

Take Control

of .Mac

by Joe Kissell

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READ ME FIRST

Welcome to *Take Control of .Mac*, version 1.3.

Membership in .Mac gives you access to a suite of online services that both complements and integrates tightly with Mac OS X and iLife. Although .Mac was designed for ease of use, it also has tremendous power—and a few hidden pitfalls. Learn how to make the most of your .Mac membership by reading this book, which goes far beyond Apple’s online help to give you detailed instructions, tips, and strategies.

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Basics

In reading this book, you may get stuck if you don’t know certain basic facts about .Mac or Mac OS X, or if you don’t understand Take Control syntax for things like working with menus or finding items in the Finder. Please note the following:

- **Path syntax:** I occasionally use a *path* to show the location of a file or folder in your file system. Path text is formatted in bold type. For example, Mac OS X stores most utilities, such as Terminal, in the Utilities folder. The path to Terminal is: **/Applications/Utilities/Terminal**.

The slash at the start of the path tells you to start from the root level of the disk. You will also encounter paths that begin with ~ (tilde), which is a shortcut for any user's home directory. For example, if a person with the user name **joe** wants to install fonts that only he can access, he would install them in his **~/Library/Fonts** folder, which is just another way of writing **/Users/joe/Library/Fonts**.

- **Finding preference panes:** I sometimes refer to system-wide Mac OS X preferences that you may want to adjust. To change these settings, open System Preferences by clicking its icon in the Dock or choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu. Settings are categorized in topic-specific *preference panes*. You access a particular preference pane by way of its icon or the View menu. For example, to see “the .Mac preference pane,” you would launch System Preferences and then click the .Mac icon or choose View > .Mac.
- **Menus:** When I describe choosing a command from a menu in the menu bar, I use an abbreviated description. For example, the abbreviated description for the menu command that creates a new folder in the Finder is “File > New Folder.”

What's New in Version 1.3

Version 1.3 of *Take Control of .Mac* contains numerous changes from the previous version, 1.2, mostly to cover the new features in .Mac that Apple announced in early August 2007. Among the most important changes in this version are the following:

- New graphics to reflect the current appearance of the .Mac Web site and to improve overall image quality.
- Information on using your own domain name with .Mac. See [Manage Your Account](#) (p. 16) and the sidebar [Master of Your Domain](#) (p. 142).
- Instructions for the new Junk Mail filter in .Mac Mail. See [Work with incoming messages](#) (p. 25) and [General Preferences](#) (p. 28).
- New details on iDisk storage capacity and data transfer limits. See [Store and Share Files with iDisk](#) (p. 81).

- Removed information specific to iLife '05.
- Suggestions for alternative providers of online backup services. See [Online Backups](#) (p. 186).

iLife '08 ABOUT THESE SPECIAL NOTES

In August 2007, Apple released iLife '08, which includes many new features relating to .Mac. A future version of this book will update all mentions of iLife applications to reflect what's true in iLife '08. However, since only a fraction of .Mac subscribers will have upgraded to iLife '08 by the time this book ships, I have not included full coverage of those new features here. Instead, I've inserted blue notes like this one wherever the behavior of iLife '08 differs significantly from that of iLife '06 and earlier, described in the main text.

What Was New in Version 1.2

Version 1.2 of *Take Control of .Mac* was updated to cover the changes Apple made beginning in October 2006 to .Mac Mail and the online Address Book interface. It contained the following changes from the 1.1 release:

- A completely rewritten section on webmail, including new screen shots. See [Access .Mac Mail over the Web](#) (p. 22).
- An updated discussion of using .Mac email aliases. See [Use Email Aliases](#) (p. 41).
- A revised [Address Book](#) section (p. 68).
- New information about a newer, easier way for others to access files in your iDisk's Public folder. See [Make public files available on the Web](#) (p. 88).
- In the section [Publish a blog on .Mac](#), updated information about features added in iWeb version 1.1 (p. 143) and the shipping version of Sandvox (p. 145).

INTRODUCTION

On January 6, 2000—more than a year before the first official release of Mac OS X—Apple announced a suite of Internet services called iTools. At that moment, as Steve Jobs delivered his Macworld Expo keynote address at Moscone Center in San Francisco, I was in the building’s basement, manning a booth for a company that was exhibiting at the expo and watching the presentation via QuickTime streaming video. I was excited to learn about iDisk, HomePage, Mac.com Mail, and all the other aspects of iTools. I was delighted that they were Mac-only, and even more thrilled that they were free!

Steve said that as soon as his speech was done, the world’s Mac users could immediately go to the Apple Web site and choose their iTools member names—which were also permanent email addresses in the Mac.com domain. I did just that. I had hoped to snag joe@mac.com, but it was already taken (perhaps by an Apple employee). However, I managed to get another three-character member name—my initials, jwk@mac.com. Like every other red-blooded Mac geek, I’ve since treasured my little corner of the Mac.com world.

Over time, Apple has made some dramatic changes to iTools. For starters, they renamed the service *.Mac*, a trendy yet often frustrating moniker—just try using “.Mac” as the beginning of a file or folder name in Mac OS X (or, worse, creating a text clipping of text that begins with “.Mac”—the clipping disappears). They’ve added numerous capabilities and expanded storage space, while removing a few features that few people used. (Do you remember KidSafe? iReview? I didn’t think so.) They’ve also made the service available to Windows users (shocking!)...and eventually, of course, they began charging for it, too. (For a while it was only \$50 per year; now it’s \$100.)

More recently, with the introduction of Tiger, iLife ’06, and iLife ’08, Apple has extended the tentacles of *.Mac* into many more parts of the operating system and its applications, giving users and developers new and useful ways to exploit the service. The arrival of Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard will extend *.Mac*’s reach even further.

This is all good, but strangely enough, I still frequently find Mac users who don’t know why they might want a *.Mac* membership. On many occasions, friends and relatives have asked me if they should purchase a *.Mac* subscription with their new Mac, pay for an upgrade

from the trial version, or renew an existing subscription. “Yes,” I say, “you definitely should.” Then, invariably, they reply, “But it’s \$100 a year! Do I really need that? What do I actually get for that money?”

Maybe Apple hasn’t tried hard enough to explain the benefits of .Mac. Maybe they’ve integrated its features so thoroughly into Mac OS X that they effectively become invisible. Maybe certain users (not to implicate my wife or my mother in particular) haven’t noticed that features they use every day are part of .Mac. Or could it be—as some critics claim—that a .Mac subscription isn’t worth that much after all?

I’d be the first person to tell you that .Mac is not perfect, and that in some cases you can get more features for less money from other sources. For me, the convenience and value I get from .Mac far exceeds my annual \$100 membership fee. And given the recent changes to .Mac—plus the new .Mac-related capabilities in iLife ’08—I think I can safely say that the case for the benefits of .Mac is stronger than ever.

But I’d like to humbly submit that perhaps the biggest problem with .Mac—the biggest reason more Mac users don’t automatically sign up each year—is its instruction manual. Which is to say, its *lack* of an instruction manual. Oh, sure, you can download a basic little “Getting Started” PDF guide, and Apple provides reasonably accurate online help on the .Mac Web site and in the Mac OS X Help program. But where are the real details? The unbiased strategies, tips, and warnings? The direct, task-oriented instructions that don’t require endlessly clicking links and squinting at a tiny window? These are the very things I’ve included in the book you’re now reading.

My goal in writing this book is to help you take control of every aspect of your .Mac membership—to get as much value out of it as you possibly can. And as Apple continues to modify the .Mac services—which they surely will—I’ll update this book, as well, so that you always have the latest information.

NOTE .MAC OR MAC.COM?

Because the .Mac Web site is located at <http://www.mac.com/>, the terms “.Mac” and “Mac.com” are to some extent interchangeable. In general, though, I use “Mac.com” when referring to the domain name itself, and “.Mac” elsewhere.

SIDEBAR .MAC AND MAC OS X VERSIONS

This book mainly covers the use of .Mac with Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger (with occasional references to Windows and earlier versions of Mac OS X). If you're running Panther (Mac OS X 10.3), you will find that some .Mac features are unavailable and that others require different procedures from what I describe here.

Specifically, Panther users should be aware of the following major differences:

- The Panther version of Mail does not automatically recognize .Mac email aliases. In addition, the procedure for adding new .Mac or POP accounts is somewhat different in the Panther version; choose Mail > Help for assistance. (See [Access .Mac Email Using Apple Mail](#).)
- In Panther, you must use the separate iSync application (in **/Applications**) to synchronize data on your Mac with .Mac's servers; the .Mac pane of System Preferences has no Sync tab under Panther. Again, consult the Help menu for instructions. (See [Keep Your Information in Sync](#).)
- iSync under Panther cannot sync Keychains; Mail accounts; and Mail rules, signatures, and smart mailboxes. In addition, third-party software that includes .Mac sync capabilities generally requires Tiger. (See [Keep Your Information in Sync](#).)
- Backup 3 requires Mac OS X 10.3.9 or 10.4.2 or later. If you are running a version of 10.3 prior to 10.3.9, you can use Backup 2, but it lacks most of the important features of Backup 3. (See [Back Up Your Files](#).)

If you're running a version of Mac OS X older than Panther, a great deal of this book does not apply; I strongly recommend upgrading if you can.

.MAC QUICK START

Use this section to get a quick overview of the process to follow in order to Take Control of .Mac. You can read the entire book in the order presented here, or click a blue link to immediately jump to any particular topic. If you are completely new to .Mac, however, I strongly recommend reading [Get to Know .Mac](#) first.

Get your bearings:

- Learn about the features of .Mac. See [Get to Know .Mac](#), especially the [What Is .Mac?](#) and [Major.Mac Features](#) sections.
- Set up your Mac to work with .Mac. Read [Set Up .Mac System Preferences](#).
- Discover how to access your information via the Web in [Learn to Navigate the .Mac Web Site](#).

Send and receive email:

- Use your Mac.com email address on the Web or with a desktop email application. Find out how in [Access .Mac Mail over the Web](#) and [Access .Mac Email Using Apple Mail](#).
- Expand your email capabilities with aliases or email-only accounts. See [Use Email Aliases](#) and [Add Email-Only Accounts](#).

Put your data online:

- Use .Mac to copy important data to the .Mac servers—for viewing on the Web or for syncing with another computer. Read [Keep Your Information in Sync](#).
- Access your data from any Web browser. See [Address Book](#), [.Mac Bookmarks](#), and [iCal Calendars](#).
- [Back Up Your Files](#)—to an iDisk or another destination.

Share your files, photos, and other information online:

- Use iDisk to make important files available online. See [Store and Share Files with iDisk](#).
- Share your stuff on the Web—with or without iLife. Read [Create and Publish a Web Site](#).

- Create a private Web site for sharing messages, schedules, files, and other information with a group of people. See [Collaborate Using .Mac Groups](#).

Manage and extend your .Mac membership:

- [Save Money on Your .Mac Membership](#), by purchasing it for less than retail price.
- Learn how to extend—or even replace—.Mac with other services. See [Appendix A: Beyond .Mac](#).
- .Mac accounts come in a variety of flavors, from the standard account to Family Pack primary and sub-accounts, email-only accounts, trial accounts, and even expired accounts, which still provide a usable .Mac ID for iChat and other services. Understand the options for converting your .Mac account from one type to another, if the need ever arises. See [Appendix B: Account Conversion Methods](#).

GET TO KNOW .MAC

At the risk of preaching to the converted, I thought it would be worthwhile to review exactly what .Mac is and what your .Mac membership includes. After a quick overview, I show you how to configure a few essential .Mac preferences, find your way around the .Mac Web site, and convert your account from one type to another, if necessary.

What Is .Mac?

Although you can go to an Apple Store and walk out with a box labeled “.Mac,” it isn’t truly a product in the sense of being hardware you hook up to your computer or software you install on it. In fact, the main thing in the box is an activation code that you enter via a Web page to turn on your .Mac features; you can just as easily purchase your membership online and save a tree branch or two. Rather, .Mac is a collection of online services—some of which you can use on their own, and some of which add capabilities to Mac OS X or to applications such as iPhoto, Mail, and Address Book.

You can use Mac OS X without a .Mac membership, but several useful features will be unavailable to you. As more third-party applications add .Mac-specific features, the value of a .Mac membership increases.

Major .Mac Features

Although Apple is constantly tweaking the capabilities of .Mac, here are the major features as of September 2007:

- **.Mac Mail:** Your .Mac membership includes an email address in the Mac.com domain (*member-name@mac.com*); you can check and send email via the .Mac Web site or use a program such as Apple Mail. You can also use your Mac.com address for instant messaging with iChat or AOL Instant Messenger (AIM). For details, see [Access .Mac Email Using Apple Mail](#).
- **iDisk:** Using this online storage space, you can access selected files from nearly any computer (Mac, Linux, or Windows) with an Internet connection. You can also publish Web sites and share files with other people. Learn more in [Store and Share Files with iDisk](#).

- **HomePage:** Anyone can create professional-looking Web sites quickly with this easy-to-use, template-based feature on the Mac.com Web site. Your Web site can include photos, movies, or other files from your iDisk. I cover this in [Create a Site Using HomePage](#).
- **Synchronization:** If you have more than one Mac, you can keep key information—your contacts, calendar, bookmarks, keychains, and more—on all of them in sync automatically (read [Keep Your Information in Sync](#)). Some third-party applications can also synchronize their data between Macs using your .Mac account.
- **Online Data Access:** The information you've synchronized from several desktop applications—including Address Book, iCal, and Safari—is also available via the Web from any computer on the Internet. See [Work with Contacts, Calendars, and Bookmarks](#).
- **Groups:** A new feature added in September 2005, .Mac Groups, gives you a private Web site where members you invite can exchange messages, share files, view a group calendar, and more. Find out more in [Collaborate Using .Mac Groups](#).
- **Backup:** .Mac members can download an application called Backup that copies selected files or folders to an iDisk, a hard drive, or even a CD or DVD. See [Back Up Your Files](#) for steps and info.
- **iLife Integration:** Although .Mac and iLife have always had a friendly relationship, iLife '06 (and later) provides a much richer integration between all its applications and your .Mac account. Of particular interest, iWeb gives you the means to quickly publish high-quality Web sites and blogs that feature media from iPhoto, iMovie, GarageBand, and iTunes.

Needless to say, a .Mac subscription is not the only way to obtain most of these features. (See [Appendix A: Beyond .Mac](#) for more details.) So why .Mac? For one thing, ease of use. Everything about .Mac—especially the way its features tie in so tightly with your Mac OS X software—makes it accessible to anyone (even technophobes). And then there's convenience: The combination of all these useful features in one package, available with a single sign-up and payment,

is worth a great deal. Finally, .Mac subscriptions include an assortment of other benefits (see the sidebar “Other .Mac Benefits,” just ahead) that Apple considers “icing on the cake,” but whose combined value may exceed the cost of your subscription.

SIDEBAR OTHER .MAC BENEFITS

Beyond the big, flashy features, such as iDisk and Mac.com email, your .Mac subscription includes a number of less visible—but no less valuable—extras. Some examples:

- **The .Mac Learning Center:** This portion of the .Mac Web site includes heavily illustrated, step-by-step tutorials, videos, and PDF documents that walk you through the features of .Mac, Mac OS X, iPod, the iLife and iWork applications, and Apple’s Pro applications (such as Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro).
- **Expert Tips:** Mac experts, including our own Tonya Engst, periodically provide tips on getting more out of Mac OS X.
- **Free and discounted software:** In the past, Apple has sometimes offered .Mac members free or discounted software, though they haven’t provided any third-party products in some time. As of mid-2007, the only free offering was a large selection of GarageBand loops.
- **iCards:** Send anyone a virtual electronic postcard for a holiday or special occasion, a thank-you note, a party invitation, or just to say hello. Although you needn’t be a .Mac member to send an iCard, members have additional capabilities—you can supply your own photo from the Pictures folder of your iDisk and use addresses from your Address Book. Because iCards are simple and self-explanatory, I do not cover them.
- **Support:** Apple has a special support Web site devoted to .Mac members, at <http://www.apple.com/support/dotmac/>. This site includes how-to articles; a discussion board where members can post questions and help each other with problems; a downloadable Getting Started PDF guide (no match for this book, of course!); extended details on the .Mac system status; and forms to contact Apple directly for assistance or to provide feedback.

SIDEBAR .MAC FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Apple created .Mac for individuals, but many small businesses also find the service to be a good value for Web hosting, email, and online backups. The .Mac Family Pack, in particular, is appealing for organizations with just a few employees, as it includes a primary account and four sub-accounts for less than the price of two full subscriptions. (Despite Apple's use of the term "family," nothing prevents you from offering the sub-accounts to friends or co-workers.)

Whether or not .Mac is appropriate for your business depends on the nature of the business and on what you need to do online. For example, if you own a bakery and need only email access and a simple informational Web page or two—along with, perhaps, some photo albums with samples of your work—a .Mac account should be more than adequate. Similarly, if your main business need is for an online location to store a small number of files so that you can retrieve them easily from anywhere, .Mac's iDisk could be just the thing for you.

On the other hand, if your business's online needs are more extensive, .Mac is not the right choice. You'll quickly run into limits of one sort or another—data-transfer limits, functionality, or policy. Apple restricts the uses of .Mac accounts, and breaking the rules could end up in the cancellation of your membership. Examples of things you must *not* do:

- Offer commercial software downloads. (Shareware is a gray area, but I'd err on the side of caution.)
- Exceed your bandwidth limitations.
- Solicit for advertisers or sponsors.
- Post third-party ads of any kind.

You can find a complete description of permissible and prohibited activities in the .Mac Membership Agreement and Acceptable Use Policy, located at http://www.mac.com/1/membership_terms.html. Pay special attention to the discussion of personal versus business uses near the end of the section titled "Violations of System and Network Security."

Set Up .Mac System Preferences

If you're using a Mac running Mac OS X (as, I assume, most readers are), make sure your computer is set up to use your .Mac account. For now, only one small item requires your attention. Follow these steps:

1. Go to the Account tab of .Mac System Preferences (**Figure 1**).
2. If your .Mac member name and password are not already filled in, enter them now. Then close the window.

Your Mac is now configured to use .Mac, and your iDisk should appear in the sidebar of Finder windows (if it was not there already). If it does not appear, see [Troubleshoot connection problems](#), later.

FIGURE 1



The first step in using .Mac is to enter your member name and password in the Account pane of .Mac System Preferences. The Tiger version of the .Mac preference pane is shown here; under Panther, some options are different—but the .Mac Member Name and Password fields are the same.

Learn to Navigate the .Mac Web Site

As a .Mac member, you'll probably visit the .Mac Web site at <http://www.mac.com/> frequently. Although the site is mostly self-explanatory, I'd like to call your attention to a few items that may be less than obvious.

You'll notice that I haven't included any screen shots of the .Mac home page. That's because it changes often. Apple adds, removes, and rearranges page elements often. In addition, the page appearance can change depending on whether or not you're logged in.

When you visit the .Mac Web site for the first time (in a given Web browser, on a given computer), you see its public face—a view appropriate for nonmembers. The main purpose of this version of the page is to describe .Mac in a way that makes people want to join.

After you log in by clicking the Log In link near the top-right of the home page, the page design changes to be more appropriate for members. Part of the page (a left-hand sidebar as of September 2007) has links to various parts of the site as well as a few bits of personal data, such as how many unread email messages you have, or the number of people who have visited any Web sites where you've set up counters. You can also search your .Mac Address Book directly from this page.

Once you log in, you see this “logged-in” version of the site even if you quit your browser and reopen it another day, because .Mac uses a cookie stored on your computer to remember that you were logged in the last time you visited the site.

The navigation bar at the top of the page is always present—and this goes for the entire .Mac Web site (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 2



The navigation bar (as it appears before and after logging in) contains links for all the major sections of the .Mac Web site (top). After you log in, your member name appears on the right side; click your member name to go to your Account Settings page (bottom).

Regardless of where you are or what else appears on the page, you can always use the links on this bar to go to the major areas of the .Mac site—the .Mac home page, Mail, Address Book, Bookmarks, HomePage (Apple’s online tool for creating Web sites), iCards, Groups, and Help. And, you can log in and out. (To see your Account Settings, click your member name on the bar after you log in.)

To end your session, click Log Out on the navigation bar. If you’re using the site from your own computer, you needn’t ever log out. But if you’re using a public computer, you should log out to ensure that no one else can access your private data. (Not that you have much to worry about—the .Mac site requires users to log in again almost every time they move from one part of the site to another. So the fact that your member name and “Log Out” appear on the navigation bar doesn’t necessarily mean you’re fully logged in.)

Bug Why does the .Mac Web site ask you to enter your member name and password so often? Even if I’ve just logged in, if I go to another area of the site, I’m frequently asked to “confirm” my login. I can understand logging me out due to a period of inactivity (which the site also does), but I’ve been asked to log in twice within the space of 5 seconds—something even my bank’s high-security Web site does not require. In my judgment, this is a serious design flaw—one that’s been around since the very beginning.

Although I know of no solution other than for Apple to fix the problem, you can partially work around it by configuring Safari (or whichever browser you use) to store user names and passwords. That way, you have only one button to click when the login page appears. To set this up in Safari, choose Safari > Preferences and click the AutoFill button in the toolbar. Make sure the User Names and Passwords checkbox is selected. The next time you log in to .Mac, Safari will ask if you want it to save your name and password. Click Yes, and the next time the login page appears, your member name and password will already be filled in.

Manage Your Account

Later in this book, I describe specific preferences you can set for each of the .Mac Web site’s sections. For now, though, I’d like to call your attention to one important area: the Account Settings page

(**Figure 3**). To go to this page, log in and then click your member name in the navigation bar; reenter your login information if prompted to do so.

FIGURE 3



Manage your account settings on this page. To get here, log in, and then click your member name on the navigation bar.

Here's what's on the Account Settings page (but note that options vary somewhat according to your account type):

- **Buy More:** Click this button to add email-only accounts (see [Add Email-Only Accounts](#)), buy more storage space (see [Buy more space](#)), or upgrade to a Family Pack. If you have an email-only account, this button may not appear; instead, click the button labeled Manage Accounts that appears above the divider line on the right.
- **Personal Info:** Click this button to change your first or last name, alternate email address, or preferred language, and to subscribe to or unsubscribe from the .Mac Newsletter.

- **Credit Card Info:** Update the credit card information on file for your membership, and choose whether you want the account to renew automatically (using that credit card).
- **Password Settings:** Here, you can change your password or enter a new password question and answer (which enables you to reset your password if you forget it).
- **Personal Domain:** As of August 2007, .Mac now lets you use your own domain name with .Mac Web sites published from iWeb. Click here and follow the instructions to set up this feature. For more information, see the sidebar [Master of Your Domain](#).
- **Storage Settings:** Choose how your .Mac storage space is allocated among your iDisk, email, and .Mac groups (see [Divide space between files and email](#)).
- **Mail Preferences:** Change settings for .Mac Mail (see [Configure .Mac Mail preferences](#)).
- **Secure iChat:** This button appears only if you've installed Mac OS X 10.4.3 or higher and enabled encryption in iChat. It lets you view the status and expiration date of your security certificate, as well as revoke it, if desired. (To enable iChat encryption, open iChat, choose iChat > Preferences, and click the Accounts icon in the toolbar. With your .Mac account selected, go to the Security pane, click the Encrypt button at the bottom, and follow the instructions.)

NOTE If your .Mac membership expires, you won't be able to encrypt iChat conversations (though you can still have unencrypted iChats).

- **Group Preferences:** If you are the owner or member of a .Mac group, this button takes you to a page where you can enter personal information (such as your address and Web site) that other group members can see.

TIP NEED HELP?

Even though I intended this book to be a fairly complete guide to .Mac, you may occasionally run into questions I don't address here. Don't forget about other ways you can get help:

- Use the Help menu in Mac OS X.
- Click the Help link in the navigation bar on the Apple Web site.
- Use the tutorials in the Learning Center on the .Mac Web site.
- Visit Apple's .Mac Discussion Boards at <http://discussions.info.apple.com/dotmac/>.

Upgrade or Convert an Account

Once you set up a .Mac member name—even if it's for a trial account or an email-only account—that name is yours forever. Well, sort of. You can use it only as long as you pay for it, but even if you let your subscription lapse, no one else can claim that member name; you can reactivate your account at a later date if you so desire. (You can continue using your .Mac member name for iChat, even after your subscription has expired.)

NOTE Email aliases (see [Use Email Aliases](#)) behave a bit differently from member names. If you create an email alias and later delete it (as opposed to merely turning it off), that email address is reserved permanently, but you can't reactivate it—and neither can anyone else.

However, you may want to convert your membership from one type to another. For instance, you may have an expired or trial .Mac membership or a Family Pack sub-account that you want to convert to an email-only account; conversely, you may want to convert an email-only account or Family Pack sub-account to a stand-alone .Mac membership. Most (but not all) conversions are possible, but the procedure varies. See **Table 1** in [Appendix B: Account Conversion Methods](#) for an outline of the possible conversions.

SIDEBAR .MAC AND WINDOWS

Even though Apple designed .Mac primarily for Mac users, you can use most of its features from a Windows computer as well. In fact, you can purchase and use a .Mac subscription even if you've never touched a Mac. Because nearly everyone can use a reliable, spam-filtered, Web-accessible email account, not to mention online storage space, and Web publishing, plenty of people join .Mac who don't ordinarily use Macs. But because .Mac takes advantage of features built into Mac OS X (and third-party Mac applications), some features are unavailable when using Windows:

- HomePage integration with iPhoto and iMovie
- Synchronization (for things such as contacts, calendars, and bookmarks) between computers
- Uploading calendars, contacts, and other personal data (though you can access information uploaded from a Mac)
- Apple's Backup application
- iLife applications
- Free software provided via .Mac, such as games and GarageBand loops

(At one time, Apple also prevented Windows users from signing up for a .Mac trial account, but that limitation has been lifted.)

COMMUNICATE USING .MAC MAIL

Each .Mac account includes an email address in the Mac.com domain (such as `jwk@mac.com`). You may already have an email account from your ISP or an online service such as Hotmail or Google Gmail, but .Mac Mail offers a number of useful features that make it ideal as a primary or supplemental email account.

NOTE I use the term “.Mac Mail” when referring either to the email accounts included with .Mac accounts or to the Web-based interface for sending and receiving email in those accounts. I refer to the email client Apple includes with Mac OS X as “Mail” or “the Mail application.”

Here are a few things that make .Mac Mail great:

- You can check your email using the Mac.com Web site (read [Access .Mac Mail over the Web](#)) or your favorite email software, on nearly any platform, using either IMAP or POP (I cover this in [Access .Mac Email Using Apple Mail](#); make sure to read the sidebar [IMAP vs. POP](#)).
- Using the Mac.com Web site, you can set up autoreplies (for example, for “out-of-the-office” and vacation notices), forward your Mac.com email to another account, check POP email on another server, add your photo to outgoing messages, and more.
- Apple’s mail servers provide excellent spam and virus filtering. (In a quick check of more than 18,000 spam messages I have received over the past several months, I found more than 12,000 received at a certain email address in my own domain, but only 37 received via my Mac.com address. That’s pretty impressive!)
- You can add up to five aliases—extra email addresses that are automatically forwarded to your main Mac.com account. See [Use Email Aliases](#).
- You can purchase up to ten additional email-only accounts (at \$10 each) for family members, business associates, or friends. Unlike aliases, these are distinct email accounts, with their own separate, password-protected email storage and access. See [Add Email-Only Accounts](#).

SIDEBAR WEBMAIL VS. EMAIL CLIENTS

I know many people who always read and compose their email (.Mac or otherwise) using a Web browser—even at home, on their own computers. This behavior baffles me, because email clients (including Mail, Eudora, Entourage, Thunderbird, PowerMail, and many others) are so much more powerful and easier to use—and several of them are available for free.

That said, Web-based access to .Mac Mail (“webmail”) has improved considerably over the years, and can be quite useful. And a few features of .Mac Mail are available *only* through the Web interface. Here are some cases where you might prefer one over the other:

Use the Web interface:

- When you’re away from your own computer—at a library, café, or friend’s home, for instance
- To add, change, or remove your photo (which appears when the recipient uses Mail or the .Mac Web site to read your message; see [Configure .Mac Mail preferences](#))
- To change email forwarding or autoreply settings
- To add, edit, or delete email aliases

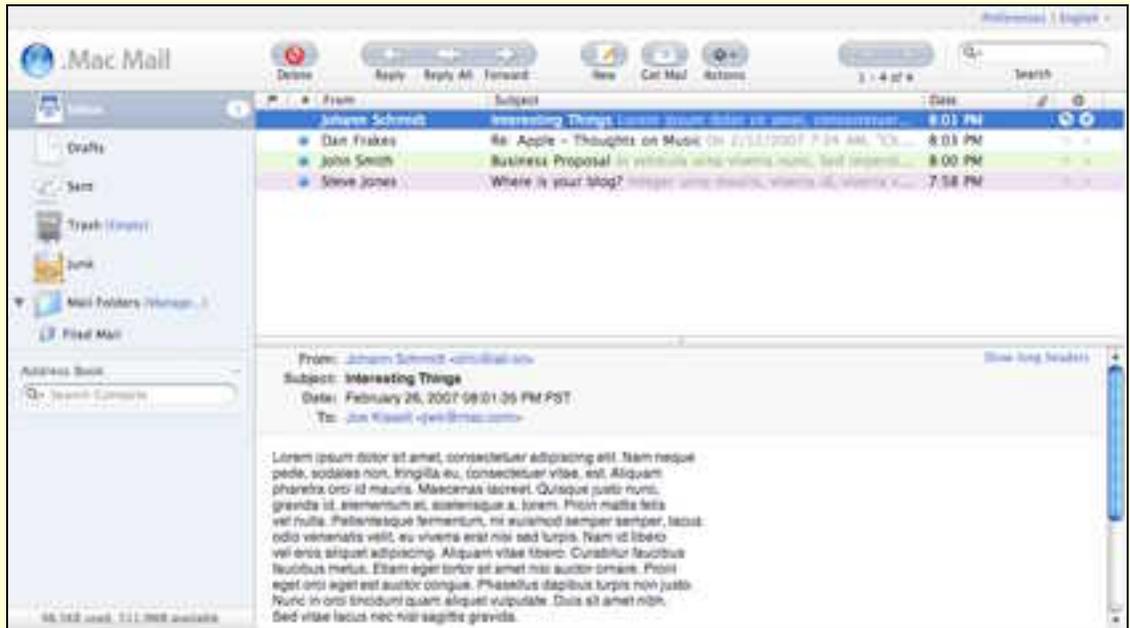
Use an email client:

- If you want multiple windows (for example, one containing your message list and another containing a message you’re composing)
- To run rules (also known as filters) for sorting your messages and performing other tasks automatically
- To search the *content* of messages
- To modify fonts, sizes, styles, and colors in outgoing messages
- To *redirect* messages to another address, keeping the original sender’s address in the From field

Access .Mac Mail over the Web

To access your .Mac Mail using your favorite Web browser, go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Mail link on the navigation bar, and—if you aren’t already logged in—enter your member name and password. The .Mac Mail page (**Figure 4**) appears, showing your Inbox.

FIGURE 4



You can view messages sent to your Mac.com address (and any email aliases, shown here in color) on this page of the .Mac Web site.

Use the main .Mac Mail page

The main .Mac Mail page, which displays your message list and folder list, mimics the interface of Apple Mail and is largely self-explanatory. Here's a quick overview of what you can do in this view:

- **Check for new messages:** .Mac Mail does this automatically when you first log in, and periodically thereafter, but to check manually at any time, click Get Mail.
- **View a message:** Click any message in the list; its contents appear in the pane below.
- **See more pages of messages:** When a folder's message list is long, click the  or  button in the toolbar to move forward and backward one page at a time.
- **Resize the preview pane and message list:** Drag the bar that divides the two panes.
- **Sort your messages:** Click any column header. To reverse the sort order, click the column header a second time. The column with the  header shows an indicator (●) for unread messages.

NOTE If you prefer not to work in the default three-pane window, you can switch to a two-pane setup, in which double-clicking a message replaces the message list with the contents of the selected message. See [Configure .Mac Mail Preferences](#) for instructions.

- **Search for a message in the current folder:** Enter search text in the Search field and press Return. Note that only the Subject, From, To, and Cc fields are searched, not the body of messages. You can quickly repeat recent searches by choosing a search term from the  pop-up menu.
- **Select all visible messages:** Choose Actions > Select All or press the A key. You may wish to do this, for example, if you intend to delete or move all the messages in your Inbox at the same time.
- **Deselect all messages:** Choose Actions > Select None.
- **View messages in another .Mac Mail folder:** Click the folder in the list on the left.
- **Move a message (or messages) to another .Mac Mail folder:** Drag the message(s) to the desired location in the folder list. Alternatively, select the messages, choose Actions > Move to Folder (or press the M key), select a folder, and click Move.
- **Create, modify, or delete folders:** Click the Manage link next to the Mail Folders item in the list on the left.
- **Modify preferences:** click the Preferences link above the toolbar (see [Configure .Mac Mail Preferences](#), ahead).

NOTE Some email programs—including Apple Mail—let you specify High, Normal, or Low priority for outgoing messages. In Mail, priority (if other than Normal) is indicated by an icon in the  column. (You may have to choose View > Columns > Flags to display the  column.) In .Mac Mail, however, message priority is not shown.

Work with incoming messages

When viewing a message, the toolbar buttons for Delete, Reply, Reply All, and Forward perform their expected functions. You can also access these commands using the Actions pop-up menu on the toolbar. If you've enabled keyboard shortcuts (see [Configure .Mac Mail Preferences](#)), the Actions menu also lists the shortcuts for these commands and several others. Unlike keyboard shortcuts in most programs, those used in .Mac Mail require no modifier keys (such as Command or Control); however, they are case-sensitive—for example, the shortcut for Reply is r (the R key), while Reply All is R (Shift-R).

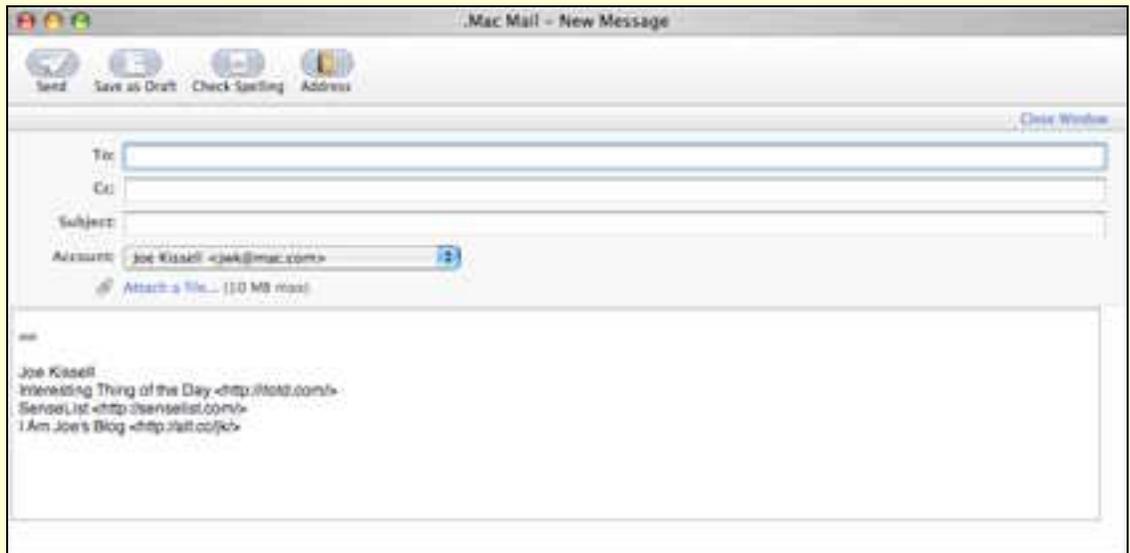
You can perform several other tasks with incoming messages:

- **Mark a message as Read or Unread:** Choose Actions > Read or Actions > Unread, respectively, or press the U key to toggle its Read status.
- **Mark a message as Junk Mail or Not Junk Mail:** Choose Actions > Junk Mail or Actions > Not Junk, respectively, or press the J key to toggle its Junk status. Depending on your preferences, marking a message as Junk Mail may also move it to your Junk mailbox; see [Configure .Mac Mail Preferences](#), ahead.
- **Mark a message as Flagged:** Choose Actions > Flagged or press the L key; repeat the action to un-flag the message.
- **Add a message's sender to your online .Mac Address Book:** Click the sender's email address in the message view. Make any desired changes to the first and last name and then click Add.
- **Display a “printer-friendly” version of the message in a new window:** Choose Actions > Print or press the P key.

Compose a new message

To compose a new message, click the New button in the toolbar. A new window appears, as shown in **Figure 5**. Fill in (at least) the To, Subject, and message fields. Click Send to send the message.

FIGURE 5



Use this window to compose new email messages.

Other features you may use when composing a message are:

- **Cc and Bcc:** Addressees in the Cc (carbon copy) field get a copy of the message, with their addresses visible to all recipients. Addressees in the Bcc (blind carbon copy) field get a copy of the message, but their addresses are hidden from all recipients. You can show or hide the Bcc field in the Composing view of .Mac Mail's preferences.

NOTE To include more than one addressee in the To, Cc, or Bcc fields, separate the email addresses with commas.

- **Account:** If you have set up one or more email aliases (see [Use Email Aliases](#)), use this pop-up menu to specify which address will appear as the From address in the message you're sending.
- **Attach a File:** To attach a file to your message, click Attach a File, navigate to the file on your disk, and click Choose. Repeat for any additional files you want to attach—up to a maximum of 20 MB worth of files. To remove a file you've chosen, click its  button.
- **Save as Draft:** If you're not ready to send a message yet but want to save what you've written so far, click Save as Draft. The message is saved in your Drafts folder.

