.5, released to end users on Friday, October 26, 2007
- Mac OS X Snow Leopard version 10.6, publicly unveiled on Monday, June 8, 2009
- Mac OS X Lion version 10.7, released to end users on Wednesday, July 20, 2011
- OS X Mountain Lion version 10.8, released to end users on Wednesday, July 25, 2012
- OS X Mavericks version 10.9, released to end users on Tuesday, October 22, 2013
- OS X Yosemite version 10.10, released to end users on Thursday, October 16, 2014
- OS X El Capitan version 10.11, released to end users on Wednesday, September 30, 2015
- macOS Sierra version 10.12, released to end users on Tuesday, September 20, 2016
- macOS High Sierra version 10.13, released to end users on Monday, September 25, 2017
- macOS Mojave version 10.14, released to end users on Monday, September 24, 2018
- macOS Catalina version 10.15, released to end users on Monday, October 7, 2019
- macOS Big Sur version 11, released to end users on Thursday, November 12, 2020
- macOS Monterey version 12, released to end users on Monday, October 25, 2021
- macOS Ventura version 13, released to end users on Monday, October 24, 2022
- macOS Sonoma version 14, announced at WWDC 2023 on Monday, June 5, 2023

Main sources to learn about this:

macintouch.com
eclecticlight.co
Tom's Guide
Intego
Google Bard
Bing Chat GPT

Mac OS has built in security

No need to download XProtect as it is a feature of the Mac OS.

X Protect has been on Macs since 2009.

It is not an application, but Part of Mac OS.

Apple quietly updates XProtect.

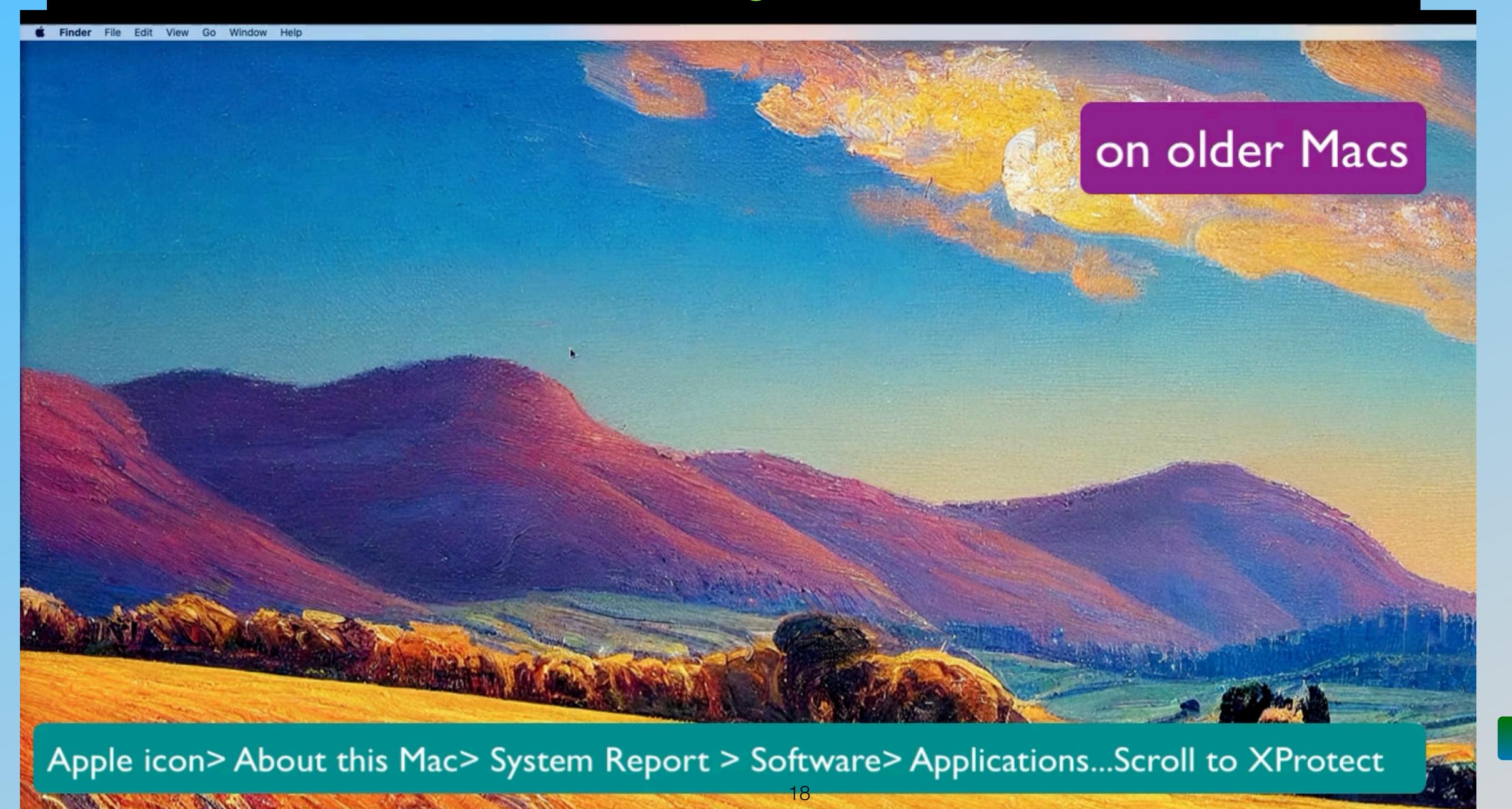
This is invisible running in the background.

So how does one know if everything is current and turned on?

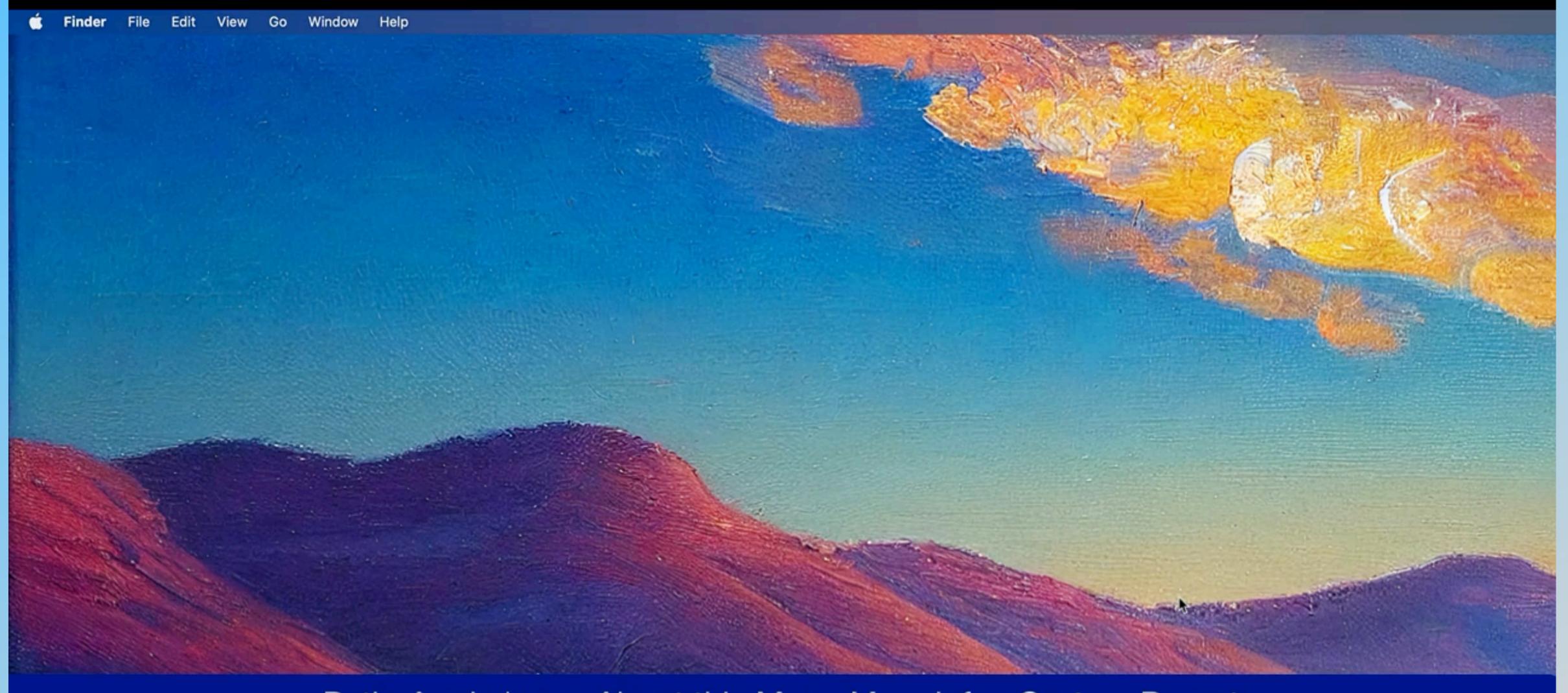
This is the hard way to learn if

XProtect is even turned on.

On an older Mac OS running Catalina



System Settings on a Silicon MI Mac. Ventura 13.4.1



Path: Apple icon >About this Mac >More Info >System Report > Go to Software> ApplicationsThen scroll to find XProtect

Step by Step Slides 19-23

About This Mac

2

System Settings...

App Store...

Click on Apple Logo

Recent Items

Then About this Mac

Force Quit

びまむア

Sleep

Restart...

Shut Down...

