Keyboard Tweaks for Citrix Workspace with MacOS

Citrix Workspace

The Connect Care clinical information system (CIS) can be accessed on desktop, workstation, notebook, laptop and tablet computers via the Alberta Health Services Unified Access Portal (UAP at myapps.ahs.ca. This causes the Epic software to be view within a "virtual machine" that is running on an AHS server. The viewer software is called Citrix Workspace (or Viewer or Receiver).

Keystroke Problems

The Citrix Workspace session relays the user's keystrokes and cursor positioning to Hyperspace (on the server) and, in turn, the server relays back a view of the user interface and how it responds to input. Citrix needs to map a pressed key to a special code which is sent to Hyperspace which is decoded to initiate the action expected of a keystroke.

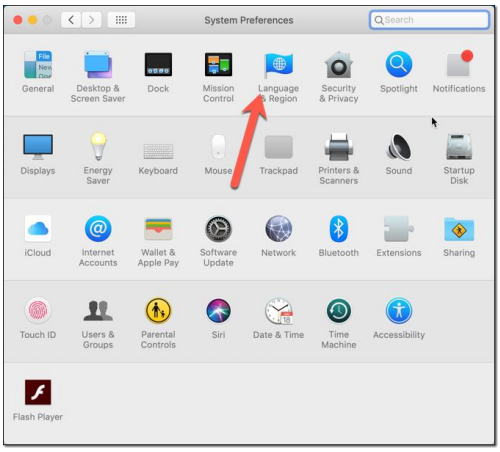
Problems can occur if the client's (user's) keyboard maps keys to different characters than the host (Citrix, then Epic) expects. This happens rarely and tends to affect special characters (e.g., "@", "#", "*") important to SmartPhrases and SmartLinks.

Keystroke Problem Work-around

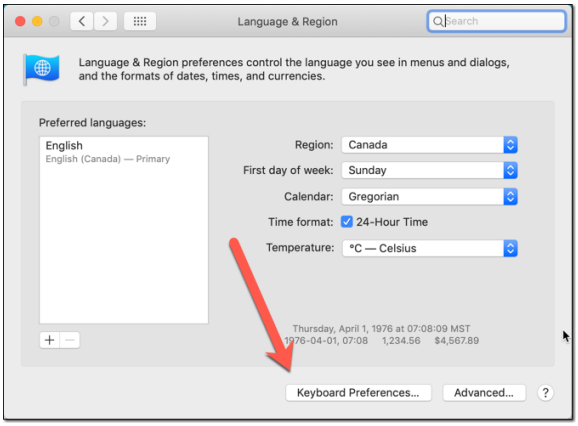
Users are referred to this Tip when experiencing Hyperspace problems that could relate to misinterpreted keystrokes. The following work-around rules out the commonest cause of such problems. The fix involves forcing the Macintosh computer to interpret all keystroke input as coming from a standard American (US) input device. The server Citrix server is already set to US keyboard input and cannot be changed.

Configure Macintosh Keyboard Input

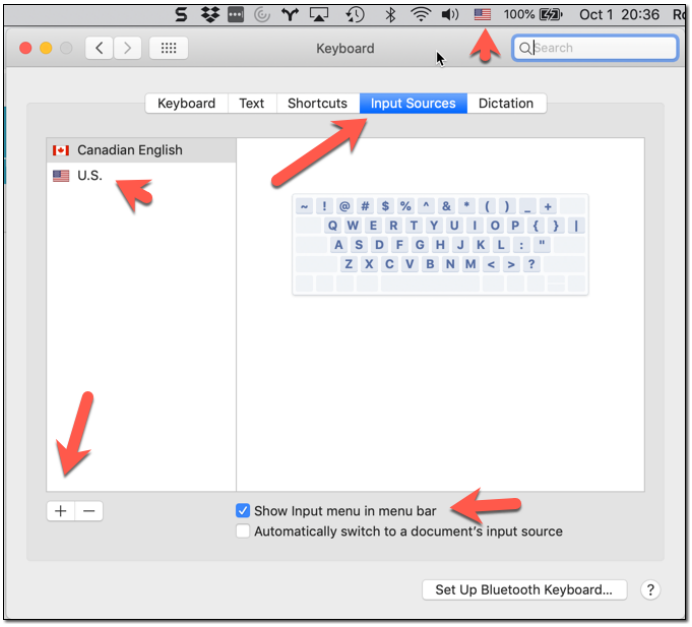
1. Open the Macintosh "System Preferences" application and select "Language & Region" settings.



2. Find and select the "Keyboard Preferences" button:



3. From the Keyboard Preferences controls, select “Input Sources”, then use the “+” at the bottom left to add a “U.S.” keyboard input option if it does not already exist in the list of input sources in the left column. If you select the checkbox for “Show input menu in menu bar”, then you will have the ability to switch between Canadian and US inputs on the fly. For now, be sure that “U.S.” is selected as the active keyboard input source.



Configure Citrix Workspace Keyboard Translation

The next set of configuration steps ensures that the Citrix Workspace software does not convert the Macintosh keyboard input to anything else before transmitting to Hyperspace running on the server.

1. Open the Citrix Workspace application (which should have been installed when first accessing myapps.ahs.ca) or logon to myapps.ahs.ca and confirm that Citrix Viewer is open on the Macintosh computer. Go to the Citrix menu and select “Preferences”.

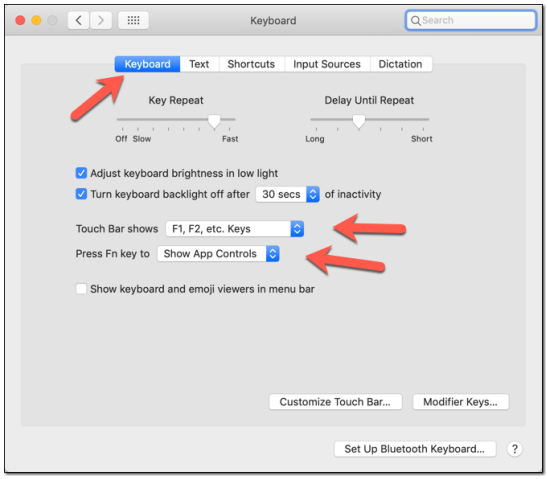
2. Select the “Keyboard” section of Citrix Preferences. Be sure to uncheck the “Send special keys unchanged” and the “Use local keyboard layout” options.

3. Try logging on to the CIS Hyperspace and confirm that special keys (e.g., “@”) are received and displayed by Hyperspace (try typing in a search box) as intended.

Function Key Access in Citrix

Newer Macintosh computers have a “TouchBar” placed just above the keyboard, where a row of function keys would normally sit. This has dynamic content that can vary by the application that one is working with. Epic’s Hyperspace relies upon quick access to function keys. However, the typical Macintosh keyboard configuration requires pressing a “fn” (function) key bring these “F” keys into the TouchBar.

It can be more convenient to have the TouchBar default to “F” keys and the “fn” key used to expose application shortcuts when needed. You can change this setting in “System Preferences” and speed up navigation of Hyperspace with keyboard shortcuts.



Getting Help

Futher Citrix questions can be directed to the AHS IT Service Desk and AHS Citrix Team.

The CMIO office will help clinicians seeking peer-to-peer help optimizing Citrix Workspace and Hyperspace access on non-AHS, non-Windows personal computers. Please report issues and suggestions to cmio@ahs.ca and check support.connect-care.ca.