- **Address:** To address this message to someone in your .Mac Address Book, click Address. This displays a special view of your Address Book in which each entry has To, Cc, and (optionally) Bcc checkboxes. First, locate your addressee(s) in the list (use the Search field at the top to find contacts quickly if the list is long). Check the To, Cc, or Bcc box for one or more contacts, and then click OK. Then .Mac Mail returns you to your message in progress, with the selected addresses entered in the fields you chose.
- **Check Spelling:** When you click Check Spelling, .Mac Mail displays an alert with the number of misspelled words; when you click OK, a (noneditable) copy of your message appears with a dotted red line under each unrecognized word. When your pointer hovers over one of these words, a pop-up menu appears. Suggested spellings (if any) appear at the top of the menu, followed by Ignore (to ignore the word for this message only), Learn (to add the word to your .Mac Mail dictionary), and Edit (to correct the word by hand).

To change the spelling dictionary's language, use the Dictionary pop-up menu at the bottom of the window. When you finish your spell check, click Check Spelling to recheck the spelling or Return to Message to continue composing the message.

TIP **INLINE SPELL CHECKING**

Some Web browsers, such as Safari and OmniWeb, support real-time inline spell-checking in Web-based forms. If you're using one of these browsers, Control-click (or right-click) in any text field on the .Mac site and choose Check Spelling As You Type from the Spelling submenu of the contextual menu. Using this spell checker is quicker than using .Mac's; you may also find it more accurate, as it uses the same spelling dictionary as most Mac OS X programs.

Configure .Mac Mail preferences

When you click the Preferences link, .Mac Mail presents five sets of preferences: General, Viewing, Composing, Aliases, and Other. Click one of those labels to display a view containing that category. When you're finished modifying preferences (in one or more views), click the Save button at the bottom, which returns you to your Inbox; to discard changes and return to the Inbox, click Cancel.

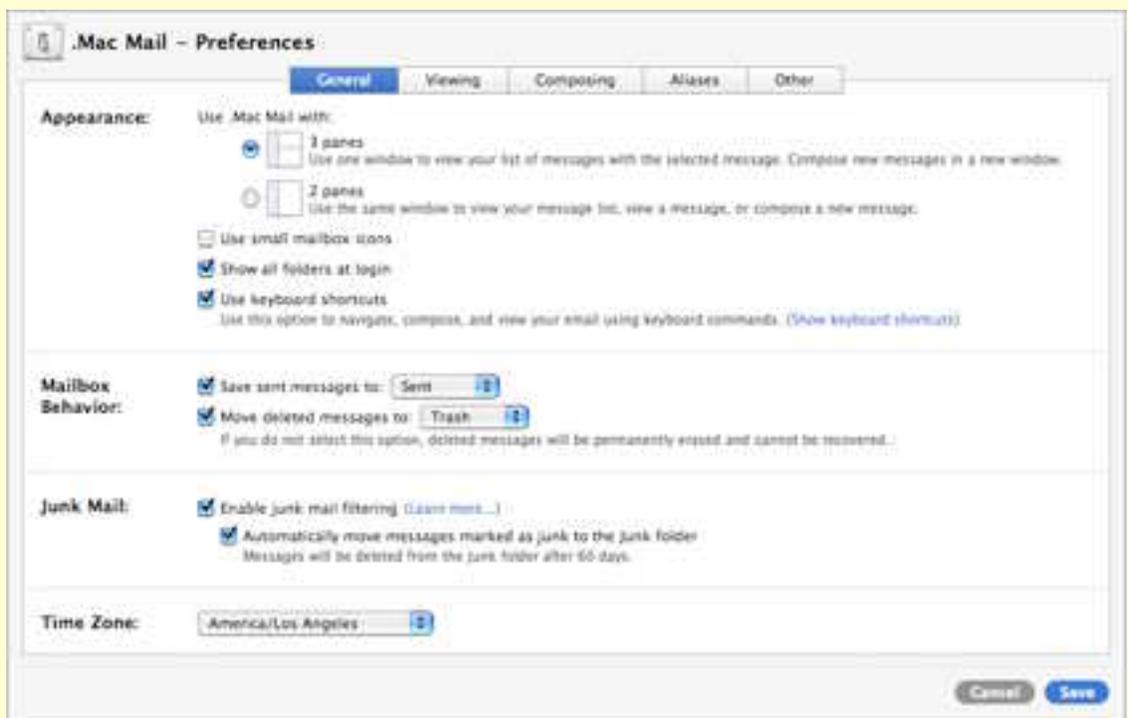
General Preferences

Let's first look at the Preferences shown in the General view (**Figure 6**).

Appearance:

- **Use .Mac Mail With:** Select 3 Panes (the default) to display the selected message's contents in a separate pane of the main window; select 2 Panes to display only the message list. In a two-pane view, double-click a message to display its contents.
- **Use Small Mailbox Icons:** Check this box if you have many mailboxes (folders) and wish to reduce their size in the folder list.
- **Show All Folders at Login:** When this box is checked, your list of user-created mailboxes (folders) is expanded in the folder list when you log in; when unchecked, the list is collapsed at login.
- **Use Keyboard Shortcuts:** When this box is checked, you can use keyboard shortcuts (displayed in the Actions pop-up menu) for common activities; when unchecked, shortcuts are disabled.

FIGURE 6



Set appearance and mailbox options in the General preferences view.

Mailbox Behavior:

- **Save Sent Messages To:** When this box is checked, .Mac Mail saves copies of all outgoing messages into the folder you choose from the pop-up menu—typically Sent Messages or Sent.
- **Move Deleted Messages To:** When this box is checked, messages you delete are moved to the folder you choose from the pop-up menu (typically Trash). When unchecked, deleted messages are removed from the server immediately and permanently.

Junk Mail:

These options were added in August 2007. Contrary to appearances, .Mac Mail has *always* included server-side spam filtering. But previously, this filtering was invisible, and it zapped only the most obvious and egregious spam. It was not configurable in any way, instead, it relied on Mail (or whichever email client you use) on your Mac to do another, more intensive level of spam filtering. Now, .Mac Mail can directly deal with messages that appear to be spam but aren't automatically rejected by the server-side filters:

- **Enable Junk Mail Filtering:** When this box is checked, .Mac Mail marks suspected spam by coloring its sender, subject, and date brown and putting a 🚫 flag in the  (Priority) column. If a legitimate message is incorrectly marked as junk, select it and choose Actions > Not Junk.
- **Automatically Move Messages Marked As Junk to the Junk Folder:** With Junk Mail Filtering enabled and this box checked, messages automatically marked as junk will also be moved out of your Inbox and into the Junk folder. If a message is in this folder and you choose Actions > Not Junk, .Mac Mail removes the 🚫 flag and brown coloring but does *not* move the message back to your Inbox; you must do that manually.

If you use the Mail application on your Mac to check your .Mac email account, make sure that your Mail preferences match those of the .Mac Web site—in particular, if you have .Mac Mail configured to automatically move spam to your Junk folder, Mail should too. Apple has a Web page providing complete details about these settings; see <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=306215-en>.

Time Zone: To ensure that incoming messages are shown with times corresponding to your locale, choose a city in your time zone.

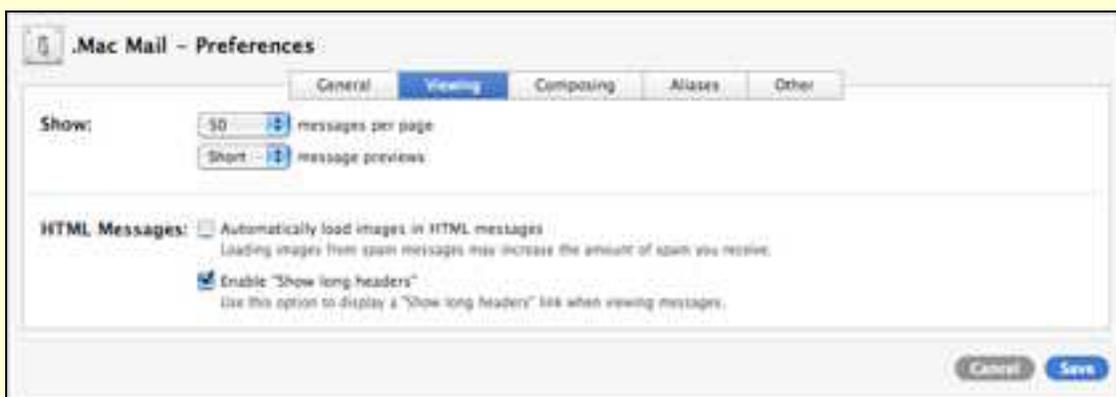
Viewing Preferences

You can modify many aspects of the way messages appear (**Figure 7**):

Show:

- **Messages Per Page:** Choose the maximum number of messages (from 10 to 50) to display at one time in message lists.
- **Message Previews:** .Mac Mail can display the beginning of each message's text after the subject in the message list. If you choose Long, the preview text can be up to three lines long. With Short (the default), it's a single line. Or choose None for no preview.

FIGURE 7



The Viewing preferences affect the appearance of message lists and incoming messages.

HTML Messages:

- **Automatically Load Images in HTML Messages:** By default this box is unchecked, so images in HTML messages don't appear unless you click the Load Images button at the top of the message. This setting may prevent spammers from detecting that their junk mail reached you. To display images automatically, check the box.
- **Enable "Show Long Headers":** With this option checked, a Show Long Headers link appears in the top-right of incoming or saved messages. Click this link to show headers that are normally hidden, such as the message's path from its originator to you, Reply-To, and Content-Type. (If you have to ask what these things mean, you probably don't need to see them, but they can be useful—for instance, when reporting spam to the sender's ISP.) If the headers are visible, the link name changes to Hide Long Headers.

Composing Preferences

Next up is the Composing view (**Figure 8**), with its preferences relating to what appears in your outgoing messages.

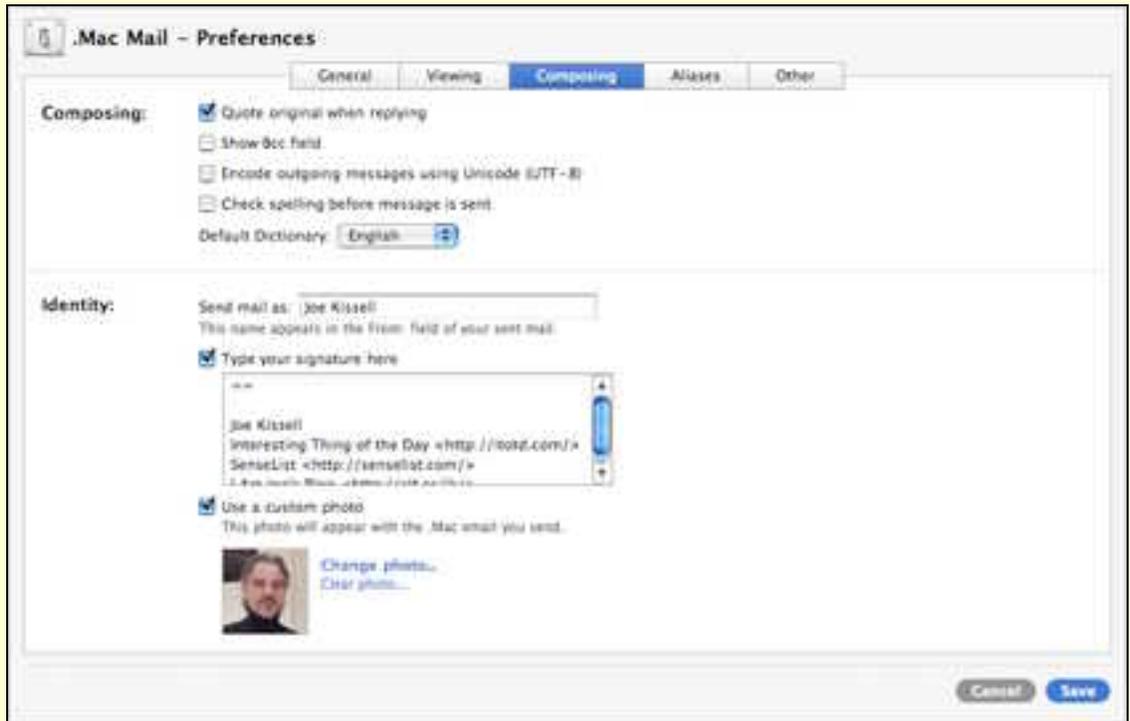
Composing:

- **Quote Original When Replying:** With this box checked, every time you reply to a message, the original message is quoted (with an attribution line, such as “On Saturday, September 1, 2007, at 02:11PM, Joe Kissell <jwk@mac.com> wrote:” and with > symbols at the beginning of each line of quoted text). You can always edit out all or part of the quoted text before sending the message.
- **Show Bcc Field:** When selected, a Bcc (blind carbon copy) field appears in the message composition window.
- **Encode Outgoing Messages Using Unicode (UTF-8):** If you mix multiple languages in your email messages or use characters that don’t appear in English, Japanese, French, or German, checking this box can help to ensure that your recipients can read your message (as long as they’re using a modern email client).
- **Check Spelling Before Message Is Sent:** When selected, .Mac performs a spell check every time you click the Send button, just as if you had clicked the Spell Check icon.
- **Default Dictionary:** Choose a spelling dictionary language.

Identity:

- **Send Mail As:** If this field is blank, only your Mac.com email address (as in “jwk@mac.com”) appears in the From field of messages you send to other people. If you fill in your name here, recipients see your name *and* your email address (as in “Joe Kissell <jwk@mac.com>”). I recommend including your name here; it’s much easier to identify a message’s sender by name than by email address alone. Be aware that when you send email from an alias (see [Use Email Aliases](#)), each alias can have its own From name.
- **Type Your Signature Here:** Your signature is a block of text that appears automatically—assuming you enable this option—at the end of every message you compose on the Mac.com Web site. This text can include your name, phone number, favorite quote, or anything you want all your recipients to know. Don’t include your life story here; a few lines should be more than adequate.

FIGURE 8



Set options for outgoing email in the Composing preferences view.

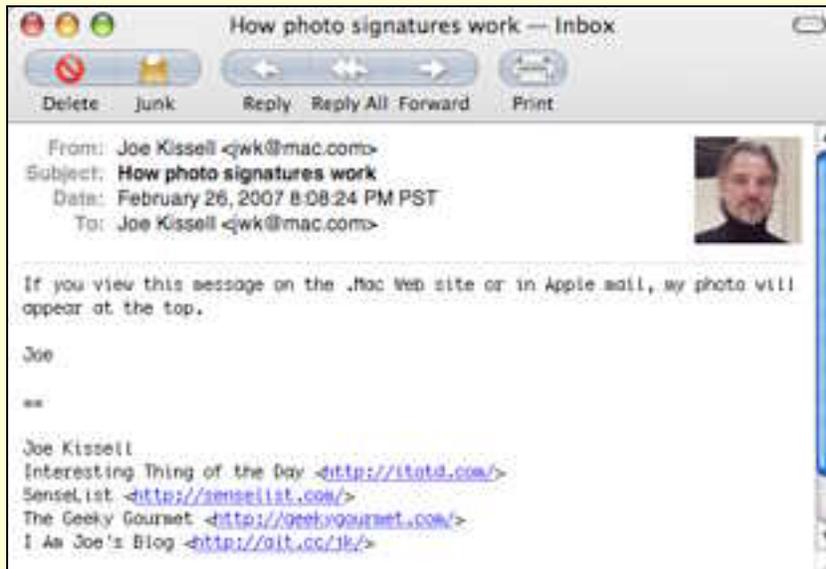
NOTE Signatures you set up in the Mail application don't transfer to .Mac Mail or vice-versa, regardless of your sync settings.

- **Use a Custom Photo:** This option (sometimes called a “photo signature”) is both cool and a bit misleading. If you include a photo here, that photo appears in *all* messages sent from your Mac.com address—whether you send them from the Web site, from the Mail application, or from another email client. The catch is that the photo appears *only* if the recipient views your message on the Mac.com Web site or in the Mail application (**Figure 9**).

This feature works because the Mac.com Web site and Mail check each incoming message to see if the sender is a .Mac member; if so, they check the .Mac database for that member's photo and, if they find it, display it. Other email clients and Web sites don't have access to this data.

NOTE If you have an email-only Mac.com account, you can't add a photo.

FIGURE 9



After you add your photo in the Composing preferences view, your recipients see it at the top of messages you send to them.

To add a photo:

1. Check the Use a Custom Photo box.
2. Click the Add Photo link (Change Photo if you previously had a photo). Then click the Choose File button, navigate to a photo (in JPEG or GIF format) on your hard disk, and click Choose.

TIP Photos are scaled to a maximum of 64x64 pixels. For best quality, consider using an image-editing program such as Photoshop Elements or Graphic Converter to crop your photo so that only your face shows and reduce it to 64x64 pixels before uploading it.

3. Click Upload. When the upload has finished, click Save.

To temporarily prevent .Mac from showing your photo, uncheck the Photo box. This setting works in real time; as long as it remains unchecked, recipients won't see your picture, regardless of the setting's status when you actually sent particular messages. To remove your photo altogether, click Clear Photo.

Alias Preferences

Use the Aliases view (**Figure 10**) to add, change, or delete *aliases*. Along with your main .Mac email address (*member-name@mac.com*), you can have up to five other addresses, called *aliases*, that use the same account. I discuss aliases a few pages ahead, in [Use Email Aliases](#).

FIGURE 10



Manage your .Mac aliases in the Aliases view.

Other Preferences

The Other view (**Figure 11**) contains preferences that help you check mail from other POP accounts, forward your .Mac email elsewhere, and set up an autoreply.

FIGURE 11



Set up POP accounts, forwarding, and automatic replies in Other.

External Account:

- **Check Mail from an External POP Account:** .Mac Mail can check POP email accounts from other providers and add those messages to the Mac.com mailbox of your choice; the messages appear both in the .Mac Web interface and in your Desktop email client.

To set up this feature, check the Check Mail from an External POP Account box, fill in the fields that appear (Email address, Incoming Mail Server, User Name, and Password), and choose a mailbox, from the Destination Folder pop-up menu, into which the imported

messages should be delivered. If you select Leave Messages on Server, .Mac does not delete the messages from the POP server after importing them. After filling in the fields, click Save.

Mail doesn't check your POP account immediately, on a schedule, or when you click the Get Mail button; checking that account is a *manual* procedure. After configuring a POP account, you'll see a new link at the bottom of the folder list that reads "Check *account name*." Click this link to retrieve messages from the account.

Forwarding:

- **Forward My Email To:** .Mac can forward all your incoming email to another (non-Mac.com) address, if you wish. This can be useful, for example, if you want to maintain multiple email addresses but check only one account, or if you want someone else to get copies of all your email.

To turn on forwarding, check this box and fill in an email address. (You cannot forward your email to another Mac.com address.) If Keep a Copy of Forwarded Messages is checked, incoming messages remain in your Mac.com Inbox (and count toward your storage quota) even when forwarded; if it is unchecked, messages are deleted immediately after being forwarded.

NOTE Forwarding and autoreplies apply to both your main Mac.com address and any aliases you've set up (see [Use Email Aliases](#), ahead).

- **Automatically Reply to Email When It Is Received:** To send an automatic reply to each person who sends email to your Mac.com address, check this box and enter the text of the reply. Each email address receives only one auto-reply—so if one person (or mailing list) emails you a dozen times while Auto Reply is enabled, only the first one of those messages generates a reply.

Auto Reply is meant primarily for "out-of-the-office" or vacation notices, and unlike rules you might set up in your email client, it works even if your computer is off (since it runs on Apple's Mac.com mail server). However, you can use it for other purposes—for example, to let senders know that you've received (and will read) their messages but that you're busy and may not be able to respond immediately.

TIP You can, if you wish, forward all your .Mac email to another account and *also* send an auto-reply. Using both (particularly when Leave Forwarded Messages on Server is selected) can be useful for sending out automated replies while also forwarding a colleague or family member copies of all messages in case something urgent comes up.

Work with folders on the server

Because .Mac Mail is based on IMAP (read the sidebar [IMAP vs. POP](#), a few pages ahead), it can store email messages on the server in any number of user-configured mailboxes (called “folders” in the .Mac Web interface). The folder list appears on the left side of the main window. To modify this list, click the Manage link by the Mail Folders item. A new view (**Figure 12**) appears.

FIGURE 12



Add, delete, or rename folders (mailboxes) in this view.

In this Manage Folders view, you can do any of the following:

- **Add a folder:** Select the folder *in* which the new folder should appear (Mail Folders or a subfolder you’ve created), type a name in the Folder Name field, and then click New Folder.
- **Rename a folder:** Select the folder, click the  icon, and type in a new name. (Changes to folder names may not appear immediately in Mail or other email programs; you generally must quit and restart the application to resynchronize folder lists.)

- **Delete all the messages in a folder:** Select a folder and click Empty Folder. Except for Trash, you probably do not want to do this. (You can also empty the Trash folder, if it contains any messages, by clicking the Empty link next to its name.)
- **Delete a folder completely:** Select it and click the  icon.

When you're finished making changes in this view, click Done.

NOTE You can't drag folders in .Mac Mail to rearrange them, but since they're sorted alphabetically, renaming them changes their order.

Access .Mac Email Using Apple Mail

Apple's Mail application, included with every copy of Mac OS X, is a full-featured email client that works with virtually any mail server. Conversely, although you can use almost any email client (not to mention the .Mac Web site) to fetch your .Mac email, Mail includes a few special features that make it the best way to send and receive email using your .Mac account.

For starters, Mail offers .Mac users semiautomatic account setup. It also provides an easy way to create rules that filter or sort incoming messages. Unlike the .Mac Web interface, Mail enables you to apply formatting such as fonts, colors, and styles to your messages. And under Mac OS X 10.4 or higher, Mail automatically recognizes your email aliases; provides a mechanism to sync your account settings, rules, signatures, and smart mailboxes between Macs; and gives you ultra-fast Spotlight searching.

If you entered your .Mac member name and password when installing (or upgrading) Mac OS X, Mail should already be configured to check your Mac.com email account. If not (or if you purchased a .Mac membership later), you can add your .Mac account to Mail as follows:

1. Choose Mail > Preferences and click the Accounts button in the toolbar.
2. Click the  button at the bottom of the Accounts view to add a new email account.
3. In the General Information dialog, choose .Mac from the Account Type pop-up menu (if it is not already chosen).

4. Enter something descriptive (such as your Mac.com email address) as the Account Description.
5. Enter your full name in the Full Name field, your .Mac member name (the part before the @ sign) in the User Name field, and your password in the Password field. Click Continue.
6. After Mail verifies your account settings and displays your Account Summary, click Continue again. Then click Done.

Mail is now configured to check your .Mac account.

By default, Mail uses the IMAP protocol to retrieve your email, storing messages you save in folders on the server. If you prefer to access your .Mac email with Mail using POP (read the sidebar two pages ahead, [IMAP vs. POP](#)), set up a POP account instead:

1. Choose Mail > Preferences and click Accounts in the toolbar.
2. Click the  button at the bottom of the Accounts pane to add a new email account.
3. In the General Information dialog, choose POP from the Account Type pop-up menu.
4. Enter something descriptive (such as your Mac.com email address) as the Account Description.
5. Enter your full name in the Full Name field, and your full Mac.com email address (*membername@mac.com*) in the Email Address field. Click Continue.
6. In the Incoming Mail Server field, type **mail.mac.com**. In the User Name field, enter your .Mac member name (the part before the @ sign). Enter your password, and then click Continue.
7. On the next screen, in the Outgoing Mail Server field, type **smtp.mac.com** if it is not already displayed. Make sure the Use Authentication checkbox is selected. The User Name field and Password field should contain the same information as in Step 5 (and may already be filled in for you). Click Continue.
8. Check the Use Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) box for outgoing email, and choose the Password authentication method. Click Continue.

9. After Mail verifies your account settings and displays your Account Summary, click Continue again. Then click Done.

Mail now checks your .Mac email using POP.

TIP To learn much more about Apple Mail, check out my two books on the subject: *Take Control of Apple Mail in Tiger* (<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/tiger-apple-mail.html>) and *Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail* (<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/spam-apple-mail.html>).

TIP ACCESS .MAC EMAIL USING OTHER EMAIL CLIENTS

Any email client can retrieve and send email using your .Mac account, even if it lacks all the special features of Mail. Just set up a new account using IMAP (generally a better choice) or POP, with the following settings:

- **Incoming mail (POP or IMAP) server:** mail.mac.com
- **User name:** Your .Mac member name
- **Password:** Your .Mac password
- **IMAP or POP Authentication:** Use “password” if your email client provides multiple options.
- **SSL for incoming mail:** Yes, if the client offers the option
- **Outgoing (or SMTP) mail server:** smtp.mac.com
- **SMTP Authentication:** Yes; use “password” if your email client provides multiple options
- **SMTP port:** 25 or 587 (Choose 587 if you get errors when trying to send mail; some ISPs block port 25 to prevent their servers from being used to send spam.)
- **SSL for outgoing mail:** Yes, if the client offers the option

SIDEBAR IMAP vs. POP

IMAP (*Internet Message Access Protocol*) and POP (*Post Office Protocol*) are the two most common email *delivery protocols*—methods for retrieving email from a server. When you configure Mail to use a .Mac account type, it uses the IMAP protocol. (The main reason for treating .Mac accounts as a separate type is that Mail can automatically fill in several settings for you; .Mac accounts also support email aliases.) However, you can also retrieve your .Mac email using the POP protocol. What's the difference, and why might you choose one over the other?

Generally speaking, when you retrieve email using POP, your email program downloads each message to your computer and then deletes it from the server—although you can configure most email programs, including Mail, to leave previously downloaded messages on the server for a set period of time, or even indefinitely. The server stores your messages in a single mailbox (your Inbox), and your email program is responsible for keeping track of which messages you've read. If you leave messages on the server and then check your email using another POP client, all the messages are marked as unread.

When you retrieve email using IMAP, messages normally remain on the server after being downloaded to your email program, and the server (not your email program) tracks which messages you've read. You can create multiple mailboxes on the server (including one to hold email you've sent), so you can organize your saved messages on the server. If you later check your email with another program (or even on another computer), all your incoming, saved, and sent messages appear, with exactly the same status.

In almost every situation, I strongly prefer IMAP, but I can think of a few specific situations in which POP might be a better option. Consider using POP for your .Mac email if:

- You have a slow (as in dial-up) Internet connection.
- You frequently exceed your .Mac mailbox quota (and can't allocate more storage space to email).
- You must access your .Mac email using an email program or Web-based service that does not support IMAP.

Use Email Aliases

Your .Mac account comes with a Mac.com email address, but you can also configure up to five *aliases*—extra Mac.com email addresses that deliver their messages to the same account. For example, since my .Mac member name is jwk, my primary .Mac address is jwk@mac.com. But if I wanted a second address I could pass out to people who may want to contact me for questions related to my business, alt concepts, I could (well, *did*) set up the alias altconcepts@mac.com. Any mail sent to altconcepts@mac.com is actually delivered to jwk@mac.com.

You can disable these aliases at any time. So if you begin receiving unwanted email at an alias addresses, you can stop it completely with just a few clicks.

Why might you want to set up aliases? Here are some common reasons:

- **Privacy:** An alias can hide your .Mac member name, giving you a measure of anonymity (or pseudonymity) if you share your address with strangers or post it in a public place (think Craigslist or “lost pet” posters, for instance).
- **Spam reduction:** If you provide an email address when purchasing a product, entering a contest, or joining a mailing list, you run the risk that your address could be sold to (or even stolen by) spammers. Worse, you may never know how they got your address. If you enter an alias, however (such as **purchases-my-member-name@mac.com**)—and later get email from another party—you’ll have a general idea of where they got it. You’ll also be able to stop future spam by disabling that alias.
- **Business:** If you use your .Mac account for both personal and business purposes, you may wish to have a more professional-looking address that is specific to your business.
- **Convenience:** Using Apple Mail (or another email client), you can set up rules that sort, highlight, reply to, or otherwise act on incoming messages based on the address to which those messages were sent. In other words, email sent to aliases can be treated differently from other email.

Deactivate or delete an alias

When you wish to stop receiving email sent to an alias, you can either deactivate it or delete it. In both cases, any email sent to the alias bounces back to its sender. The difference is that if you merely deactivate an alias, you can reactivate it later (if you want to use it for, say, tracking another online purchase or putting up another “lost pet” poster). If you delete an alias, it’s gone forever—neither you nor anyone else can ever choose that email address again. Your limit of five aliases applies to both active and inactive aliases. If you reach your limit and want to create a new alias, you first must delete an existing alias (or, if you’re really stuck, buy a new email-only account).

WARNING! If you already have five aliases and delete one, .Mac imposes a one-week waiting period before you can create a new one. (You can’t get around this by deleting more than one of your aliases either.) This is a security measure to prevent unscrupulous users from hoarding aliases—or using an endless string of aliases to send out spam.

To deactivate (or reactivate) an alias:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Mail link on the navigation bar, and—if you are not already logged in—enter your member name and password.
2. Click the Preferences link above the toolbar, and then go to the Aliases screen.
3. Uncheck the box in the Active column for the alias you wish to deactivate. (To reactivate it, check the box.)
4. Click the Save button at the bottom of the screen.

To delete an alias permanently:

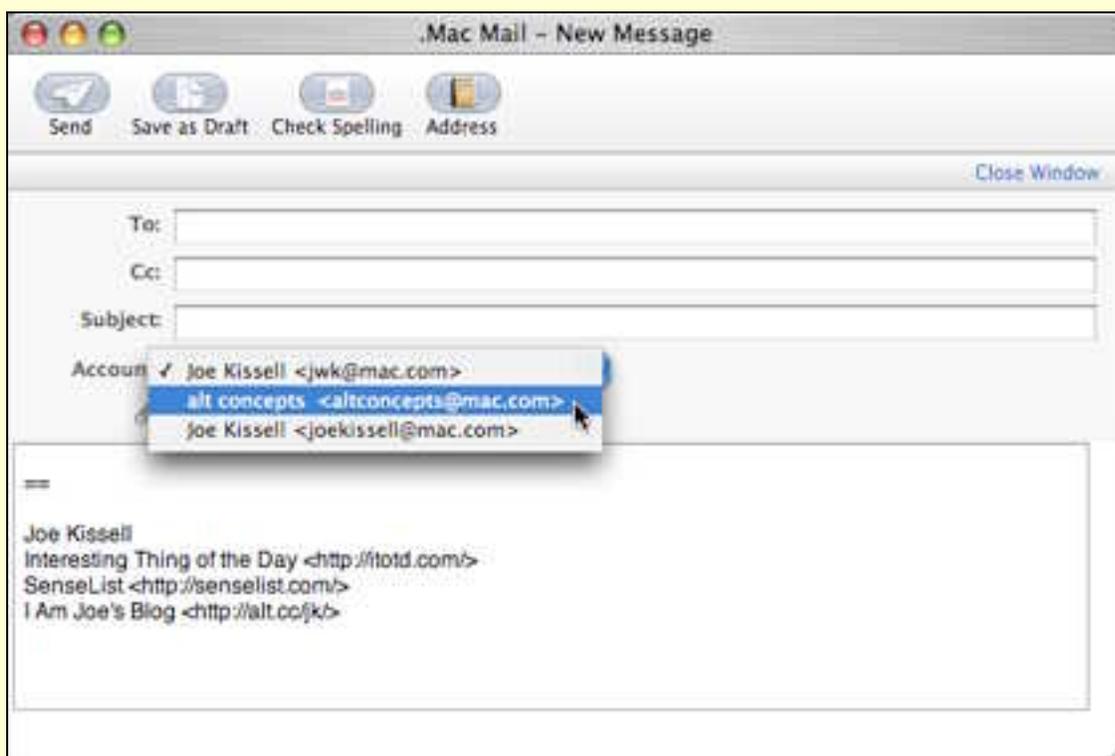
1. Follow Steps 1 and 2 above.
2. Click the  icon at the right end of that alias’s row.
3. Click the Save button at the bottom of the screen.

Work with aliases on the Web

As soon as you've set up an alias, any incoming email sent to that address goes directly into your .Mac Inbox, and, if you check your email using the Mac.com Web site, you'll see the message sender, subject, and date in the color you selected.

When sending outgoing messages, though, you may also want to use an alias as the From address, so that your main address remains private and replies go to the alias address. To use an alias when sending outgoing email, choose it from the From Address pop-up menu in the Compose window (**Figure 14**).

FIGURE 14



Choose an alias from this pop-up menu to use it as the From address for this particular outgoing message.

Work with aliases in Apple Mail

If you're using Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger, you'll find that Apple's Mail application works seamlessly with aliases you've defined on the .Mac Web site. When sending a message with Mail, you can (as in the Web interface) choose one of your aliases as the From address. To do this, choose the alias from the Accounts pop-up menu just below the Subject field of the New Message window.

NOTE Users of email-only accounts (read [Add Email-Only Accounts](#), next page) cannot add aliases.

Rumor has it that the Tiger version of Mail was supposed to automatically apply to your incoming email the highlight colors you selected for your aliases on the .Mac Web site, but that isn't the case. However, you can create the same effect with a rule. To set up Mail to apply colors to messages based on the address to which they were sent:

1. Choose Mail > Preferences, click the Rules icon in the toolbar, and click Add Rule.
2. In the Rules dialog, type a name (your choice) into the Description field.
3. In the “following conditions” section, choose To from the first pop-up menu and Contains from the second one. (These are the default settings, so you really don't need to change anything.) In the field after the second pop-up menu, enter one of your aliases.
4. In the “Perform the following actions” section:
 - a. Choose Set Color of Message from the first pop-up menu.
 - b. From the second pop-up menu, choose Of Text to replicate the effect on the .Mac Web site, or Of Background to keep the text of the sender, subject, and date in black and color the background.
 - c. Choose a color from the last pop-up menu (ideally, choose the same color you used for this alias on the .Mac Web site).
 - d. Click OK.

Incoming messages sent to that alias will now appear in the chosen color in your Inbox. (Repeat this procedure, if you wish, for each of your aliases.)

TIP Although space does not permit a detailed discussion of Mail rules here, you can follow the steps just above and choose other actions in Step 4 if you want to move, flag, reply to, or otherwise process incoming messages sent to any of your aliases.

Add Email-Only Accounts

If you have friends, family members, or co-workers who want a Mac.com email address but don't need a full .Mac membership, you can purchase email-only accounts, for \$10 each per year, that essentially piggyback on your full .Mac membership. Each of these accounts comes with 512 MB of storage space for email.

NOTE If you have a .Mac Family Pack, only the primary member (not sub-account holders) can add email-only accounts.

To add one or more email-only accounts, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/> and log in.
2. Click your member name on the navigation bar or the Account link on the left side of the window and (if prompted to do so) enter your member name and password again.
3. Click the Buy More button.
4. Choose the number of accounts you want to add from the Email-Only Account(s) pop-up menu (**Figure 15**). Then click Continue, enter your billing information, and click Continue again.
5. When you're ready to check out, click Buy Now. Click Continue one last time.

Now that you've added an account, you must configure it with a member name and password. To do this, follow these steps (for each new account):

1. Log in (twice), following Steps 1 and 2 above.
2. Click the Manage Accounts button.
3. Click the Set Up Account button and follow the instructions for configuring the account.

Give the member name and password you just entered to the person using the account. She can then log in herself and, if desired, modify the password and other preferences.

FIGURE 15



To add one or more email-only accounts, choose how many you want from this pop-up menu on the Buy More page.

NOTE EMAIL ALIASES VS. EMAIL-ONLY ACCOUNTS

So many email addresses! You have your main Mac.com email address, up to five aliases, and you can also add up to ten completely separate email-only accounts. In some situations, a (free) email alias can serve the same purpose as a (paid) email-only account. When should you choose which?

The distinction to keep in mind is that email *aliases* deliver email to the same Inbox as your main Mac.com address, whereas email-only *accounts* have entirely separate mailboxes—each with its own user name and password. So although you can use a rule to sort messages addressed to various aliases into different mailboxes, nothing prevents you from seeing and working with all those messages. With email-only accounts, only someone who knows that specific user name and password can access the messages—in fact, each email-only account must be set up as a separate account in your email client.

Thus, as a general rule, one person may have several aliases, but each person should have a separate email account (if not a separate full .Mac membership)—even if all users share the same computer. Because each user can set up a separate system-level user account with its own preferences for every application (including Mail), having a separate account reduces clutter and enables each user to maintain privacy.

KEEP YOUR INFORMATION IN SYNC

Your .Mac account provides several different ways of synchronizing information. These include:

- Synchronizing data from applications on your Mac (Address Book, Safari, and iCal) with the .Mac Web site.
- Synchronizing data of various kinds between two (or more) Macs (discussed later in this section)
- Synchronizing files and folders on your iDisk with a local copy stored on your Mac.

Depending on the third-party software you have installed, you may be able to synchronize other sorts of data too.

Because synchronization is such a large part of the .Mac experience (especially under Tiger), you should understand why you should (or shouldn't) sync your data, how syncing works, how to set it up, and how to deal with some of the complexities it presents.

NOTE OTHER KINDS OF SYNCING

Mac OS X can synchronize data in other ways, too, such as:

- Between your Mac and a mobile phone
- Between your Mac and a PDA
- Between your Mac and an iPod

In addition, many programs exist to facilitate the syncing files and folders (perhaps even entire volumes) between two computers. Because these kinds of syncing do not require .Mac (and because they can be quite involved), I don't cover them here. However, you can learn about them in *Take Control of Syncing in Tiger* (<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/tiger-syncing.html>).

Why Sync?

You can use your Mac, and your .Mac account for that matter, without ever synchronizing anything. And yet, I think this set of capabilities is so useful that to ignore it is to pass up a great opportunity to make

your life easier with almost no effort. Here are a few reasons you might want to use some or all of .Mac's sync capabilities:

- Make your key information (such as contacts and bookmarks) available from any computer, at any time, via the Web.
- Get a “backup,” of sorts, free. I put backup in scare quotes because I wouldn't pretend that these few synchronized items in any way constitute a complete or proper backup, but an extra offsite copy of your data surely never hurts.
- If you have more than one Mac, make sure some of your most important information is the same on each of them, without lots of tedious, error-prone manual copying.
- Give multiple users (on different computers, or even on the same computer) access to the same information.