Lock Screen

^ # Q

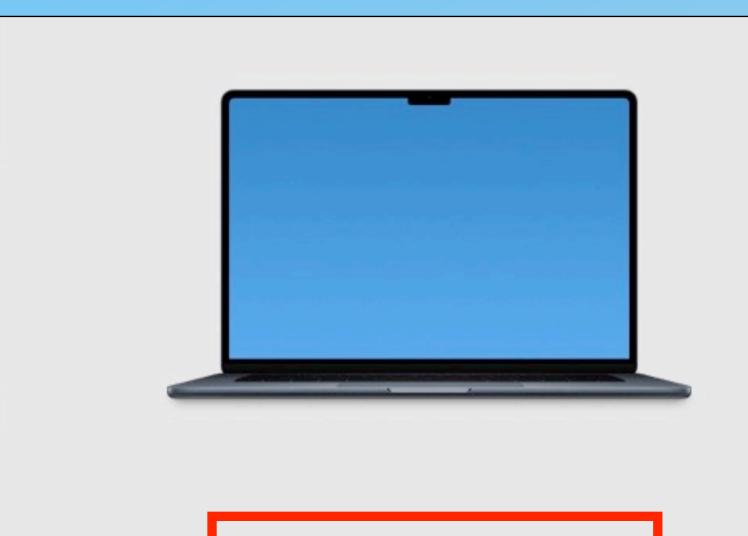
Log Out

20

分₩ Q

3

Click on More Info



MacBook Air

15-inch, M2, 2023

Chip Apple M2

Memory 24 GB

Serial number V

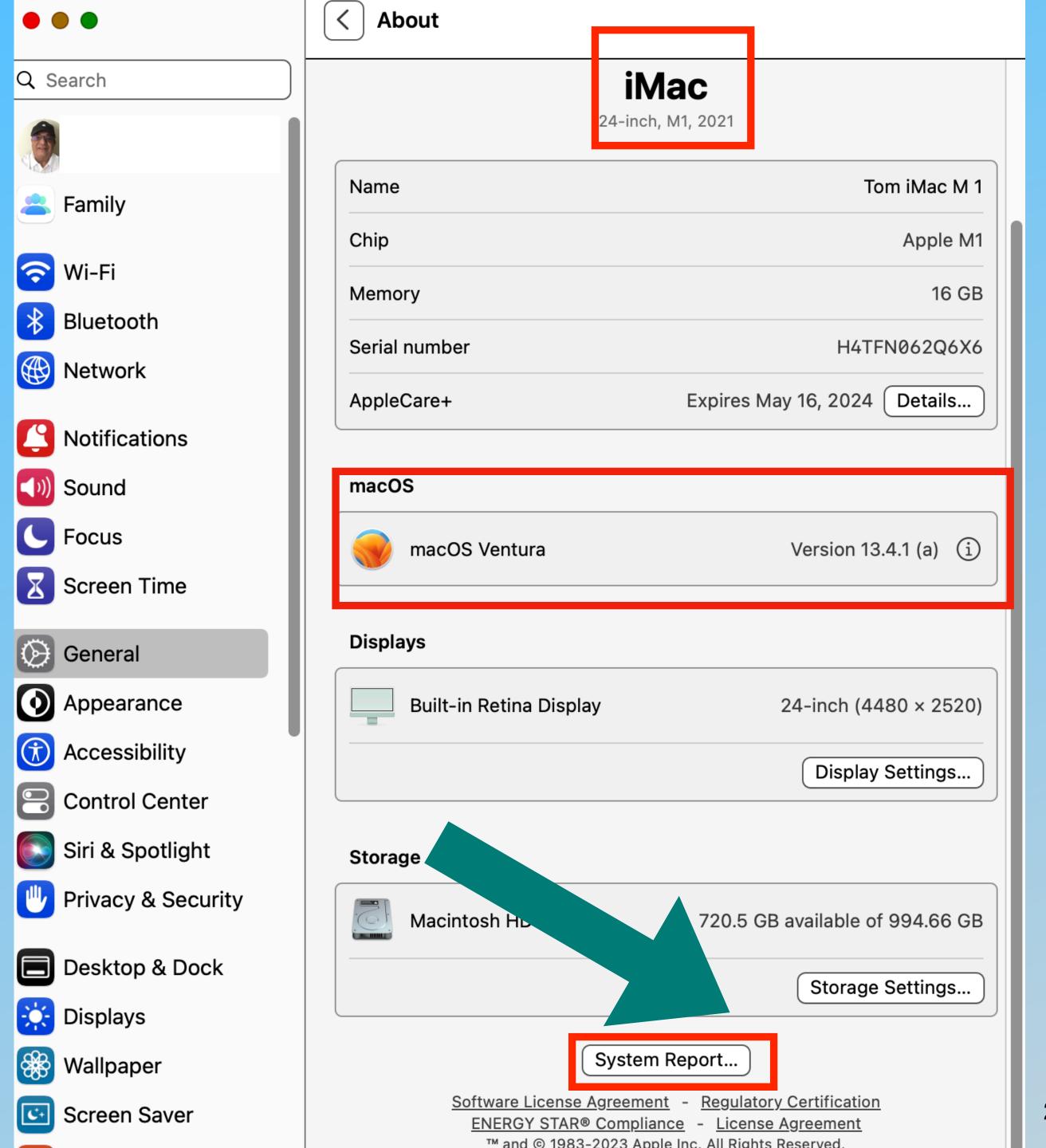
macOS Ventura 13.4.1

More Info...

Regulatory Certification

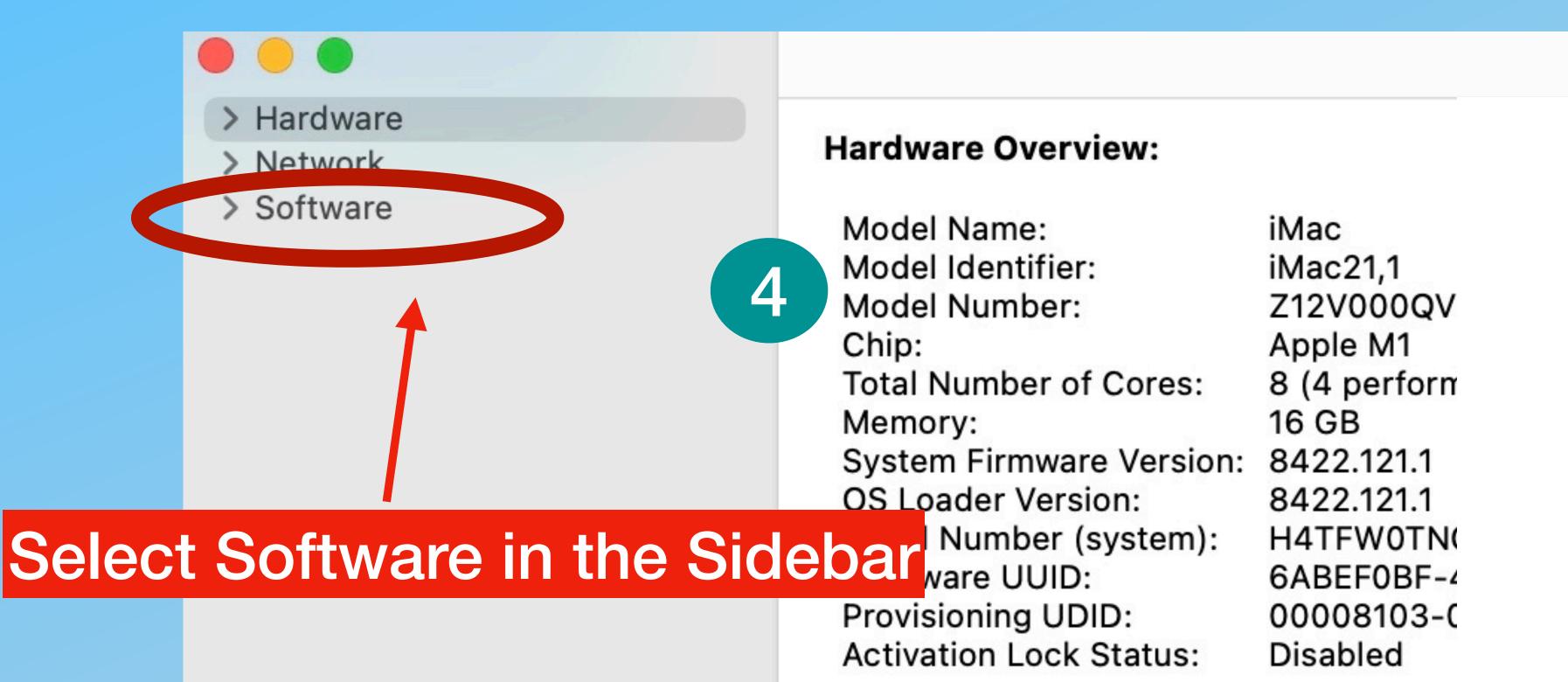
™ and © 1983-2023 Apple Inc.

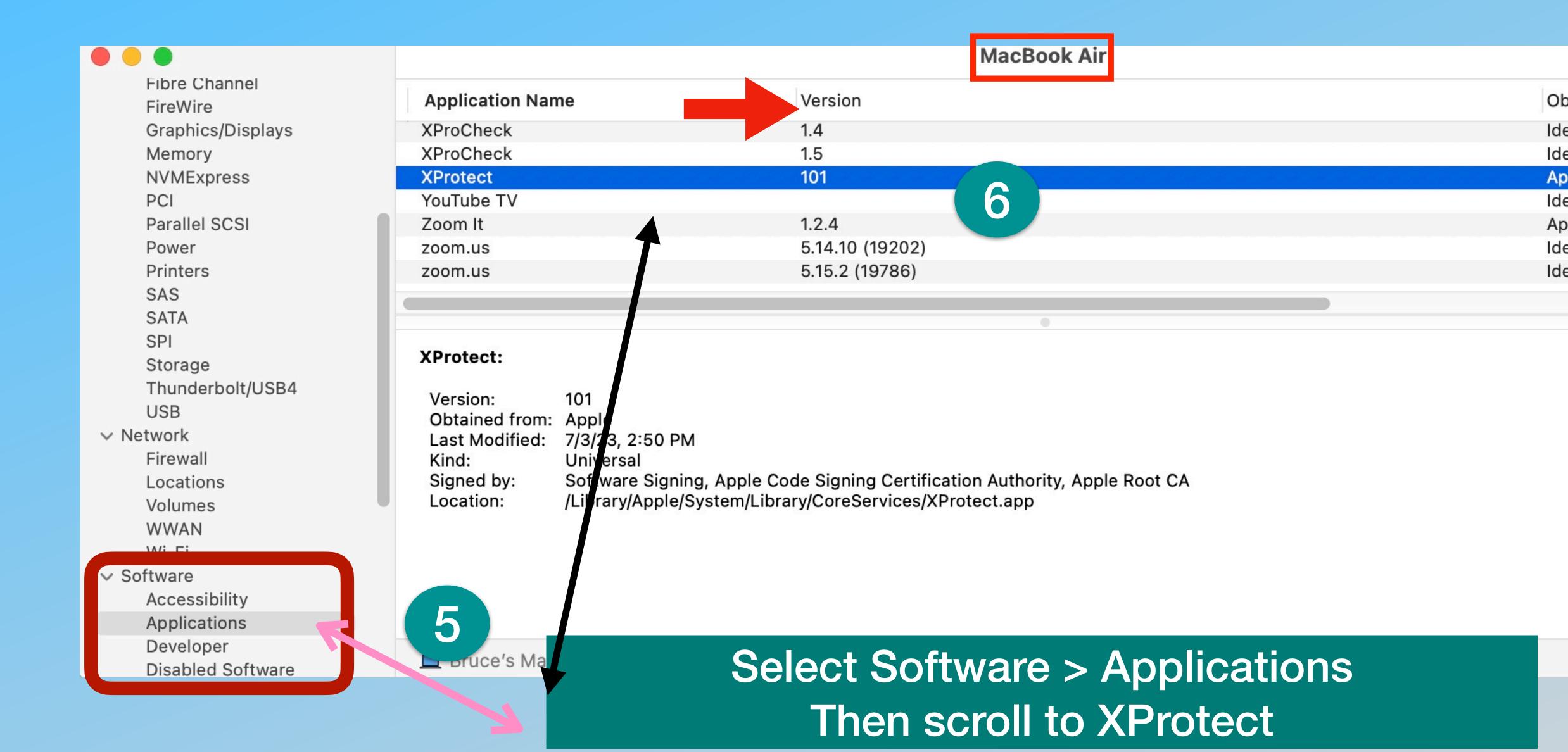
All Rights Reserved.

