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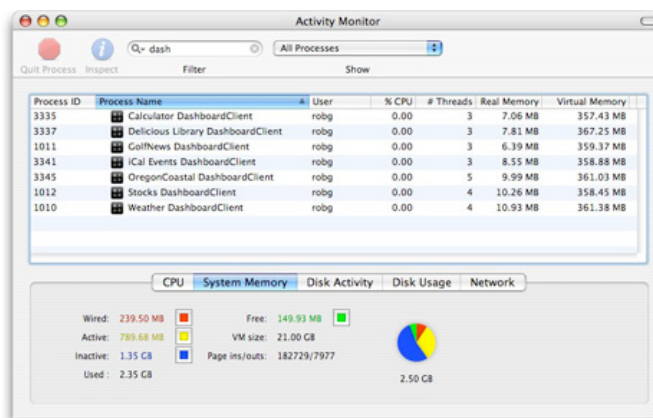
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Disable Dashboard

By Rob Griffiths

[Dashboard](#) is OS X 10.4's new "always ready" utility application. When you hit F12, Dashboard springs forward, dimming the background, ready to provide you a wealth of information on everything from airline flights to currency conversions to stock prices—and much, much more if you install some of the hundreds of [third-party Widgets](#) that are already available.

But all of this power comes at something of a price—mainly increased RAM consumption from open widgets, even if Dashboard itself is closed. Look at the screenshot below and pay attention to the Real Memory column. That figure represents how much actual RAM each Widget is using—even though Dashboard itself wasn't opened when this image was captured. If you have a Mac with limited RAM, you may wish to disable Dashboard to deny yourself the temptation of these oh-so-handy Widgets. (Even if you don't disable Dashboard, you should try not to leave lots of Widgets open if you're working on a RAM-constrained Mac).



There may be other reasons you'd rather not have Dashboard available. For instance, if you run a lab of Macs in a school, you may not want the students wasting all their work time on the Asteroids video game widget or watching the (I am not making this up) Goblet of Fire movie release date countdown Widget. If you'd like to disable Dashboard, for either RAM usage or other reasons, here's how to do it. It requires a trip to the Terminal, in /Applications/Utilities, but it's not too hard to do.

Open Terminal, and then type this command, followed by the Return key:

```
defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean YES
```

This tells the system that you no longer wish to have Dashboard available. However, the Dashboard task is actually "owned" by the Dock, so to make your changes take effect, you need to restart the Dock. The easiest way to do that is to type this command into the Terminal (and press Return when done):

```
killall Dock
```

After the Dock restarts, hit F12 and you'll see...nothing at all. If you run Activity Monitor, you also won't find any Dashboard widgets in the list of tasks, even if you had several open when you ran the above command. Dashboard has been eliminated from your system, and won't return until you tell it to do so. You can do just that by opening Terminal again, and typing this command:

```
defaults write com.apple.dashboard mcx-disabled -boolean NO
```

Once again, you'll have to use the `killall Dock` command to make the changes take effect. Once you do, though, you'll find that Dashboard is back as usual—and any widgets you had opened on the Dashboard will still be open.

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