Castor Labs - Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: Adobe is asking me for an ID, do I need this??

You will need an Adobe ID to use Adobe software. When launching an Adobe app a login screen will pop up. You can sign up for a free account, we recommend using your MIT email address. This password is separate from your Kerberos password.

Q: What software is installed?

You can find the majority of software in the /Applications folder. This can be accessed by opening a Finder window and selecting Applications on the left. Other software is accessible via Terminal and outlined below. A list of software is available [here].

Q: Can I install software?

You are a local administrator on the computer and can install any software you would like. It will be removed at shutdown or restart.

Q: Can I use Athena software?

You can launch the DebAthena VM located on the desktop via a virtual machine.

You can also log into Athena remotely and run applications via X11. Open Terminal (in /Applications/Utilities, also in the Dock) and enter **ssh -X athena.dialup.mit.edu**. From there, you can execute any Athena program from the command line.

Most software available in Athena is already built into Castor. Please check the /Applications folder to see if the software you need is available.

Q: How can I mount AFS lockers?

The AFS file system is automatically mounted in Castor. If you open "Macintosh HD" on your desktop, you'll see an "AFS" directory; all AFS lockers are mounted and available here. There's also a folder on your desktop that links directly to your personal AFS locker.

For backwards compatibility with Athena, there is also an "attach" command, which functions similarly to the version in Athena. In Terminal, you can enter **attach <lockername>** to mount the named locker in /mit.

Q: Where is Python?

The default OS X / macOS Sierra python is Python 2.7. This can be accessed by entering **python** in a Terminal window.

Python 3 is also installed on the computers and can be accessed by entering **python3**. If you need a specific revision of Python 3, you can enter **python3.5**, **python3.6** or **python3.7**.

You can also use virtual environments with Anaconda, via the **conda** command, or use Anaconda's standard Python 3.6 environment by entering

source activate root.

Q: I need Python package x, how can I install it?

Pip is installed on all lab computers. From a terminal enter **pip** to see options. Install packages with **pip install packagename.** More information on this command is available at https://docs.python.org/3/installing/. Some software may require **pip3** instead which is also installed.

You can also install packages into a virtual environment with Anaconda, using the **conda** command.

Q: Are Homebrew or Macports available?

Yes, both are available.

To install a package with Homebrew, type **brew install <packagename>**. More information is available at http://brew.sh/.

To install a package with Macports, type **sudo port install <packagename>**. More information is available at https://guide.macports.org/#using.port.

Q: Can software be installed permanently?

Requests for additional permanent software can be made sent to castor-feedback@mit.edu. Please include the following information with your request:

- Name to software and link to download site (free software only).
- If it's for classwork, specify class name and number.
- How long will you need the software?
- Details of how you installed the software locally. Please note that all software must be compatible with macOS across multiple versions.
- Which labs you need the software in.

IS&T will make a best effort to install requested software. This may take up to two weeks as we have to support multiple OSes as well as multiple user accounts on a machine. Many pieces of software are designed be installed and used by a single user and it may not be possible to get it working in the correct manner. Finally, some pieces of software conflict with other pieces of software based on dependencies. We will do our best to give you the steps that will work on a per login basis such as basic commands to run.

Q: What if I have other questions?

Please send an e-mail to the **Castor team.**