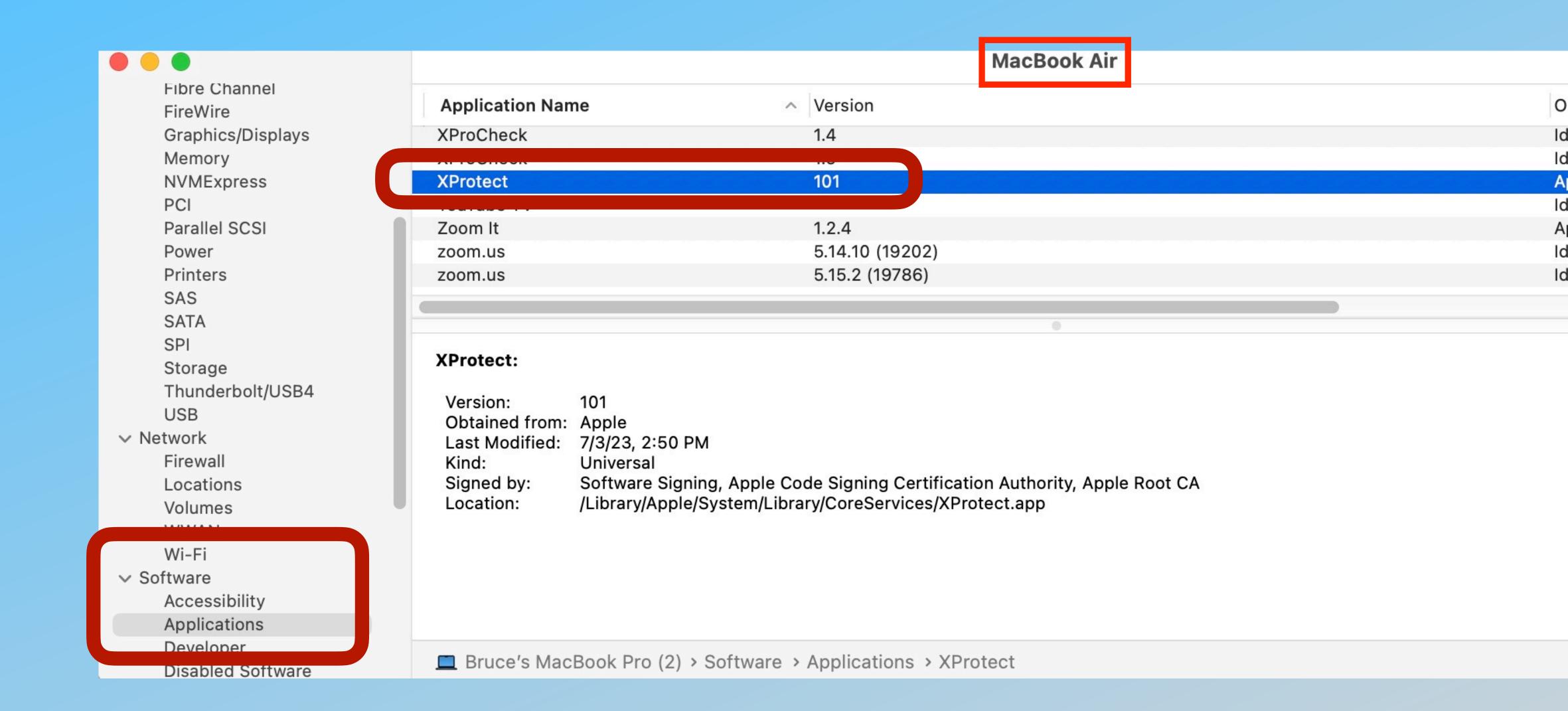


System Report





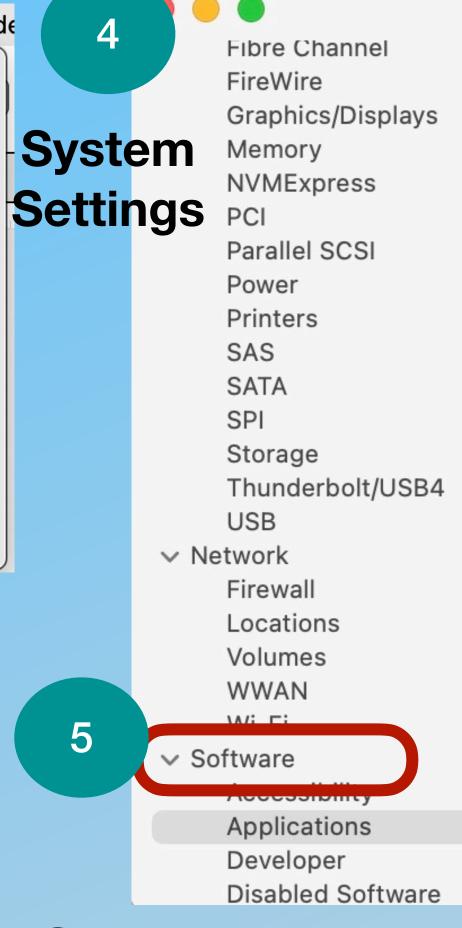




So you found a number. What does it even mean?

Summary: check the version of XProtect





		MacBook Air
	Application Nan	e ^ Version
6	XProCheck	1.4 1.5
	XProtect	101
	Zoom It	1.2.4
	zoom.us	5.14.10 (19202)
	zoom.us	5.15.2 (19786)
	XProtect:	
		Apple 7/3/23, 2:50 PM Universal Software Signing, Apple Code Signing Certification Authority, Apple Root C//Library/Apple/System/Library/CoreServices/XProtect.app

Path: Apple icon >About this Mac > More Info > System Report > Software> Applications

Then scroll to find XProtect

But one has no idea if that 101 is current.

XProtect Needs Updates

XProtect removes malware

Remediator was added to XProtect in March 2022.

XProtect consists of modules that briefly but regularly scan your Mac for specific nasties during periods of low user activity.

Remediator is the anti- virus/malware definitions part of XProtect trying to stay current to the latest nasties.

Remediator updates anti-virus definitions.

* These nasties are malware, adware, spyware etc.

Past presentation on Malware... https://www.tvaug.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/12.08.20 Understanding-Malware.pdf

Apple has become more aggressive keeping XProtect updated as malware activity has increased in the past year.

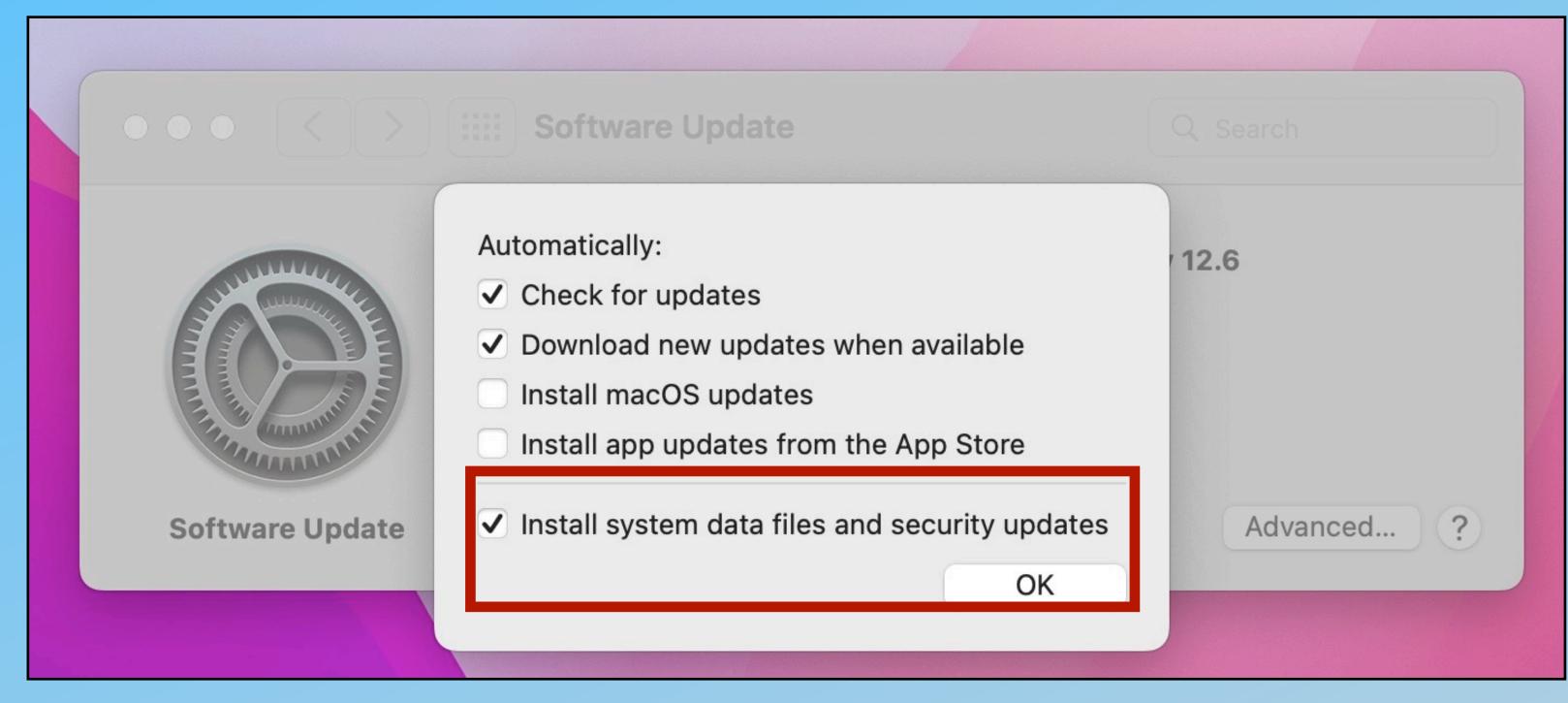
Lots of Remediator updates.