Although not every type of syncing provides all these benefits, every little bit counts. If you ever use more than one computer—whether that means two Macs on the same desk in your home or a Mac at school and a PC at your local library—.Mac's synchronization features will soon become indispensable.

Syncing Basics

The fundamental idea of synchronization is very simple: You have copies of some piece of information in two different places, and you want them to be the same—preferably with the latest information from each. So synchronization consists of looking for the most recent piece of data in each place and copying it to the other place, replacing the older piece of data already there.

To take a real-life example, let's say the two places that store your data are your desktop Mac and the .Mac servers. And let's say, further, that the information you're trying to synchronize is your Address Book, and that both your local and online copies are, at the moment, identical. Now you change a contact on your Mac, and you change a *different* contact on the .Mac Web site. Then you synchronize your data. What should happen (and usually does) is that .Mac figures out that contact A is newer on your computer, and contact B is newer on the .Mac Web site, and it updates each copy of your data with the newer information.

That sounds easy enough, but any number of factors can make it more complicated and error-prone. Consider these, for instance:

- You may be syncing not just one Mac, but two or even five Macs, with the .Mac servers—perhaps all on different schedules. A given piece of information could change in several different places between syncs.
- In addition to syncing your Mac(s) with .Mac and with each other, you may sync them with a mobile phone or PDA, so changes can happen in even more places.
- Although Mac OS X and the .Mac servers can look for changes in specific parts of some files (say, a given field in the record of a given contact), the same is not true for documents you manually put on your iDisk. If you revise the first page of your novel in one place and the last page in another, you end up with two versions of a file, neither of which is completely up-to-date.
- Synchronization might not always occur when you think it should, due to a temporary loss of Internet connectivity, problems with the .Mac servers, or any number of other issues.
- Your computer could experience disk errors or other problems that lead to corrupted data files.

For all these reasons and more, syncing is often not as transparent and foolproof as we'd like. In the next few pages I tell you how to set up syncing and how to deal with some common kinds of conflicts. But first, permit me to offer a friendly word of advice:

TIP Always back up your hard disk—and do *not* rely on the copy of your data that you sync to .Mac as your sole backup! I know from personal experience that unexpected things can and do go wrong. A thorough backup strategy can protect you against many problems, both human and technical in nature. For details about backing up, read my book *Take Control of Mac OS X Backups* (<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/backup-macosx.html>).

Set Up Syncing

In versions of Mac OS X prior to 10.4, .Mac syncing required separate software, called iSync, and a series of often-confusing steps. In Tiger, however, you can set up basic synchronization with just a few clicks.

NOTE iSync is still used for syncing certain kinds of devices, such as mobile phones. Although you no longer need it to *sync* with .Mac, you still need it to [Adjust the Data Change Alert](#).

To turn on synchronization, follow these steps:

1. In the .Mac System Preferences, in the Accounts pane, verify that your .Mac member name and password are filled in.
2. On the Sync pane (**Figure 16**), check the Synchronize with .Mac checkbox.

FIGURE 16



Turn on syncing on the Sync pane in the .Mac System Preferences.

4. Choose an update frequency from the pop-up menu. Here are your choices and what they mean:
 - **Manually:** With this setting, which is the default, you must initiate every sync manually—either by clicking the Sync Now button at the bottom of this pane, or by using the .Mac status menu (see [Use the Sync Menu](#)).
 - **Every Hour, Every Day, Every Week:** Synchronization occurs automatically at these fixed intervals, as long as your Mac is connected to the Internet.
 - **Automatically:** According to Apple’s documentation, this option means that synchronization occurs at least once per hour; if another of your registered computers (see [Synchronize Multiple Macs](#)) performs a synchronization before then that changes the data stored on .Mac, the sync occurs immediately. In practice, I’ve never seen a case where changing data on one computer and performing a sync triggered another registered computer to synchronize early, but synchronization does take place at least hourly.

TIP In general, I recommend choosing Every Day if you use only one Mac, and Automatically if you use more than one. If your Mac isn’t ordinarily connected to the Internet, particularly if your Internet connection requires dial-in access, choose Manually.

5. Check the checkbox for each type of data you want to sync. (In most cases, you’ll probably want to select them all.) I discuss the details of each data type just ahead, in “Understand Sync Options.”

That’s it—your Mac will now synchronize the designated data with .Mac at the frequency you set. (If you chose Manually, click Sync Now to perform your first sync.) What exactly does it mean that your Mac and .Mac are in sync? Read on for the nitty-gritty details.

Understand Sync Options

The Sync tab of .Mac System Preferences lists at least six categories of data you can synchronize (and perhaps more, depending on which third-party applications are installed on your Mac). But it provides

no specific information about what each of these data types actually includes, or what exactly it means when you sync them. Here's the scoop on what enabling each option does:

- **Bookmarks:** Your Safari bookmarks are copied to your iDisk in `Your-iDisk/Library/Application Support/Bookmarks/Bookmark.xml`. You can view, use, and modify these bookmarks online using the .Mac Bookmarks feature (discussed in [.Mac Bookmarks](#)).

If you set up another Mac to sync its bookmarks, your Safari bookmarks will stay in sync between the two computers, as well. This option does not synchronize bookmarks from any other Web browser—only Safari.

- **Calendars:** Your iCal calendars are copied to the .Mac servers. This includes all your local calendars as well as other (public or private) calendars to which you've subscribed. The calendar data is stored...somewhere. (You can look all through your iDisk—even using Terminal to see invisible files—but you won't find your iCal data there anywhere. I suspect Apple stores the data in a private location that is not part of your iDisk, but I can't prove, disprove, or explain this.)

When you sync your calendars, they become available to other Macs you synchronize with .Mac, but you *cannot* view your calendar information on the Web unless you go through a separate procedure to publish the calendars (read [Publish and view calendars](#)). Even then, you cannot *modify* them on the Web.

TIP If you sync your iCal calendars across multiple Macs, alarms will pop up on all of them—and if you've set up email alarms, you'll get multiple copies of each email too. This may be what you want, but if you're using several Macs at the same time, this can become an annoyance. You can, of course, simply choose not to *sync* your calendars, instead publishing your calendars from one of your Macs and subscribing to them from the others—omitting the alarms. One caveat: you'll only be able to modify the calendars from the Mac that does the publishing.

- **Contacts:** All your Address Book contacts—including groups and LDAP server settings—are copied to your iDisk. The data is stored in *Your-iDisk/Library/Application Support/AddressBook/Contacts*. You can view and modify these contacts online using the .Mac Address Book. You can also use them when sending email using .Mac Mail. If you set up another Mac to sync its contacts, your Address Book applications on each computer will display the same information.

BUGS Apart from the fact that the .Mac Address Book displays less data than the Address Book application, some Address Book data is simply not synchronized at all. Specifically:

- If you create more than one address or phone number with the same label (say, “home”), only the first one of each syncs.
- Although a contact may have numerous email addresses and instant messaging user names, only the first six email addresses and the first three IM user names are synchronized.

Whether these are bugs in the Address Book application, Tiger (at version 10.4.10 when this was written), or the .Mac Web site, I can't be sure. Apple is aware of these problems, however, and I hope very much to see them fixed in the future.

- **Keychains:** Mac OS X stores user names, passwords, security certificates, and other sensitive data in files called keychains. (If you have your Safari preferences set to remember user names and passwords used on Web forms, for instance, those passwords go into your keychain.) Every user has at least one keychain, but you may have several. By enabling the Keychains option, you can copy your keychains to your iDisk. Those copies (stored in *Your-iDisk/Library/Application Support/SyncServices/Schemas/com.apple.Keychain*) can serve as a backup; syncing also makes the keychains available to other Macs you sync. You cannot, however, view or modify the contents of your keychain(s) on the Web.
- **Mail Accounts:** The account *settings* from Mail are copied to your iDisk (in *Your-iDisk/Library/Application Support/SyncServices/Schemas/com.apple.MailAccounts*). Whether you have one email account or dozens set up in Mail, all these settings (such as the server address, user name, password,

and other account options—though not your email messages themselves) are synchronized. This applies not only to your .Mac email account, but also to other POP, IMAP, and Exchange accounts, as well. By synchronizing your Mail accounts, you can avoid the tedium of configuring the same accounts on multiple Macs. However, regardless of this setting, your .Mac email account is the only one you can access via the .Mac Web site.

- **Mail Rules, Signatures, and Smart Mailboxes:** You guessed it—all the rules, signatures, and smart mailboxes from Mail are copied to your iDisk, to *Your-iDisk/Library/Application Support/SyncServices/Schemas/com.apple.MailConfiguration*. Syncing these files makes them available to other Macs, but, as with Keychains, you cannot access this data directly over the Web—nor does it have any effect on .Mac Mail.
- **Other data types:** Other third-party applications may add checkboxes to the list, as well. For example, Transmit, an FTP client, can synchronize its data automatically via .Mac if you have Transmit installed and check its checkbox here.

NOTE I can't overemphasize this point: syncing your Mail accounts does *not* copy email to your iDisk (or to another Mac). It copies only account *settings*. The good thing about this is that even if you have many gigabytes of saved email, you needn't worry about running out of space on your iDisk. But if you were expecting this feature to sync email between multiple computers, you're out of luck.

The easiest and best way to sync email across multiple computers is to sign up for (or switch to) an IMAP account. (As mentioned earlier, .Mac email accounts use IMAP by default.) With IMAP, you can have local copies of all your incoming, sent, and saved messages—but because there's also a copy of all your email on the server, any changes will synchronize automatically whenever you connect to your IMAP email account from another client.

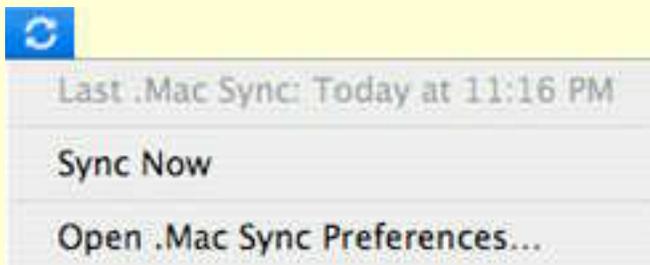
If you can't use IMAP, the only way to keep email in sync between computers is to copy (manually or using a synchronization utility) the contents of `~/Library/Mail/account-name` and `~/Library/Mail/Mailboxes` from one computer to the other. But I should caution you that this is an error-prone process.

NOTE Rules and smart mailboxes may be tied to mailboxes stored on your Mac, or in specific IMAP accounts. If your mailbox structure is different from one Mac to another, some rules may not work correctly and some smart mailboxes may not show the contents you expect—even if your accounts have also been synchronized.

Use the Sync Menu

One last item on the Sync tab of .Mac System Preferences is noteworthy: the checkbox labeled Show Status in Menu Bar. When this box is checked, a new icon (🔄) appears in your menu bar; click it to display the Sync menu (**Figure 17**). The Sync menu gives you a one-click method to check the date and time of your last synchronization, to initiate a sync immediately (handy if you've chosen manual synchronization), or to open the Sync pane of .Mac System Preferences.

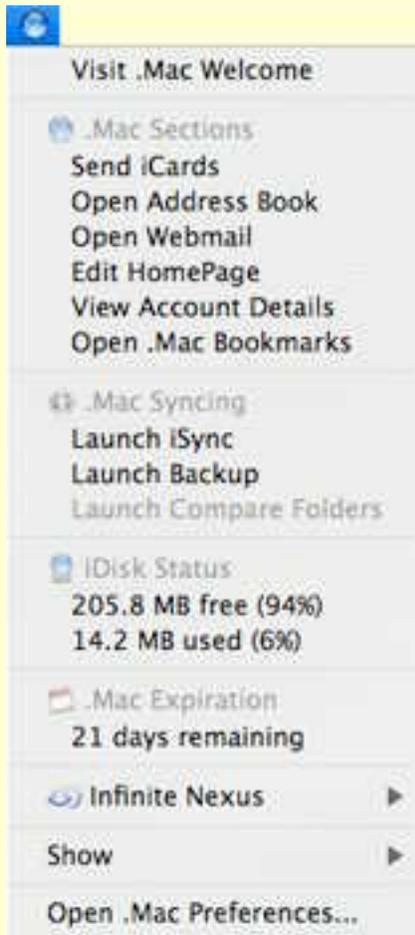
FIGURE 17



The Sync Menu shows when your last sync occurred and gives you an easy way to initiate syncs.

I should also mention a third-party menu that enhances your .Mac capabilities: dotMac Menu from Infinite Nexus, a free (\$5 donation requested) utility found at <http://www.infinitenexus.com/dmm/>. Using this menu, shown in **Figure 18**, you can jump to a specific section of the .Mac Web site with a single click, check your iDisk usage, and more. Oddly, the dotMac Menu lacks a Sync Now command, so it does not entirely replace the Sync menu.

FIGURE 18



The third-party dotMac Menu adds an even greater range of .Mac-related options to your menu bar.

Synchronize Multiple Macs

If you have more than one Mac—perhaps a home machine and a work machine or a desktop Mac and a laptop—you can use .Mac to synchronize information between them.

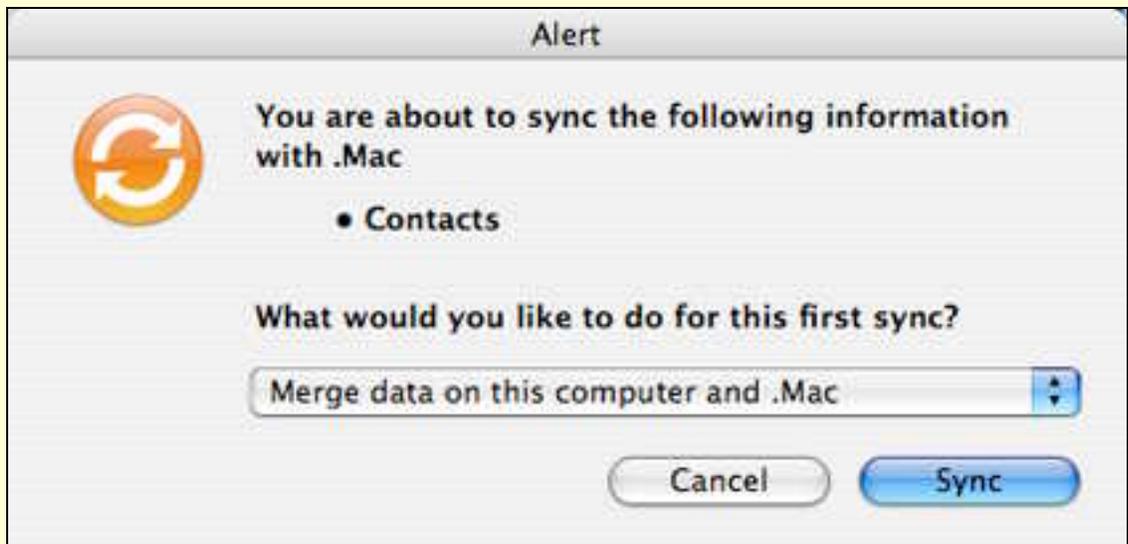
TIP You can follow exactly the same procedure to synchronize data between users on the same Mac. I sometimes do this, for example, when setting up a secondary user account on one of my computers for testing or troubleshooting.

The short version of the instructions is to turn on synchronization for each of the computers following the steps in [Set Up Syncing](#), earlier. Apple suggests (as do I) that if you're syncing multiple Macs, you should give each of them the same settings (that is, the same sync frequency and the same selections of data types). One exception: you might want to synchronize iCal calendars on just a single Mac to avoid multiple alarms (see the tip, later, in [Understand Sync Options](#)).

NOTE Keep in mind that syncing multiple Macs has nothing to do with iDisk syncing (see the sidebar [To Sync or Not to Sync](#)), even though the data that is synchronized is stored on your iDisk!

When you sync a new computer (or a new user account) for the first time, an alert appears, similar to the one shown in **Figure 19**. (The alert may list more than one data type—or you may see multiple instances of this alert, depending on a number of variables.)

FIGURE 19



The first time you synchronize a computer with .Mac, you must choose how to copy or merge the information.

When this alert appears, choose one of the following options from the pop-up menu:

- **Merge data on this computer and .Mac:** This is the default choice; it combines any existing data of the specified type(s) already on this computer with the data of that type on .Mac. (Both this computer and .Mac will contain the merged information.)
- **Replace data on .Mac:** This option erases all the information of the type shown on .Mac and replaces it with the information on this computer. Assuming you've already synchronized another computer to .Mac, this is never the choice you want for the *first* sync of an additional computer.
- **Replace data on this computer:** If you have not yet entered any data on this computer, this choice should have exactly the

same effect as choosing Merge; it's also, generally speaking, the safest and cleanest option when syncing a new computer with data already on .Mac.

After you make your choice, click Sync to perform your first sync, or, to stop the entire sync, click Cancel.

SIDEBAR UNREGISTER A COMPUTER

As soon as you enter your .Mac member name and password in the Accounts pane of .Mac System Preferences, Apple's servers register that computer as one that you can synchronize with .Mac.

Registration enables Apple to keep track of (and report to you, on the Advanced pane of .Mac System Preferences) the time and date each of your machines last synchronized. (Registration undoubtedly serves other functions too, but Apple doesn't reveal what those are.)

If you decide at some point that you will no longer be synchronizing a computer with .Mac, you can remove it from this list. To do so, select its name in the list and click Unregister. After you unregister a computer, it will no longer synchronize with .Mac. If you later decide you want to synchronize that computer again, go to the Advanced pane of .Mac System Preferences on *that* machine and click the Register this Computer button.

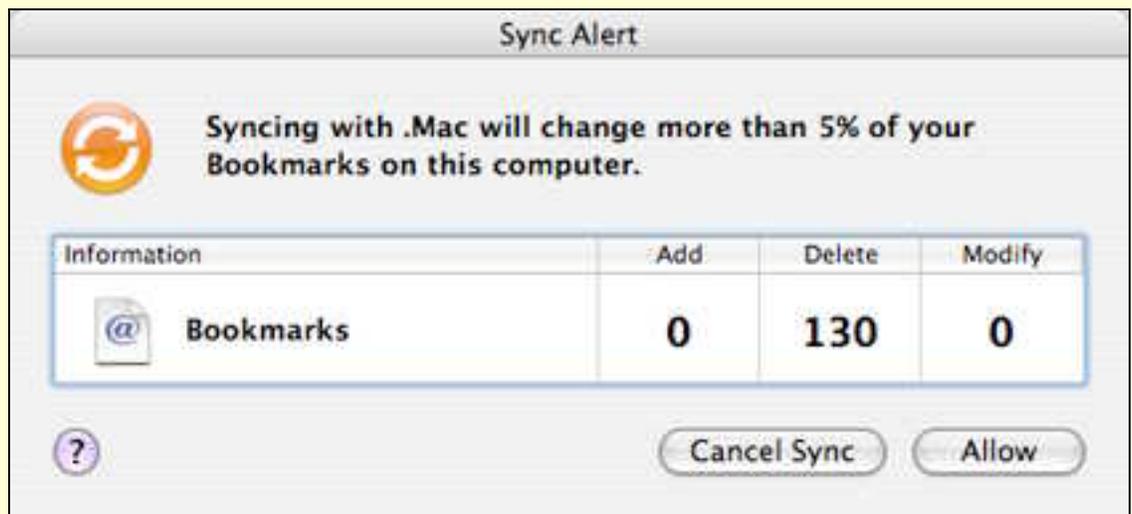
Adjust the Data Change Alert

The point of syncing your computer with .Mac is to make sure that any information that has changed in one location changes in the other as well. But sometimes—due to human error or machine error, perhaps—one side of the sync might have changed too much, so that overwriting the other side will result in both copies being incorrect. As a safeguard against such an outcome, .Mac sync includes a Data Change Alert, which is a window that pops up whenever the amount of information to be changed *on your Mac* is greater than a percentage you can specify (5% by default). That way, if you see, for example, that .Mac sync is about to overwrite 50% of your contacts, but you recall changing only a few, you can stop the process before any damage occurs.

The Data Change Alert, when it appears, looks something like the dialog shown in **Figure 20**. It lists what type of data has changed

beyond the amount you specified, and what sorts of changes have occurred—that is, how many records of the type shown that will be added, deleted, or modified if you permit the sync to complete.

FIGURE 20



This alert appears when a type of data has changed to a greater extent than the threshold you specified. If many unexpected changes are about to occur, use caution: you could inadvertently overwrite important data.

When you see this alert, click **Allow** to permit the changes (for this data type only) or **Cancel Sync** to cancel the *entire* sync. (Unfortunately, .Mac sync gives you no way to cancel syncing of just this one data type while allowing syncing of the rest; to do this, you must go into the Sync tab of .Mac System Preferences and deselect any data types you wish to exclude from a sync.) If more than one type of data (say, Bookmarks, Address Book contacts, and Calendars) exceeds your threshold, you will see more than once instance of this dialog.

Although most of the .Mac sync settings moved into the .Mac pane of System Preferences in Tiger, this one little detail—changing the alert threshold—still requires a trip to iSync to adjust. To configure the Data Change Alert, follow these steps:

1. Open iSync (in **/Applications**) and choose iSync > Preferences.
2. To enable the Data Change Alert, check the Show Date Change Alert checkbox; to disable it completely, uncheck the box.

3. If you have enabled the alert, choose a threshold from the pop-up menu; remember that this threshold applies individually to records in each data type. Your choices are:
 - **More than 5%, More than 25%, More than 50%:** If the number of records that will change exceeds this percentage of the total records for a given data type, an alert will appear.
 - **Any:** An alert will appear if even a single record will change.
4. Close iSync Preferences, and quit iSync.

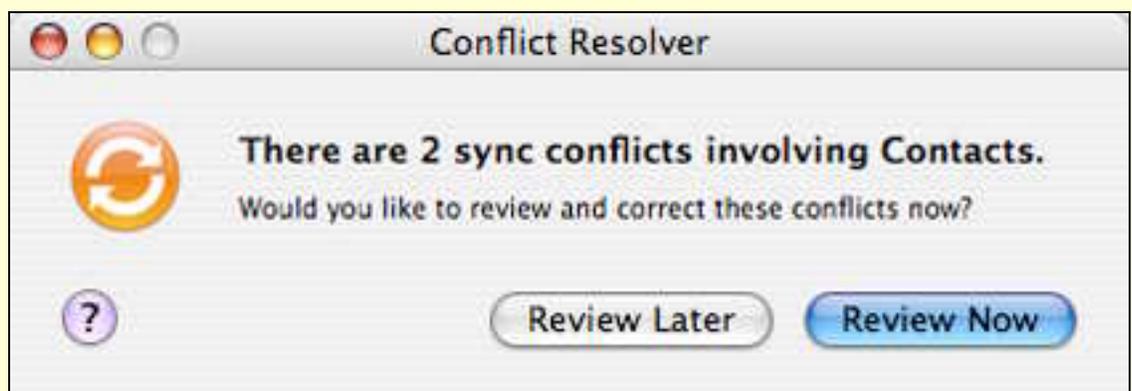
Your new settings will be used the next time you sync.

Resolve Synchronization Conflicts

From time to time, you may change a specific piece of information on both your Mac and the .Mac Web site (or another Mac you're syncing) between syncs. If this happens, and the information is not *exactly* the same in both places, .Mac sync won't know which version is correct. This is known as a synchronization conflict. For example, say your friend Chris just moved, and you updated your Address Book application with the new address 123 N. Main Street. But you also updated your .Mac Address Book on the Web, and you entered the address as 123 S. Main Street. Now, .Mac can't figure out which one is correct.

When such a conflict occurs, a Conflict Resolver alert appears, which looks something like **Figure 21**. You can either resolve the conflict immediately (by clicking Review Now) or leave the data just as it is in both places (by clicking Review Later).

FIGURE 21



When a conflict occurs, click Review Now (preferably) or Review Later to resolve it.

If you click Review Now, the dialog expands to show you the details of the conflict(s), as in **Figure 22**.

FIGURE 22



Choose which version of the data to use to resolve the conflict.

Select the version of the information you want to keep. If you're sure that you'll want to use the version of the information found on the same source—either an application on your Mac or on the .Mac Web site—for all the conflicts, check the Resolve All Similar Conflicts Using Data-Source checkbox. Click Continue; repeat, if necessary, for additional conflicts.

After you've addressed the last conflict, another dialog appears with the title Save Conflict Choices. In this dialog, click Sync Now to re-synchronize your computer with .Mac using the new information you've just provided, Sync Later to update the data during your next sync, or Cancel to throw out the changes and leave the information as it was, in both places, before the sync.

Reset Sync Data

Suppose you discover one day that a great deal of your synchronized information has changed in one of its locations—and you didn't want it to. For example, perhaps a family member unwittingly deleted 100 important contacts from your Address Book, or you experienced some sort of computer problem that led to corruption in your data. You could go through another sync and laboriously answer all the Conflict Resolver inquiries, or you could simply start over again and replace all the data in one location with all the data in the other location. The latter approach is called *resetting* your sync data.

When you reset your sync data, you pick a location (either your Mac or .Mac) to serve as the master. The next time you sync, *all* the synchronized data from the other location is deleted and then overwritten with the information from the chosen source location. Because this is such a drastic measure, you should not undertake it lightly (and you should always back up your data first—in both locations—just in case). But resetting your sync data can be a great time-saving tool when you really need it.

WARNING! Did I mention that resetting your sync data deletes *all* the synchronized data from the other location? I believe I did, but it never hurts to have another reminder. Think before you sync!

To reset your data, follow these steps:

1. Go to the Advanced pane of .Mac System Preferences.
2. Click the Reset Sync Data button. A dialog (**Figure 23**) appears.
3. From the Replace pop-up menu, choose which data you want to reset: All Sync Info, or just one type (say, Contacts). If you want to replace more than one type of data, but not everything, you'll have to repeat this entire procedure multiple times, once for each type of data.

FIGURE 23



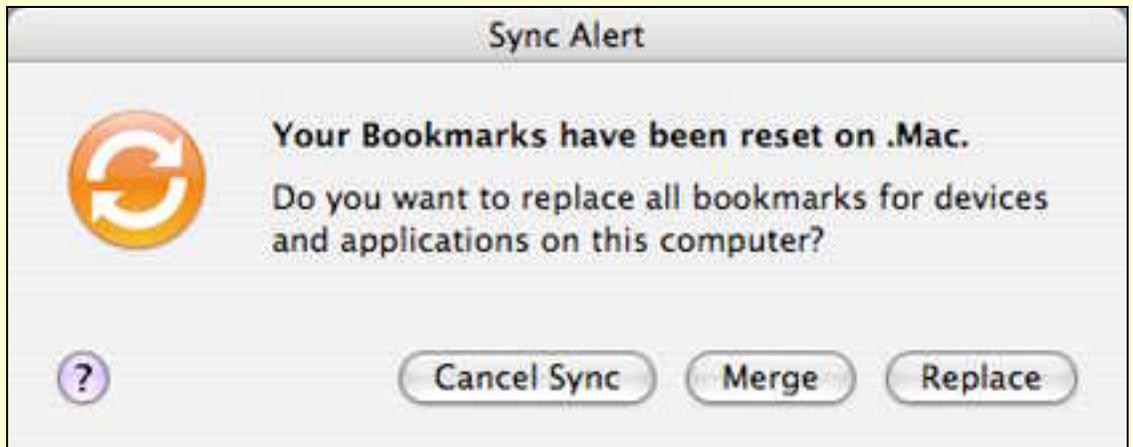
In this dialog, choose whether information on your Mac should replace the information on .Mac (as shown here), or vice-versa.

4. Choose which location .Mac sync should consider primary:
 - If you click the *left* arrow, you'll see the animated arrow going *from* the .Mac icon on the right *to* the computer icon on the left. The text reads: Replace *data-type(s)* on this computer with sync info from .Mac. So .Mac is the master for the next sync, and all the data of the selected type(s) on your computer will be overwritten by the data from .Mac.
 - If you click the *right* arrow, you'll see the animated arrow going *from* the computer icon on the left *to* the .Mac icon on the right. The text reads: Replace *data-type(s)* on .Mac with sync info from this computer. So your computer is the master for the next sync, and all the data of the selected type(s) on .Mac will be overwritten by the data from your computer.
5. Stop for a moment, reread the text, and be sure you have chosen the right direction for resetting your sync data.
6. Click Replace. An alert asks you if you're sure this is what you really want to do, reminding you that it is not undoable. Spend a moment pondering the sense of security you have from the backups you performed earlier. (You did back up your data, right? In both places?) Click OK.

A synchronization occurs immediately. When the sync is complete, your data will have been replaced as you specified.

If you are syncing multiple computers to .Mac and you've just reset your .Mac sync data with the information on one of the Macs, the next time you synchronize one of the other computers, it will display an alert such as the one in **Figure 24**. (The exact text will depend on which data type(s) you've reset; if you reset more than one type of data, you'll see multiple instances of this alert.)

FIGURE 24



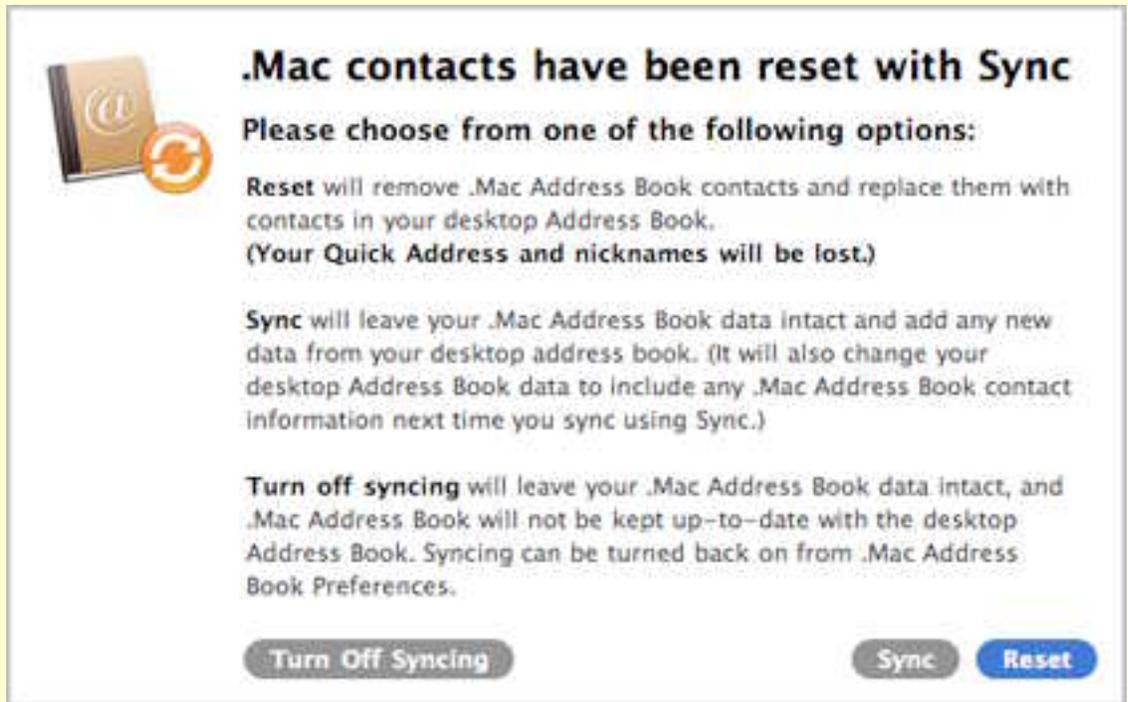
After resetting sync data on one computer (or on the .Mac Web site), this alert appears on other computers when they try to sync.

When this alert appears, click **Replace** to *completely erase* the data type specified on your Mac and replace it with the data from .Mac (which, in turn, should just recently have been replaced by data from your other Mac). Click **Merge** to combine the data on .Mac with the data on this computer—but be aware that doing so may pollute the data on .Mac with extra bits of stuff that had already been deleted on your other Mac. To stop the entire sync, click **Cancel Sync**.

In addition to warnings on other computers after you reset your sync data, you'll also see warnings on the .Mac Web site for each type of data you reset with your computer selected as the source (**Figure 25**). In other words, even though you've reset your sync data to reflect what's currently on your Mac (and even though you may have successfully synchronized that data with another computer), you don't necessarily see that information on the .Mac Web site—not until you've responded to these alerts.

For each such alert (which you'll see the first time you access a particular data type over the Web), click Reset to overwrite the online data with the information from your Mac (equivalent to "Replace"), Sync to merge the two sources (equivalent to "Merge"), or Turn Off Syncing to leave both copies of the data separate and intact.

FIGURE 25



When you reset your sync data, choosing your Mac as the authoritative source, you'll see alerts like this when you next try to access that data on the .Mac Web site.

WORK WITH CONTACTS, CALENDARS, AND BOOKMARKS

In addition to email, .Mac provides members with Web-based access to three other kinds of information: contacts from Address Book, bookmarks from Safari, and (to a more limited degree) calendar information from iCal. This means that by synchronizing your information to .Mac, you can access it not only from other Macs you own, but also from nearly any computer in the world with an Internet connection and a Web browser.

NOTE As much as I'd like to provide details about using Address Book, Safari, and iCal, that's way beyond the scope of this book. If you need help learning these applications, please use the Help menu or go to <http://www.apple.com/support/>. In this section I assume that you have a basic understanding of how to use these programs.

Address Book

Once you've followed the steps in [Set Up Syncing](#) to synchronize your Address Book contacts with .Mac, you can not only sync those contacts easily to another Mac, but also view (and edit) them from any computer on the Internet using the .Mac Web site. Naturally, these contacts are also available when using the site to send email.

Apple uses the term "Address Book" to refer to both a Mac OS X application *and* a part of the .Mac Web site, so I refer to the former as "the Address Book application" and the latter as "the .Mac Address Book" to keep them straight.

NOTE You can use the .Mac Address Book to keep track of your contacts even if you do not use the Address Book application.

To access your contacts online, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>.
2. Click the Address Book link on the navigation bar, and log in when prompted to do so.

You should see something resembling **Figure 26**.

FIGURE 26



Using the .Mac Address Book, you can view and edit your contacts on the Web.

On this page, the following options are available:

- **Display the complete record for a contact:** Double-click the contact's name.
- **Modify a contact's information:** Select the contact and click the Edit button in the toolbar. (You can also click this button when viewing a contact's address record.) After making changes, click Save. (Note that the Edit button is not available if multiple contacts are selected.)
- **Display the contacts in business card format:** Click the  icon by to the word View, just below the toolbar. To revert to list view, click the  icon.
- **Select all the contacts currently listed:** Click the All link. To deselect all contacts, click the None link.
- **Find contacts:** Enter the text you wish to search for in the Search field and then press Enter or Return.
- **Delete a contact:** Select the contact and click the Delete button in the toolbar; confirm deletion by clicking OK.
- **Add a new contact:** Click the New icon in the toolbar. After entering the information for the new contact, click Save.
- **Send an email message to one or more contacts:** Select the contact name(s) and then click the Email Contact button in the toolbar; or click any contact's email address. The page switches to

.Mac Mail, with the name(s) you selected pre-entered in the To field of a new email message.

- **Move to the previous or next page of contacts:** Click the  or  button, respectively.

TIP If you have a large number of contacts, you may want to adjust your preferences to display as many as possible (up to 50) per page—see the next item.

- **Set your .Mac Address Book preferences:** Click the Preferences link above the toolbar. (The few available preferences should be self-explanatory.)
- **Return to the main .Mac Address Book list after viewing a contact record:** Click the Back to Address Book link just beneath the toolbar.

Not all the info you can enter in the Address Book application appears in the .Mac Address Book. For example, the Notes field does not appear on the Web, nor do most of the optional fields you can enter by using the Card > Add Field submenu. (Nickname and Job Title are notable exceptions.) In addition, no matter how many addresses you've entered for a contact in Address Book, the .Mac Address Book shows only the first work and home addresses. Similarly, for other fields that can have many entries (such as Email, AIM, and Phone), the .Mac Address Book may not display all the entries that appear in the Address Book application.

SIDEBAR ADDRESS BOOK SHARING

In addition to syncing Address Book data with your other Macs via .Mac and editing that data on the .Mac Web site, you can share your Address Book with other .Mac members—as long as they’re using Address Book in Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger or higher. This method of sharing is relatively secure, in that only those people whose email addresses you explicitly add can view your data. (It doesn’t, however, stop someone else with physical access to the other person’s computer from seeing the contents of your Address Book.)

To share your Address Book with someone, follow these steps:

1. Make sure the person is in your Address Book, and that the person’s contact info includes his or her Mac.com address.
2. In the Address Book application, choose Address Book > Preferences and click the Sharing icon in the toolbar.
3. Check the Share Your Address Book checkbox.
4. Click the  button to show the contents of your Address Book.
5. Select a name. (Shift-click to select a range of names, or Command-click to select noncontiguous names.) Click OK.
6. If you want another person to be able to *edit* your contacts, too, check that person’s Allow Editing checkbox.

The selected contact(s) can now subscribe to your Address Book. To make this process easier for them, click Send Invite; the contacts can then subscribe to your Address Book by clicking a link in the message they receive. Alternatively, the other member can open Address Book, choose File > Subscribe to Address Book, and enter your .Mac member name to subscribe.

.Mac Bookmarks

Another type of information that you can sync from your Mac to .Mac and then access (and edit) online is Safari bookmarks. As with contacts in Address Book, syncing your bookmarks makes them available to your other computers (*and* to yourself) while browsing the Web—regardless of which browser you use, and even when you are not using a Mac. Assuming you’ve followed the steps in [Set Up Syncing](#) for syncing bookmarks, no additional configuration is required.

