1- When did it come out?

This past fall (October) with the MacOS and iPadOS updates.

2- What systems have it?

MacOS Ventura and iPadOS 16 (M1 chips only - if you have A15 or earlier chip, it will not be available on the iPad.)
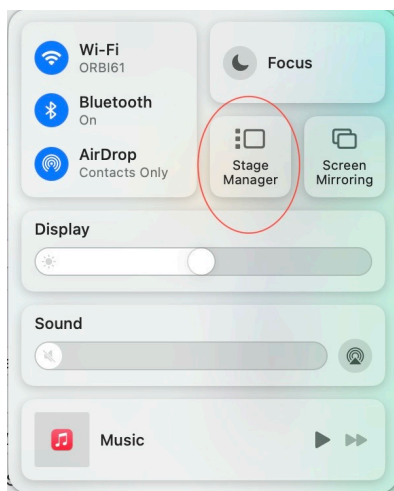
3-What is it?

Stage Manager is a file management and multi-tasking option which allows you to work on one app or program in the screen center and see reduced images of recent open apps on the left side of the screen. The maximum to be seen on the side is 5. Depending upon the size of the Mac or iPad, you may only see 4.

4-How is it activated?

1st, Click on the control center icon in the menu bar.

2nd, In the control center, click on the Stage Manager button.

Upon activating, you'll see recent open apps move to the left side of the screen. They will appear angled with the app icon displayed in the lower left corner of each app.
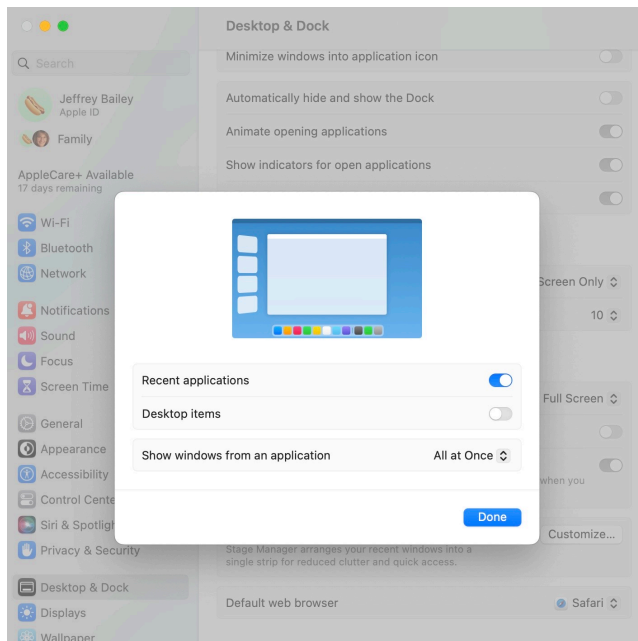

The default setting for Stage Manager is that desktop files do not display when an app is up and active in the center of your screen. Click anywhere in the desktop and the center, active app will reset to the left side of the screen and all desktop files will reappear.

There are few customizable adjustments to Stage Manager. The adjustments available are:

1) You can disable "Recent Applications." This removes the recent apps normally displayed on the left side of the screen. The are not gone; in fact, simply move the cursor to the left side of the screen and they will display as before.

2) You can toggle on "Desktop Items." This allows the display of desktop files at all times.

3) You can change "Show windows from an application" to either "All at Once" (default) or "One at a Time." Some apps (such as System Settings, Day One and Mail) can display a separate window within the app. This option allows you to bring up part or all of the app and sub windows.

To make changes, simply click "System Settings" —> "Desktop and Dock" —> "Stage Manager" and then click "Customize."

There are truly very few customizable elements available to the Stage Manager feature.

It is important to note that the Stage Manager feature will not operate when an app is in "Full Screen" mode. However, you can resize an app to nearly full screen and, while the left side apps will disappear, once the cursor is placed at the left screen edge, the apps will reappear.

5-Fun features
Apps can be grouped into "sets" by dragging one app from the side over to the active app in the center. Example - If you want Pages and Safari together, simply have one in the center screen and drag the other from the side over the center app. Now, once you click anywhere in the desktop or click on any app on the left side, both previous apps will move to the side together and remain together until you separate them.

Another nice feature is that, since all apps on the side are active, you can resize them (when in the center) and it will remember what size for what app you desire. Simply bring it back to the center and it will be as you left it.

Some find Stage Manager is a good stand alone feature and others think it is best optimized with **Universal Control** as it enables you to have multiple open apps across your Mac and iPad.

6- Who is likely to benefit from it?

This is a preference question. Some love this, others think it is an interesting item while some do not like it at all. A lot will depend on how you operate. Most of us operate one app at a time. Even with that, most still use info from one app and apply it to another. So, it does provide a convenient way of viewing and accessing previously used open apps. It is important to remember that all apps shown are dynamic or live. If a video was playing or a podcast was playing, even if it is moved to the side, it will still continue to play.

7- Summary

Stage Manager is an optional file management or multi-tasking system that allows for quick viewing of previously used open and active apps and to quickly bring them to the center for your use. It is yet another arrow in the quiver of Apple's options to make the Mac and iPad more tailorable to your preferences and improve your Apple experience.