Remediator is just Apple's term for anti virus definitions.

New attacks, new updates run quietly in the background.

* * *Important* * *

Enabled by Default on Mac Keep X Protect Updated in Background



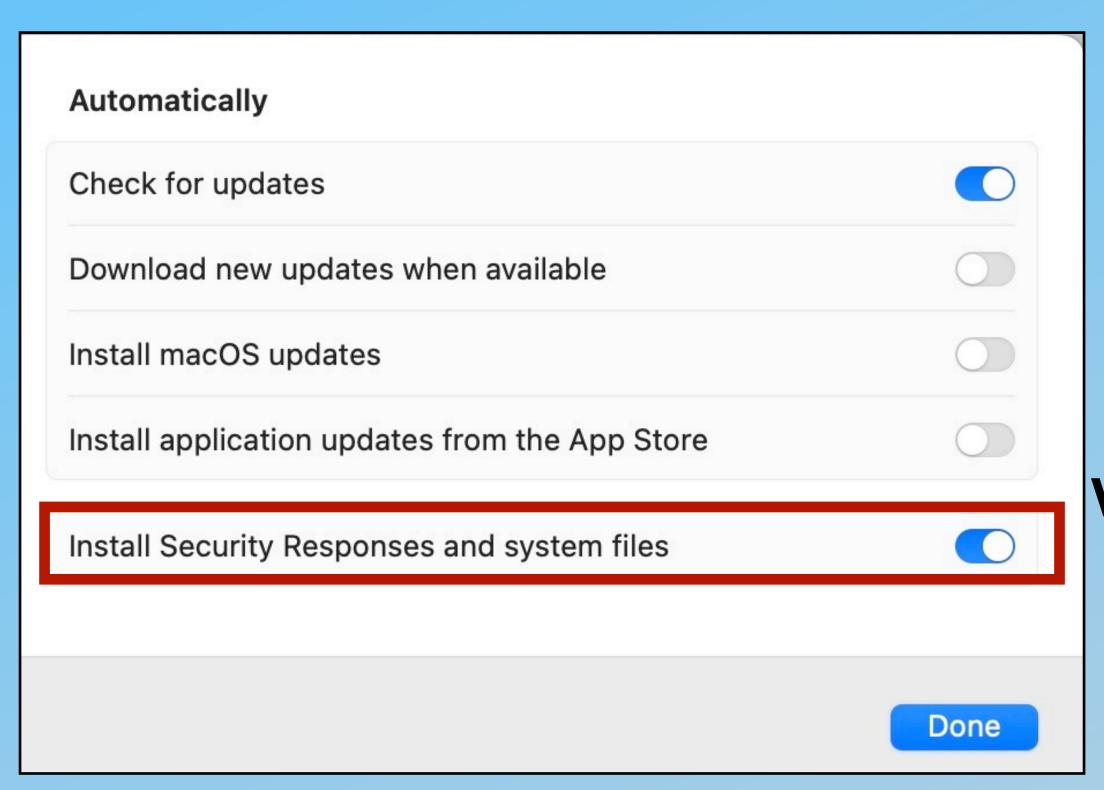
View in System Preferences

To Get automatic updates to XProtect to run in the background...

Older Mac OS Apple logo > System Preferences > Software Update > Advanced

* * *Important* * *

t* * * Enabled by Default on Mac Keep X Protect Updated in Background



View in System Settings Ventura Mac OS 16

To Get automatic updates to XProtect to run in the background...

In Ventura: System Settings > General > Software Updates> Click Automatically

To Recap:

XProtect removes harmful malware in the background

The app is invisible

It can't be found in the Applications folder.

It is part of the System OS.

Apple never discloses what malware it removed.

It is active and running when there is light activity.

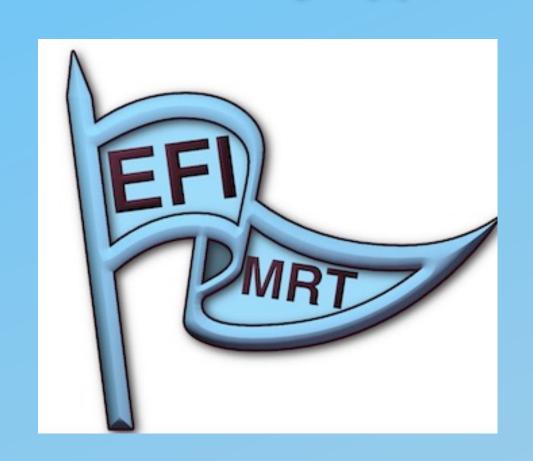
This is another reason not to always shut down your Mac.

Just let it run in the background.

There is an easier way to see if everything is running in the background.

I learned more about XProtect in the summer of 2022

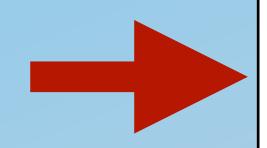
Silent Knight 3rd Party App



This free application give us an insight.

Security Integrity Check

to see if everything is active and current



SilentKnight 1.21 – checks security systems automatically SilentKnight 2.6 – Catalina and later

What Silent Knight tells us

XProtect is responsible for checking apps and some other files indicating if they are malicious. It should <u>always</u> be enabled.

Apple periodically updates its signature and malware definitions (remediator) using pushed security updates.

So Silent Knight shows a System Integrity Check.

It lets you know the status of the System. If everything is updated and turned on.

Silent Knight is intended to:

- check that your Mac has the current firmware
- check that its security protection is current and hasn't fallen behind
- •screen for major security issues, and warn you of them
- •make it easier to keep your Mac's security data up to date.

So how do you find and download Silent Knight?

Where to find Silent Knight



eclecticlight.co not.com

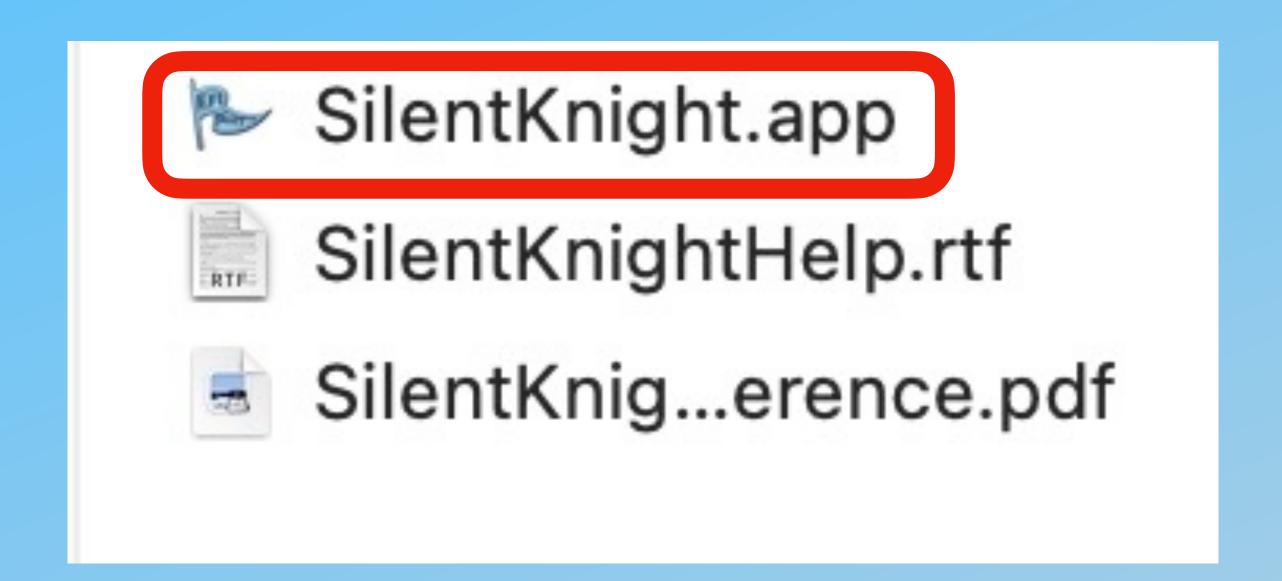
It isn't electric

A shortcut to download Silent Knight

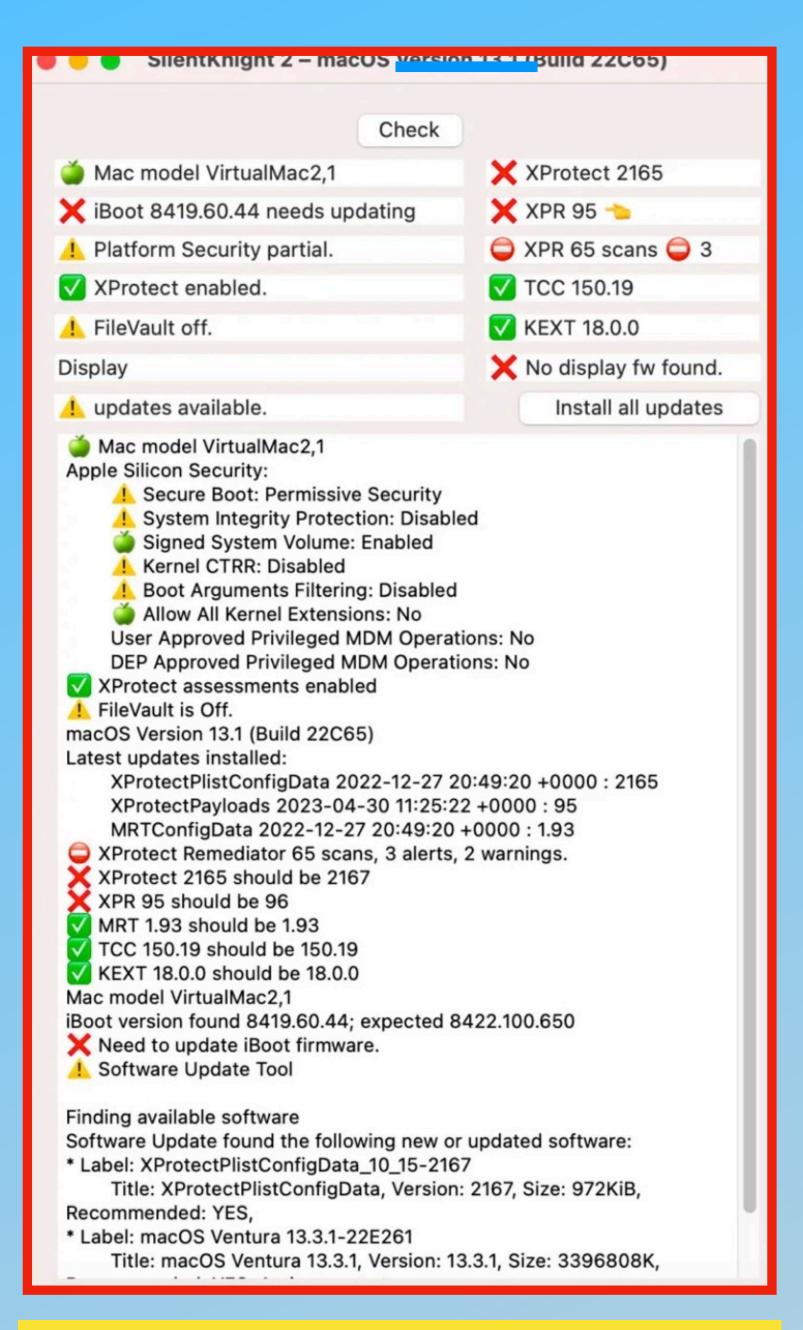
https://eclecticlight.co/lockrattler-systhist/

Updated! Check whether your Mac is up to date automatically. Covers firmware, security settings and data files, and now checks macOS malware scans. Has both a summary Help page and a detailed reference. Update improves XProtect Remediator scan checks.