TIP Even if you use only a single Mac all the time, .Mac bookmarks can be very helpful if you use a variety of browsers. Instead of storing bookmarks separately in Firefox, OmniWeb, Opera, and iCab (or whatever browsers you use), you can simply open your .Mac bookmarks in each of those browsers. You'll get access to your Safari bookmarks, and any new bookmarks you add using the .Mac Bookmarks window will also appear in Safari (after they've been synchronized, of course).

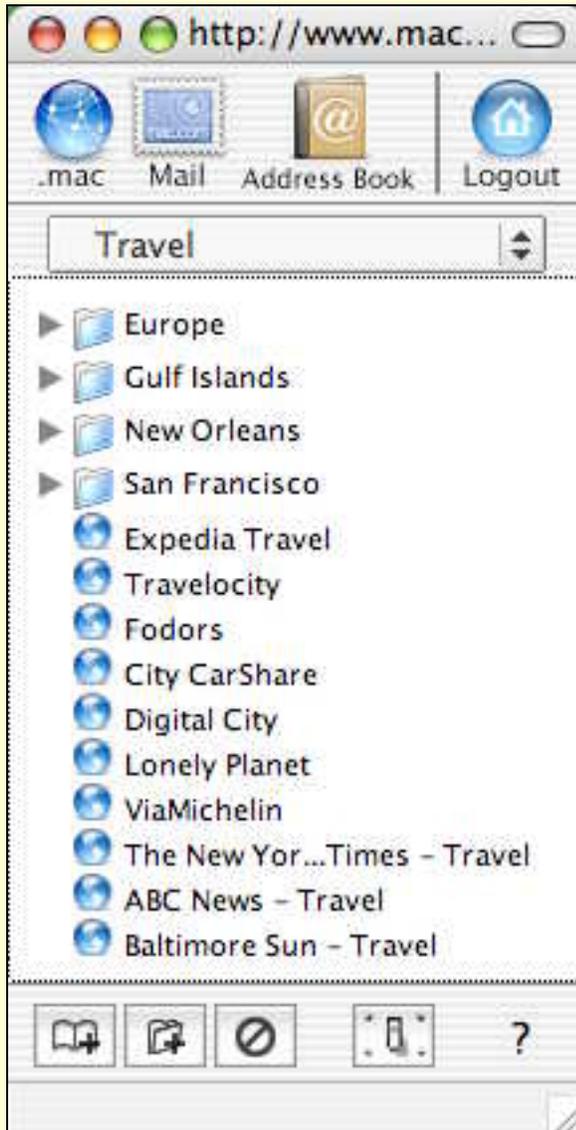
To access your bookmarks online, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>.
2. Click the Bookmarks link on the navigation bar, and log in if prompted to do so.
3. If this is your first sync of bookmarks, a message appears stating that your Safari bookmarks will be synchronized with your .Mac bookmarks. Click the Sync Now button.
4. A welcome page appears, giving you a quick overview of how .Mac bookmarks behave.
5. Click Open Bookmarks. A new window appears, similar to the one in **Figure 27**. Leave this window open while you browse the Web.

The bookmarks window provides the following options:

- **Visit an existing bookmark:** Click the bookmark (once). The linked page will open in a new window.
- **View the contents of a folder at the *top* level of your Bookmarks menu:** Click the folder name or choose the folder name from the pop-up menu (officially called the Collections menu) at the top of the window. (Choose the All Collections item from this menu at any time to return to the top level.)
- **View the contents of a folder *within another folder* in your Bookmarks menu:** Click the triangle (▶) by its name.
- **Add a new bookmark:** Click the  button at the bottom of the window. Enter the name and URL for the bookmark in the fields that appear, choose a folder (if you wish) from the Add Bookmark To pop-up menu, and click Add.

FIGURE 27



Use the .Mac Bookmarks window in any browser, on any platform, to keep your .Mac bookmarks in sync with Safari—regardless of which browser you’re using. This view shows a particular folder (or “Collection”) as viewed in Firefox.

TIP When adding a bookmark, you can use copy-and-paste to avoid typing long URLs.

- **Delete one of the currently visible bookmarks:** Click the  button. Then click the  icon next to the bookmark or folder you want to remove, and confirm by clicking Delete.
- **Add a new bookmark folder:** Click the  button. Type in a name for the new folder, choose a location from the Add Folder To pop-up menu, and click Add.
- **Set your .Mac bookmark preferences:** Click the  button. (The few available preferences should be self-explanatory.)

- **Jump to other .Mac areas (Home, Mail, Address Book) or to log out of .Mac:** Click the appropriate icon in the toolbar at the top of the window.

TIP **BOOKMARK YOUR BOOKMARKS**

You can also jump to your .Mac bookmarks directly by going to <http://bookmarks.mac.com/> (and logging in, if necessary). If you plan to use .Mac Bookmarks regularly in another browser, bookmark this URL in the other browser for one-click access.

iCal Calendars

On the left-hand side of the .Mac home page you see if you have already logged in to .Mac is a small calendar with a tiny calendar icon in the upper right (**Figure 28**). This might lead you to suspect that a .Mac subscription includes online access to your iCal calendars. Your suspicion might be reinforced when you notice that iCal offers the option of publishing your calendars to .Mac, and that the .Mac pane of System Preferences lists Calendars, along with Contacts, as items you can sync to .Mac. Since you can view and modify your address book and bookmarks online, no one would fault you for supposing that you could do the same with your calendars.

FIGURE 28



Think this will give you online access to your iCal calendars, which you've dutifully synced to .Mac? Think again! Clicking this icon takes you to a Web page that describes sharing iCal calendars using .Mac—but doesn't actually show you any calendars.

Curiously, though, you can't. If you look at the features Apple lists as being part of .Mac, you will not find online calendar access anywhere. You *can* synchronize your iCal calendars to your iDisk, and you *can* publish individual calendars to .Mac. But in neither case do you get

what Address Book gives you: a private, editable view of your data via the Web. For reasons only Apple knows, the interactions between your calendar and the .Mac Web site are oddly limited.

I confess that I find this both puzzling and annoying. That's not to say the available capabilities aren't useful, but they're much different from what you get with Address Book contacts and Safari bookmarks. You can do basically these two things:

- Publish any individual calendar to .Mac, so that anyone who knows (or can guess) the calendar's URL can view—but not modify—its contents on the Web.
- Synchronize the contents of all your calendars with .Mac, for the sole purpose of keeping calendar information on multiple Macs in sync (covered previously in [Keep Your Information in Sync](#)).

Publish and view calendars

By default, any meetings, tasks, or other schedule items you enter in an iCal calendar are for your eyes only. However, if you have a particular calendar you want to share with others, you can publish that calendar to .Mac—or to another Web server of your choice. After you've done this, you (or anyone who knows the calendar's address) can view the calendar on the Web, download it as a static .ics file (for import into iCal or another calendar application), or *subscribe* to it with a calendar program so that any changes you make to the calendar appear in the subscribing program automatically.

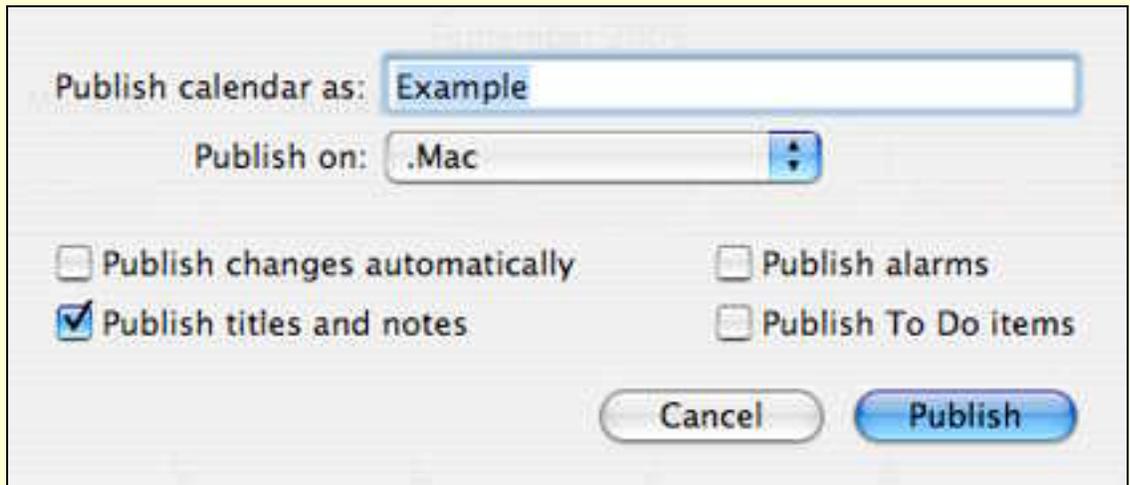
Publish iCal calendars on .Mac

When you publish a calendar, iCal stores your calendar data in an industry-standard iCalendar file (with the extension .ics) and copies that file to Apple's iCal servers. Other users can then use iCal to read the contents of that file.

To publish an iCal calendar on .Mac, follow these steps:

1. In iCal, select a calendar or calendar group in the Calendars list.
2. Choose Calendar > Publish. A dialog appears (**Figure 29**).
3. Type in a new name for the published calendar if you wish.

FIGURE 29



Enter a name for your calendar and choose other options in this dialog. Click Publish to make it available to other users.

4. Select any, all, or none of the following options:

- **Publish Changes Automatically:** If selected, iCal immediately updates the published .ics file whenever you make changes to the calendar on your Mac. This makes the calendar dynamic, and is usually desirable.
- **Publish Titles and Notes:** When this box is checked (it is by default), each event's title appears in the published calendar; any notes you've added appear in the window that pops up when you click the event title on the Web page. When unchecked, the calendar shows only that the time is blocked off. You cannot show titles but hide notes, or vice-versa.
- **Publish Alarms:** To include your alarm settings for events in the calendar, check this box. This means that if someone else subscribes to this calendar in iCal, the alarms you set will appear on her computer too. (Usually this is *not* what you want, so the option is unchecked by default.)
- **Publish To Do Items:** If selected, your published file will contain any To-Do items in this calendar. However, to-do items never appear when viewing your calendar on the Web, regardless of this setting; they are only visible if someone subscribes to your calendar using a calendar application on their computer.

5. Click Publish.

A dialog appears displaying the URLs for the calendar—one for subscribing to the calendar from an application such as iCal, one for viewing the calendar using a Web browser—and offering you the option of viewing the page immediately or sending an email announcement containing the URLs. In addition, an icon () appears next to the name of published calendars in your Calendars list.

NOTE When you publish a calendar directly from iCal to .Mac, that calendar is *not* (as far as I can tell) stored on your personal iDisk. It is apparently stored in a public portion of Apple's .Mac server.

View .Mac-published iCal calendars on the Web

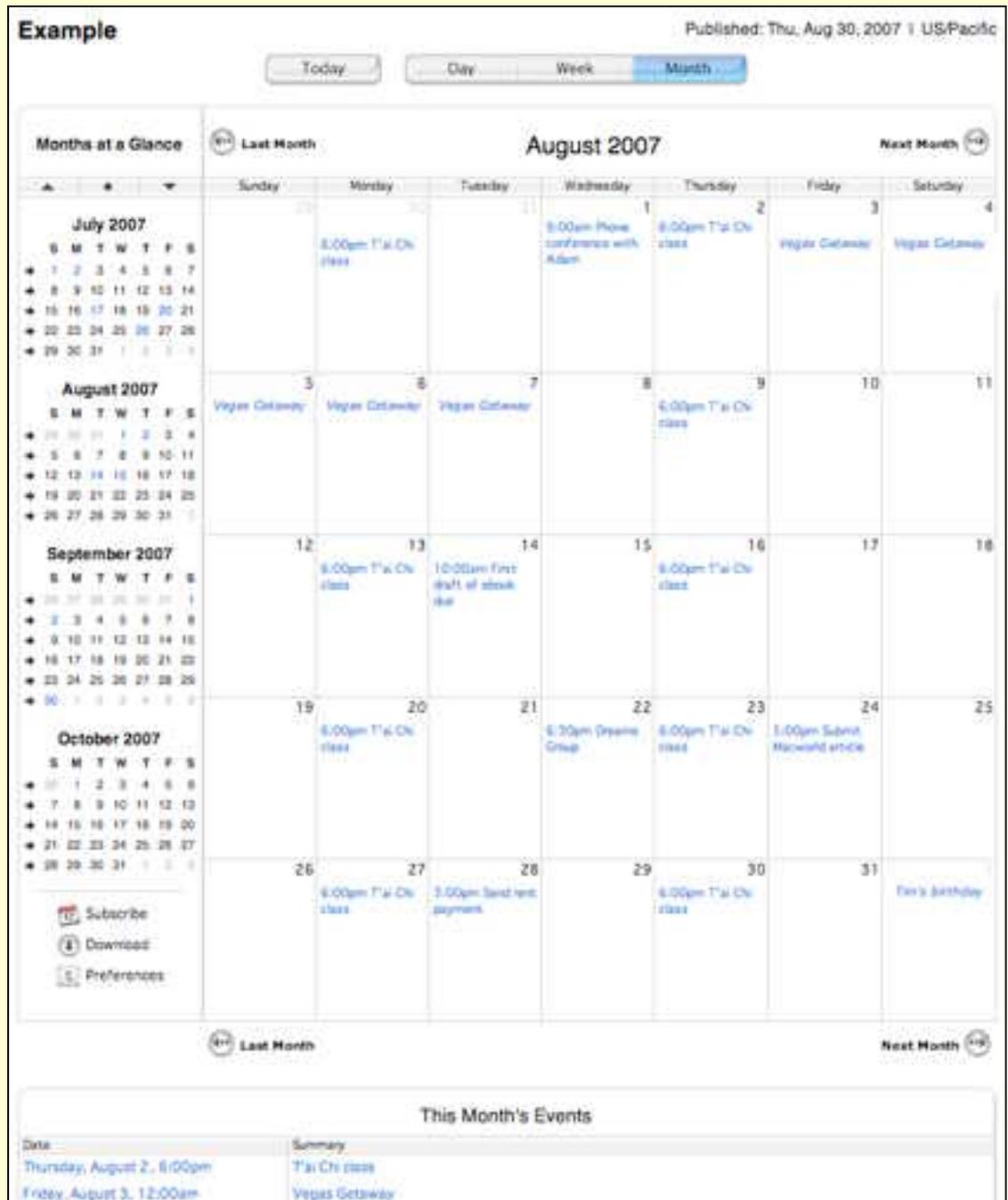
Your published calendar's address will be `http://ical.mac.com/member-name/calendar-name.ics`; any spaces in the calendar name are replaced with "%20". To view your calendar on the Web, enter that URL (the same one shown in the confirmation dialog) in any Web browser. Your calendar will look like the one in **Figure 30**.

The following options are available:

- Click the Day, Week, or Month button (at the top of the page) to change the overall calendar view to that time range.
- Click Previous () or Next () to move backward or forward by one day, week, or month (depending on the current view).
- Click the Today button to jump to the time period (as appropriate for the current view) that includes today.
- Click an event's title in the calendar to display its details (including any notes, if published) in a pop-up window.
- Click a date on one of the mini-month calendars on the left to display that date's events in Day view; click the arrow () next to a week to display that week in Week view; click a month name to display that month in Month view.
- Click the up () or down () arrows above the mini-months to move the mini-month display forward or backward one month; click the diamond () to return to the default view (the previous month, the current month, and the next two months).
- To subscribe to this calendar in iCal (or another application you've configured to open webcal URLs—Now Up-to-Date, for example), click Subscribe.

- To download a static .ics file of the calendar, click Download.
- To configure default calendar options for the Web interface, click Preferences. (The options here are self-explanatory.)

FIGURE 30



When you view your published iCal calendar on the Web, it looks something like this. (Month view shown here.)

NOTE Not to beat a dead horse, but remember: you can only view, not modify, your iCal calendars on the Web.

WARNING! Unlike email, address book, backups, and other files, calendar files published on .Mac aren't protected with a password. Anyone who knows, or can guess, the name of a calendar file can see its contents. The info is protected only by obscurity. Obviously, if you're publishing a calendar that you *want* the public to see, this is no problem, but if you have confidential items in a personal calendar, you might want to think twice before publishing it on .Mac.

You can publish iCal calendars securely to a password-protected folder on your iDisk (your Documents folder or your Public folder, for instance) by using the Private Server option (described below in "Publish iCal calendars using WebDAV") and entering `http://idisk.mac.com/member-name/some-folder-name` as the Base URL. A problem with this approach is that although you can download or subscribe to such calendars in iCal or other calendar software, you *can't* view their contents on the Web.

Unfortunately, I know of no way around this; Apple provides no secure means of viewing calendar contents via the Web.

Publish iCal calendars using WebDAV

You can also publish an iCal calendar to a Web server other than .Mac—if, and only if:

- The server supports WebDAV.
- You have a valid user name and password for the server.
- You have write access to the WebDAV directory in which you want to place the file.

If this is the case, follow Steps 1–4 previously under [Publish iCal calendars on .Mac](#), but from the Publish On pop-up menu, choose A Private Server. Three new fields appear, which you must now fill in:

- **Base URL:** The URL for the folder on the WebDAV server you want to use. It must begin with either "http:" or "https:".
- **Login:** Your user name for the WebDAV server.
- **Password:** Your password for the WebDAV server.

After filling in this info, click Publish. iCal uploads the .ics file representing your calendar information to your selected location, from which it can then be downloaded.

Subscribe to a published calendar using iCal

To subscribe to a published calendar (someone else's, or your own published from another computer) using iCal, follow these steps:

1. Choose Calendar > Subscribe.
2. Enter the calendar's URL (it normally begins with "webcal://").
3. Click Subscribe. If the calendar is located in a password-protected folder, another dialog appears, prompting you to enter a user name and password. Enter this information and click OK.

After the calendar has been added to iCal, its name appears in your Calendars list. If you wish to change the color used for the calendar's events, select the calendar and choose a new color from the pop-up menu by its name in iCal's Info drawer. To update a calendar to which you've subscribed so that it displays the latest information, select it and choose Calendar > Refresh (Command-R).

Update a published calendar

When you change your local copy of an iCal calendar, you may want to update the published copies of the calendar as well. If you enabled the Publish Changes Automatically option when you published the calendar, iCal uploads the changes soon after they're made—but not necessarily *immediately* thereafter. And if you did not select that option, you must update the online copy manually. Either way, to update the published copy immediately, select the calendar name in the Calendars list and choose Calendar > Refresh (Command-R). To update all your published calendars—as well as those to which you've subscribed—choose Calendar > Refresh All (Command-Shift-R).

Unpublish a calendar

To unpublish a published calendar file (regardless of whether you published it to .Mac or to another server), select the calendar in the Calendars list and choose Calendar > Unpublish. This will make the calendar data unavailable to new subscribers and prevent existing subscribers from updating their copies—but it does not automatically remove subscribers' existing local copies of the calendar.

STORE AND SHARE FILES WITH iDISK

iDisk is without a doubt one of the most useful—and most visible—features of .Mac. An iDisk is like an extra hard drive that provides 10 GB¹ of storage for your files (2.5 GB for Family Pack sub-account holders), but this virtual drive is actually located on Apple's servers. You can use it to store anything you want, and you can access it from nearly any computer on the Internet. By putting items in your iDisk's Public folder, you can also make those items available to others (with optional password protection).

That said, depending on how you look at it, you have much more or much less than 10 GB of space on your iDisk. Apple makes numerous software updates and third-party downloads available via iDisk, and these packages do *not* count toward your 10 GB limit. On the other hand, all of the following things, if you use them, *do* count toward that limit:

- Files you store using Apple's Backup utility
- Data you sync using .Mac Sync, such as contacts, bookmarks, your keychain, and data from third-party applications
- Mail rules, signatures, smart mailboxes, and accounts you synchronize using .Mac Sync
- Web sites, photos, movies, podcasts, and other media you publish using iWeb or HomePage
- Space allocated to .Mac Groups (at least 30 MB per group you own)
- Manually uploaded files

In addition, because you share that 10 GB between your .Mac email account and your iDisk, whatever amount of space you've designated for email storage (see [Divide space between files and email](#)) is subtracted from the total available for other files. (You cannot allocate less than 30 MB to email or less than 10 MB to iDisk.)

¹ Actually, you get 10,240 MB, which is technically 10 *gibibytes*. A gigabyte is a billion bytes; a gibibyte is approximately 1.07 billion bytes.

All this means you can quickly fill up your iDisk. Even if you purchase extra space (see [Buy more space](#)), you may find that it's too little; all those files—especially digital media—can take up a huge amount of space. In addition, iDisk access is often slow (even as network servers go), making it less than ideal for transferring large amounts of data.

These can be serious limitations, but if you understand iDisk's capabilities and quirks, you'll be able to make the most of this valuable feature.

The key to effective iDisk use is to concentrate on its strengths. In a nutshell, its optimal uses are:

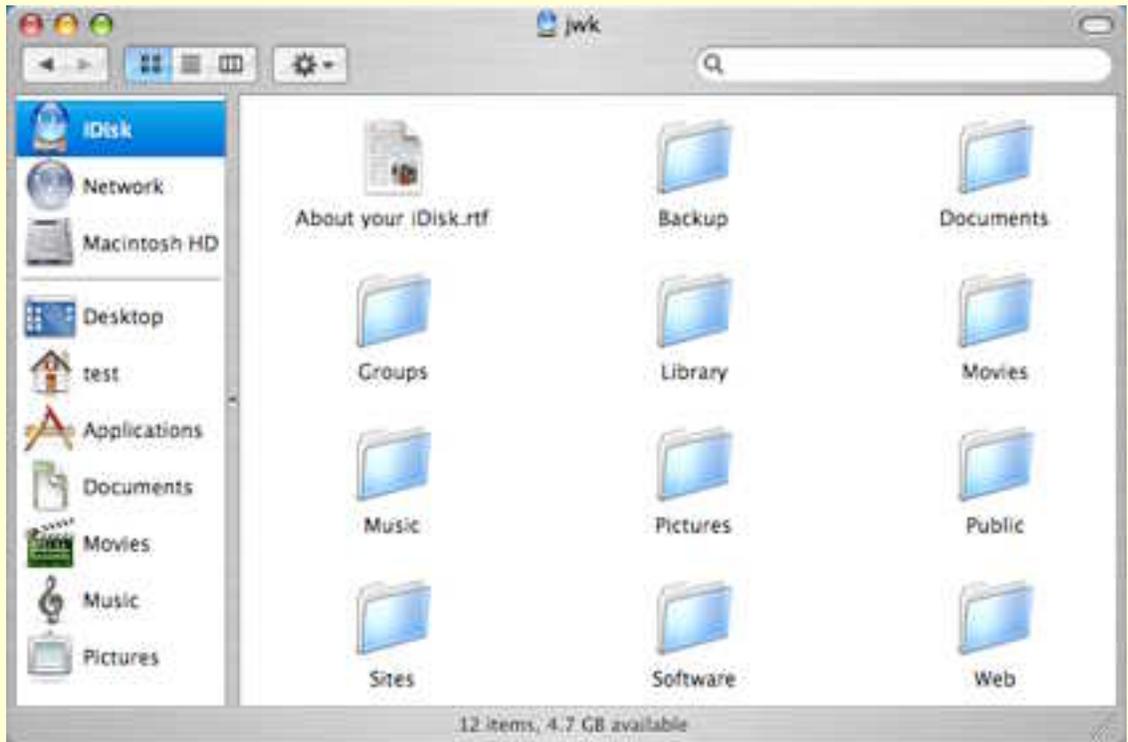
- Providing remote access to important files; use your iDisk instead of a USB flash drive or burning a CD to make files available to yourself when you move from one location to another.
- Synchronizing information between two or more Macs (or making that information available via the Web).
- Publishing simple Web sites, such as photo albums for family members.
- Transferring large files (larger than what .Mac's mail servers, or your recipient's email servers, support but less than your iDisk's space limit) to other people.
- Providing a *secondary* offsite backup for key files.

These are my opinions, of course; your mileage may vary. But keep these ideas in mind as you read more about iDisk's features.

Explore Your iDisk

In Mac OS X, your iDisk appears by default in the sidebar of any Finder window (**Figure 31**) and, optionally, on your Desktop as well; you can see its contents simply by clicking (in the sidebar) or double-clicking (in the Finder) the iDisk icon. (For other ways to access your iDisk, read [Access an iDisk](#), ahead.)

FIGURE 31



Click the iDisk icon in a Finder window sidebar to see its contents.

Your iDisk looks like any other volume, but its contents act a bit differently. Inside your iDisk, you'll find Read-only folders (which I describe next, along with their contents) and a few special [Read-write folders](#).

NOTE When an iDisk icon appears in the sidebar, it has the label “iDisk” (unless it’s another user’s iDisk or Public folder). When an iDisk icon appears on the Desktop, its label is the .Mac member name of the iDisk’s owner.

Read-only folders

Two of the folders are read-only; you can see, open, and copy items from them, but cannot change the folders or their contents manually:

- **Library:** Files used when synchronizing data from applications such as Address Book, Safari, and Mail.
- **Software:** Apple and third-party software that you can download to your hard disk simply by dragging and dropping. Software in this folder does not count toward your iDisk quota. (For more details, read the sidebar, “The Software Folder,” just ahead.)

SIDEBAR THE SOFTWARE FOLDER

A few years ago, the iDisk Software folder was chock full of free software, including games, utilities, Apple updaters, media files, and much more. These days, since most people get their software over the Web (and their Apple software updates via Software Update), this distribution method has become much less popular, and the selection of software available has decreased accordingly. All these items are also, I should mention, available on Apple's Web site. However, although you need not ever look inside this folder, you might find it interesting to check every so often to see if anything new and useful has appeared.

The following list represents the software available in the Software folder at the time this was written:

- Backup
- GarageBand JamPacks (free samples taken from the full commercial versions)
- iDisk Utility for both Mac OS X and Windows (not applicable to Tiger, which includes this function)
- Mac Slides Publisher

At one time, Apple provided many third-party software updates via the iDisk's Software folder, but getting updates on iDisk was a bit of a hassle for developers, and users overwhelmingly preferred to get updates via the Web or applications' built-in software update features. So third-party updates no longer appear on iDisk.

Read-write folders

You can write to, read from, or delete items from the other folders (though, in general, you shouldn't delete items you didn't place there yourself):

- **Backup:** Files copied to your iDisk by Apple's Backup utility. (If you haven't used Backup, this folder may be empty.) Prior to the release of Backup 3, this folder could only be modified only by Backup.

WARNING! Even though you *can* delete your Backup folder or its contents, don't. If you need to free up space in this folder, open Backup and choose Backup > Remove iDisk Backups. Then, for safety, immediately run a new backup.

- **Documents:** Any files you copy manually to this folder. No other user can read these files (without your password, that is).
- **Groups:** This folder contains a subfolder for each group of which you are a member or owner. Within each group folder is another set of folders (Documents, Library, Movies, Pictures, Public, Sites), each of which mirrors the function of the folders at the top level of your iDisk. The Public folder in each group folder contains files accessible by any group member.
- **Movies:** Can contain any file type, but intended mainly for QuickTime movies, which can then be published on your Web site using HomePage.
- **Music:** Like the Movies folder, this folder can contain any file, but is (apparently) designed mainly to hold music and playlist files. However, its specific purpose is a bit of a mystery, since iTunes does not use it—and since music files can just as easily be copied to other folders (including Documents and Sites).
- **Pictures:** Once again, this folder can contain anything, but it is intended to hold graphics (in JPEG or GIF format), which then become available to both HomePage and iCard. When you publish photos from iPhoto, the images go here.

WARNING! Apple's tools (including HomePage and iPhoto) sometimes create subfolders within these folders to help organize your content. If you rename, move, or delete these subfolders (or the files within them), your Web site could break.

- **Public:** Files and folders you want to share with other people. Others can access these files using the Mac OS X Finder, Windows, or a WebDAV client; you can also make these files available via the Web using HomePage. In addition, you can protect this folder with a password; see [Protect your Public folder with a password](#).

- **Sites:** Web pages created with HomePage and related files, or Web pages you've created in another application and copied here in order to publish them on the Web. By default, items you put in this folder become available at *http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/*, but you can protect individual folders with a password; you can find out how in [Protect a site with a password](#).
- **Shared:** This folder appears only if you have a Family Pack account. Files in this folder can be shared among all the accounts within the Family Pack—it's basically a Public folder with access limited to Family Pack members. Files in this folder count only toward the storage quota of the master account.
- **Web:** Web pages created with iWeb (including pages with photo or movie content from iPhoto or iMovie) and related files. Sites you create with iWeb are available by default at *http://web.mac.com/member-name/*, but you can protect the site with a password; see [Protect an iWeb site with a password](#).

NOTE You cannot delete or rename any of the standard folders at the top level of your iDisk, even though you may be able to modify the files within them.

Share Files

Although many people use their iDisk for backups or for remote access to their own files, you can also use your iDisk to share files with friends, family, or the general public. Apart from files shown on Web pages (including pictures and movies), the ideal way to accomplish this is to use your iDisk's Public folder. Simply copy a file to this folder to share it with others. Once you've done so, you have a number of options for how people access those files.

NOTE If you keep a local copy of your iDisk (refer to the sidebar [To Sync or Not to Sync](#)), files you copy to your iDisk may not be available to other users immediately; they'll be uploaded during the next scheduled sync. To force your iDisk to sync immediately, select the iDisk icon in the sidebar and either click the Sync icon () next to it or choose Sync Now from the Action menu () in the toolbar.

Protect your Public folder with a password

By default, any file you place in your Public folder is freely available to anyone who knows your .Mac member name (see [Access an iDisk](#), ahead). However, you can restrict access to this folder to people who know a password (separate from your own .Mac password) you specify. To protect your Public folder with a password:

1. Go to the iDisk tab of .Mac System Preferences, and check the Password Protect Your Public Folder box (**Figure 32**).

FIGURE 32



Check the box at the bottom of this pane to protect your Public folder with a password.

A dialog appears where you can enter (and confirm) a password.

2. In Tiger, you can click the key-shaped icon to open the Password Assistant, which helps you to select a secure yet memorable password.

3. To change the password, click the Set Password button, and enter the new password. (Disabling and then re-enabling the password protection option will also prompt you for a new password.)

You can remove password protection from your Public folder at any time by returning here and unchecking the Password Protect Your Public Folder checkbox.

Enable or disable write access

Although other users can see and download files in your Public folder, by default, they cannot add or remove files. In other words, your Public folder is normally read-only. You can optionally change it to have read-write access, meaning that someone else can give you a file by putting it in your Public folder (and can delete files already there).

To toggle between read-only and read-write access, select the Read Only or Read & Write radio button, respectively, on the iDisk tab of .Mac System Preferences. This change takes place immediately.

If you do enable write access, remember that files other people copy to your iDisk count against your quota. I therefore suggest checking your Public folder periodically and removing files you no longer need.

Make public files available on the Web

To make it even easier for others to access files in your Public folder, tell them to visit <http://idisk.mac.com/membersname-Public>. That URL displays a Web page that provides download links for each item in your Public folder.

SIDEBAR STORING IMAGES FOR EBAY

People who frequently sell merchandise on eBay need a convenient online location for storing product images that can be displayed in eBay listings. (eBay will host images, but places limits on the number and size of photos and charges additional fees for more than one photo. These limits and charges do not apply when the photos are hosted on another site and you supply HTML-formatted image tags.) This is a perfect job for your iDisk. Just place the images you want to use in your iDisk's Sites folder (or in a subfolder stored there); the URL for an image then becomes:

<http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/image-name>

or

<http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/folder/image-name>

To make the process easier—and automate much more of the eBay listing procedure—try iSale (\$40) or GarageSale (\$25), two Desktop programs that integrate seamlessly with both iPhoto and your iDisk. With these programs, you can take product photos using your iSight camera and include Tiger-specific enhancements such as Spotlight searches, Dashboard widgets, and Automator actions.

<http://www.equinux.com/us/products/isale/>

<http://www.iwascoding.com/GarageSale/>

SIDEBAR TO SYNC OR NOT TO SYNC?

You configure iDisk syncing in .Mac System Preferences, on the iDisk tab. It's off by default; to turn it on, click the Start button.

If iDisk syncing is *off*, then your iDisk is always live; when you view its contents, you see exactly what's on Apple's servers. This means that if you edit a file from your iDisk, changes are saved to the server immediately. But it also means you may have to wait longer than usual for the file to open or save—and if you aren't connected to the Internet, that file will be unavailable (unless you have a local copy).

If iDisk syncing is *on*, Mac OS X creates a hidden disk image on your Mac that's the same size as your iDisk and fills it with whatever files are currently on your iDisk. So what you see when you look in your iDisk is the contents of this disk image—*not* necessarily what's on the server. (This applies only to your personal files; Apple and third-party software is never copied to the local disk, and is available only if you're connected to the Internet.) Mac OS X then syncs the contents of this local iDisk image with the contents of the actual iDisk on the .Mac servers. Syncing is useful for accessing files on your iDisk if your Mac is often without Internet access. You can decide if this syncing occurs automatically (the default) or manually.

If you select *Automatically* (Apple's suggestion), Mac OS X copies new or changed files to (or from) the server whenever the system deems it necessary, assuming your Internet connection is active and your Mac isn't busy doing other things. But how often, or under what circumstances, syncing occurs is a mystery—Apple doesn't say, and significant time may pass without an update. (When you select the iDisk icon in the sidebar, the time of the last sync appears at the bottom of the window.) However, you can sync the files manually at any time using the procedure described in the next paragraph.

If you select *Manually*, iDisk files sync only when you explicitly initiate the process. To sync manually, either click the Sync button () by the iDisk icon in the sidebar or select the iDisk icon and choose Sync Now from the Action menu () in the toolbar.

Finally, if you use iDisk syncing and connect to the Internet with an AirPort base station, you may be able to increase syncing speeds; <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=302510> has details.

Access an iDisk

You can connect to your iDisk—or someone else’s—in any of several ways. Which you choose depends on your needs, preferences, and the type of computer you’re using. Here’s where to find the right info for your computer:

- **Via the Web and a Mac** (with Safari 2.0.2 or newer, or Firefox 1.0.4 or newer): Later on this page.
- **Via the Web and Windows** (with Firefox 1.0.4 or newer, or Internet Explorer 6 or newer): Later on this page.
- **Mac OS X:** Read [Connect using Mac OS X](#).
- **Mac OS 9:** Read [Connect using a WebDAV client](#).
- **Windows:** Find directions for several Windows versions in [Connect using Windows](#).

Connect using a Web browser

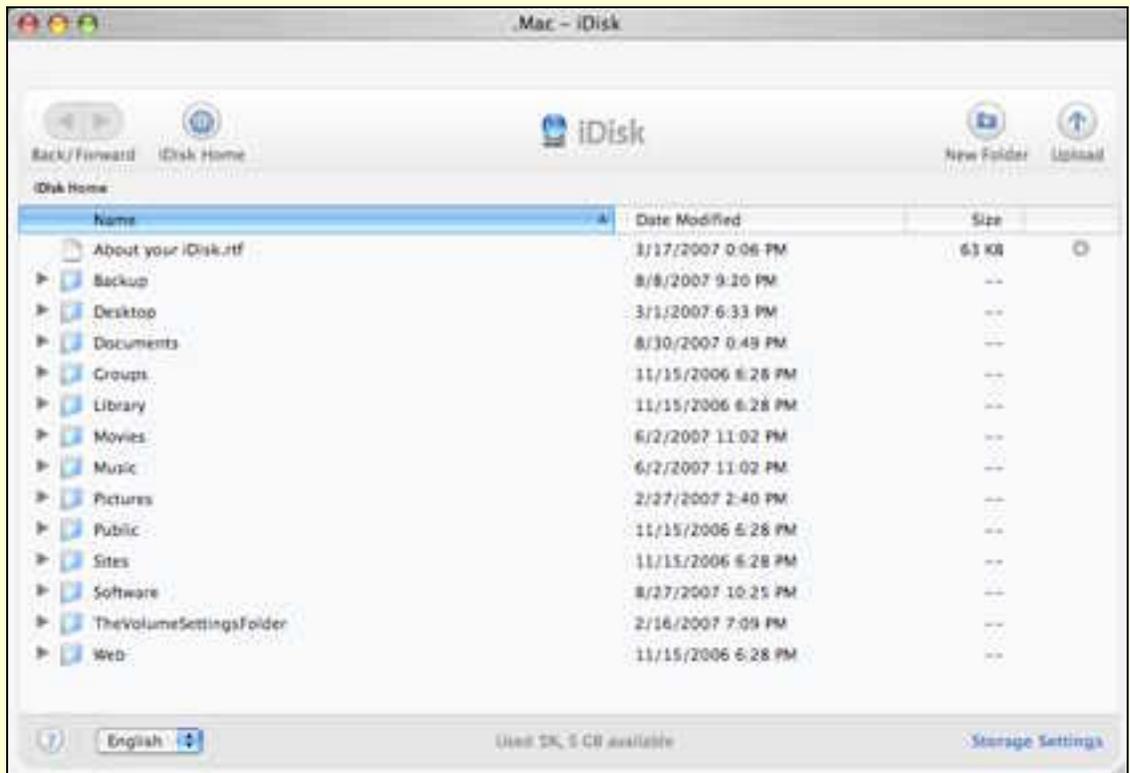
To access an iDisk using a Web browser, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/> and log in.
2. Click the  icon next to the iDisk heading on the sidebar of the .Mac home page. A new browser window opens.
3. If a dialog appears, prompting you for a user name and password, enter your .Mac ID (the part before “@mac.com”) in the Username field and your password in the Password field. Then click OK.

Your browser window should now look like **Figure 33**. You can navigate this window just like a Finder window in List view: click the triangle by a folder name to reveal its contents, or double-click it to show only that folder’s contents in the window.

4. To upload a file to the current folder, click the Upload button, select a file, and click Choose. To download a file, click the  icon in the rightmost column for that file; to delete a file, select it and click the  icon.