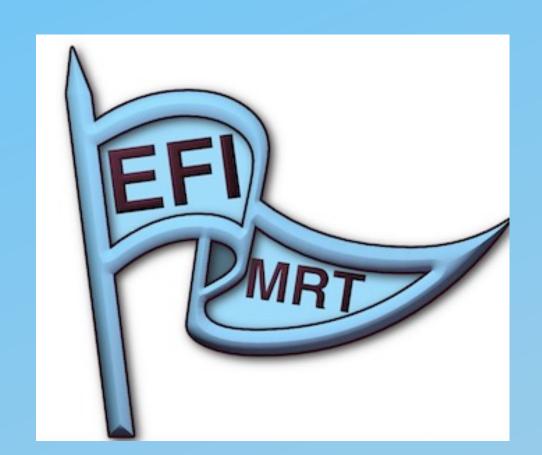
SilentKnight 1.21 (Universal App for El Capitan, Sierra, High Sierra, Mojave, Catalina, Big Sur, Monterey and Ventura) – last version to run on El Capitan to Mojave SilentKnight 2.6 (Universal App for Catalina, Big Sur, Monterey, Ventura and Sonoma)



Put the Silent Knight app in the Applications folder.



Silent Knight



System Integrity Check

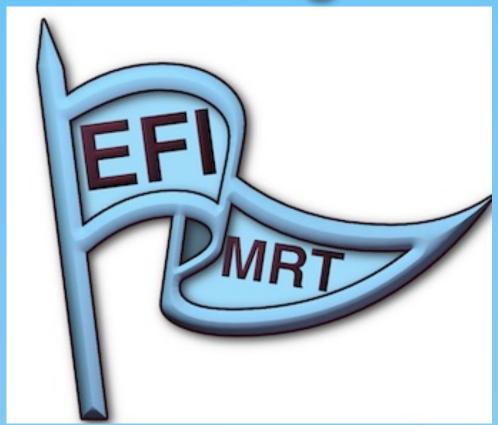
The macOS doesn't have a dashboard to warn you of dangerous, outdated security settings.

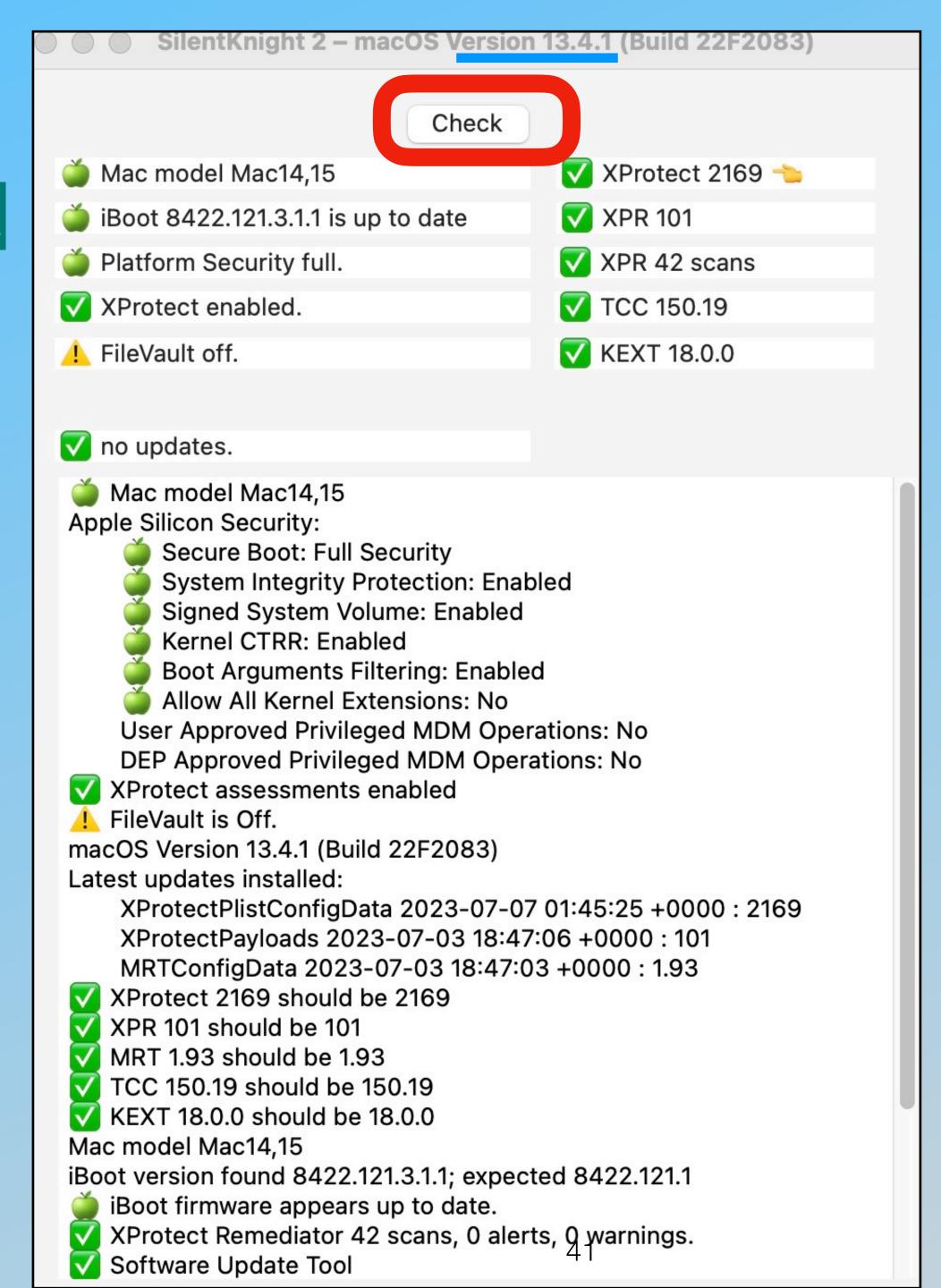
But Silent Knight does.

This Mac has integrity issues.

System Integrity Check

Silent Knight icon





Launch Silent Knight and Click Check



means current
Green is good

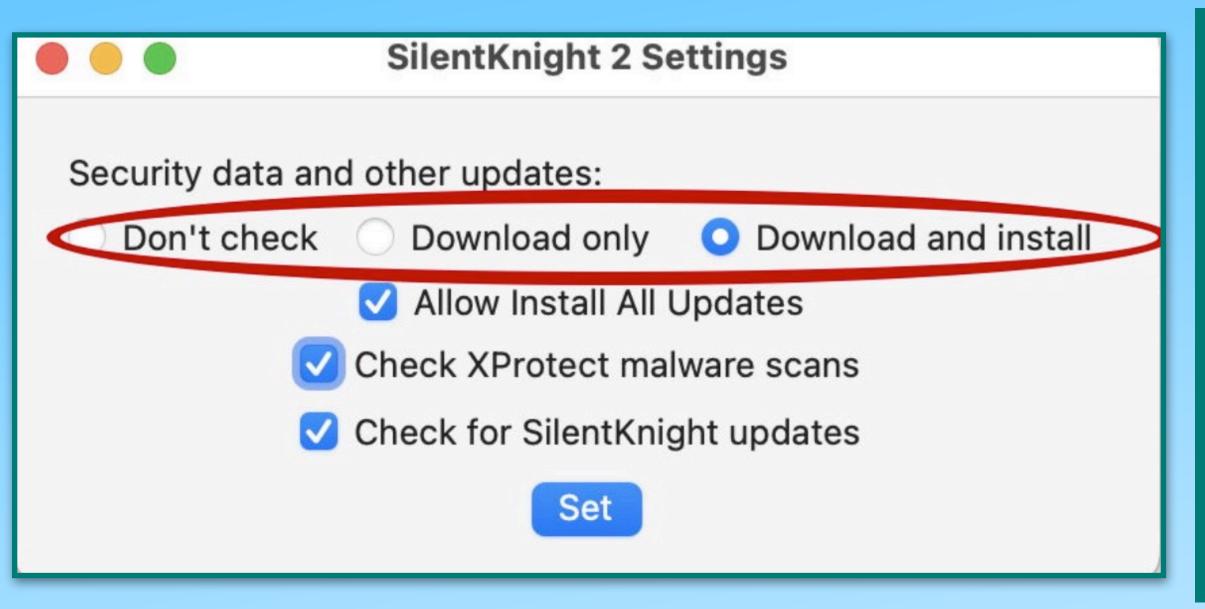
If not current there is a red X

A yellow triangle is a caution.

It might mean something needs updating or isn't turned on.

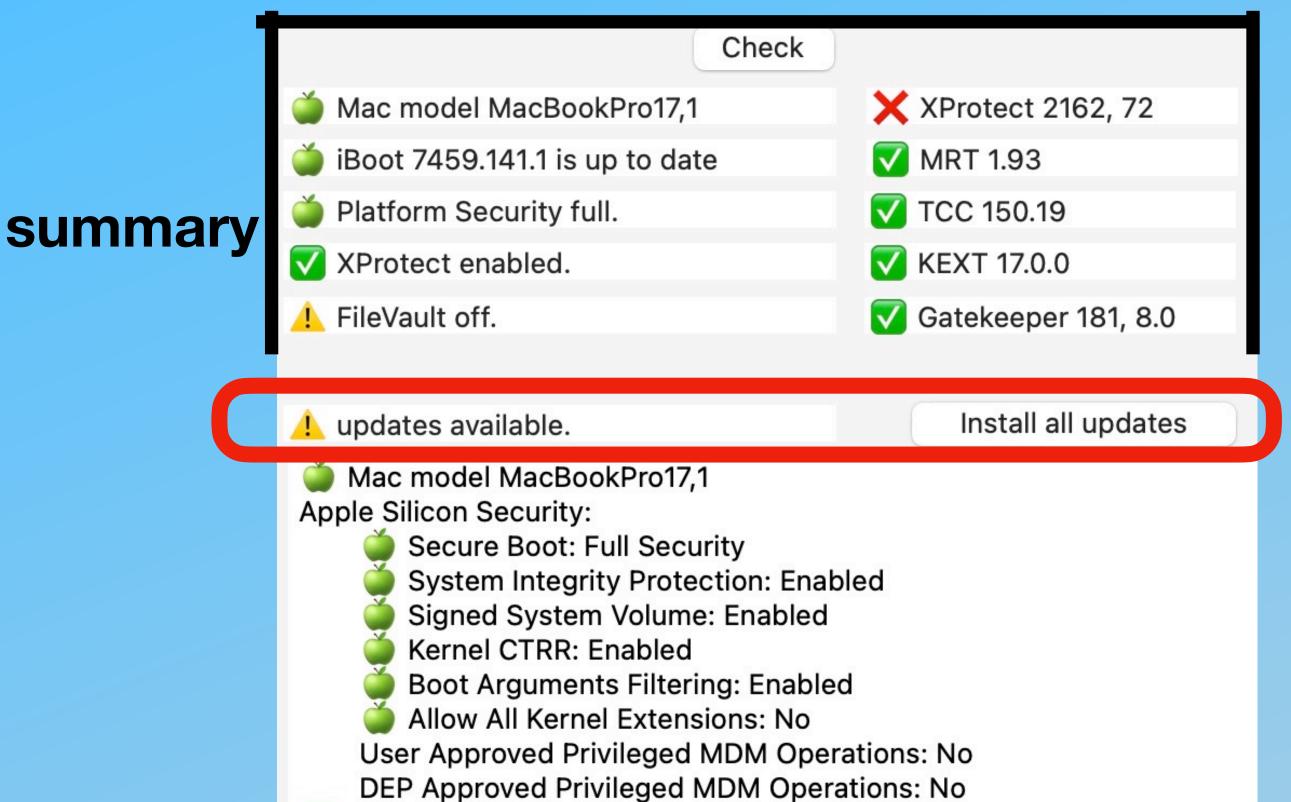


Silent Knight Settings



Note that SilentKnight *never* downloads or installs any updates automatically: you always have to tell it to do that by clicking on the button, or using a menu command. You remain in control.

- Don't check means that whenever you open the app it won't check for Apple's updates at all
- **Download only** means that the app will check for updates with Apple, but when you choose to fetch them, they will only be downloaded and not installed. It adds to your work, and makes use more complicated, but it's available if you prefer.
- **Download and install** means that when you click on the button to **Install All Updates**, SilentKnight will both download and install all available security updates from Apple.



XProtect Remediator needs an Update.
Thus a red X

It should be a newer version

Just let the Mac run in the background or trigger an update

details

XProtectRemediator 2022-09-08 15:08:35 +0000 : 72
MRT 2022-07-30 02:04:15 +0000 : 1.93

XProtect 2162, 72 should be 2162, 74

Gatekeeper 181, 8.0

MRT 1.93 should be 1.93

TCC 150.19 should be 150.19

KEXT 17.0.0 should be 17.0.0

Mac model MacBookPro17,1
iBoot version found 7459.141.1; expected 7459.141.1

iBoot firmware appears up to date.

Software Update Tool

XProtect 2022-08-20 03:20:29 +0000 : 2162

XProtect assessments enabled

macOS Version 12.6 (Build 21G115)

FileVault is Off.

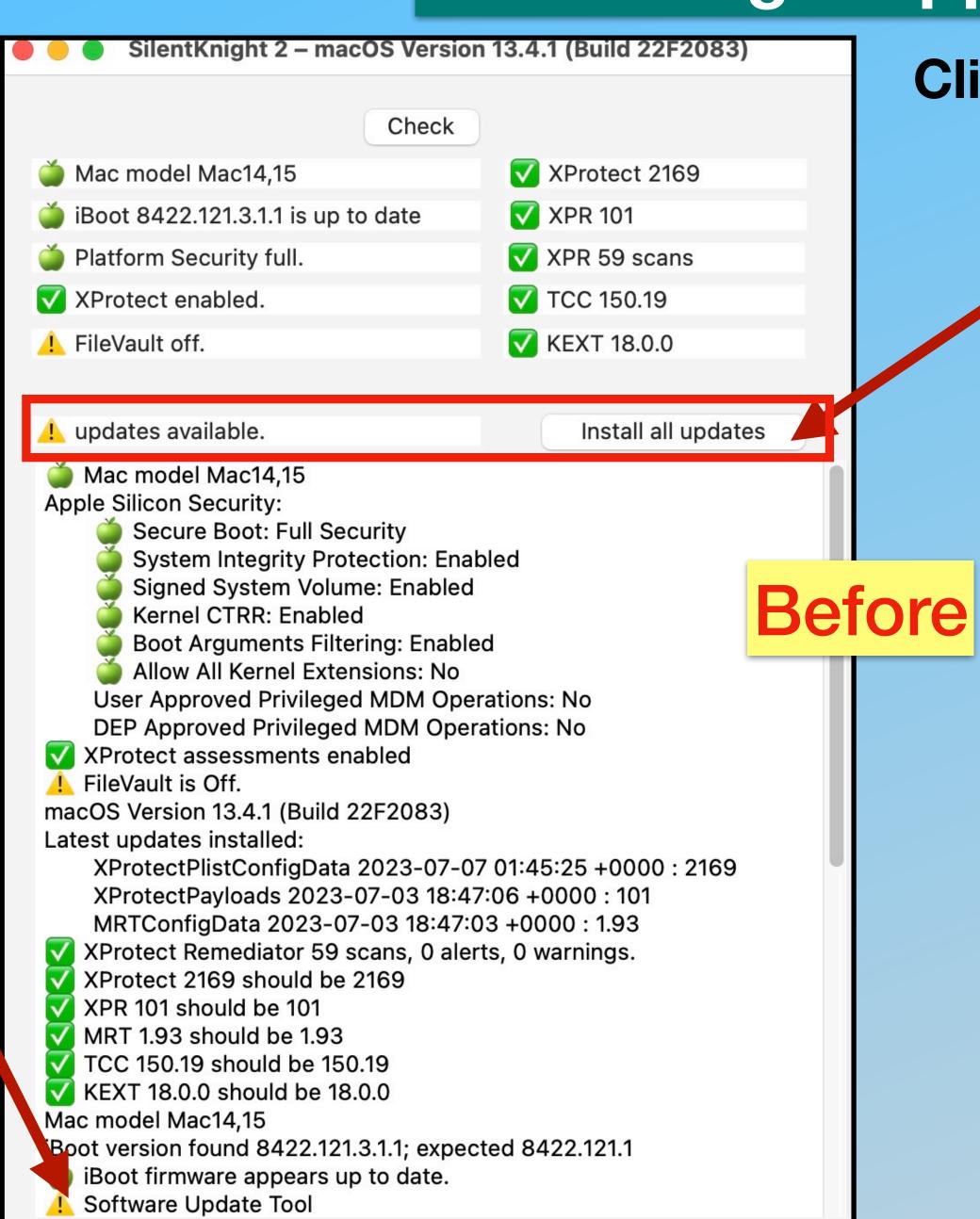
Latest updates installed:

Remediator is just the

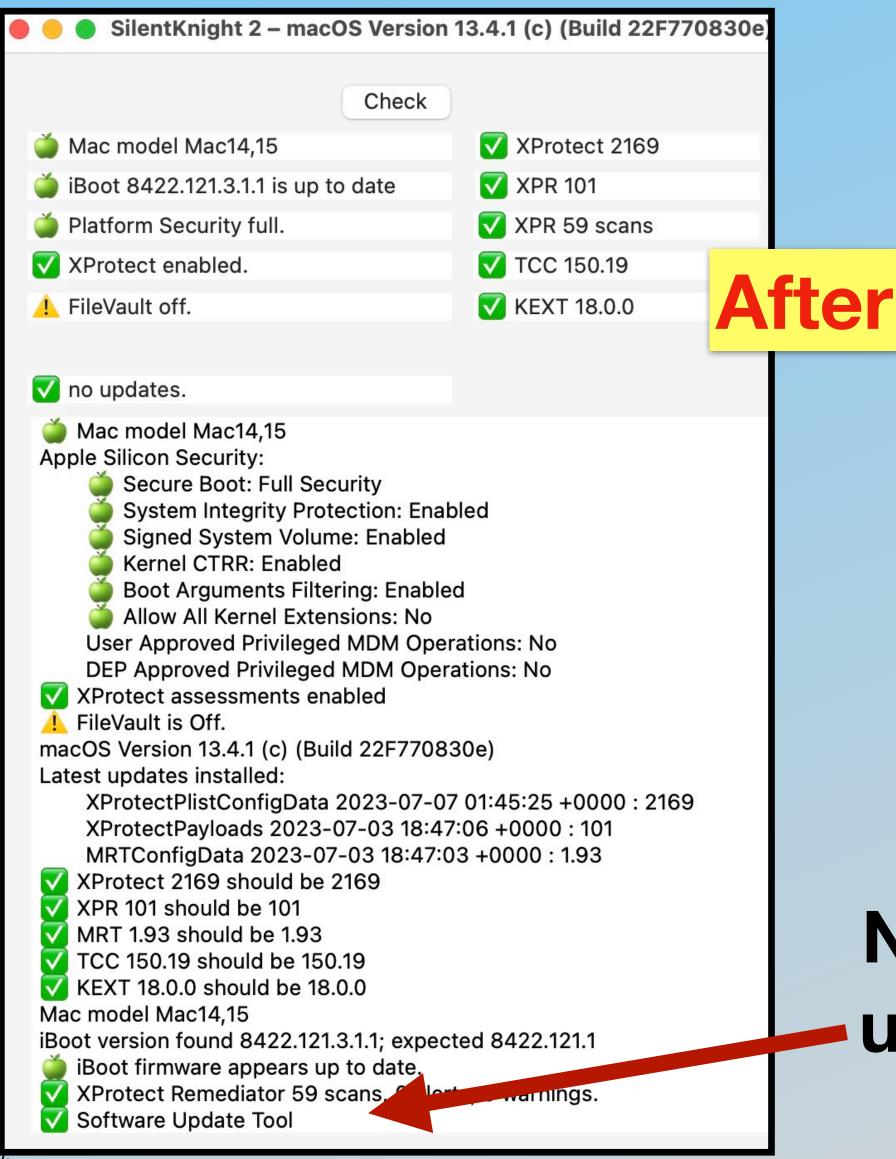
malware /antivirus definitions

that need updating in the background.