FIGURE 33



As long as you're using a compatible browser, you can access your iDisk from nearly any computer.

NOTE You can use browser-based access to connect to any iDisk for which you know the user name and password, but you can't access another user's Public folder from a browser. To access a Public folder, follow the steps ahead for the operating system you're using.

Connect using Mac OS X

Ordinarily, if you're using Mac OS X you don't have to do anything at all to connect to your own iDisk—as long as you have an Internet connection, Mac OS X automatically connects to your iDisk when you access it. You can display the contents of your iDisk by clicking the iDisk icon in Finder window sidebars, by choosing **Go > iDisk > My iDisk**, or by pressing **Command-Shift-I** in the Finder.

Connect to another user's iDisk

At times, you may wish to retrieve personal files from your iDisk while using someone else's computer, or someone using your computer may wish to connect to their own iDisk. To access an iDisk other than the one specified in .Mac System Preferences:

1. Choose Go > iDisk > Other User's iDisk.
2. Enter the user's member name and password and click Connect.

The other user's iDisk appears in the sidebar of Finder windows, and a window displays its contents.

Connect to another user's Public folder

To access only the Public folder of another user's iDisk:

1. Choose Go > iDisk > Other User's Public Folder.
2. Enter the member name for the other user and click Connect. If the user's Public folder is password-protected, you'll be asked to provide that password.

The other user's iDisk appears in the sidebar, and a window displays the contents of its Public folder.

Once an iDisk is visible in the Finder, you can copy, add, or remove files (subject to the limitations of individual folders) using drag-and-drop or copy-and-paste, just as you would for any other volume.

Troubleshoot connection problems

If you cannot connect to your iDisk:

- Check to see that your Internet connection is active (by viewing a Web page in your browser, for example).
- Make sure you have correctly entered your member name and password in the Account tab of .Mac System Preferences.
- Verify that your .Mac subscription has not expired.

If you can connect to your iDisk but do not see the iDisk icon in the sidebar of Finder windows:

- Be sure your sidebar is visible. If it isn't, move your pointer to the left edge of a Finder window; the pointer will change to a  shape. Then double-click to display the sidebar.

- If the sidebar is visible, you're connected to the Internet, and your .Mac preferences are specified correctly, you may have inadvertently removed the iDisk icon from your sidebar. To restore it, follow these steps:
 1. Choose Finder > Preferences.
 2. Click the Sidebar icon at the top of the window.
 3. Check the iDisk checkbox (**Figure 34**).

FIGURE 34



Check the iDisk checkbox in this window to ensure that your iDisk appears in the sidebar of Finder windows.

If your iDisk icon does not appear on the Desktop, and you want it to, follow these steps:

1. In the Finder, choose Finder > Preferences.
2. Click the General icon at the top of the window.
3. Check the Connected Servers checkbox.

Note that this will cause icons for *all* connected servers to appear on the Desktop.

NOTE iDISK UTILITY ON MAC OS X

Apple still distributes a Mac OS X version of the iDisk Utility, but they don't specify who needs it or why. Let me clear that up. The iDisk Utility provides the following capabilities:

- Connect to any iDisk with a member name and password.
- Connect to any member's Public folder.
- Set, change, or remove a password for accessing your Public folder.
- Toggle your Public folder between read-only and read-write access.
- Check the available storage space on your iDisk.

You can do these things in the .Mac pane of System Preferences in Tiger (Mac OS X 10.4) or Panther (10.3) or in the Internet pane of System Preferences in Jaguar (10.2). So the iDisk utility is necessary only for people using Mac OS X 10.0.x or 10.1.x. If you're one of those (very few) people, it's time to upgrade!

Connect using Windows

Using a computer running Windows 98 or higher, you can access an iDisk in any of several ways. For users of Windows XP or higher, the easiest solution is to download and use iDisk Utility for Windows. On older versions of Windows (or if the iDisk Utility does not work for any reason), you can manually add an iDisk to your list of available network places or use a WebDAV client (see [Connect using a WebDAV client](#), a few pages ahead.)

Use iDisk Utility to access an iDisk (your own or someone else's):

1. Go to http://www.mac.com/1/idiskutility_download.html. Follow the instructions on that page to download and install iDisk Utility for Windows XP.
2. To access an iDisk for which you know the password, run iDisk Utility, click the Open iDisk icon, enter the member name and password, and click Open. To open a user's Public folder, click Open Public Folder icon, enter the user's member name, and click Open.

A window appears, showing the contents of the selected iDisk.

Use Windows XP or higher (without iDisk Utility) to access an iDisk:

1. Choose Start > My Network Places.
2. On the left side of the window, in the Network Tasks list, click the Add a Network Place link to run the Add Network Place wizard.
3. Advance through the wizard until you reach a screen asking you to type the location of the network place. You may need to move through a welcome screen, and you may need to indicate that you want to choose another network location.
4. In the field labeled “Type the location of the Network Place,” enter **http://idisk.mac.com/member-name** (replace *member-name* with the .Mac member name of the person whose iDisk you’re trying to use). Click Next.

NOTE These instructions assume you’re accessing your own iDisk, or someone else’s whose password you know. To access a user’s Public folder, add **/Public** to the end of the URL in Step 4. If the folder is not password-protected, skip Step 5.

5. When prompted, enter the appropriate .Mac member name and password. Click OK.
6. Enter a name for the network place, such as **My iDisk**. Click Next.
7. In the final screen of the wizard, you should see confirmation that you’ve successfully set up a new network place. Click Finish.

A window appears, showing the contents of the selected iDisk. In addition, the iDisk icon is added to your list of network places, so you can reconnect at any time by double-clicking that icon.

Use Windows 2000 to access an iDisk:

1. Choose Start > My Computer.
2. Choose Tools > Map Network Drive.
3. Click the link labeled “Web folder or FTP site.” The Add Network Place Wizard runs.

4. In the field labeled “Type the location of the Network Place,” enter: **http://idisk.mac.com/member-name** (replace *member-name* with the .Mac member name of the person whose iDisk you’re trying to use). Click Next.

NOTE These instructions assume you’re accessing your own iDisk, or someone else’s whose password you know. To access to a user’s Public folder, add **/Public** to the end of the URL in Step 4. If the folder is not password-protected, skip Step 5.

5. When prompted, enter the appropriate .Mac member name and password. Click OK.
6. Enter a name for the network place, such as “My iDisk.” Click Finish.

A window appears, showing the contents of the selected iDisk. In addition, the iDisk icon is added to your list of network places, so you can reconnect at any time by double-clicking that icon.

Use Windows 98, without iDisk Utility, to access an iDisk:

1. Choose Start > My Computer.
2. Double-click the Web Folders icon.
3. Double-click Add Web Folder.
4. In the field labeled “Type the location to add,” enter: **http://idisk.mac.com/member-name** (replace *member-name* with the .Mac member name of the person whose iDisk you’re trying to use). Click Next.

NOTE These instructions assume you’re accessing your own iDisk, or someone else’s whose password you know. To access to a user’s Public folder, add **/Public** to the URL in Step 4, and skip Step 5.

5. When prompted, enter the appropriate .Mac member name and password. Click OK.
6. Enter a name for the network place, such as “My iDisk.” Click Finish.

A window appears, showing the contents of the selected iDisk. In addition, the iDisk icon is added to your list of network places, so you can reconnect at any time by double-clicking that icon.

Connect using a WebDAV client

Unbeknownst to most .Mac members, iDisk uses a method of file transfer called *WebDAV*, which stands for Web-based Distributed Authoring and Versioning. To oversimplify somewhat, think of WebDAV as a two-way version of *HTTP*, the protocol for communication between Web servers and Web browsers. Why should you care? Well, one implication of this is that you can use other programs, besides the Finder, iDisk Utility, or Windows, to access files on your iDisk. Some of these programs provide faster access, some provide more features, and some work on platforms where your iDisk would otherwise be inaccessible—such as Mac OS 9, Windows 95, and Linux.

The following is a small sampling of WebDAV clients:

- **Goliath:** Versions available for Mac OS 8 & 9 and Mac OS X (<http://www.webdav.org/goliath/>, free).
- **Transmit:** Runs on Mac OS X; also supports FTP and SFTP (<http://www.panic.com/transmit/>, \$30).
- **DAV Explorer:** A Java-based WebDAV client that runs on almost any operating system. (<http://www.ics.uci.edu/%7Ewebdav/>, free)
- **BitKinex:** A commercial FTP and WebDAV client for Windows (<http://www.bitkinex.com/webdavclient.php>, \$39).
- **cadaver:** Command-line WebDAV client that runs on most versions of Unix (including Mac OS X) (<http://www.webdav.org/cadaver/>, free).
- **davfs:** A Linux file system driver that enables WebDAV volumes to be mounted as local drives (<http://dav.sourceforge.net/>, free).

To access your iDisk with any of these programs, simply enter **homepage.mac.com/member-name** (replacing *member-name* with your member name) as the location you wish to access and, if the program supports multiple protocols, specify WebDAV.

NOTE Just as HTTP comes in plain and secure (HTTPS) varieties, so does WebDAV. However, .Mac does not support WebDAV HTTPS. This means that all communication between your computer and your iDisk on Apple's servers (whether using the Mac OS X Finder, Windows, or a WebDAV client) is unencrypted. In theory, a hacker could intercept these network transmissions and thus obtain the files you upload or download. Worse, a hacker could obtain your .Mac password (which is sent in the clear), thus gaining access to not only your files but your .Mac email. For this reason, you should be circumspect about accessing your iDisk using an unencrypted wireless network or any other public network or computer.

Understand data transfer limits

Many Web hosting companies place a limit on the amount of data that can be transferred from each member's site per month. This prevents a few extremely busy sites from overwhelming a server—thus reducing performance for everyone who uses it, and it limits the cost of the company's Internet connection (the higher the capacity needed, the more the connection costs).

Your .Mac account, too, has data transfer limits. Basic .Mac accounts have a limit of 100 GB of data transfer per month; by buying more storage (for \$50 or \$100 per year), you can increase that limit to either 200 GB or 300 GB per month (see [Buy more space](#), ahead).

Even the standard limit of 100 GB should provide more than adequate data transfer capabilities for most people. But if you get close to maxing out your monthly data transfer limit, Apple will send you an email message inviting you to buy more storage. If you choose not to—or if you've already purchased the maximum amount—Apple disables access to your Web site(s) and any other data on your iDisk until the beginning of the next bimonthly² monitoring period.

² Apple uses the term “bimonthly” to mean twice a month, not every two months.

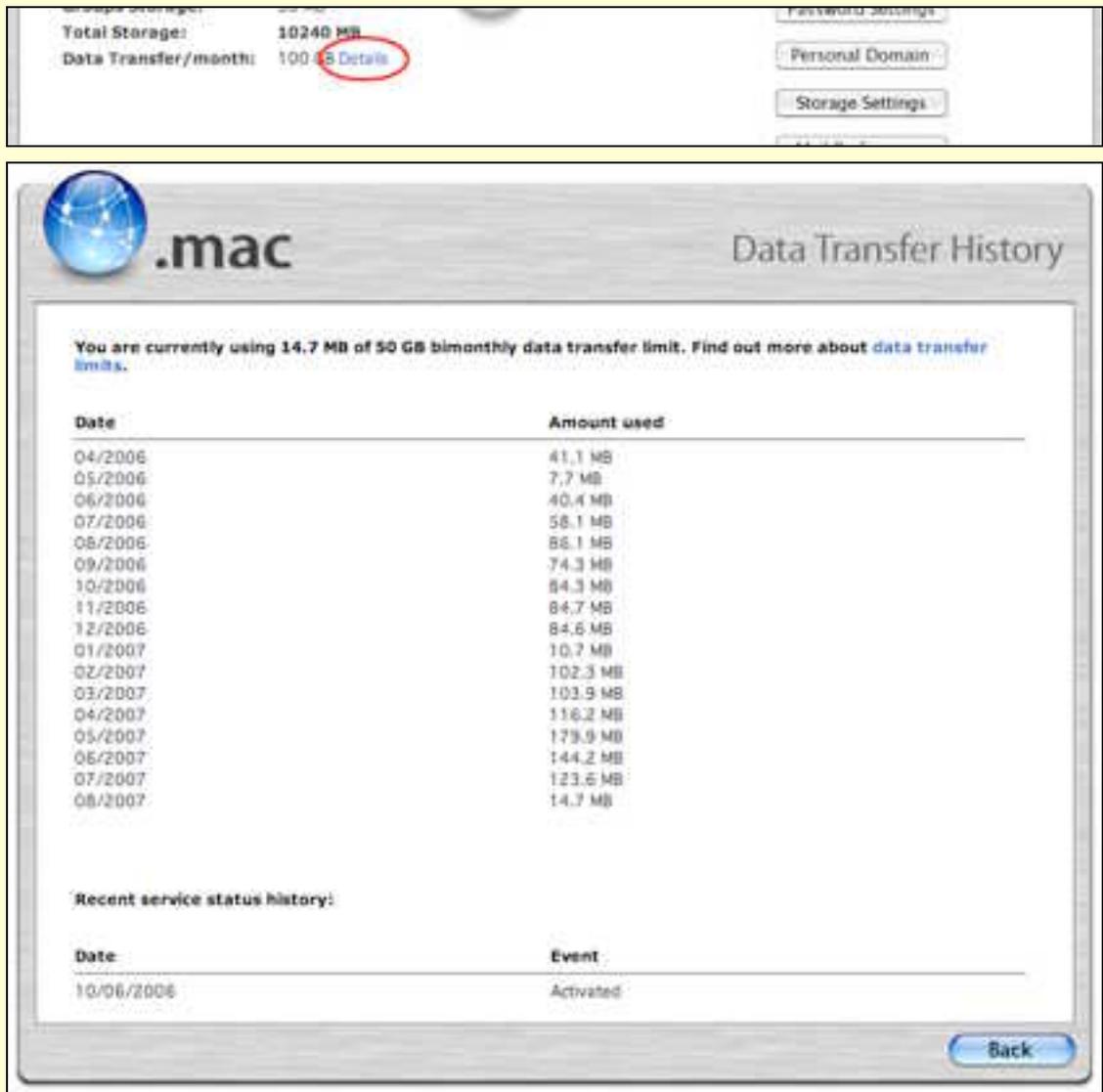
NOTE Apple calculates your data transfer usage in a surprising way. Although a standard membership includes 100 GB of data transfer per month, what that really means is 50 GB every *half* month. So if you use up 50 GB in the first week of a month, Apple disables iDisk access until the 16th (their date for starting the second half of any month for monitoring purposes). Then you get another 50 GB for the second half of the month.

Determining how much of the monthly data transfer quota you're using can be tricky. For example, if you put a 10 MB file on your iDisk, you can't tell if it has been downloaded once or a thousand times. Luckily, Apple now provides an easy (if somewhat obscure) way to check your data transfer usage.

To check your current data transfer statistics, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/> and log in.
2. Click your member name on the navigation bar or the Account link on the left side of the window and (if prompted to do so) enter your member name and password again. The Account Settings page appears.
3. The last item listed under Storage is "Data Transfer/month." Click the Details link that appears on this line immediately after the number of gigabytes (**Figure 35**).

FIGURE 35



Click the Details link on the Account Settings page (circled, at top) to see your data transfer history—including usage for the current half-month (bottom).

The Data Transfer History page appears, giving you the information you need to determine your current monthly usage:

- The paragraph at the top of the page tells you how much data has been transferred so far during the current half of the month. Remember that the bimonthly limit is half of your monthly limit.
- The table lists a series of dates and amounts used in previous months. What this means is that during the month *preceding* a given date, you transferred the amount of data shown in the

second column. So the figure for “01/2007” is the amount of data transferred in December 2006.

Most of us will never even come close to exceeding Apple’s limits—for that to happen, you must have either an extraordinarily popular site or some very large files (or both). To give you an idea of what I mean, here are some examples of what you can transfer with the standard 100 GB monthly limit:

- 10,000,000 text-only Web pages (10 KB each)
- 1,000,000 low-res digital photos (100 KB each)
- 100,000 high-res photos or short podcasts (1 MB each)
- 10,000 short movies or long podcasts (10 MB each)

In short, the data transfer limits are entirely reasonable for most individuals sharing information with family and friends. If you do find yourself exceeding these limits, though—or if you use a great deal of bandwidth sharing files, restoring backups, or performing synchronizations—see [Buy more space](#), ahead, to learn about increasing your data transfer limit.

NOTE In calculating data transfer usage, Apple counts only outbound traffic from your iDisk (which includes Web access, downloading files from the iDisk via the Finder or WebDAV, and other kinds of remote access). Uploading files to your own Web site doesn’t count, but each time someone downloads one of those files, that data transfer does count.

Divide space between files and email

Your .Mac account comes with 10 GB of storage space, but not all that space is available for use by your iDisk. Apple allocates a portion of the space to storing your Mac.com email; your iDisk gets the rest. By default, the 10 GB is divided evenly: 5 GB each for email and iDisk. (For each .Mac group you own, Apple subtracts at least 30 MB from your iDisk quota.) But you can adjust this setting to meet your needs—depending on the volume of email you store on the server and the space you wish to use for storing and sharing files.

NOTE The 10 GB figure applies only to standard individual accounts. If you're using a free .Mac trial membership, you get 100 MB of storage. If you have a .Mac Family Pack, the primary member gets 10 GB while each sub-account gets 2.5 GB.

To change the allocation of your storage space, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/> and log in.
2. Click your member name on the navigation bar or the Account link on the left side of the window and (if prompted to do so) enter your member name and password again.
3. Click the Storage Settings button to open the Storage Settings page (**Figure 36**).

FIGURE 36



Use these pop-up menus to divide your .Mac storage space between email and iDisk.

4. Choose a new setting from the .Mac Mail pop-up menu. If you own one or more groups, you can also specify how much space is used for iDisk and message storage for each group. .Mac automatically assigns the rest of your available space to your iDisk. (The minimum you can allot to .Mac Mail, a group iDisk, or a group's messages, is 15 MB.) When you're finished, click Save.

The change generally takes place within a few minutes.

Buy more space

The amount of storage space included with your .Mac account—and the amount you can add for an extra fee—has changed several times over the years. As of late 2007, Apple offers three levels of service:

- The standard 10 GB, which includes 100 GB of data transfer per month
- An optional upgrade to 20 GB total storage and 200 GB of data transfer per month for \$50 extra per year
- An optional upgrade to 30 GB total storage and 300 GB of data transfer per month for \$100 extra per year

These figures will no doubt change again in the future.

To increase your total storage space from 10 GB to 20 GB or 30 GB, you can do any of the following:

- Click the Buy More button on the iDisk tab of .Mac System Preferences or the iDisk Utility.
- Click one of the numerous “Purchase additional iDisk storage” links on the Mac.com Web site.
- Go to <http://www.mac.com/> and log in. Click your member name on the navigation bar or the Account link on the left side of the window and (if prompted to do so) enter your member name and password again. Click the Storage Settings button, and then click the Buy More button.

You can then choose the level of storage you want to buy and enter your credit card info to complete the purchase. A few “fine-print” details about increasing your storage space are worth highlighting:

- If you upgrade your storage capacity partway through your subscription (i.e., not on the same day you purchase or renew a subscription), Apple charges you a prorated fee. For example, if your subscription is due for renewal in 6 months, Apple charges you only \$25 for the upgrade to 20 GB.
- By default, your upgraded storage space will renew automatically (at the full \$50 or \$100 rate, naturally) at the same time your .Mac subscription does (assuming you’ve set your account to auto-renew, of course).
- When you upgrade, Apple divides your .Mac storage space evenly between email and iDisk—regardless of how you divided it earlier. To divide you space differently, you must change it manually (refer to [Divide space between files and email](#), just previously).

TIP MORE STORAGE FOR LESS

If you find yourself needing more capacity than even an upgraded .Mac account includes—or if you find the cost of additional storage too expensive—you may wish to consider another strategy. Some examples:

- If you need the extra space primarily for moving files from one place to another, consider buying an inexpensive USB flash drive.
- If backup is your main need, you may be able save money by using a service such as CrashPlan (<http://www.crashplan.com/>) or Mozy (<http://www.mozy.com/>). Or, pick up an inexpensive hard drive that will store much more than 30 GB for \$50.
- For publishing photos, movies, and other files on the Web, try a low-cost Web hosting provider (I list a few in [Appendix A: Beyond .Mac](#)).
- If you have a massive archive of email you wish to keep online, an alternative email provider may be your best option; you can then forward your .Mac email to the new account, if you wish. Again, [Appendix A: Beyond .Mac](#) refer to for ideas.

BACK UP YOUR FILES

Since your iDisk is always available as a network volume, and since its contents are inherently offsite, it holds an obvious attraction as a repository for backups. Apple even provides .Mac users with a free utility (imaginatively named *Backup*) to assist in this process.

TIP When it comes to backups, I wrote the book: in *Take Control of Mac OS X Backups* I walk you through developing and implementing a solid backup strategy and includes details about dozens of backup programs, including Backup 3 (<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/backup-macosx.html>).

Given the recent increases in storage space on .Mac and the reasonable quality of Apple's Backup 3, I feel comfortable recommending .Mac-based backup solutions for some people—with the following qualifications:

- Even if you max out your iDisk at 30 GB and allocate as little space as possible to email, you'll probably be able to back up only *some* of your files to iDisk. My iTunes library alone, for instance, is larger than 30 GB! (You can, however, use Backup with other media.)
- The more space you use on your iDisk for backups, the less is available for other purposes.
- Backup cannot create *bootable* duplicates, and your iDisk cannot be used as a boot volume.
- Backup 3 can't back up data for more than one user at the same time. So if your Mac has three user accounts, each user must log in and run Backup separately. If you want to back up multiple users at the same time, you must use a different backup program.
- Backups to an iDisk are *slow*, and backing up a full 30 GB could take several *days* or more, even with a fast Internet connection.
- If you lose your Internet connection, or if Apple's servers are unavailable for any reason, you can't retrieve your backed-up files.

In short, you can (and should) use your iDisk to store backups of *some* of your files, and you can use Backup (or another backup program, if you prefer) to automate that process. However, because your

iDisk is relatively small (compared to today's cavernous hard drives), and because Backup cannot create a bootable duplicate of your drive, I recommend thinking of iDisk and Backup as only a partial backup solution. Still, something is always better than nothing, and I find a lot to like about Backup's ease of use in combination with the offsite security of an iDisk.

NOTE I want to emphasize that although iDisk and Backup work well together, you can also use either one individually. Backup can store backups on recordable CDs or DVDs, external hard drives, or network servers (in addition to your iDisk). And you can back up files to your iDisk by copying them manually, or by using any of dozens of other backup programs. In this section, I cover only the use of Backup 3. To use your iDisk as a destination with other backup software, follow the instructions that came with the application.

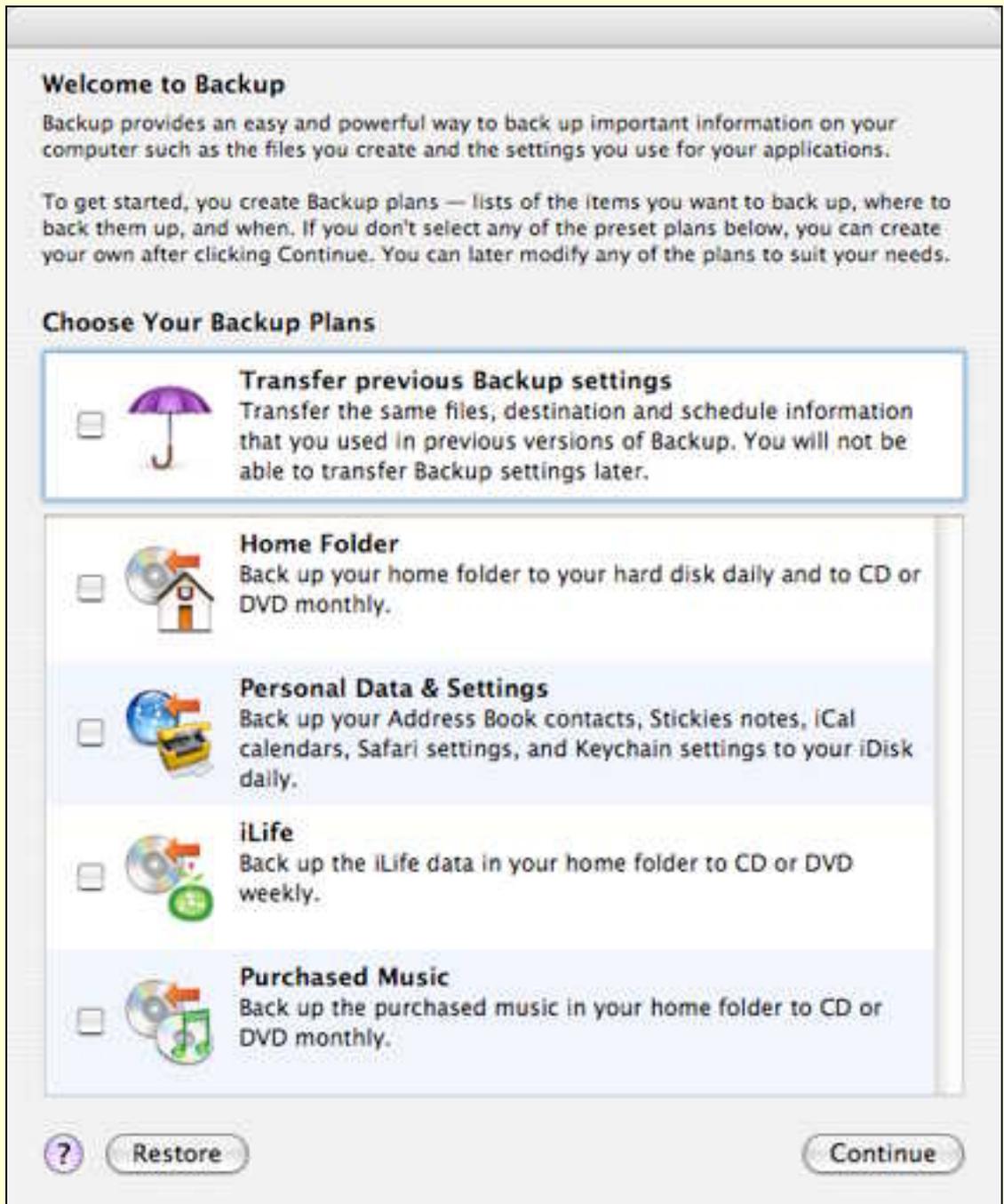
Install Backup 3

The easiest way to obtain your copy of Backup 3 is to copy it from your iDisk—it's located in the **Software/Apple Software/Backup for Mac OS X 10.3.9 or 10.4.2 or later** folder. Copy the **Backup_3.1.1** disk image to your hard disk and then double-click it to mount the image. Double-click the installer icon, and follow the prompts to install Backup 3. When the installation is complete, you can find Backup in your **/Applications** folder.

NOTE As the iDisk folder name suggests, Backup 3 requires Mac OS X 10.3.9 or 10.4.2 or later. If you're using an earlier version of Mac OS X 10.3 or 10.4, run Software Update to download and install the latest version of Mac OS X. If you're still using Mac OS X 10.2 or earlier, Apple still provides the previous version of Backup (2.0.2), but it lacks most of the features I describe here.

When you launch Backup, the first thing it shows you is a list of preset backup plans, as shown in **Figure 37**. (If you used an older version of Backup, Backup 3 offers to transfer your previous settings the first time you run it. I recommend skipping that option and setting up an entirely new backup configuration from scratch.) Instead of rushing into a choice now, click Continue to display the main Backup window—you can still access the preset plans later.

FIGURE 37



This Welcome window gives you a quick way to set up some basic backup plans—but I recommend skipping it. After you click Continue, you get access to even more options.

NOTE To use Backup without limitations, you must have a .Mac member name and password (corresponding to a paid, non-trial account) entered on the Account pane of .Mac System Preferences. If not, Backup runs in a “demo” mode, which limits you to 100 MB of data per backup.

Understand How Backup Stores Your Files

Before you actually set up a backup plan, you should understand how Backup stores your files, because this could affect the decisions you make about which files to back up to which destinations.

Backup 3 creates what I call *additive incremental archives*. This means that after the first full copy of a given folder or volume, each successive backup copies only those files that have been added or modified since the last time—but it does *not* delete old copies of your files. (In fact, Backup doesn’t even touch the earlier backups—it stores the files copied during each run in an entirely separate archive.)

Because the backups are *incremental*, they’re relatively fast after the initial backup; Backup doesn’t waste its time (or your disk space) re-copying files that haven’t changed. Because the backups are *additive*, you can retrieve an older version of a file, even if you accidentally (or intentionally) change or delete it just before making a backup.

Backup 3 also compresses backed-up files into an *archive* (which is actually a disk image along with several supporting files in a special folder called a *package*) in order to further reduce both disk space usage and upload times. Backups can span media, too—if you back up to CD or DVD, Backup prompts you to insert new discs as necessary, and keeps track of which files were stored on which disc.

NOTE When backing up to optical media, Backup first makes a temporary copy of your data as a disk image on your hard disk. (This behavior should be familiar to anyone who has burned CDs or DVDs under Panther or earlier versions of Mac OS X; Apple fixed it in Tiger’s version of the Finder.) This means you must have *at least* as much free space on your drive as the size of the disc you will be using!

NOTE A glaring omission to Backup's optical media support is that it doesn't permit *multisession* recording. That means once you've recorded anything on a CD or DVD—even if it's just a single file—you can never add anything to that particular disc. The result is that you're guaranteed to use at least one new disc every single time you back up, which can result in quite a waste of media. Several other backup programs (including Retrospect) can keep writing to a CD or DVD until it's full.

Yet another feather in Backup's cap is that it stores catalogs of backed-up files—what some applications call *snapshots*. A snapshot is a complete list of the files in the folders you're backing up as they appeared at the time of a backup, even though only a few of those files may actually have been copied during that particular backup run. Snapshots make it easy for you to restore a folder to its state at some arbitrary time in the past in a single step. When backup programs incrementally add files to an archive but don't keep track of snapshots, file restoration can become a long and tedious exercise of digging through an endless list of folders.

As you can tell, I think Backup does nearly all the right things in terms of file storage. However, I do want to mention two points:

- Backup *always* uses the archive method to store files. It never stores raw files on the destination volume. As a result, you can't use Backup to create an exact copy of a folder or volume on another volume. This is why you can never start up your computer from a backup that Backup makes—even if you select the entire contents of your hard disk and copy it to another hard disk.
- Backup's file format discourages manual restoration of files. If you look at the files Backup creates, you'll find a large file with the extension `.FullBackup`, as well as smaller files—one for each successive backup after the initial one—with the extension `.IncrementalBackup`. These files are actually special folders called packages. To see the contents of one of these files, Control-click (or right-click) on it and choose Show Package Contents from the resulting contextual menu. In the folder that appears, you'll see a Contents folder. Inside that folder, along with some other items, is a *second* folder called Contents. And inside that second Contents folder is a disk image called Backup.dmg. If you were to double-

click that disk image, you would see your original files—at least, those that were copied during that particular backup run—and you could copy them to another volume manually. But you can save yourself all that effort by using Backup to restore your files.

The upshot is that Backup is a good tool for storing archives of your important files, but not for backing up an entire hard disk—especially if you want to be able to start up your computer from the backup. If you choose to use Backup for archives, I urge you to consider supplementing those archives with a bootable backup—using a utility such as Carbon Copy Cloner or SuperDuper.

<http://www.bombich.com/software/cccl.html>

<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper/>

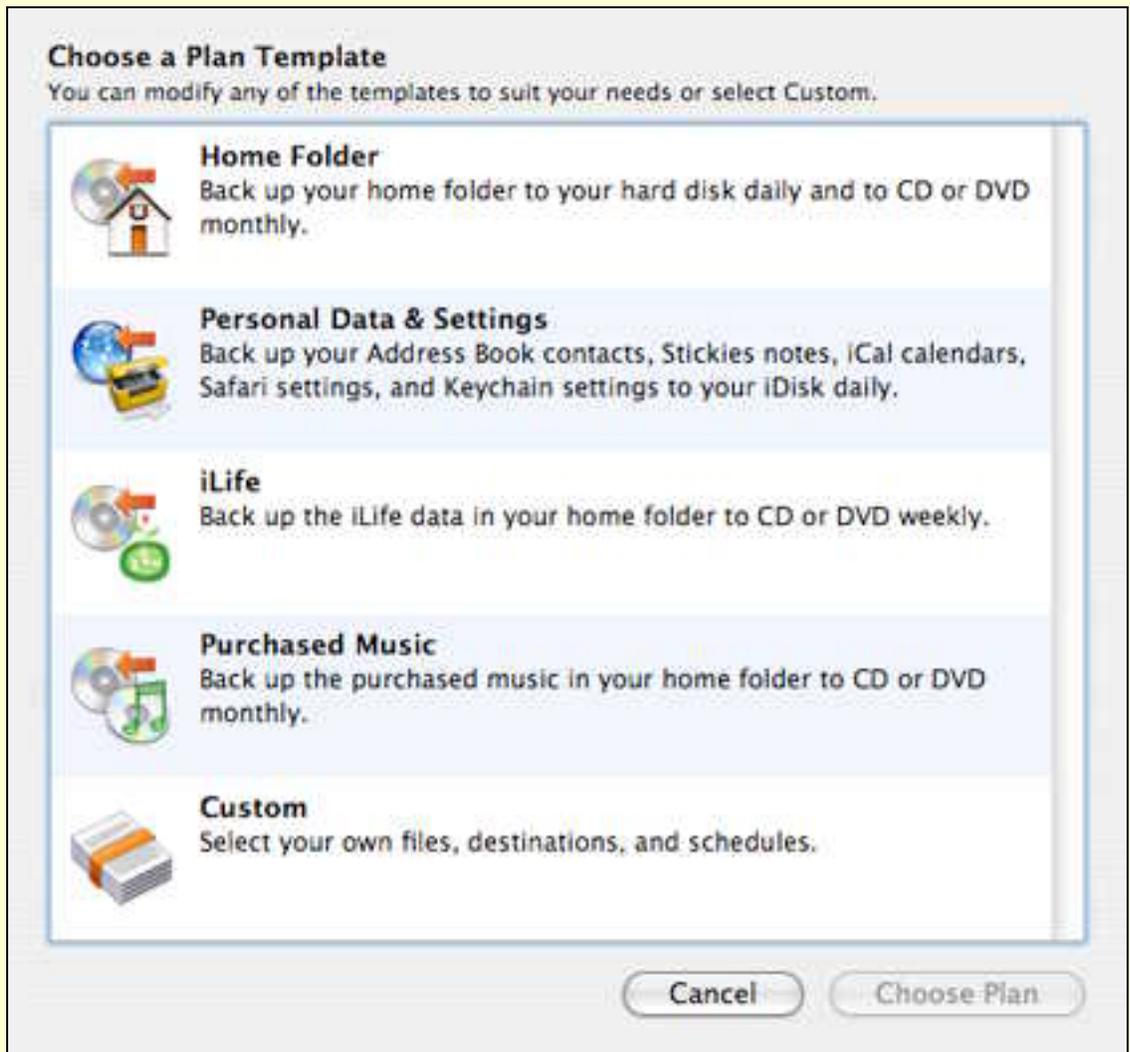
Add a Plan

Backup uses the term *plan* to mean a set of files copied to one or more locations (optionally, on a recurring schedule). You can create as many plans as you need.

To create a plan, click the  button at the bottom of the main Backup window (which is initially empty). The Choose a Plan Template dialog (**Figure 38**) appears, showing preset options similar to those you saw in the Welcome window.

WARNING! I recommend against backing up files to your primary hard disk. Even if it has plenty of space, you're storing all your digital eggs in one basket. If your hard drive becomes damaged (an all-too-frequent occurrence), you'll lose access to both your original files and your backups. Storing your files on a separate hard drive (or on optical media) is safer.

FIGURE 38



Choose one of these preset plan templates as the basis for your backup—but really, Custom is the best and most flexible choice.

Although the included descriptions are largely self-explanatory, I'd like to provide a bit more detail on the main presets:

- **Home Folder:** Your home folder (`/Users/your-user-name`) contains almost all your personal files: your email, music, photos, preferences, documents, and so on—even the files on your Desktop. In most cases, backing up your home folder will cover all your important data, but it does not include Mac OS X itself, your applications, or any folders you may have created manually at the top level of your hard disk.

Your home folder can get quite large (mine happens to be about 50 GB at the moment, and that's small compared to some), so you need plenty of space to store a copy. That's why this preset makes a

copy on your hard disk (daily), under the assumption that your hard drive has plenty of free space. It also makes monthly copies to CD or DVD—which will probably mean *several* DVDs or a *stack* of CDs.

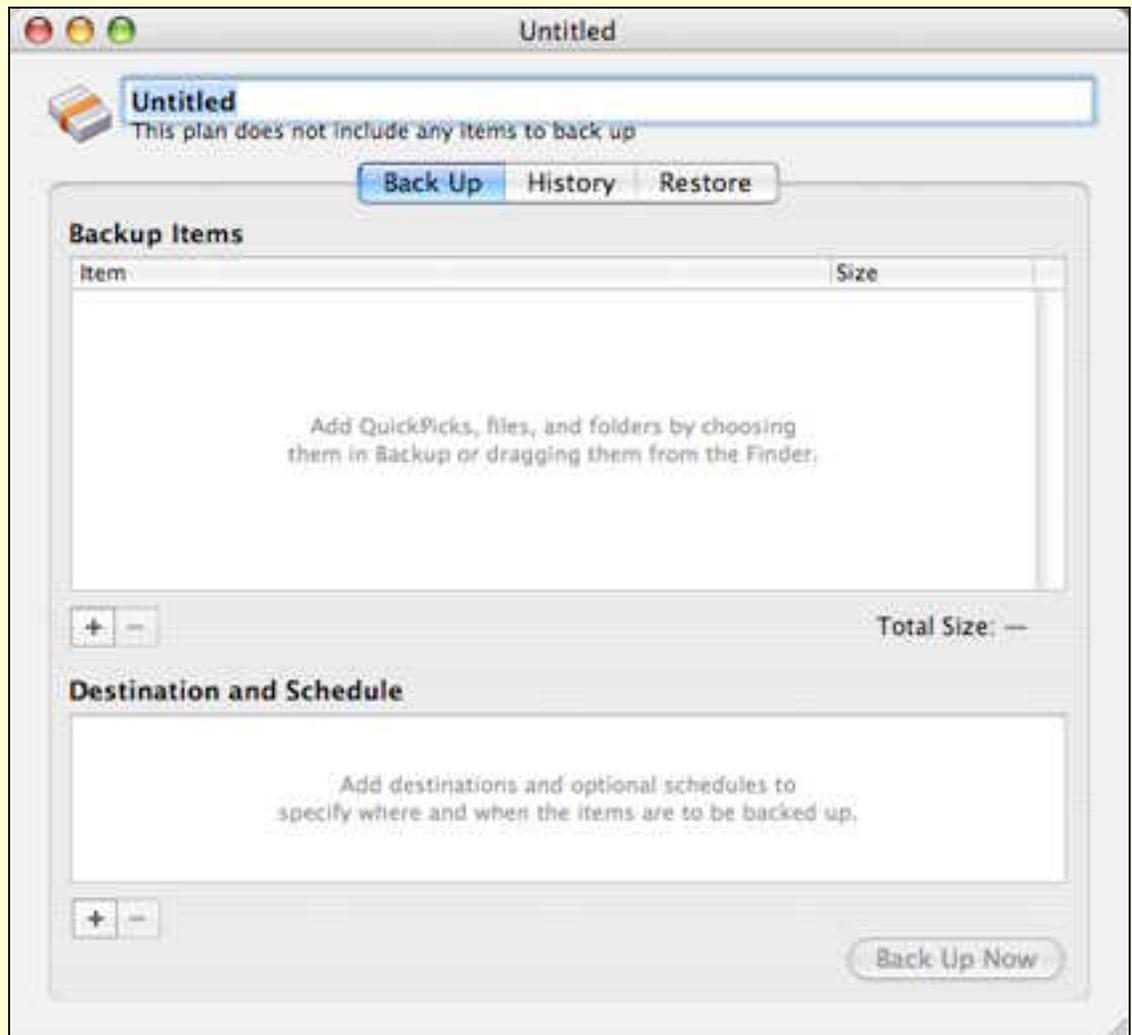
- **Personal Data & Settings:** As the description says, this preset includes just a small subset of the items in your home folder: your Address Book contacts, Stickies notes, iCal calendars, Safari settings (including your bookmarks), and Keychain settings. Because this data usually takes up fairly little space, this preset copies the listed items to your iDisk.

NOTE If you use .Mac sync to sync items such as your Address Book contacts and Safari bookmarks to your iDisk, this preset will make *another* copy of the same data, taking up even more space on your iDisk. Not that there's anything wrong with having an extra copy of your data, but if you're running out of iDisk space, you might want to omit these items from your backup and rely on the synchronized copy (which may also be accessible on the Web) instead.

- **iLife:** This preset copies data from all your iLife applications, assuming you've stored it in the default locations. This data includes GarageBand projects, iDVD projects, iMovie projects, your iPhoto library, and your iTunes library and playlists (and music purchased from the iTunes Store). Because the amount of data in these categories may be quite large, this preset uses optical media as its destination.
- **Purchased Music:** Instead of copying *all* your iTunes music, this preset copies just those tracks you purchased from the iTunes Store, along with your iTunes playlists. Again, optical discs are the default storage destination.
- **Custom:** Create your own backup scenario, which can include any of the other options listed here, as well as many other pre-selected packages, arbitrary files and folders, and even the results of Spotlight searches. You can also choose your destination(s) and schedule(s). Because this option has the greatest flexibility, I recommend choosing Custom.

After you make a selection from the list, click Choose Plan. Enter a name for your backup plan in the window that appears (**Figure 39**).

FIGURE 39



Enter a name for your new backup plan, add items to be backed up, and then select the destination and schedule.

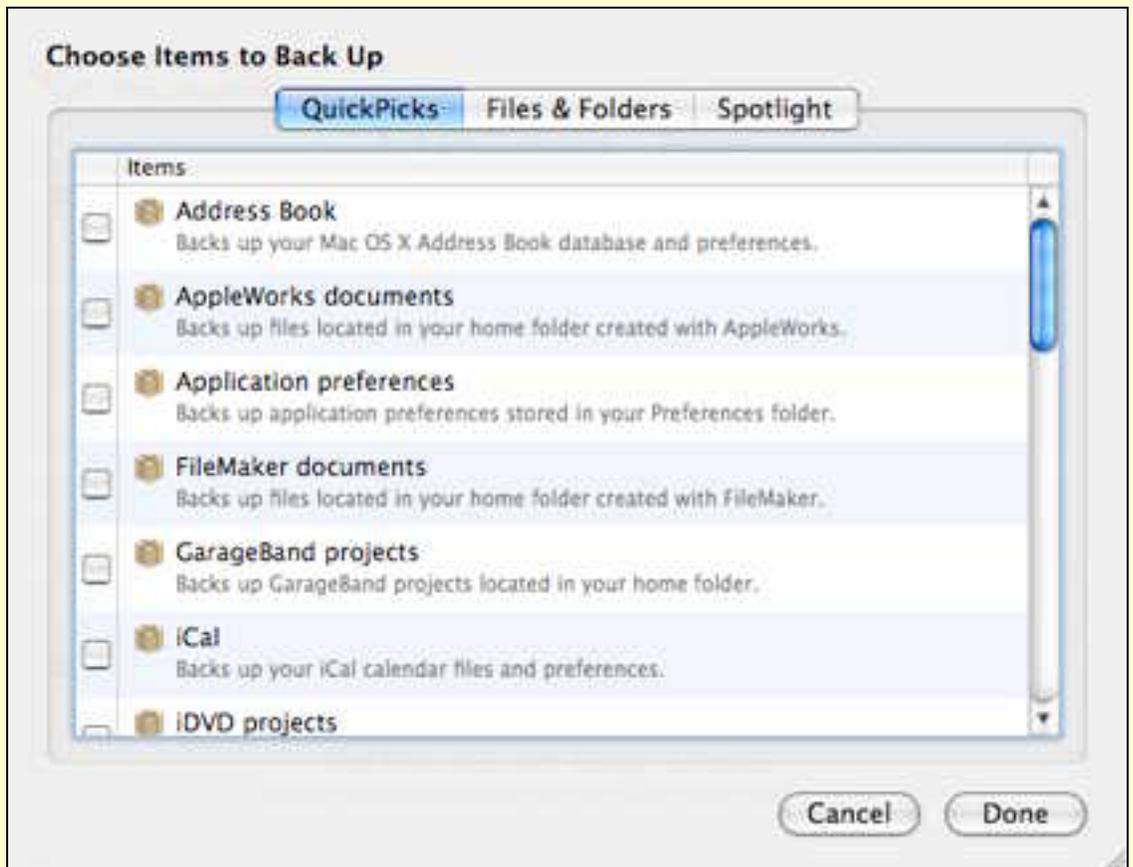
The Plan window has three tabs (Back Up, History, and Restore). On the Back Up tab, which appears initially, you select what items you want to back up, where you want to store them, and when you want the backup to run.

Add backup items

If you selected a preset other than Custom, some items will already appear in the Backup Items list. Otherwise, you can add items by dragging them into the list from the Finder, or by clicking the 

button. When you click the button, another dialog appears, showing three tabs that lead to a wide variety of options (**Figure 40**).

FIGURE 40



QuickPicks are ready-made selections of files in popular categories.

Click a tab at the top of the dialog to choose a category of options:

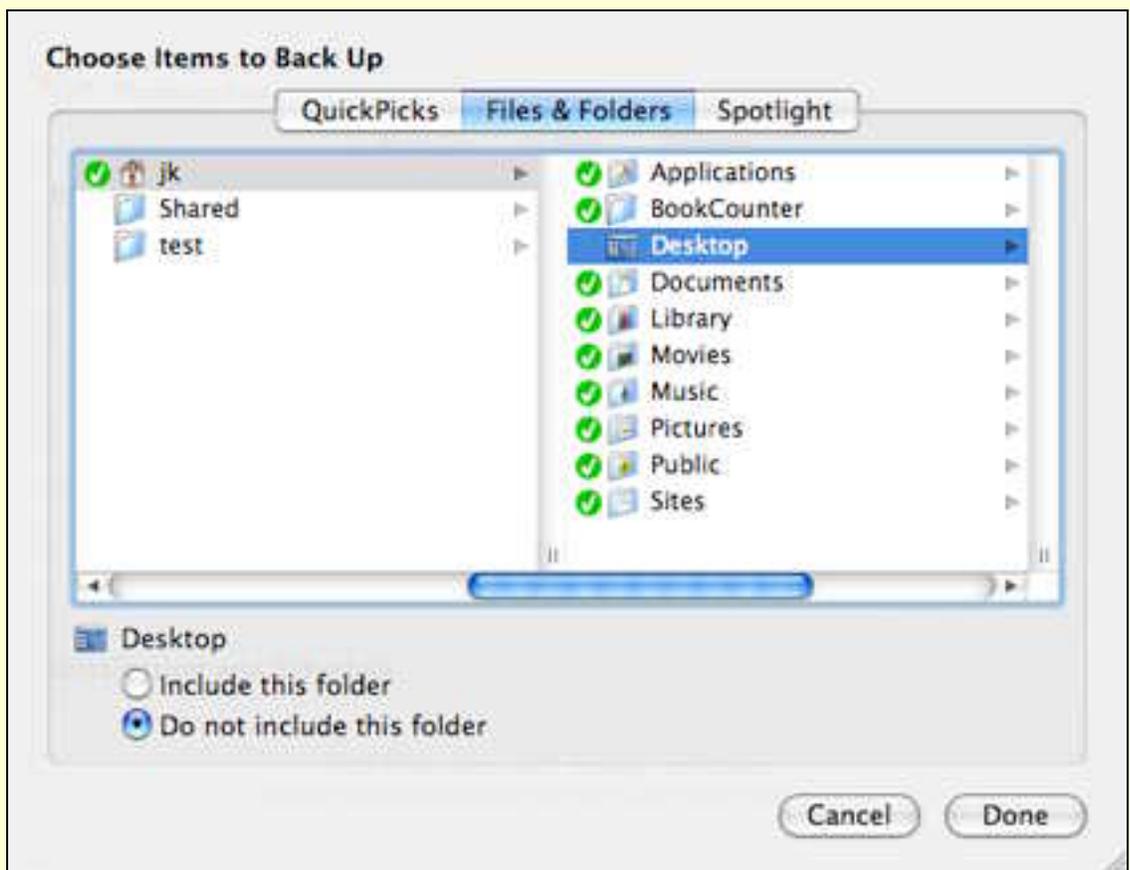
- **QuickPicks:** On the QuickPicks tab, you can select one or more packages representing certain file types Backup knows about, such as documents created with iLife or iWork applications, Microsoft Office documents, or personal information (contacts, calendars, and so on).

WARNING! Apple's QuickPicks back up only data located in your home folder. So, for example, if you have music from the iTunes Store that you keep in a different folder (or on an entirely different volume), or if you've moved your iPhoto Library to another disk, QuickPicks will not make Backup back up those files! You must add them to a backup plan manually.

TIP Several third parties have created plug-in QuickPicks for other kinds of files. For example, Delicious Library offers a QuickPick for its files (http://www.delicious-monster.com/blog/2005_09_01_archive.html), and there's one for a user of the Mellel files. (<http://www.redlers.com/download/other/MellelQuickPick.dmg.zip>). To find more QuickPicks, search in VersionTracker for QuickPick (<http://www.versiontracker.com/macosx/>).

- **Files & Folders:** On the Files & Folders tab (**Figure 41**), you can select one or more individual files or folders to be backed up.

FIGURE 41



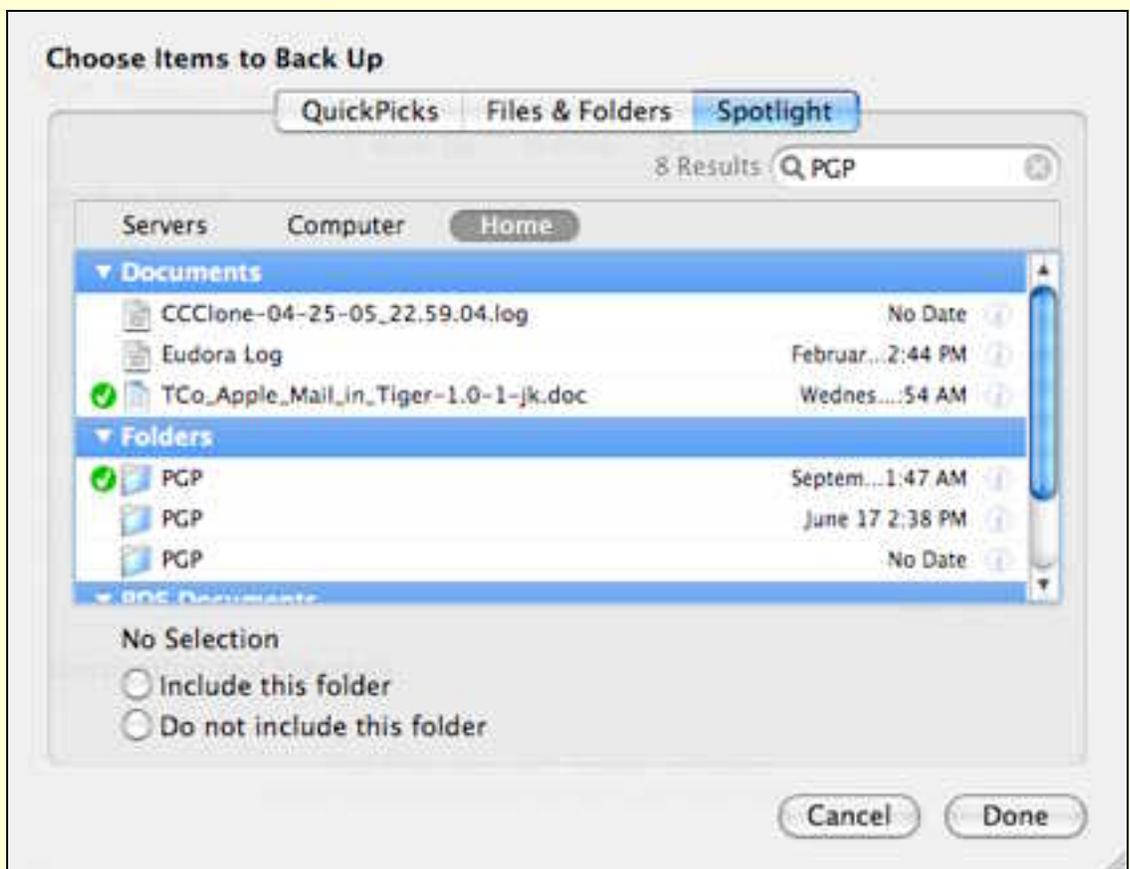
Use the Files & Folders tab to select particular files and folders to back up. In this example, I selected my home folder (jk) and clicked Include This Folder. Then I selected Desktop and clicked Do Not Include This Folder. The result is that everything in my home folder *except* my Desktop folder will be backed up.

(You can select more than one item by holding down the Command key while clicking; you can also drag to select multiple contiguous items.)

After selecting one or more items, select the Include This Folder (or Include This File) radio button. A checkmark in a green circle appears by the item (and all its contents, in the case of a folder). If you want to *exclude* part of a folder you've just marked for inclusion, select that item and click the Do Not Include This Folder (or Do Not Include This File) radio button.

- **Spotlight:** If you want to find files or folders to back up but you are not sure where to find them (or you want to make sure they get backed up, even if they're spread out all over your hard drive), go to the Spotlight pane (**Figure 42**). Enter a string in the search field and select an area to search (Home, Computer, or Servers), and Backup displays matching results, just as in any Spotlight search. As on the Files & Folders tab, select an item and click Include This Folder (or Include This File) to add it to the list of items to back up; click Do Not Include This Folder (or Do Not Include This File) to remove it from the list.

FIGURE 42



The Spotlight tab can help you locate files and folders to back up.

WARNING! The Spotlight tab can help you find files and folders, but it does *not* give Backup the capability of dynamically backing up items that meet the search criteria each time it runs. (And in case you're thinking of using a smart folder to get around this, if you select a smart folder in this list—a file ending in `.savedSearch`—Backup will back up only the search *settings*, not the smart folder's *contents*.)

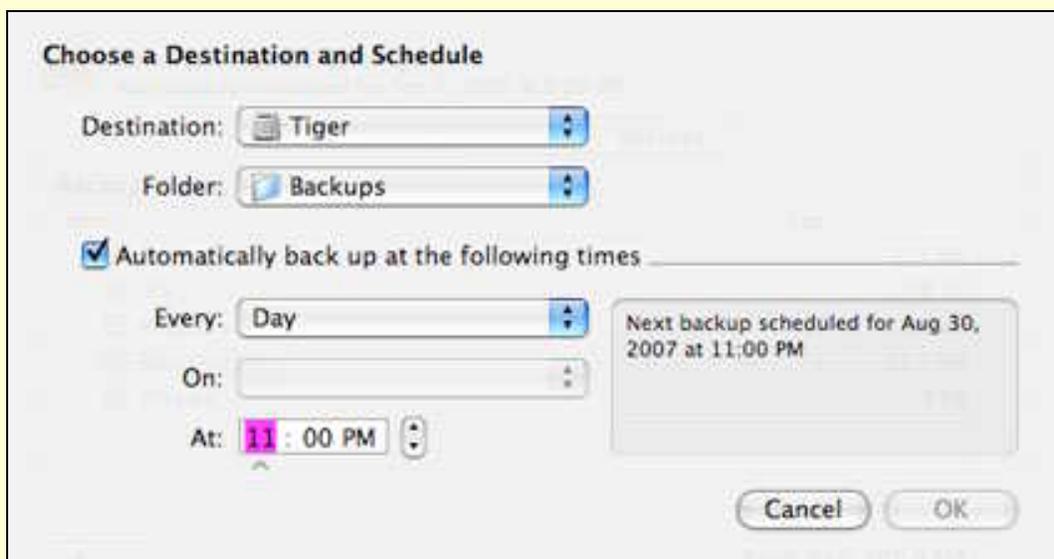
After you've selected file(s) or folder(s) on one of these tabs, click Done to add them to your backup list; you can then click the  button again, if necessary, to add more items. To remove an item from the list, select it and click the  button (or press Delete).

WARNING! If you use any method other than Apple's preset plans or Quick-Picks to add items to a backup plan, be aware that Backup doesn't track changes you make to the names of those items. So if you rename a file or folder you've manually added to a backup plan, Backup won't be able to find it. You must manually add it again.

Add destinations and schedules

Now you have to tell Backup where to put the items you're backing up, and when. To do this, click the  button below the Destination and Schedule list. A dialog (**Figure 43**) appears.

FIGURE 43



Set the location where your backup files will be stored, and the frequency with which backups will occur, in this dialog.

First, choose a volume from the Destination pop-up menu. This menu lists all currently mounted volumes—which includes network servers, other partitions on your main hard disk, and external hard disks—and your iDisk.

NOTE Before choosing your iDisk as a destination, make sure you have allotted it enough storage space. You can find details in [Divide Space between files and email](#).

NOTE Apple claims that you can back up only one computer to a given iDisk. My tests have shown differently. I set up two Macs with identical backup plans, and both backed up their respective files to my iDisk without complaint. Even though the plans had the same names, Backup correctly kept track of them when it came time to restore files. Your mileage may vary, however—it could be that under some circumstances (which I have not yet discovered), Backup prevents you from storing files from multiple computers (or multiple users on the same computer) on the same iDisk.

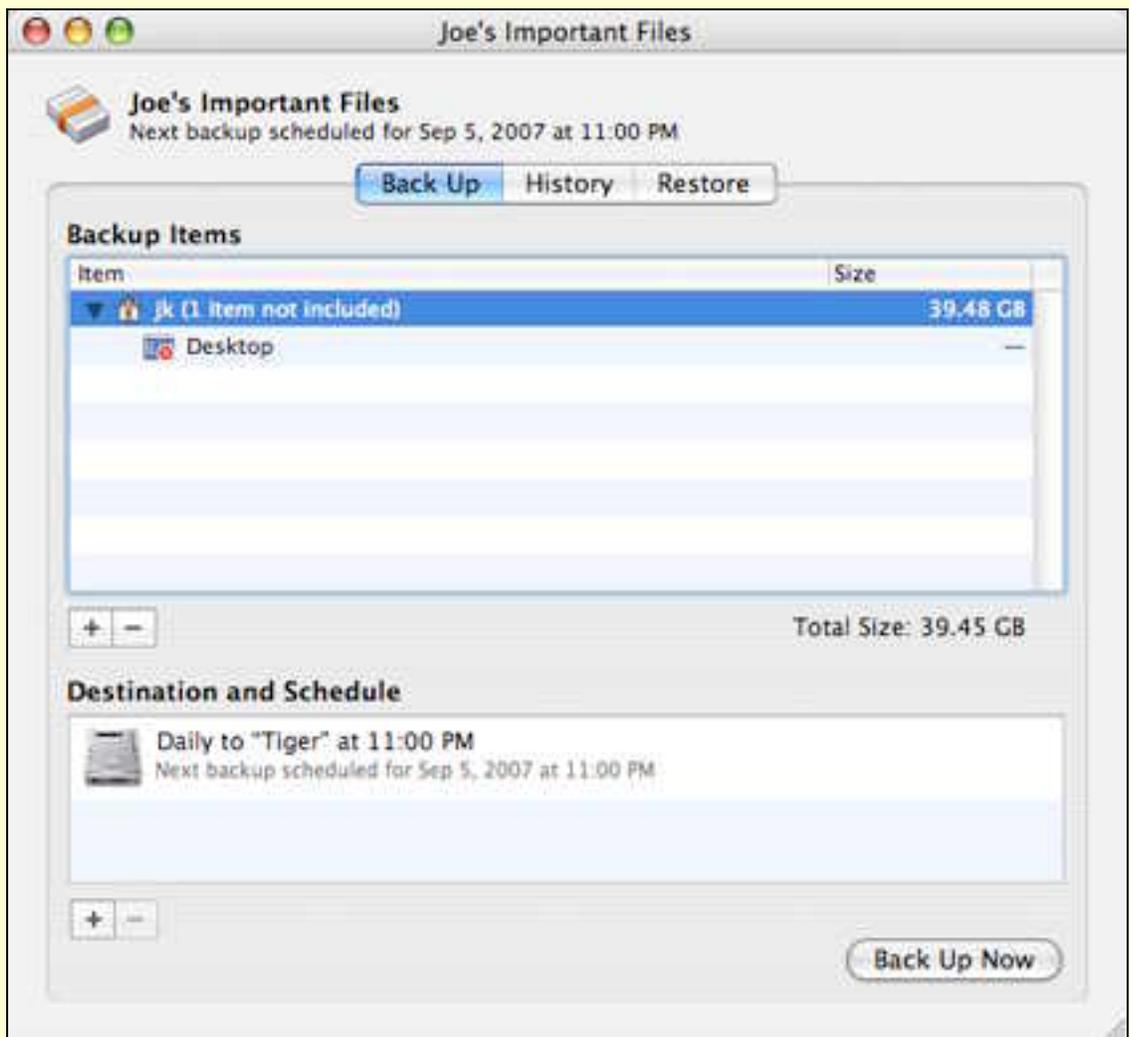
If applicable, choose a folder on the destination volume from the Folder pop-up menu. If the location you want to use does not appear in the Folder menu (or if you chose Network from the Destination pop-up menu in order to select a server that's not currently mounted), choose Choose Location from the Folder menu and navigate to your desired destination. If you want to back up to optical media, choose CD or DVD from the menu.

NOTE Unlike some backup applications, Backup will not mount a network volume automatically when a backup runs. If you're backing up to a server, make sure it's mounted on the Desktop before the scheduled backup time.

Next, choose when the backup should run. If you want this to be a manual backup that runs only when you explicitly initiate it, uncheck Automatically Back Up At the Following Times. Otherwise, make your selections using the controls at the bottom of the window. If you choose Week from the Every pop-up menu, you can then choose a (single) day of the week from the On pop-up menu; similarly, if you choose Month from the Every menu, you can use the On pop-up menu

to choose a (single) day of the month. Enter a time of day for the backup to run, and click OK. Your final backup plan appears, with the items, destination, and schedule you selected (**Figure 44**).

FIGURE 44



This window displays your finished backup plan.

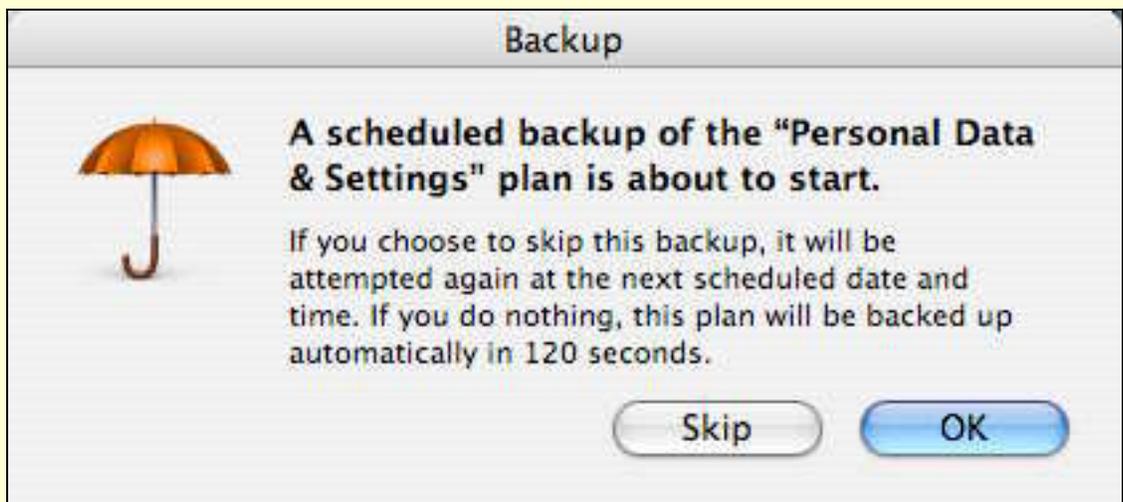
Regardless of the time you chose for the backup to run automatically, you can start it immediately by clicking Back Up Now. If you want to add additional destinations schedules for this set of files and folders, do so by clicking the lower **+** button again. To delete a destination and its schedule, select it and click the **-** button (or press Delete).

Backup provides limited flexibility in setting schedules—for instance, you can choose for a backup to run every Tuesday, but not every Tuesday and Thursday. However, you can achieve this effect by adding another item to the Destination and Schedule list of the same backup plan; then choose the same destination but a different day.

NOTE Try not to schedule more than one backup for the same time (or overlapping times). Only one plan can run at a time; if you've scheduled two or more plans for the same time, the first plan must finish before the next begins.

When a backup is scheduled to run, an alert appears (**Figure 45**). Click OK to begin the backup immediately, click Skip to postpone the backup until its next scheduled time, or simply ignore the alert and the backup will begin on its own in 2 minutes.

FIGURE 45



This alert appears when a scheduled backup is about to run. To postpone the backup, click Skip.

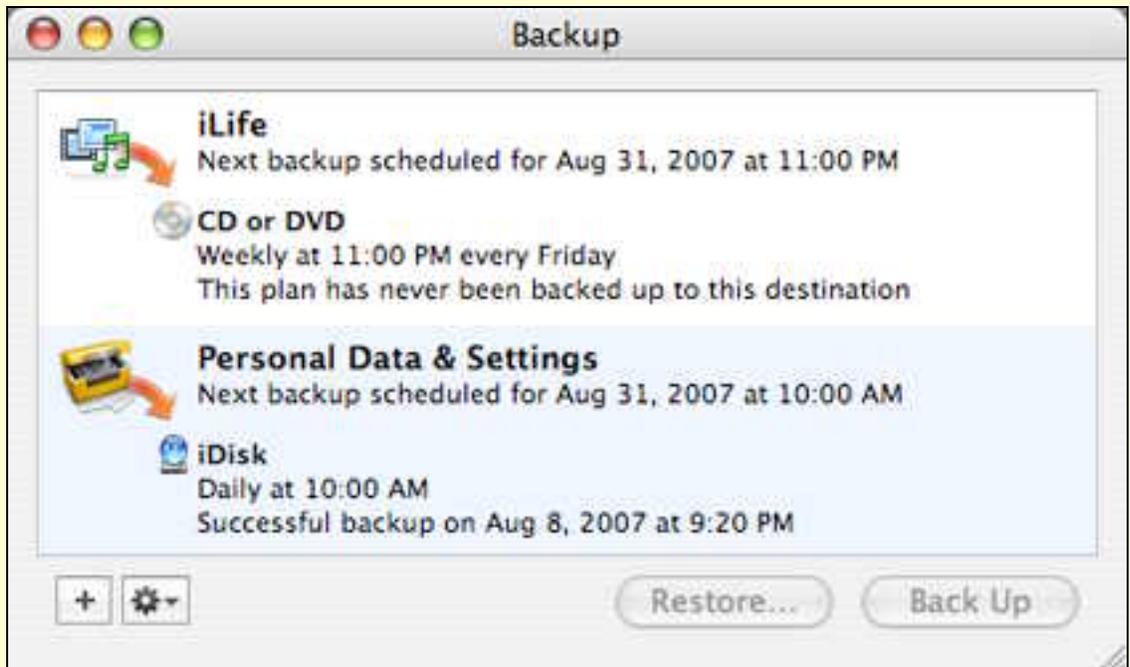
Why does this alert appear? A backup could occur at an awkward moment—perhaps you don't have any blank DVDs handy, the drive you want to use is unavailable, or your Internet connection is down. Also, in some situations Backup can slow down other tasks. For all these reasons, the Skip button can be handy.

TIP I suggest backing up to more than one set of media—for example, two or more distinct sets of DVDs or two or more external hard drives. That way, you have a secondary backup in case one set of media is lost or damaged. To do this, simply add more destinations. You can (and should) store one copy of your backups offsite—at a friend's home, say—to provide extra protection against theft or catastrophic damage to your home.

Work with Backup Plans

Once you've completed setting up a plan, it appears in Backup's main window (**Figure 46**). You can add as many plans as you need, each with its own data, destinations, and schedules.

FIGURE 46



The main Backup window displays the details of the plans you've configured.

In this window—which you'll see immediately after launching Backup after you've configured at least one plan—you can also add, modify, and run backup plans with just a click or two. The commands for working with existing plans are on the pop-up Action menu () at the bottom of the window. After selecting a plan, choose one of these options:

- **New:** Add another plan. (You can also click the  button to accomplish the same task.)
- **Rename:** Change a plan's name. (Alternatively, you can select a plan in the list and then click its name to make the name field editable.)

- **Edit:** Modify a plan's settings, including backup items, destination, and schedule. (You can also double-click a plan to edit it.)
- **Remove:** Delete a plan altogether. (You can also select a plan and press Delete to remove it.)

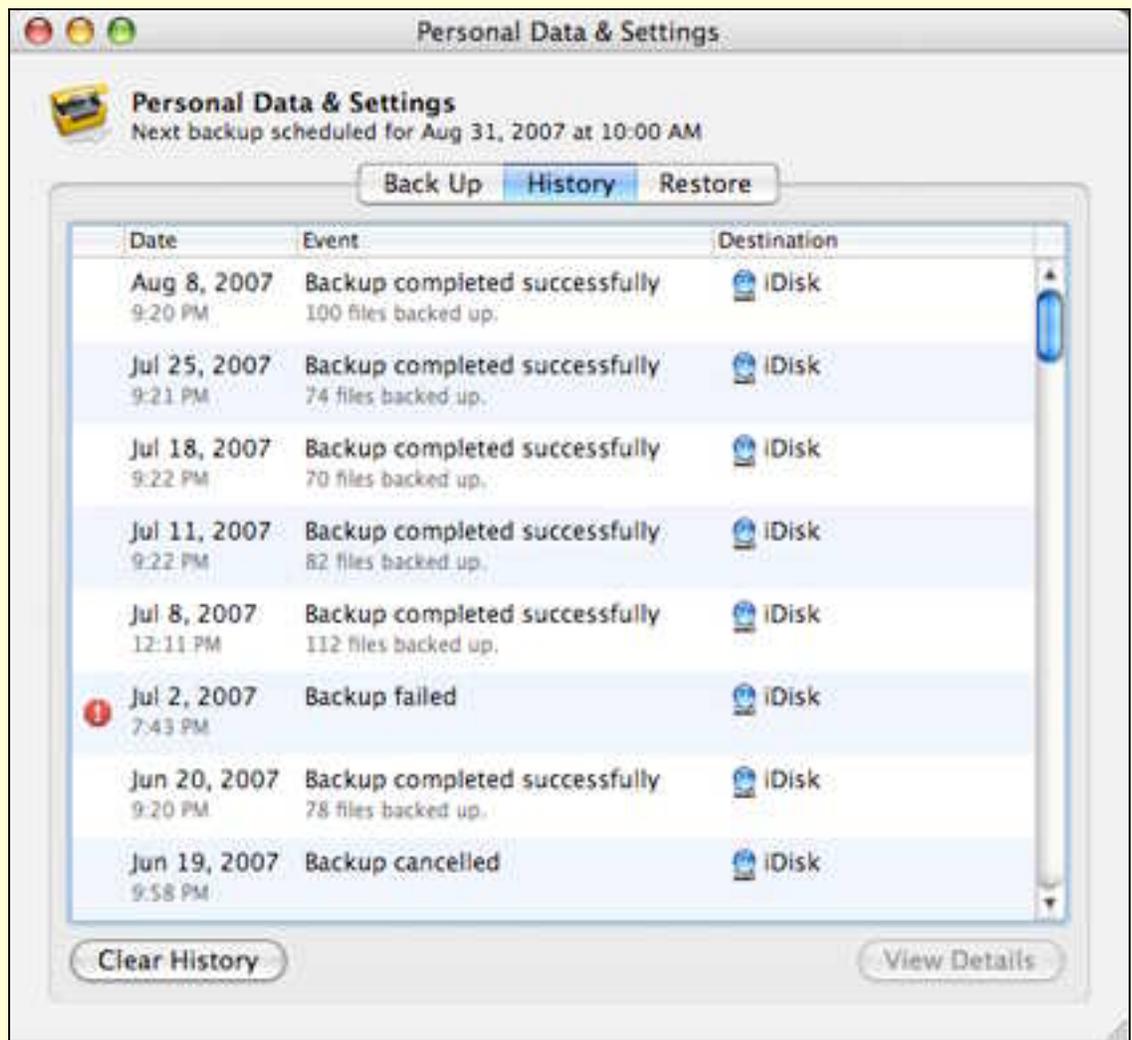
NOTE Removing a plan does *not* delete the backup archives it created. If you later want to restore files from a backup plan you've deleted, double-click the archive package in the Finder; doing so also adds it back to this list (but without a schedule).

- **Back Up:** Run the selected plan now, regardless of when (or if) it's scheduled to run. You can also click the Back Up button to run a plan.
- **Restore:** Retrieve files from the backup and copy them either to their original locations or to another location (see [Restore a Backup](#)). You can also click Restore to do the same thing.

Review Your Backup History

To see which backup plans have run when—and with what results—select a backup plan in the main Backup window and choose Edit from the pop-up Action menu () (or double-click the plan). Click the History tab (**Figure 47**).

FIGURE 47



The History pane lists all the activity for this plan, including backups and restorations.

The History tab lists each activity (backup or restore) Backup has performed with this backup plan—whether manually or on a schedule—along with its date, time, destination, and the number of files backed up or restored.

If you want to know exactly *which* files were backed up or restored, select an item in the list and click View Details. Backup opens the Console application with a window displaying more details than you probably care to read.

To clear the list (which does not affect the backed-up files themselves), click Clear History.

NOTE RECYCLING BACKUPS

Each time your backup runs, the archive grows somewhat. The rate at which it grows depends on the number and size of files backed up and how frequently they change. But if you're backing up to a hard disk, an iDisk, or another network server, you may eventually fill up your available storage space. When this happens (or, preferably, *before* this happens), you should delete the existing backup files and immediately perform a new full backup. (But bear in mind that you'll no longer be able to retrieve older versions of your files.) Some software refers to this process as "recycling" backup media.

Before deleting your backup files, you might consider copying them onto CDs, DVDs, or a spare hard drive so that you can later retrieve old versions of your files if necessary. If you delete backups without first making another copy, you will lose the ability to restore files older than today (or the next time you run your backup).

If you're backing up to an iDisk, choose Backup > Remove iDisk Backups to delete the backup files. Otherwise, delete the files from the backup media manually. Then, select a backup plan and choose Plan > Full Backup. Repeat for each of your plans.

Restore a Backup

Having backups is useful only if you can restore files you've backed up when the need arises—after your drive has died, your computer has been stolen, you've deleted an important file, or whatever. Backup 3 makes this process fairly simple.