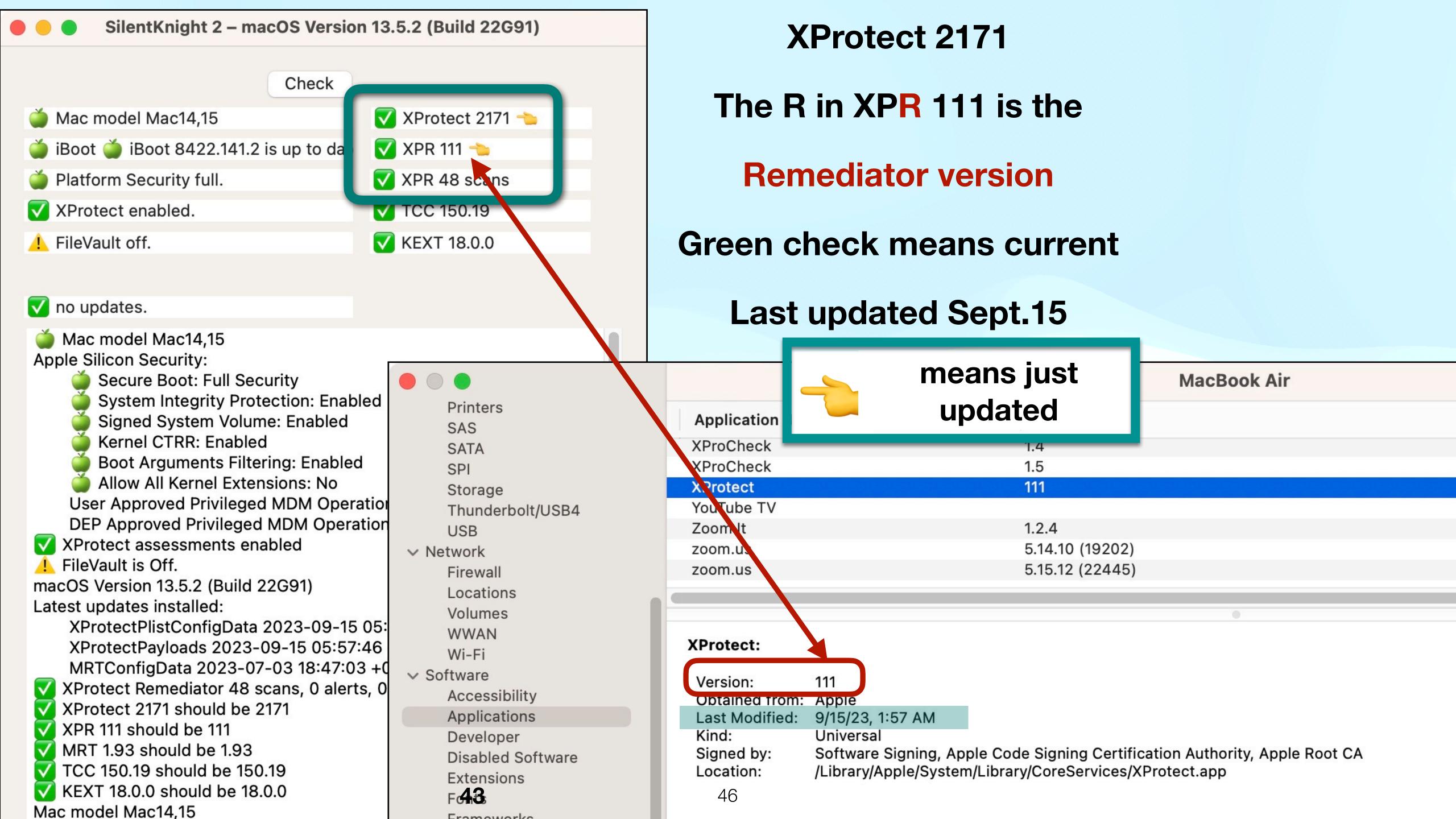
Silent Knight app Version 2.6.1



Click to install Software Update Tool



Now it is updated.







If you have any more questions just ask.



So XProCheck is another application created by the developer of Silent Knight.

It shows what XProtect found when it scans.

It provides a log report

So it is not as visual as Silent Knight.





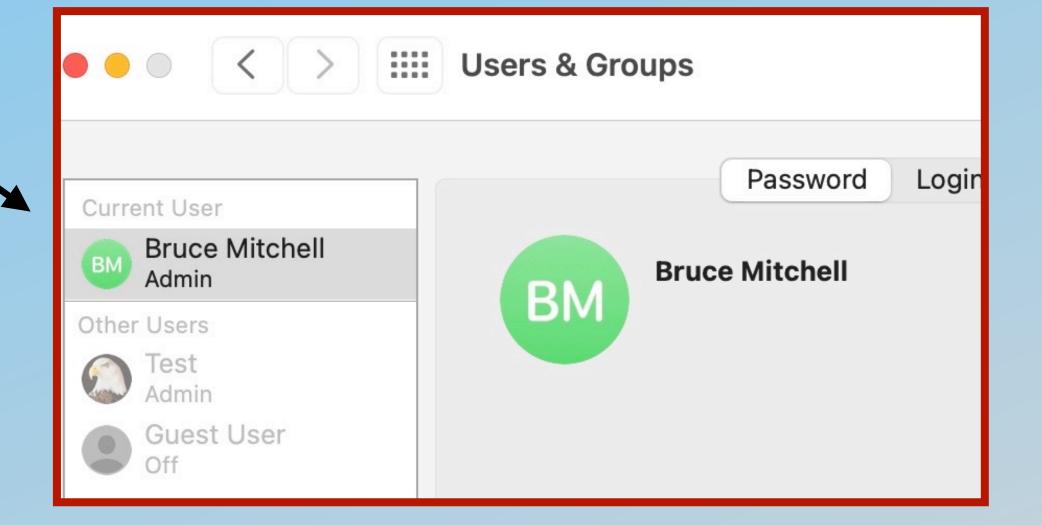
XProCheck 1.5

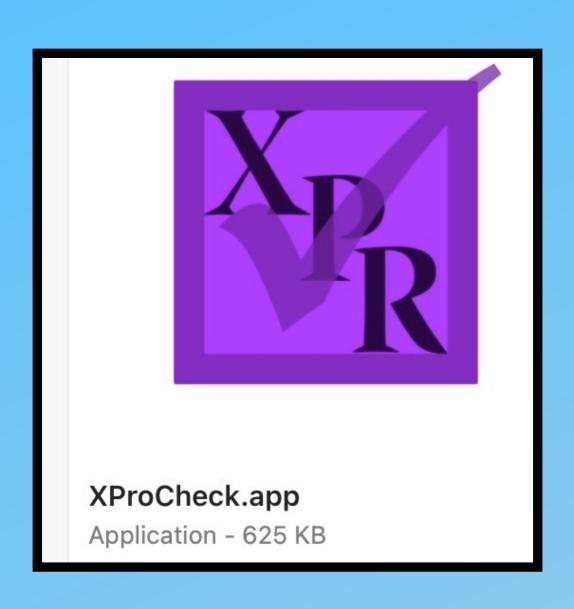
Requires the admin account to run the app. It reports recent scans and findings found by XProtect

It also confirms you are using a current version of XProtect

As XProtect Remediator only reports the current status.

There is no other way of knowing whether if a file was detected or was removed malware. But XProCheck does!





Go to: https://eclecticlight.co/downloads/

Scroll until you see this.



XProCheck—check on XProtect Remediator scans completed and reporter a the log

Product Page.

XProCheck 1.5 (Universal App for Catalina, Big Sur, Monterey and Ventura)

XProCheck: XProtect Remediator version 101

Run XProtect

last day:

days Check XProtect Save Check for last 1 Adload BadGacha ColdSnap DubRobber Eicar FloppyFlipper GreenAcre KeySteal MRTv3 Pirrit RankStank RoachFlight SheepSwap SnowBeagle SnowDrift ToyDrop Trovi WaterNet

These are the malware

it scanned for in

XProtect.

The number does not

mean it found an issue.

No Threat Detected Status Code 20

You want to see No Threat Detected Status Code 20

NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0000989 2023-07-11 19:42:42.193 WaterNet NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0001349 2023-07-11 19:42:43.126 Adload NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0000530 2023-07-11 19:42:50.961 SheepSwap NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0001160 2023-07-11 19:42:51.179 ToyDrop NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0000970 2023-07-11 19:42:51.225 Trovi NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0000581 2023-07-11 19:42:51.226 Trovi NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0000089 2023-07-11 19:42:51.226 Trovi NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0000080 2023-07-11 19:42:51.291 BadGacha NoThreatDetected status_code 20 time 0.0000681 2023-07-11 19:42:51.578 KeySteal

XProtect Remediator scans completed in the

2023-07-11 19:42:39.191 ColdSnap

Apple conceals the identity of the malware

handled by XProtect. Remediator uses

code names for malware, including

GreenAcre, SheepSwap, SnowBeagle,

SnowDrift, ToyDrop and WaterNet.

Two are named after known malware

families such as Adload and Geneio.