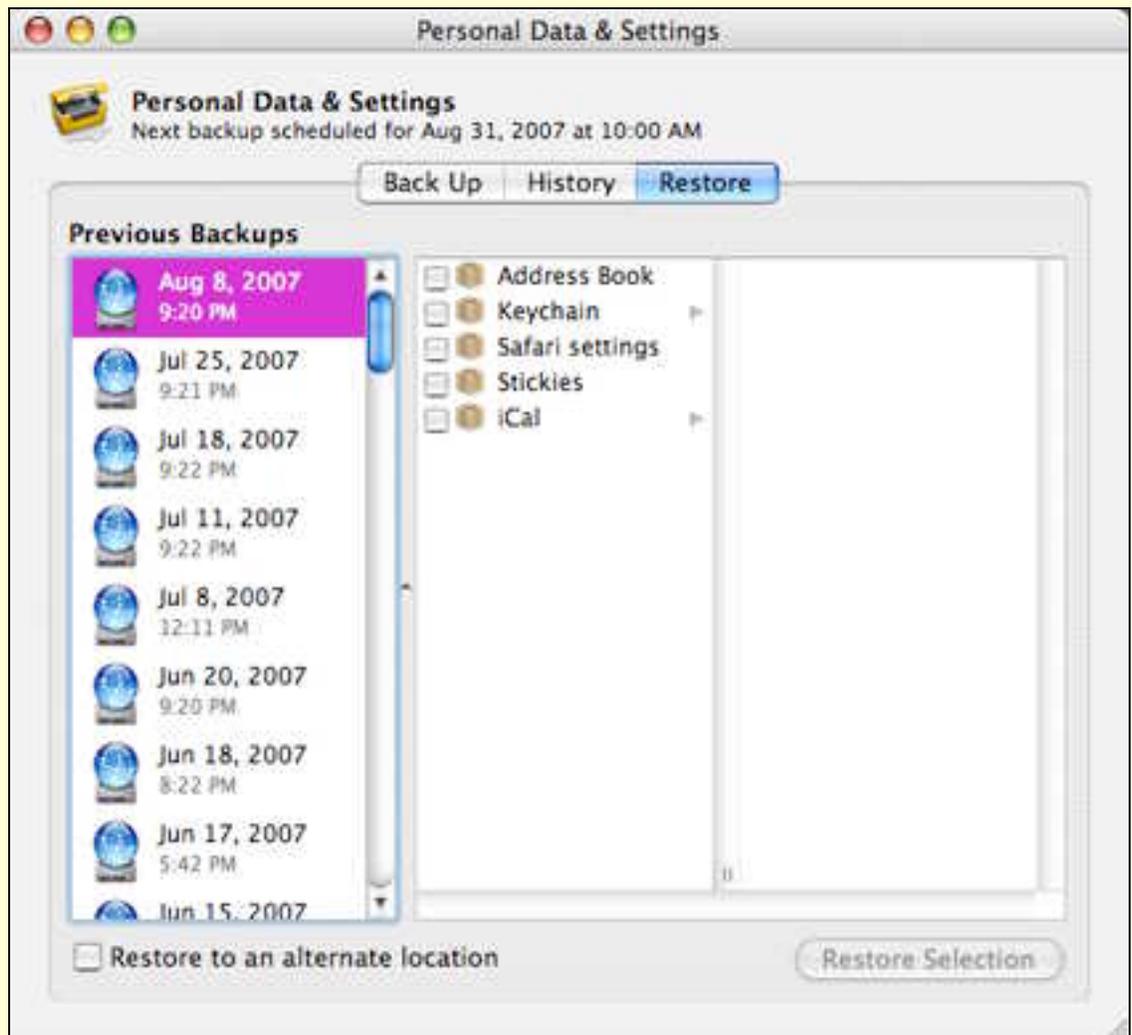
WARNING! Don't assume your backups are fine, just because your backup software says they are. Perhaps you didn't select the right files, a disk error occurred, or for some other reason the files didn't get backed up the way you thought they would. This is the sort of thing you don't want to discover only after disaster strikes!

Test your backups regularly by restoring sample files, opening those files, and verifying that they are intact. Like testing a smoke detector's battery, checking your backups regularly can help you spot problems before it's too late.

To restore a backup, follow these steps:

1. Quit all applications except Backup, or, at the very least, quit the applications whose data you're about to restore. Otherwise, the backup may not work properly.
2. Select a plan in Backup's main window and click Restore. The Restore pane of the backup plan window (**Figure 48**) appears.

FIGURE 48



Use the Restore pane to select files and folders to restore from one of this backup's snapshots.

3. The left pane, labeled Previous Backups, has an entry for each time this backup plan has run. If you select one of these entries, the next column lists the items in your backup, as they appeared at the time listed—whether or not they were copied during that particular backup run. Check the box next to one or more items to restore them to the state in which they existed at the time and date shown.

4. By default, Backup copies the files back to their original location. Although this can be handy (especially for files whose original location may not have been obvious), it can also be dangerous—you could unintentionally overwrite newer, useful data with an older copy. To avoid this problem, check the Restore to an Alternate Location box.
5. Click Restore Selection. Then:
 - If you selected Restore to an Alternate Location, Backup will prompt you to select a folder where the files should be copied. Make your selection and click Choose.
 - Otherwise, a dialog (**Figure 49**) appears. Select whether you want to replace (overwrite) the files currently in the destination with the copies from the backup, or restore files and folders only if the destination folder currently has no files or folders with the same names. Click Restore.

FIGURE 49



When restoring files to their original location, choose whether or not you want to overwrite existing files with the same names.

6. If you did not quit all open applications (Step 1), an alert will remind you that you really should do so now! After doing so, click Continue.

Backup restores the selected items to the location you requested.

CREATE AND PUBLISH A WEB SITE

Creating a Web page is not rocket science—millions of ordinary people have successfully done so with no training or prior experience. For a simple Web page, all you must do is mark up a plain text file with a few special tags enclosed in angle brackets, upload it to a Web server, and wait for the world to beat a path to your virtual door.

But behind this deceptively simple process are some potential sources of confusion that often require at least a modicum of geek mojo to overcome, such as:

- How do I get started learning HTML? (Or, for that matter, do I need to learn it at all?)
- How do I choose a Web hosting provider?
- How do I get my files onto the server? (And what in the world is FTP, anyway?)
- How do I make my Web pages look spiffy and professional?
- How can I make photo or video albums—with thumbnails, navigational links, and all the other niceties?

.Mac aims to address all these issues by providing Web access to your iDisk's Sites folder, offering HomePage, an easy-to-use system for designing Web pages with no knowledge of HTML, and selling iWeb (part of iLife '06 and later), which can publish Web sites directly to your iDisk. In other words, no matter how little you know about Web design, you too can have a high-quality Web site in just minutes. And if you *do* know a thing or two about Web design, you can leave the training wheels behind and create your own custom sites from scratch.

Broadly speaking, Apple provides three ways to publish a Web site:

- Use HomePage to create Web pages, optionally incorporating photos, movies, and other files on your iDisk.
- Use iWeb to create Web pages or blogs, which can include media from iPhoto, iMovie, GarageBand, or iTunes.
- Manually create pages and upload them.

We'll look at each of these techniques in turn. Before we do, though, I want to make sure you fully understand the distinction between a *page* and a *site*; this will become increasingly important as you add more material.

A *page* is a single HTML file. That single file could be anything from a blank page to your entire life's story with hundreds of photos. But when you view a page on the Web, you can see the whole thing simply by scrolling up or down. In some cases (such as with photo albums), a single page can produce pop-up windows that contain additional content, such as full-size photos.

Although a Web page can in theory be as long as you like, most people prefer to break up large amounts of content into smaller chunks—separate pages—so that pages load faster and the information is neatly organized. A *site* is such a collection of related pages. You can include two, or ten, or hundreds of pages in a single site; if you do, you'll most likely include links of some sort so that visitors can move from one page to the next easily. Back to the photo album example, if you had 50 pictures, you might choose to put ten images on each of five pages, with “Previous” and “Next” links on each page.

Your .Mac account can include any number of sites. If you create a site using HomePage, its address begins with *http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/*; if you create a site using iWeb, its address is of the form *http://web.mac.com/member-name/*.

Each site has its own *home page*. This is the page visitors see when they go to your site without specifying a filename at the end of the URL. A home page generally provides an overview of the site, and links to each main page within it.

Create a Site Using HomePage

HomePage is .Mac's Web-based HTML authoring tool. (If you have iLife '06 or later, you'll probably want to use that instead.) To use HomePage, go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the HomePage link in the navigation bar, and log in with your member name and password. You'll then see the main page of Apple's HomePage system, which will initially look something like **Figure 50**.

FIGURE 50



To create a Web page using HomePage, begin by selecting a category and theme.

Create your first page using HomePage themes

To create a page, you begin by selecting a theme. Apple organizes available themes into several categories, some of which have special features. Here's the run-down:

- **Photo Album:** To display a series of photographs—including thumbnails, full-size photos, and a slideshow option—select one of these themes. After adding a folder of photos, you can choose which ones to display by toggling their Show checkboxes, or rearrange the photos by dragging them to a new location on the page.

NOTE Before you can use a Photo Album theme, you must already have a folder of photos in your iDisk's Pictures folder or one of its subfolders. You must copy these photos there manually.

- **File Sharing:** If you want to have a page where visitors can download one or more files, use one of these themes. The files must already be on your iDisk, but they can be in any of these folders: Movies, Pictures, Public, Sites, or Music—or in other folders you create at the top level of your iDisk.
- **Site Menu:** Use one of these themes to create a menu-like page that provides links to other pages (either on your own site or elsewhere on the Web); a link can also be an email address. Each link can include a title, description, and photo if you wish.

TIP If you create several individual pages on your site and later want to create a navigational page to tie them together, a Site Menu theme is just the ticket. But remember: you have to create the individual pages first; you can't add non-existent pages to a Site Menu.

- **iMovie:** Each of these themes is designed to display a page with a single QuickTime movie. As with the Photo Album themes, you must already have a movie somewhere in your iDisk's Movies folder.
- **Writing:** If your page will contain primarily text—an article, story, newsletter, journal, personal profile, or something of that sort—choose a Writing theme. You can add graphics to these, as well, but the Writing layouts focus on the text rather than pictures.
- **Resume:** Use a theme in this category to turn your résumé into a Web page.
- **Baby:** For baby announcements (or movies of babies), select one of these themes.
- **Education:** This category contains school-related themes, such as a school newsletter, a homework assignment, an announcement of a sporting event, or photos from a graduation.

- **Invite:** To create a Web-based invitation to a party, picnic, or other event, select one of these themes.
- **Advanced:** This category contains a single entry—not really a theme—for adding your own HTML files to a site. But you can put a page on your Web site without using this interface; refer to [Create a Site Using Your Own Tools](#).

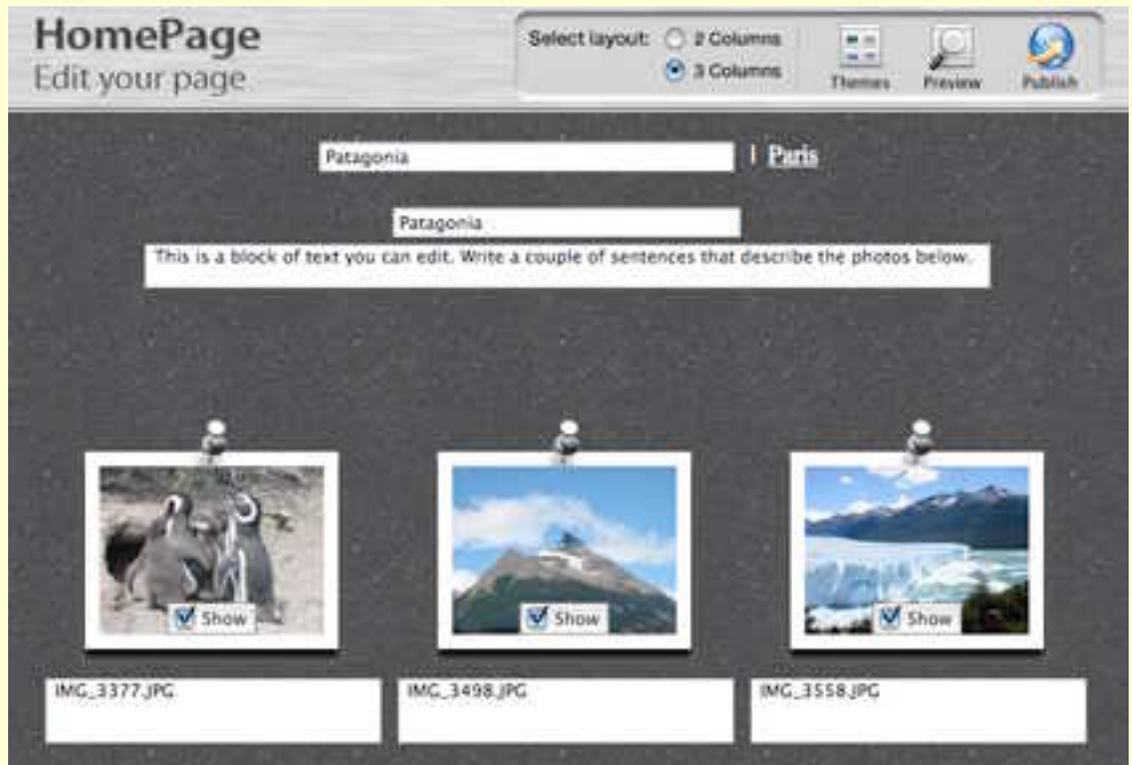
Once you've chosen a starting point for your first Web page, it's time to customize it.

Customize your page

When you click on a theme, HomePage displays a form where you can add more information. Your options vary from one theme to the next—you may see a button to select a file, photo, or movie, for example, or have one or more text fields to fill in (**Figure 51** for an example). Generally, however, each page provides at least these options:

- **Title:** The topmost box is usually the page's title, which will appear in the browser's title bar when someone visits the page.
- **Headline:** Most pages have a headline, which is a title that appears on the page itself, usually in large letters near the top.
- **Counter:** To keep track of how many people have visited this particular page, check the Show checkbox near the bottom of the form, next to the box displaying the number 0. When this option is selected, a counter appears on the page, displaying the number of times it has been visited.
- **Send Me a Message:** Check the Show checkbox by this button to display it at the bottom of the page. When a visitor clicks the button, a feedback form (sort of an abbreviated version of the iCards interface) appears. This provides a way for someone to send a message from your Web page without the need to publicize your email address (which could lead to spam).
- Photo album pages also include a pair of Layout radio buttons; select 2 Columns or 3 Columns, according to your taste.

FIGURE 51



Each page has several fields, such as captions and titles, which you can use to customize it.

Make your selections and fill in the text fields—and don't worry, you can always change your Web page later. To see what your page will look like on the Web (without actually publishing it), click the Preview icon at the top of the page. When previewing a page, this icon changes to Edit; click it again to make changes. If you want to choose a different theme within the same category (keeping all your other selections and text), click the Themes icon.

Publish and announce your page

When you're satisfied with your theme and page contents and you like the way the page looks in Preview mode, click the Publish icon at the top. Your page becomes available on the Web immediately, and HomePage displays the URL for your new page. (Click the URL to visit the live page yourself.)

You should probably make a note of your new page's URL. To send friends or family members a note that includes a link to the new page, click the Announce Site button.

Edit, add, or delete pages

Your first .Mac Web page, by default, lives at the top level of your Sites folder. (Its title will depend on which template you used to create it.) HomePage also places a file there called `index.html`. Its purpose is to serve as a jumping-off point for all your pages. So if you go to <http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/> (or, for that matter, <http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/index.html>) and there is just one page in your Web site—regardless of that page’s name—the index file will redirect you to that page. (If you have more than one page, the top of each page contains links to all the other main pages.)

NOTE The automatic redirection and navigational links apply only to pages created by HomePage, not to pages you create and upload manually.

After you’ve created your first page, the HomePage page on the .Mac Web site also changes; a new area, which I call the *site browser*, appears at the top (**Figure 52**) that lists your pages.

FIGURE 52



You can use the site browser at the top of the HomePage page to modify individual pages within your site.

When you select a page in this list, a thumbnail of the site’s theme appears, along with information about its category and modification date. If you want to revise a page (choose a different theme, change

some captions, rearrange photos, or whatever), click the Edit button; you'll go right back to the view you saw when you first created it.

To add another page, either select a theme (just as you did when creating your first page) or click the Add (or Add Page) button under the site browser—and *then* select a theme.

TIP The page shown in bold is the default page, which appears initially when someone visits your site. To change the default page, drag another page to the top of the list.

To delete a page, select it and click Delete. You'll see a warning that deleting this page is permanent and cannot be undone. Think seriously about this warning, and then click Yes.

Edit, add, or delete sites

Although your main .Mac Web site can contain any number of pages, you may wish to have multiple sites—perhaps with a different theme or subject matter for each. (If you have multiple sites, you can also selectively protect the content of particular sites with passwords; see [Protect a site with a password](#), ahead.) Each site occupies its own subfolder within your Sites folder.

To create a new site, follow these steps:

1. Click the Add Site (or Add Another Site) button below the site browser.
2. Enter a name for your new site (which will correspond to the name of the folder created in your Sites folder).
3. If you want to protect the site with a password, check the On box and enter a password. (You can return and do this later, if you wish.)
4. Click Create Site.

HomePage creates a new, empty site, which will be visible at <http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/site-name/> once you add some content to it. (Repeat this procedure as often as you like to create additional sites.)

After you've added a site, it appears in the first column of the site browser (refer back to **Figure 52** on the previous page), which functions much like the Finder's column view—sites in the first column,

pages and folders on that site in the second column, and so on; clicking on a page provides info about that page in the next column.

Your next step is to add one or more pages to the site. To do this, select the site name in the Sites list and then follow the procedure described earlier ([Edit, add, or delete pages](#)) for adding new pages.

TIP You can move a page from one site to another within the site browser using drag-and-drop.

To delete a site, select it and click Delete. As when deleting a page, you'll see a warning that deleting this page is permanent, cannot be undone, and deletes *all* the pages within the site. Think seriously about this warning, and then click Yes.

Protect a site with a password

I mentioned earlier that when you create a new site from within HomePage, you're presented with the opportunity to protect that site with a password. However, you can also add such protection to an existing site. To do so, select the site in the site browser and click the Protect This Site button. Check the On checkbox, enter a password, and then click Apply Changes.

NOTE You may not use the password **guest** to protect a site.

You can also make a particular site the default site for people who visit *http://homepage.mac.com/member-name* by checking the Make This My Start Site box and clicking Apply Changes. (You can designate a site as the default without protecting it with a password.)

WARNING! Protecting a site with a password does not automatically protect items in your Public folder. If a Web page links to files in your Public folder, those files are still accessible to the public unless you also protect your Public folder with a password (see [Protect your Public folder with a password](#)).

When someone attempts to visit a password-protected site, a password prompt (like the one in **Figure 53**) appears. Only by entering the correct password can someone gain access to the site.

FIGURE 53



When someone visits a page in a password-protected site, this prompt appears, requiring a password to enter.

To turn off password protection later, or to change the password, select the site in the site browser and click the This Site Is Protected button.

WARNING! The procedure I describe here for protecting sites with a password applies only to HomePage. I cover iWeb just ahead.

Create a Site Using iWeb

HomePage has been, and continues to be, a great way to create Web sites without ever having to mess around with HTML. But if you have a copy of iLife '06 or later, you now have an even better way: iWeb. Like HomePage, iWeb makes it easy to create attractive Web sites. Unlike HomePage, iWeb runs directly on your Mac—and it gives you additional options, such as creating blogs, adding podcasts directly from GarageBand, and adding content from iPhoto, iMovie, or iTunes with just a click or two.

You can use iWeb to create a Web site and upload it to any Web hosting provider, but in this book I cover an easier approach: publishing your site directly to .Mac.

Besides creating a site in iWeb (see [Publish a Web site on .Mac](#) and [Publish a blog on .Mac](#), just ahead), you can also start in iPhoto, iMovie, or GarageBand and send your content to iWeb. I describe that approach as well; see [Share Your Media from iLife](#).

SIDEBAR JOE'S GUIDE TO THE iBUZZWORDS

iLife '06 is, as we say in the industry, fully buzzword-compliant: it contains features that allow you to create all the new kinds of content you've been hearing about in the news, such as *blogs*, *RSS feeds*, *podcasts*, and *video podcasts*, not to mention an invention of Apple's called *photocasts*. But if you haven't kept up with the evolution of the English language, some of these terms may be unfamiliar. Here's what they mean:

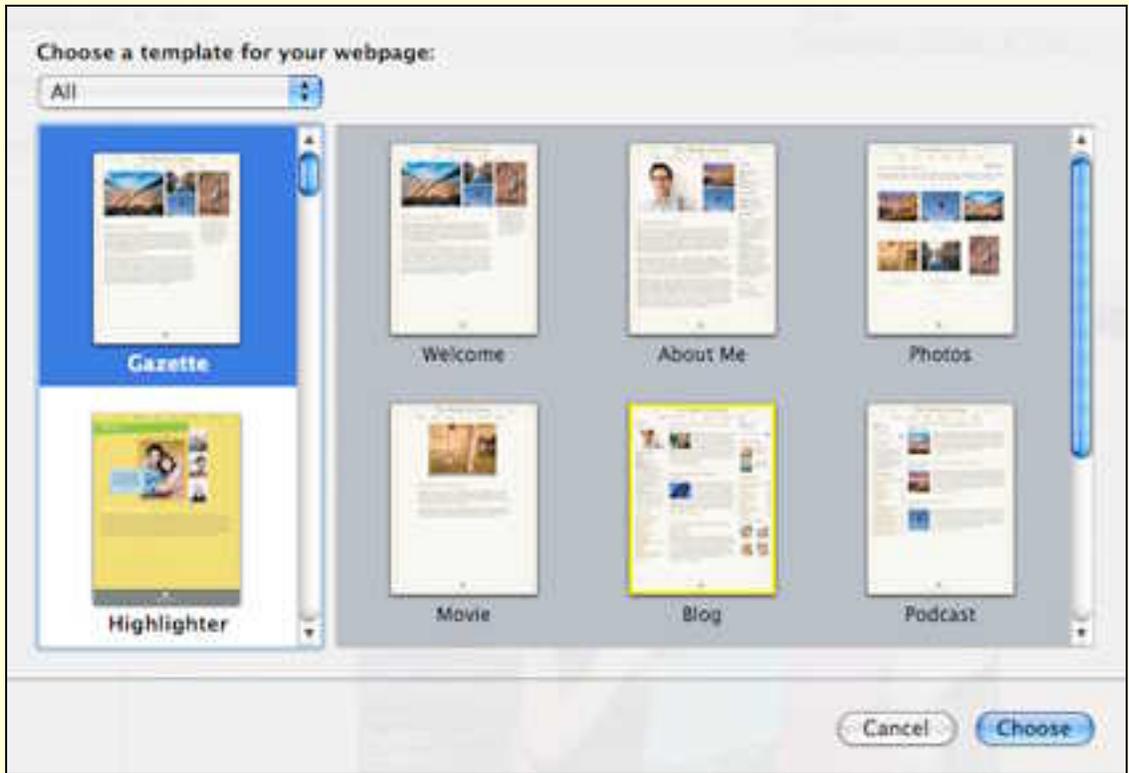
- **Blog:** Short for *weblog*; a Web site consisting of a journal, news reports, or other regularly posted articles, usually with entries listed in reverse-chronological order.
- **RSS feed:** RSS stands for either "Rich Site Summary," "RDF Site Summary," or "Really Simple Syndication," depending on which source you consult. An *RSS feed* is a way of packaging and delivering information such as blog entries over the Internet so that subscribers—who may view the feed using a Web browser such as Safari, or a specialized RSS reader—can easily see which articles they've read and which are new. The majority of blogs (including ones you create yourself in iWeb) offer RSS feeds.
- **Podcast:** A downloadable audio recording you can put on your iPod (or other portable media player). Generally, podcasts are delivered along with a blog post, so that you can click to listen in a Web browser. If you subscribe to the blog via RSS, the podcast downloads automatically when the article containing it appears. In other words, it's very much like sending an email attachment, except in this case the blog's publisher sends the attachment to everyone who may be subscribing at any given time.
- **Video podcast:** A podcast in the form of a movie, rather than an audio file. Also known as a *vlog* or *vodcast*.
- **Photocast:** A *photocast* is nothing more than an RSS feed for a certain collection of photos. Other people can subscribe to that feed using a special URL—but instead of seeing text, they'll see your photos. Add photos to an album you've photocasted, and the subscribers can instantly see what's new. In addition, iPhoto itself can act as an RSS reader for photocasts. So you can both publish and subscribe to collections of pictures without having to use a separate application.

Publish a Web site on .Mac

To create a Web site using iWeb, follow these steps:

1. Open iWeb. The first thing you'll see is a dialog (**Figure 54**) listing a variety of templates. (If iWeb is already open, click the **+** button at the bottom of the window to display the templates.)

FIGURE 54



Every page you create in iWeb starts with a template. Choose an overall style from the list on the left, then a specific page type.

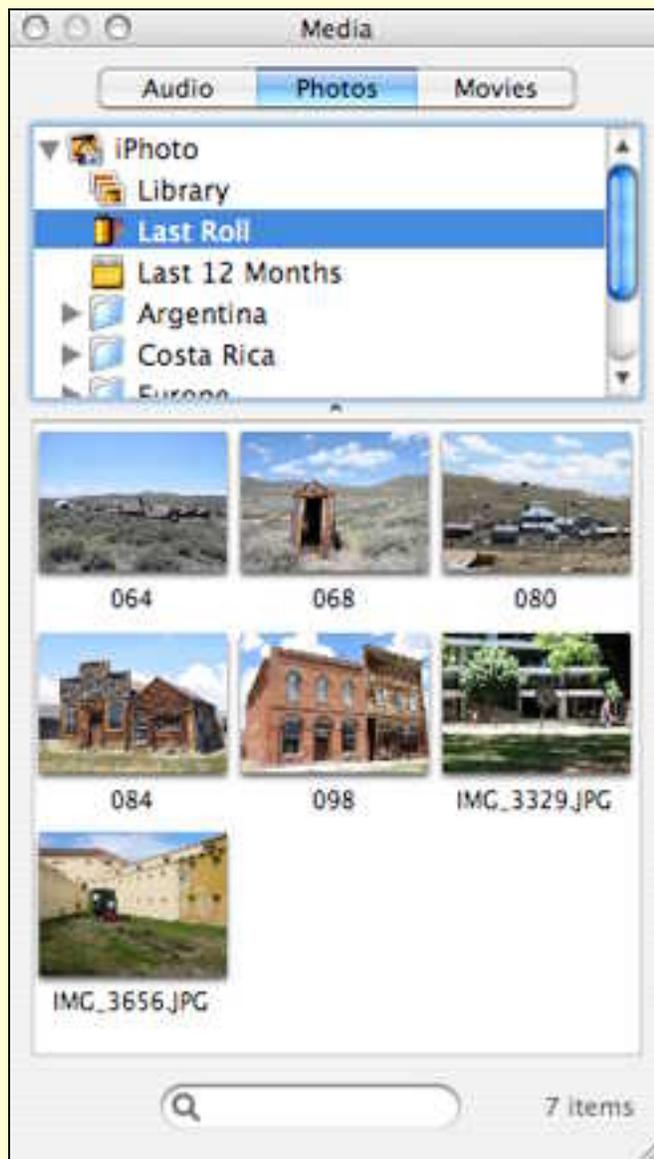
iLife '08 NEW iWEB TEMPLATES

In iWeb '08, Apple has provided new and redesigned templates, and the scrolling list on the left features smaller thumbnails.

2. Select a template theme from the list on the left (optionally narrowing the list of options by choosing a category from the pop-up menu), and then select a page type on the right. Click Choose. iWeb opens the template you selected, with placeholder pictures and text.

3. You may see a floating palette with Media in its title bar; this is called the Media Browser (**Figure 55**). If you don't see it, choose View > Show Media Browser.

FIGURE 55



The Media Browser gives you instant access to your iTunes music, iPhoto photos, and iMovie movies—right from within iWeb.

iLife '08 UPDATED MEDIA BROWSER

The Media Browser in iLife '08 shows new iPhoto categories such as Events and Flagged.

4. To replace the placeholder photos, locate a photo on the Photos tab of the Media Browser and drag it onto the photo you want to replace. To add a photo to any other part of the page, select it and drag it to the desired location. You can then resize or reposition it to taste.

NOTE If you have never added any photos to iPhoto, an alert appears when you first display the Photos tab telling you to do so.

NOTE You can use the same procedure to add music from your iTunes library (on the Audio tab of the Media Browser) or movies from iMovie (on the Movies tab). Or, if you have media elsewhere on your hard disk, you can simply drag it in from the Finder.

5. To replace the placeholder text, double-click a paragraph and type in your own text. To add text in a new location on the page, click the Text button at the bottom of the window. You can resize or reposition any text box simply by clicking and dragging.
6. Repeat Steps 4 and 5 until you're satisfied with the page.
7. If you want to add more pages to your site, click the  button at the bottom of the window. Then repeat Steps 2–6. iWeb automatically places a link to every new page in your site in the navigational area at the top of each page.
8. When you're finished, choose File > Publish to .Mac.

iWeb uploads the page and its photos to your iDisk, and then displays a dialog with the site's URL and buttons you may use to visit the site in your default browser or send an email message announcing the site. If you later make changes to the site, choose File > Publish to .Mac again; iWeb uploads only new or changed pages.

NOTE Web sites you create in iWeb have URLs that follow this pattern:
http://web.mac.com/member-name/iWeb/Site/site-name.html

iWeb offers a number of additional options I can't cover here. To learn how to go beyond the basics, consult iWeb's Help menu.

SIDEBAR MASTER OF YOUR DOMAIN

If you'd like a shorter or more personal URL for your site than one beginning with "homepage.mac.com," you can register a domain of your own and have it redirected to your .Mac site. Previously, this took a lot of effort and produced unreliable results, but starting in August 2007, Apple officially gave .Mac the capability to use other domains.

With this feature activated, .Mac becomes a Web host for your own domain. In other words, type **www.your-domain-name.com** into a browser and up pops your .Mac-hosted Web site, created in iWeb and stored on your iDisk. Note that you cannot use .Mac to host email from another domain name, and that only sites created in iWeb '08 or higher (not in HomePage or another application) work with your personal domain.

To set this up, follow these steps:

1. Register a domain name (if you haven't done so already) with any of the numerous registrars. If you need advice with this step, I recommend reading *Take Control of Your Domain Names* (<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/domain-names.html>).
2. Go to www.mac.com, log in, and click your member name in the navigation bar. Reenter your login information if prompted to do so, and then click the Personal Domain button.
3. Click Add Domain. Enter (and confirm) your domain name and then click Continue.
4. Following the instructions provided, visit your registrar's Web site and set up an alias (technically called a CNAME) for "www" that points to **web.mac.com**.
5. Return to www.mac.com as in Step 2, and click Continue to finish setting up your domain name.

From now on, anyone going to your domain name in a Web browser will see your site that's hosted on .Mac.

Publish a blog on .Mac

In addition to conventional Web sites, iWeb can create blogs, which include an RSS feed (and a button to subscribe) and an Archive page listing previous posts. The process for creating a blog is very much like that for creating any other Web page. For beginning bloggers,

iWeb is perhaps the simplest way to get a great-looking blog onto the Web quickly. That said, before you take the plunge, you should be aware of a few limitations of any blog published on .Mac:

- .Mac blogs do not support *trackbacks* (comments about your blog post that were originally posted on other sites).
- Although your blog can include a search box, it cannot display an arbitrary list of posts (beyond what appears on the Archive page).
- If you create your blog with iWeb, you cannot assign your posts to categories, include a calendar showing recent blog entry dates, or add other custom features to your blog.

iLife '08 CUSTOM FEATURES

In iWeb '08, you can easily add custom features, such as YouTube videos and Flickr photos, to your Web site using the Insert > HTML Snippet command; you can also add Google AdSense blocks and Google Maps using Insert > Google AdSense Ad and Insert > Google Map, respectively.

If you're still using iLife '06, you can get many of these features with the \$13 iWeb Enhancer (<http://web.mac.com/cbrantly/iWeb/Software/iWeb%20Enhancer.html>)

NOTE iWeb version 1.1 (part of iLife '06) supports reader comments and searching of archived posts, but these features work *only* if you publish your blog to .Mac, not if you upload it manually to another server.

The \$10 iComment makes it possible to publish your blog to another server and still include comments (<http://web.mac.com/cbrantly/iWeb/Software/iComment.html>).

Assuming these limitations cause no problems for you, follow these steps to create a blog with iWeb:

1. Open iWeb. A list of templates appears. (If iWeb is already open, click the  button at the bottom of the window.)
2. Select a template theme from the list on the left, and then select a page type on the right. For a blog, you must select either a Blog template or, if you expect to include audio or video podcasts in your blog, a Podcast template. Click Choose. iWeb opens the template you selected, with placeholder pictures and text.
3. Type in a title for your first blog post. Then double-click the placeholder text below it and enter the text of your article.
4. Using the same procedure I described earlier (see [Publish a Web Site on .Mac](#)), replace the graphics, add more media, or make any other desired changes to the page.
5. If you wish your blog to support user comments, open iWeb's Site Inspector palette (if it's not visible, choose View > Show Inspector). Go to the RSS tab and check the Allow Comments checkbox. If you want commenters to be able to upload files (such as graphics), also check Allow Attachments.

TIP If you don't want a photo in your blog entry, delete the placeholder photo, then drag the text boxes for the entry's title, date, and contents to the spot where the photo used to be (and resize if you wish).

6. When you're finished, choose File > Publish to .Mac.

iWeb uploads the page and its photos to your iDisk, and then shows a dialog with the site's URL and buttons you can optionally use to visit the site in your default browser or send an email message announcing the site. To add another entry, select the blog's Entries page in iWeb's Site Organizer. Click the Add Blog Entry button and repeat Steps 3–5.

TIP OTHER .MAC BLOGGING OPTIONS

In addition to iWeb, several third-party software packages provide blogging capabilities on .Mac. Although none of these applications comes close to providing the flexibility of the major blogging packages, such as WordPress or Movable Type, they're easy to use and include some unique and interesting features.

- **Sandvox:** This application from Karelia uses a template-based system similar to iWeb's to create Web pages and blogs. It has built-in support for comments and trackbacks via the HaloScan service (<http://www.haloscan.com/>). Sandvox can publish sites to .Mac or another Web hosting provider. Regular version, \$49; Pro version, \$79 (<http://www.sandvox.com/>).
- **Blog.Mac:** The \$30 Blog.Mac supports using your iSight camera as a live webcam, and updating a blog to show your current iTunes track (<http://www.largemouthsoftware.com/blogmac.html>).
- **iBlog:** This \$20 program supports multiple blogs and categories; can easily include media from iTunes, iPhoto, and iMovie; and functions as a basic RSS reader (<http://www.lifli.com/iBlog/>).
- **Snippet Mind:** This \$20 basic, no-frills journal program can publish entries to your iDisk as a blog and copy them to an iPod (<http://zykloid.com/snippetmind/>).

Protect an iWeb site with a password

Ordinarily, sites you create with iWeb are accessible to anyone who knows (or can guess) the URL. However, for any given site, you can restrict access to those who know a user name and password of your choice. To protect a site with a password, follow these steps:

1. Open iWeb's Site Inspector palette (if it's not visible, choose View > Show Inspector).
2. Go to the Password tab and check Make My Published Site Private.
3. Choose File > Publish to .Mac.

WARNING! The procedure I describe here for password-protecting sites applies only to iWeb. For HomePage, see [Protect a site with a password](#).

Share Your Media from iLife

iWeb provides more-powerful and easier-to-use Web publishing capabilities than HomePage. It integrates tightly with not only iPhoto and iMovie, but also GarageBand—giving you even more ways to share media with just a few clicks. Also, iPhoto 6 offers a unique way to share photos: *photocasting* (see [Work with photocasts in iPhoto 6](#)), plus a way to publish your photos as a screensaver without a separate program (see the sidebar [Mac Slides](#), a few pages ahead).

However, if you prefer the HomePage templates, or want to retain the option of editing your pages in a Web browser, you'll have to go through additional steps to upload your media from iPhoto or iMovie to your iDisk and then build your site using HomePage.

NOTE Another reason you might choose HomePage over iWeb: HomePage permits you to change a photo album's template after you've published it. In iWeb, you must re-create the album from scratch.

Publish photos from iPhoto

To create a photo album on your .Mac Web site from within iPhoto, follow these steps:

1. Select one or more photos (or, if you wish, an entire album—but note that you can send only 99 photos to iWeb at a time).
2. Choose Share > Send to iWeb > Photo Page. (If you want the photo(s) to appear as part of a blog entry, instead choose Share > Send to iWeb > Blog.) iWeb opens.
3. Select a template and click Choose. iWeb imports your images and creates a new page with thumbnails of your photos and a Start Slideshow button.
4. If you wish, add (or change) captions, drag photos to rearrange them, and modify other information—such as the page's title and introductory text.

5. To create additional pages with more photos, repeat Steps 1–4.
6. Choose File > Publish to .Mac.

iWeb uploads the page and its photos to your iDisk, and then shows a dialog with the site's URL and buttons you can optionally use to visit the site in your default browser or send an email message announcing the site.

NOTE If you want to create a photo album on your .Mac site from iPhoto *without* going through iWeb, follow these steps instead:

1. Select your photos or a photo album.
2. Choose File > Export, and click Web Page.
3. Select the options you want and click Export.
4. Select the Sites folder on your iDisk as the destination.

Work with photocasts in iPhoto 6

iPhoto 6 gives you yet another way of sharing your photos using your .Mac account—a process Apple calls *photocasting*. (See the sidebar [Joe's Guide to the iBuzzwords](#), earlier.)

iLife '08 OUT WITH PHOTOCASTS, IN WITH WEB GALLERIES

In iPhoto '08, although you can still *subscribe* to photocasts created with iPhoto 6, you can't create new ones. (And, to continue publishing existing photocasts with iPhoto '08, you must supply your subscribers with a new URL.) Instead, you can create Web Galleries, which feature much spiffier graphics when viewed on a Web page, and to which other people can (with your permission) upload their own photos. Plus, like photocasts, Web Galleries include RSS feeds anyone can use to subscribe to the photos (via iPhoto or in any RSS reader).