Adload BadGacha ColdSnap DubRobber Eicar FloppyFlipper GreenAcre KeySteal MRTv3 Pirrit RankStank RoachFlight SheepSwap SnowBeagle SnowDrift ToyDrop Trovi WaterNet



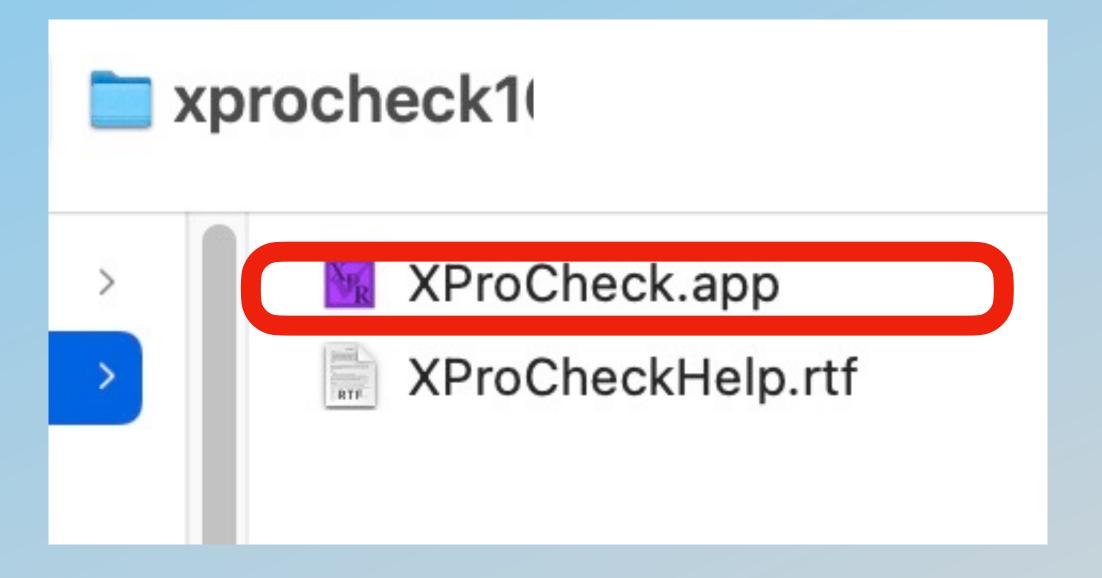
Download following the link below and open the app

XProCheck – check on XProtect Remediator scans completed and reported in the log

Product Page.

XProCheck 1.0 (Universal App for Catalina, Big Sur, Monterey and Ventura)





Link: https://eclecticlight.co/consolation-t2m2-and-log-utilities/



This requires:

any Mac running macOS Catalina 10.15 or later,

an admin user account to run in

a running Unified log (macOS).

XProCheck examines the logs of your Mac and reports completed scans performed by the new protection provided in macOS by XProtect Remediator, which is only installed on Macs running Catalina or later. This lets you: confirm that your Mac has the active protection of XProtect Remediator, and check whether any scans have detected and remediated any malware.

As XProtect Remediator only reports the results of its scans in your Mac's log, there is no other way of knowing whether it has detected or remediated malware. macOS Ventura changes that, by making results known to third-party Endpoint Security software.

XProCheck can also instruct XProtect Remediator to run its standard set of scans, so you can check for malware when you wish.





If you have any questions just ask.



So where does that leave other anti virus programs like Intego Virus Barrier, Malwarebytes, Norton, BitDefender, etc.?

"While Apple offers its own antivirus protections in the form of Gatekeeper and XProtect, they don't always work so well due to the fact that they rely on out-of-date methods for stopping infections. The best Mac antivirus programs on the other hand do a better job, quickly spotting new malware strains and double-checking suspicious files that have been "signed" with an Apple developer ID."

Third Party Apps

https://www.tomsguide.com/best-picks/best-mac-antivirus

1. Intego VirusBarrier X9



<u>Intego</u> is one of a tiny number of internet security companies that make Mac security (not Windows) the priority. In fact, for many years, Intego offered only Mac AV scanning and removal tools. It's opened up its ecosystem to Windows, but its company focuses remains primarily dedicated to providing effective, industry-leading security for macOS and iOS devices.

In independent antivirus tests, Intego is among the best-known top performers. Its tool is AV-Test certified with near-perfect protection and performance scores, and perfect usability scores. Strong test scores combined with an abundance of useful features put it at the top of our list.

Intego also passed our review for billing practices. The company avoids significant upselling at checkout and only includes minimal extra add-on services. For \$39.99, Intego attempts to compete with the other top-performing services on price, representing good value for money.

Pros:

- + Perfect malware detection ratings
- Excellent, consumer-friendly billing practices
- No false positives in testing lab results

Cons:

 Some impacts on system performance and processing speeds



NetBarrier X9

Mac firewall and network protection.

Protecting your Mac from unauthorized access.

The only Mac antivirus that can scan your iPhone or iPad for malware

SPECIFICATIONS

macOS compatibility: macOS 10.12 or later

Browser extensions: No Firewall: Yes

Hardened/secure browser: No

Parental controls: Yes Password manager: No

Ransomware file protection: No

Scan scheduling: Yes Webcam protection: No

VPN: No

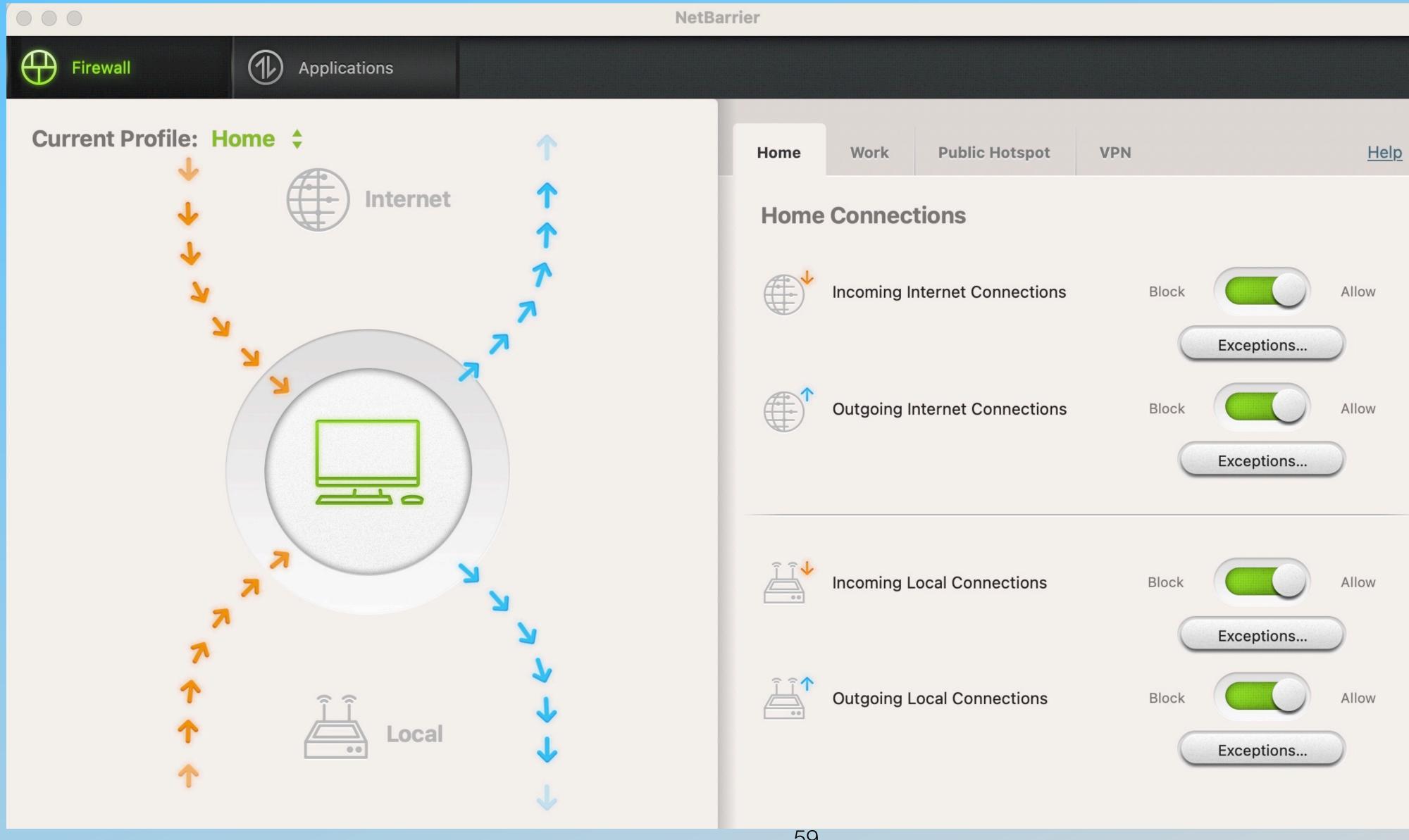
Support options: 24/7 email and live chat

We were very impressed with the interface of Intego's animated firewall which showed how data flowed into and out of our test system with color coded arrows. One thing that sets Intego Mac X9 apart from all of the other Mac antivirus programs on this list is that it can scan an iPhone or iPad for malware when they are connected to your Mac via USB cable.

https://www.tomsguide.com/best-picks/best-mac-antivirus

May 16, 2023

Intego Net Barrier Component



Summary

We talked about:

- Firewall and Gatekeeper
- XProtect built-in malware protection
- Use Silent Knight for a System Integrity Check
- and XProCheck to see what XProtect found

Silent Knight and XProCheck are third-party apps

You might consider additional anti-virus software.

Demo Time

released in 2001

macOS Software Since the Beginning 2001

- Mac OS X 10.0 code named "Cheetah", released to end users on Saturday, March 24,
 2001
- Mac OS X 10.1 code named "Puma", released to end users on Tuesday, September 25, 2001
- Mac OS X Jaguar version 10.2, released to end users on Friday, August 23, 2002
- Mac OS X Panther version 10.3, released to end users on Friday, October 24, 2003
- Mac OS X Tiger version 10.4, released to end users on Friday, April 29, 2005
- Mac OS X Leopard version 10.5, released to end users on Friday, October 26, 2007
- Mac OS X Snow Leopard version 10.6, publicly unveiled on Monday, June 8, 2009
- Mac OS X Lion version 10.7, released to end users on Wednesday, July 20, 2011
- OS X Mountain Lion version 10.8, released to end users on Wednesday, July 25, 2012
- OS X Mavericks version 10.9, released to end users on Tuesday, October 22, 2013
- OS X Yosemite version 10.10, released to end users on Thursday, October 16, 2014
- OS X El Capitan version 10.11, released to end users on Wednesday, September 30, 2015
- macOS Sierra version 10.12, released to end users on Tuesday, September 20, 2016
- macOS High Sierra version 10.13, released to end users on Monday, September 25, 2017
- macOS Mojave version 10.14, released to end users on Monday, September 24, 2018
- macOS Catalina version 10.15, released to end users on Monday, October 7, 2019
- macOS Big Sur version 11, released to end users on Thursday, November 12, 2020
- macOS Monterey version 12, released to end users on Monday, October 25, 2021
- macOS Ventura version 13, released to end users on Monday, October 24, 2022
- macOS Sonoma version 14, announced at WWDC 2023 on Monday, June 5, 2023