Publish a photocast

To publish a photocast in iPhoto 6, follow these steps:

1. Select a photo album.
2. Choose Share > Photocast. A dialog appears with additional options (**Figure 56**).

FIGURE 56



Choose a photo size, automatic update settings, and optional password protection for your photocast in this dialog.

3. Select a size for your photos from the pop-up menu. Remember that the larger the size, the longer it will take not only to publish the photos, but for subscribers to download them. Medium or Large are usually good choices.
4. Check Automatically Update When Album Changes to update the photocast immediately when you make changes to the published album. (Updates to the photocast may take several minutes from the time you make changes.) If this box is unchecked, you can update the photocast manually at any time by clicking the  icon next to its name in the Source list.
5. If you wish to restrict access to the photocast to those who have a special user name and password, check Require Name and Password and fill in the Name and Password fields.
6. Click Publish.

iPhoto uploads the photos and supporting files to your iDisk. When it's finished, it displays a dialog with the photocast's URL and a button you can optionally click to send an email message announcing the photocast. (If you ever forget the photocast's URL, select the

album and look in the Information pane at the bottom of the Source list; if the pane isn't showing, click the  button in the bottom left corner of the window.) An album that has been photocast displays a  icon by its name in the Source list.

NOTE iPhoto 6 publishes photocasts *only* to .Mac, not to other Web sites.

Subscribe to a photocast

To subscribe to a photocast using iPhoto 6, choose File > Subscribe to Photocast (Command-U), enter the photocast's URL—or, if someone has sent you an email message announcing a photocast, simply click the link in the message—and click Subscribe.

By default, iPhoto checks for updates to photocasts once per day. To change the frequency, choose iPhoto > Preferences, click the Photocasts button in the toolbar, and choose a different frequency from the Check for New Photos pop-up menu. Or, to force an immediate update, click the  icon next to the photocast in the Source list.

TIP iPhoto 6 can display the photos from *any* RSS feed—not just a photocast (though not the accompanying text, if any). For example, to display the photos from Engadget, a gadget blog, choose File > Subscribe and enter `http://www.engadget.com/rss.xml`.

To subscribe to a photocast using another RSS reader, follow the software's instructions for adding a new RSS feed and type or paste in the photocast's URL.

Cancel photocast publication

If you decide you no longer want a published photocast to be available, you can cancel it by following these steps:

1. Choose iPhoto > Preferences.
2. Click the Photocasts button in the toolbar.
3. Select the photocast you want to cancel.
4. Click Stop Publishing. A confirmation appears; click Stop Publishing again.

iPhoto removes the published photos from your iDisk.

TIP If you create a site in iWeb, you can add a link to a podcast (so visitors can subscribe—using iPhoto 6 or another RSS reader—with one click). You can also add photos from a podcast (one you’ve published or one to which you’ve subscribed in iPhoto 6) to a page.

To link to a podcast on a Web page in iWeb, follow these steps:

1. Click the Media button in the toolbar to display the Media Browser and click Photos.
2. Select the podcast in the list and drag it to an empty spot on a Web page.

To put photos from a podcast on a page in iWeb, follow these steps:

1. Click the Media button in the toolbar to display the Media Browser and click Photos.
2. If you’re using a Photo template, select the podcast in the list and drag it to the photo grid. If no photo grid is on the page, hold down Option and drag the podcast to an empty spot on the Web page, and then rearrange the photos as you wish.

If the podcast is updated, your Web page will not change automatically; you must add the photos again and republish the site.

TIP If you’re not satisfied with the photo album themes available in iPhoto, you can add a new set of themes—plus the capability to create your own templates—with a \$20 shareware plug-in for iPhoto called BetterHTMLExport. This plug-in also gives you much greater control over the resulting pages, though it doesn’t publish files to your iDisk—you’ll have to upload the exported files manually (<http://www.droolingcat.com/software/betterhtmlexport/>).

Another plug-in, called CustomHTMLExport, also enables you to create your own themes. It’s not as versatile as BetterHTMLExport, but it’s free (<http://www.uweb.ucsb.edu/~dstaudigel/CustomHTMLExport.html>).

Be aware, however, that once you’ve published a photo album with one of these tools, you may not be able to edit it later using Home-Page or iWeb—you’ll have to use the same tool you used originally.

SIDEBAR MAC SLIDES

Yet another way of sharing your photos is to turn them into a screen saver that other .Mac members can display on their Mac running Mac OS X 10.2 or later.

To do this in iPhoto 6 or higher, select some photos, choose Share > .Mac Slides, and follow the on-screen instructions.

If you don't have iLife '06 or later, you can use Mac Slides Publisher (available on your iDisk in **Software/Apple Software**). After installing it, drag one or more photos from iPhoto or the Finder and drop it on the Mac Slides Publisher icon in your Applications folder. Mac Slides Publisher should *not* be already running when you do this.)

The selected photos will be optimized for screen saver use and uploaded to your iDisk; when the process ends, you'll see a dialog offering to send an email "to your family and friends" announcing your slideshow. The photos are now available for use as a screen saver to anyone who knows your .Mac member name. (Note that each .Mac account can publish only one set of screen-saver photos at a time; if you upload a new set, the previous one is deleted.)

To set up Mac OS X's screen saver to use .Mac slides (your own or someone else's), follow these steps:

1. Go to the Screen Saver tab of Desktop & Screen Saver System Preferences.
2. In the Screen Savers list, scroll down to .Mac; select it.
3. Click Options. In the dialog that appears, enter someone's .Mac member name in the field provided.
4. Select any Display Options you wish to use for your screen saver. Then click OK.

The next time your screen saver activates, it displays the slides from the selected .Mac account. You can set up screen savers for more than one .Mac member, though each member can have only one set of slides; to add another .Mac member's slides, repeat this procedure. You can temporarily disable display of a member's slides by unchecking the checkbox by that member's name; to remove a member's slides from the list permanently, select the name and click Delete.

Publish movies from iMovie HD 6

The process for putting movies from iMovie HD 6 (part of iLife '06) on the Web (thus creating a *video podcast*; see the sidebar [Joe's Guide to the iBuzzwords](#), earlier) is very similar to that for publishing photos from iPhoto 6.

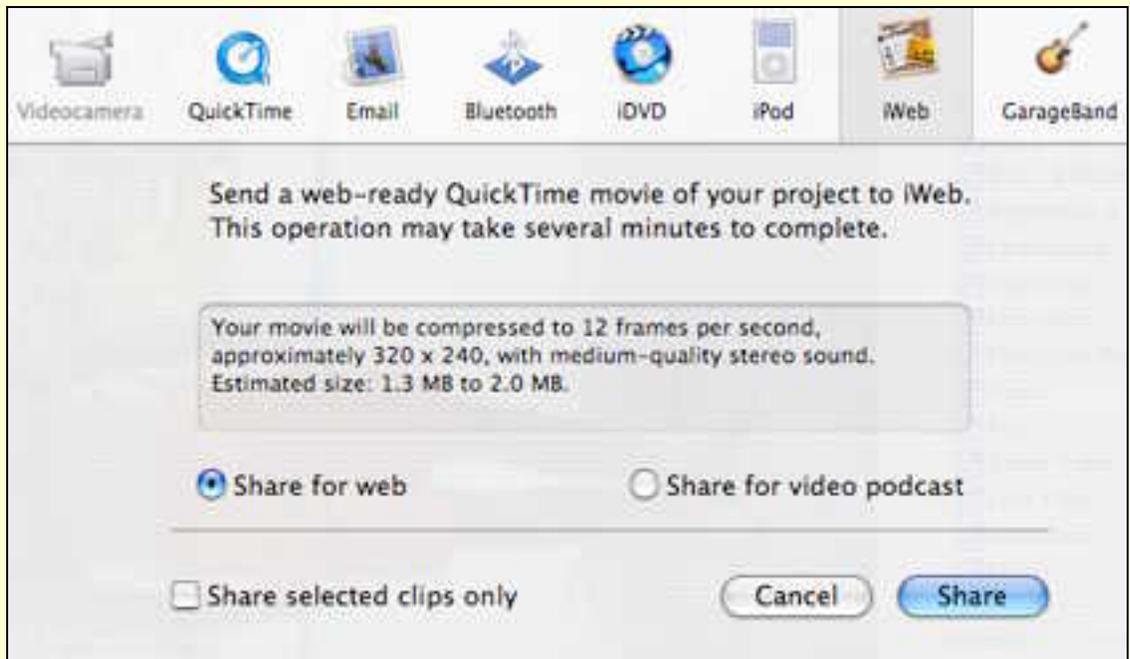
iLife '08 A WHOLE NEW iMOVIE

iMovie '08 is a completely different program from iMovie HD 6. It now offers a way to publish Web Galleries to your .Mac Web site in much the same way as iPhoto '08 (choose Share > .Mac Web Gallery). The process described here for sending content to iWeb no longer exists; when working in iWeb '08, you can add iMovie content using the Media Browser.

Follow these steps:

1. Select one or more video clips (or none, if you want to share the entire movie).
2. Choose Share > iWeb. A dialog appears (**Figure 57**).

FIGURE 57



Select options for movie sharing in this dialog.

3. Select either Share for Web (smaller movies, lower quality) or Share for Video Podcast (larger movies, higher quality).

4. If you want to export only the selected clip(s), which will be concatenated into a single movie, select the Share Selected Clips Only checkbox.
5. Click Share. iMovie compresses your movie and iWeb opens.
6. Select a template and click Choose. Your options depend on the format you selected:
 - If you selected Share for Web, you can choose any Movie template.
 - If you selected Share for Video Podcast, you can select a Blog template or a Podcast template.

iWeb imports your movie and creates a new page.

7. Enter text to accompany your movie, and if you wish, modify other information—such as the page’s title.
6. Choose File > Publish to .Mac.

iWeb uploads the page and movie to your iDisk, and then displays a dialog with the site’s URL and buttons you can optionally use to visit the site in your default browser or send an email message announcing the site.

NOTE To create a page with a movie on your .Mac site from iMovie HD 6 *without* going through iWeb, follow these steps instead:

1. Select one or more video clips (or none, if you want to share the entire movie).
2. Choose File > Export, and choose Web (or another compression option, if you prefer) from the Compress Movie For pop-up menu.
3. If you want to export only the selected clip(s), which will be concatenated into a single movie, select the Share Selected Clips Only checkbox.
4. Click Share.
5. Select the Movies folder on your iDisk as the destination.
6. Use HomePage to create a new page with the movie (see [Create a Site using HomePage](#)).

Publish a podcast with GarageBand and iWeb

Creating a podcast (see the sidebar [Joe's Guide to the iBuzzwords](#), earlier) basically involves recording an audio file, optionally editing it (for example, to add music or sound effects, or to remove mistakes), uploading it to a server, and putting a special line of HTML code in a blog post so that RSS readers can see it and download it. By using the combination of GarageBand and iWeb (both components of iLife '06 and later), you can do all these tasks without knowing anything about the underlying processes. Just click a few buttons, and your recording automagically appears on your blog.

TIP I cover only the very basics of creating a podcast with GarageBand here. For much greater detail, see Andy Williams Affleck's *Take Control of Podcasting on the Mac* (<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/podcasting-mac.html>).

To create a podcast, you'll need a microphone. Although many Macs have built-in microphones, you'll get better results from an external microphone. Some microphones require adapters to connect to your Mac. The directions that follow assume that you've already successfully connected a microphone and configured GarageBand to use it.

iLife '08 A BIGGER GARAGE

GarageBand '08 offers lots of interesting new features, but most of them pertain to making music, not podcasts. As a result, the procedure for making podcasts is almost identical to that used in GarageBand '06.

To create a simple podcast episode, follow these steps:

1. Open GarageBand and click the New Podcast Episode button.
2. Type in a name for your episode, choose a location to store it, and click Create.
3. Select the Male Voice or Female Voice track, as appropriate, and click the Record button. When you're done recording, click the Record button again.

4. To add music, sound effects, or other audio embellishments, drag them from the Loop Browser to the desired location in your recording. (If the Loop Browser isn't visible, choose Control > Show Loop Browser [Command-L].)
5. Choose Share > Send Podcast to iWeb. GarageBand mixes down your recording, converts it to the correct format, and opens iWeb.
6. In iWeb, choose a Blog or Podcast template, and click Choose.
7. Enter text to accompany your podcast, and if you wish, modify other information—such as the page's title.
8. Choose File > Publish to .Mac.

iWeb uploads your podcast, along with the new blog entry, to your iDisk, and then displays a dialog with the site's URL and buttons you can optionally use to visit the site in your default browser or send an email message announcing the site.

Create a Site Using Your Own Tools

If you find both HomePage and iWeb too limiting for your needs, you can create Web pages of any size or complexity using other software, and then simply copy those pages to the appropriate folder on your iDisk to publish them—your Sites folder, if you want to have the pages appear in your main .Mac Web site, or a subfolder of the Sites folder if you want to have them appear as part of a new site.

Professional designers often use tools such as Adobe Dreamweaver to create HTML pages. Those who prefer to work with raw HTML code (including yours truly) may opt for a high-end text editor such as Bare Bones Software's BBEdit (a commercial application) or TextWrangler (a free version with fewer HTML-related features). Even a simple application such as TextEdit or a command-line program such as pico or vi can produce HTML files (since they're stored as plain text), but you won't benefit from syntax coloring, automatic indentation, and other niceties found in dedicated editors.

TIP If you specify a character set in the head section of your HTML files (or if your authoring tool does), make sure you use UTF-8. Other character sets can cause problems with the .Mac Web server. If your file uses a different encoding, the .Mac server may attempt to convert it for you—with potentially undesirable results.

I'm not about to explain the ins and outs of HTML here; if you want to learn how to create Web pages, pick up a book from your local library or locate one of the thousands of tutorials on the Web using Google. I do, however, want to point out a few important things about creating Web pages that will be hosted on your iDisk:

- To include media files on your site (such as photos), CSS (cascading style sheet) files, or other external files that you'll reference in your Web pages, you have two choices for how to store them on your iDisk:
 - You can store the files in existing folders at the top level of your iDisk—such as Pictures or Movies (or subfolders within these folders), in which case you must reference the files using tags containing their complete path, with a period before the name of the top-level folder; for example, *http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/.Pictures/folder-name/photo.jpeg*.
 - You can place the files somewhere within your iDisk's Sites folder, in which case you can reference the files with a regular relative URL, such as *subfolder-name/photo.jpeg*.
- Even if you do your own coding, the .Mac Web site does not support server-side programming languages such as perl or PHP. You can, however, include JavaScript code within your Web pages if you wish, since that code executes on the client computer rather than on the server.
- To make a file the home page for a given site—so that it appears when someone enters a URL like *http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/site-name/* (without specifying a particular document)—give it the name **index.html**.

- Any file you place in the Sites folder or one of its subfolders is immediately available on the Web; you needn't do anything special to "turn them on" or inform the .Mac servers of their existence. Their URLs will be of the form:
 - *http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/file-name* (for files at the top level of the Sites folder)

or

- *http://homepage.mac.com/member-name/folder-name/file-name* (for files in a folder called *folder-name* inside the Sites folder)

However...

- The only way to protect a site in your Sites folder with a password, or to add a .Mac counter or Send Me a Message button to a page you've created, is to use the HomePage interface. This gets a little weird with custom pages, but if you really want to do it, here's how. After you've created and uploaded a site, follow these steps:
 1. On the HomePage page, click the Advanced tab (at the bottom).
 2. Click the External HTML icon.
 3. Navigate to a page (any page) in the site you've created. (Note that files named *index.html* do not appear in the list; you must have at least one other HTML file, with a different name, to make this work.) Select it and click Choose.
 4. A preview of the page appears. If you wish, select the Show checkbox next to the counter or Send Me a Message button.
 5. Click Publish. The next page displays the URL for the page you've just specified. (If you added a counter or Send Me a Message button, HomePage adds some HTML code to your document.)
 6. Click Return to HomePage. You should now see that the page you just selected (minus its *.html* extension) appears in the Pages list. Now click the Add Another Site link.

7. In the Site Name field, enter the *exact* name of the folder you uploaded—the one containing the file you specified in Step 3.
8. If you wish to password-protect the site, select the On checkbox and enter a password.
9. Click Create Site.

The site you uploaded manually now appears in the Sites list at the top of the HomePage page; you can now use the regular HomePage controls to add, remove, or change the site password if you wish.

But notice that the page you added in Step 3 *also* appears in the site bearing your .Mac member name, whereas if you select your new site in the Sites list, none of its pages appears in the Pages list. Just ignore this behavior; this oddity is one of the side effects of password-protecting a manually uploaded site.

COLLABORATE USING .MAC GROUPS

One of the least publicized features in .Mac is .Mac Groups. The central focus of a .Mac group is a private Web site that's accessible only to group members (those invited, or approved, by the group's owner). This Web site includes:

- **A message board:** Group members can post messages that are visible to the entire group. Because members can also send messages to the group via email—and receive copies by email—the message board also functions as a private mailing list.
- **Announcements:** A section of the group's home page is devoted to announcements that require special attention.
- **A shared calendar:** Using iCal, the group's owner can publish a calendar of group activities to the site. Members can then view the calendar on the Web or subscribe via iCal.
- **Group Web pages:** Group members can create Web pages using HomePage or iWeb that are available only to other group members—including photo albums and file-sharing pages.
- **Shared iDisk Space:** The group has its own iDisk space (an adjustable amount taken from the owner's iDisk quota), which members can access using a Web browser, a WebDAV client, or the built-in WebDAV capabilities of Mac OS X or Windows.
- **Slideshows:** Members can create a slideshow by uploading photos to a special folder on the group iDisk.
- **Link sharing:** The group's home page can list links to other sites of interest to the group.
- **A searchable member list:** Members can include their contact information, including personal Web sites, in their profiles; other members can then search this information and contact them directly.

In addition, you can customize the group's home page with photos or other images and modify the background color.

Why Use a Group?

Apple's marketing copy suggests that .Mac Groups are for families and groups of friends with common interests, such as a community sports team. But .Mac groups are better suited to some groups of people than to others.

One important consideration you should keep in mind is size. The maximum number of group members is 999, but in most cases, you'll never approach that figure. The group owner must personally invite (or at least approve) every member, and each member is free to create pages, post messages, or customize the group's home page. For this reason, a .Mac group works best for relatively small groups—say, 20 members or fewer (give or take a few). The more people you add, the greater your administrative hassles, and the greater the likelihood that the site will grow out of control.

Also, remember that .Mac groups are private. As tempting as it may be to use a group as a discussion board for your personal Web site or promotion of a community event, such applications are better suited to tools that permit anyone to participate. Use groups for situations where you personally know and trust the other members.

Examples of groups for which .Mac groups may be useful include:

- **Committees:** If you're on a committee in your company, religious group, or community organization, a .Mac group can be a great place to share ideas, keep track of committee meetings, and plan events.
- **Recreation and fitness:** Do you study yoga or t'ai chi? Take part in an aerobics class? Participate in a local geocaching or hiking club? If the group is small enough (and wired enough), a .Mac group can help facilitate communication and activities.
- **Arts and literature:** If you're part of a musical ensemble, dance troupe, book club, or writers' collective, you can use a .Mac group to keep up with the group's schedule and share information.
- **Ad hoc groups:** You don't have to belong to an organized club or group of some kind to use .Mac groups. An informal group of friends or family members can set up a group for planning a family reunion, discussing new movies or restaurants, or debating the latest political news.

To give you an example, I meet with about half a dozen close friends once a month for dinner and a discussion of our recent dreams. (Read more about Dream Groups at <http://itotd.com/articles/207/>.) We had been communicating with each other via email, but members frequently deleted messages with important information, or lost track of meeting times. I set up a .Mac group for our little dream group, which enabled us not only to post group-related messages and keep track of our schedule, but also to share links to relevant books, Web sites, seminars, and so on.

NOTE GROUP GOTCHAS

Before you start a group, be aware of some limitations and consequences of .Mac groups:

- You (or another group member) can invite anyone with an email address to join the group. However, in order to respond to the invitation and join, each invitee must use a .Mac ID. This does *not* mean each member must be a paid .Mac member! ([Add and Manage Group Members](#) has details.) But non-.Mac members will have to jump through an extra hoop or two to join.
- Groups use storage space on the group owner's iDisk for shared files (including photos and other media)—with a minimum of 30 MB (15 MB each for iDisk and messages). And if you want to start more than one .Mac group, remember that *each* group requires at least 30 MB of your iDisk space.

Create a Group

To start your own group, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click Groups on the navigation bar, and log in with your .Mac member name and password.
2. Click the large Create a Group button, and log in again. (After you've created your first group, you'll instead see a button labeled Create a New Group.)
3. Enter the information requested on the Set Up Your Group page (**Figure 58**)—the Group's name, email address, description, color scheme, time zone, and referral setting.

FIGURE 58

Set up your group Cancel Submit

Here's your opportunity to create a distinctive name and email address for your group. Write a description to let new members know about the group's history, purpose, activities, and more. Then select your time zone and indicate if you want your group to allow member referrals or not. When you have everything just the way you want it, click Submit.

Group name

San Francisco Dreamers

Group email address

Please enter an email address for your group (3 - 20 characters). Once you have completed this page and clicked Submit, this email address will be permanent and cannot be changed.

sfdreamers @groups.msc.com

Description of your group

Please enter a description of your group, to appear on your group page.

This group meets monthly over dinner to discuss the dreams we've had recently and how we might interpret them.

Customize your group page view

Pick the color scheme you want to see when you visit the group page.

Six preview thumbnails of group pages with different color schemes (green, blue, purple, teal, orange) are shown.

Group time zone

Please select a time zone for your group's messages.

America/Los Angeles

Allow referrals

If you would like members to be able to refer new members to the group, select Allow. If you select Allow, those who respond to invitations from members will appear on the "Pending your approval" list on your Manage group membership page. You will also receive email notification of each request.

Allow members to refer new members to the group.

Do not allow members to refer new members to the group.

Cancel Submit

Set up the basic details of a new group on this page.

A few setup-related hints:

- You can change the Group name or Description later, if you wish. However, once you choose an email address for a group, you can never change it without completely deleting the group and starting again from scratch. So choose carefully.
- The Group time zone is the time zone that will be used for marking messages that members post to the group's home page. If your group will have members from multiple time zones, you might want to remind them that the times shown for some messages will appear slightly out of whack.

- The referrals setting is for determining who can invite new members to join: any member (Allow) or only the owner (Do not allow). You can change this setting later. (Even if any member can invite someone else to join, the owner must approve each new membership.)
4. When you're finished, click Submit. If the email address you selected was already taken, the site will prompt you for a different one. When your group name has been accepted, you'll see a page like the one shown in **Figure 59**. Apple also sends you a welcome message listing the group's email address and Web site URL.

FIGURE 59

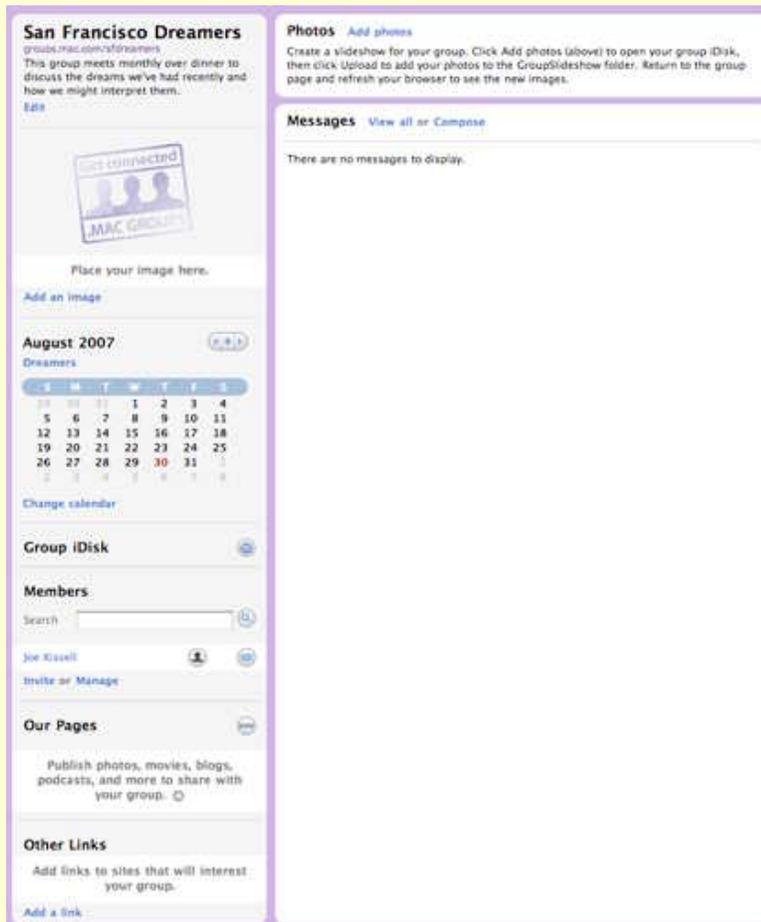


After you set up a group, you'll see the My Groups page. (If you have more than one group, they'll all appear here.)

To change any of this group's settings, click Edit. To create another group, click Create a New Group. To view your new group's home page, click the group's name or the  icon.

Initially, your group home page will look like **Figure 60**. You can then add content—pictures, messages, calendar items, and, most importantly, new members! I recommend setting up at least some basic features of the site before adding new members, so that they'll see some useful content when they first arrive.

FIGURE 60



A brand-new .Mac group home page, ready for you to add content. Note that some links shown here are visible only to the group's owner, not to other members.

Add Content to Your Group Home Page

The first thing you probably want to do is customize your group page (beyond selecting the background color, which you've already done) so that it provides some useful information to new members. Most of these tasks are fairly simple.

Add an image

A photo or other graphic can appear in the upper left corner to give your site some character. To add a photo:

1. Click the Add an Image link. The sidebar expands to reveal instructions and several new buttons.
2. Click Choose File, navigate to the image on your hard disk, and click Choose.
3. Click Upload to upload the image.

The chosen image now appears on your group's home page. You can change that image in the future by clicking the Change link beneath the image.

NOTE Only the group's owner can add or change an image.

Add calendar events

A small calendar appears in the sidebar of your group's home page. You can add group-related events to this calendar by linking it to an iCal calendar on your own computer. To do this:

1. Open iCal and create a new calendar (File > New Calendar). I suggest giving the new calendar a name that refers to the group in some way.
2. Add events to this calendar as you normally would in iCal.
3. Choose Calendar > Publish. Choose .Mac from the Publish On pop-up menu. Be sure to select Publish Titles and Notes, and to be sure the calendar stays up to date, also select Publish Changes Automatically. Click Publish, and click OK when the confirmation alert appears.
3. On your group home page, click the Change Calendar link. A pop-up menu appears. (If you don't see this pop-up menu, click Log Out on the navigation bar, then log back in and try again.)
4. Choose your newly created group calendar from the pop-up menu. Then click Apply.

After you've linked your calendar, the minicalendar on your group home page displays clickable links for each date on which a calendar event occurs (**Figure 61**). Click any of these linked dates to display the group's calendar in a Web page (just like any other published iCal calendar, as discussed in [Publish and view calendars](#), earlier).

NOTE Only the group's owner can add an iCal calendar.

FIGURE 61



This minicalendar has clickable links for dates with scheduled events. Click one of those dates to see the full calendar for that date.

When another member views your group's home page, the link underneath the calendar will read [Subscribe](#). Members can click this link to subscribe to the calendar in iCal (or another application that supports the webcal URL protocol [`webcal://`]).

Add a slideshow

In addition to Web pages (which can include photos), your group page can include a slideshow, which displays a collection of photos one at a time, with smooth transitions between them.

To create a group slideshow:

1. Click the [Add Photos](#) link in the Photos section at the top of the group's home page. The group's iDisk opens in a browser window.
2. Click the [Upload](#) button in the upper right. A file browser appears.
3. Select a photo from your hard drive and click [Choose](#). Repeat Steps 2 and 3 for as many photos as you wish to add to the slideshow.
4. Close the iDisk browser window and reload the window showing the group's home page.

Thumbnails of the first two images appear at the top of the group's home page. When you move your mouse pointer over the bottom of these images, additional controls appear. To play the slideshow, click [Play Slideshow](#). The slideshow opens in a new window.

To pause the slideshow, or to manually select the next or previous photo, move the mouse pointer to a spot below the photo currently being displayed. Next, Previous, and Pause/Play controls appear.

Add Web pages

Your private .Mac group site can contain any number of Web pages—or entirely separate Web sites, for that matter. Any group member can add or edit new pages or sites. You can add Web content using a Web browser and .Mac's HomePage feature or, if you have iLife '06 or later, using iWeb.

Using HomePage

To add Web content, in the sidebar of your group's home page, click the  icon by the Our Pages heading. The .Mac site takes you to HomePage (detailed earlier in [Create a Site Using HomePage](#)), which now contains an additional icon for your group (**Figure 62**).

FIGURE 62



When you are a group owner, a new icon appears in the HomePage interface.

Select the group icon and then:

- To create a new (single) Web page, select one of the themes from the gallery at the bottom of the page.
- To create a new site, which can hold numerous pages, click the Add Site button.

Everything else about adding pages and sites is the same as for your personal .Mac Web site (refer to [Create a Site Using HomePage](#), earlier). Files you want to use within the Web site—such as pictures and movies—should be stored in subfolders within the group’s folder on your iDisk; see [Use the Group iDisk](#), ahead, for details.

NOTE You can even create your own custom HTML pages and upload them manually to your iDisk. Group pages are stored on your iDisk in **Groups/your-group-name/Sites**, but otherwise follow the same structures and rules as for other Web pages stored on your iDisk.

Links to the pages you create using HomePage appear in the Our Pages section of the sidebar on your group’s home page (**Figure 63**). To edit any of these pages or add new ones, click the  icon.

FIGURE 63



The Our Pages section of the sidebar lists pages you’ve created within the group’s site.

Using iWeb

You can also publish a Web site or blog from iWeb directly to your .Mac group.

iLife '08 REGROUPING

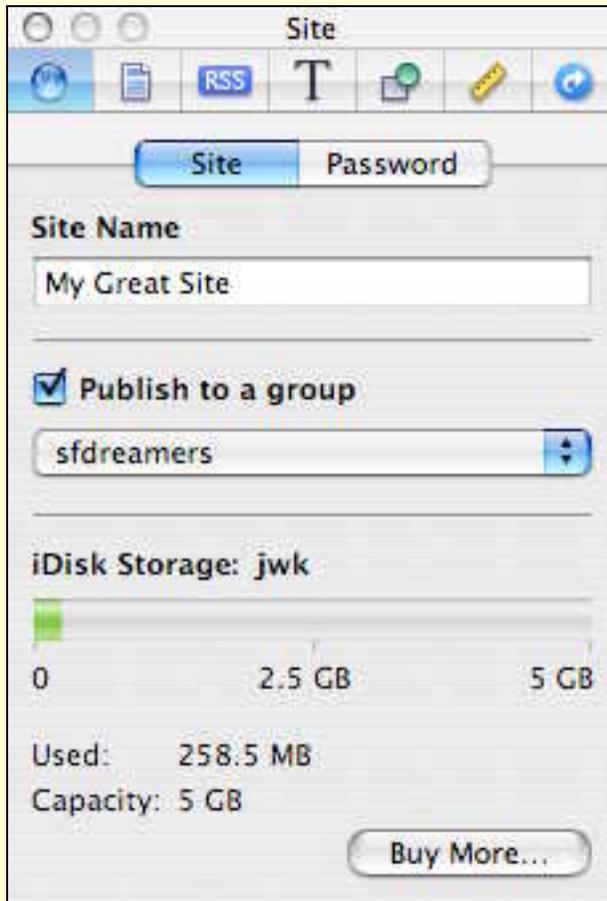
iWeb '08 no longer offers a way to publish Web content directly to your .Mac group. Instead, you must publish pages to your personal .Mac Web site and link to them from a group page.

To do so, follow these steps:

1. In your Web browser, go to <http://www.mac.com/> and log in.
2. Open iWeb, and create a site in the usual way (I cover this in [Create a Site Using iWeb](#)).

3. In the Site Organizer (the area on the left side of the iWeb window), select the site you want to publish to your .Mac group.
4. Make sure the Inspector palette is visible. (If it isn't, choose View > Show Inspector.) On the Inspector palette, click the leftmost toolbar button () to display the Site Inspector pane. Then make sure the Site tab is showing; if not, click the Site button. The Inspector palette should look like **Figure 64**.

FIGURE 64



To publish your site to a group, select the Publish to a Group checkbox in this pane of the Site Inspector palette.

5. Choose the group to which you want to publish your site from the pop-up menu.
6. Choose File > Publish to .Mac.

iWeb publishes all your sites to .Mac; any sites for which you checked Publish to a Group in Step 4 go onto the group's site, while the rest go onto your personal .Mac Web site.

NOTE According to Apple, if you launch iWeb without first logging into your .Mac account, you won't be able to publish a Web site to a group. I was able to do so, but if you have problems, quit iWeb, log in (as per Step 1) and then reopen iWeb before proceeding.

NOTE If you change the state of the Publish to a Group checkbox and publish a site, it will move from your personal site to the group's site, or vice-versa. You cannot publish a given site to more than one location.

Links to the pages you create using iWeb appear in the Our Pages section of the sidebar on your group's home page (see **Figure 64** on the previous page). However, you cannot later edit these pages using HomePage; to change them, you must return to iWeb and republish the pages.

NOTE The group sites and pages you create with HomePage and those you create with iWeb both have links in the Our Pages section of the sidebar, but they are stored in different places on the iDisk and have different URLs:

- URLs for group sites created with iWeb take the form:
http://web.mac.com/groups/group-email-address/your-.Mac-ID/iWeb/site-name/page-name (where *group-email-address* is the part of the address before @groups.mac.com).
- The files themselves are stored on your iDisk in
Groups/group-email-address/Web/Sites/your-.Mac-ID/iWeb.

Add other links

Your group's home page has a section, Other Links, devoted to any URLs you wish—typically sites that relate to your group's interests. *Any* group member can add or remove links. To add a link:

1. Click the Add a Link link! Two new fields appear: Link Name and Link URL.
2. Enter a name for the link and the site's URL. Then click Add.

The link appears in the Other Links section of the page (**Figure 65**). To add a new link, click Edit. When you do this, you can also select any of your existing links and click Delete to delete them. (If you need to change a link, you must delete it and then re-add it with the corrected name or URL.)

FIGURE 65

Other Links

[Waking Life DVD](#)

[The Lucidity Institute](#)

[Dream Dictionary](#)

[Jeremy Taylor Interview](#)

[Edit](#)

Links to other Web pages you add appear under the Other Links heading.

Add and Manage Group Members

Once you have a group home page set up, the next step is to invite new members to join. As the group's owner, you can also remove members if need be.

Invite a member

To invite new members to join the group, click the Invite link at the bottom of the Members section on the sidebar of your group's home page. (Depending on the preferences you've assigned, this capability may be available to all group members, or just to the owner). Enter as many names and email addresses as you wish; click Add Another Row if you want to invite more than four people. To add contacts from your .Mac Address Book, click the Address Book link, check the boxes for one or more people, and click Select; .Mac fills those names and addresses into the Invite New Members list. Type in a personal message that will be included in the invitation email. Then click Continue, review the message that will be sent, and click Send.

When a prospective member receives the invitation, he must click the link provided; this leads to a .Mac Log In page. If the invitee already has a .Mac member name and password, he can enter it now; if not, he can click the big orange Get a .Mac ID icon to sign up for a 60-day free trial—and then accept the group invitation.

NOTE Just to be crystal clear, *anyone* with a .Mac ID can join a group. This includes, according to Apple:

- Paid .Mac members (both individual and Family Pack members)
- Holders of Family Pack sub-accounts
- People with email-only accounts
- People with free trial memberships
- People with expired .Mac memberships
- Windows, Linux, and Mac users

Mac.com email addresses belong to a user permanently, and remain usable for AIM/iChat, Apple Store purchases, the iTunes Store, and .Mac Groups—even if the user never paid for the membership, or has allowed a paid membership to lapse.

If a member who is not the group owner has invited someone to join the group, the group owner must approve the new member. To do this, follow these steps:

1. When a prospective member accepts an invitation, you will receive an email; click the link in that message to go to the Manage Group Membership Page.
2. Requests that have not yet been processed appear in the Pending Your Approval list. Check the box next to a person's name and click Approve to approve him for membership, or Deny to prevent him from joining.

If you approve the request, the member is activated immediately; if you deny the request, the person receives an email telling them so. Members can get to the group's home page by going to <http://groups.mac.com/group-email-address> (where *group-email-address* is the part of the address before @groups.mac.com).

Cancel an invitation

Invitations are valid for 30 days. If an invitee does not join within that period of time and later wishes to do so, you must send a new invitation. To cancel the invitation for someone who has been invited but not yet joined:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Groups link on the navigation bar, and log in.

2. In the Members section of the group home page sidebar, click the Manage link. The Manage Group Membership page appears.
3. Under the Invitations Sent heading, check the box by the name(s) of the invitee(s) whose invitation you wish to cancel.
4. Click Cancel Invitation. An alert appears confirming that you want to cancel the invitation. Click OK.

The invitee can then no longer accept the invitation; if you later wish that person to join, you must send a new invitation.

Delete a member

To remove a member from your group, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Groups link on the navigation bar, and log in.
2. In the Members section of the group home page sidebar, click the Manage link. The Manage Group Membership page appears.
3. Under the Members heading, check the box by the name(s) of the member(s) you wish to delete.
4. Click Remove.

The former member receives an email message stating that their membership in the group has been cancelled.

Modify Group Settings

As a group's owner, you can, at any time, change numerous settings that apply to the group's home page and overall group activity. To modify group settings:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Groups link on the navigation bar, and log in.
2. Click the Edit link beneath the name of any group that displays the Owner () icon. The Edit Group page appears.
3. Most of the settings on this page (which I describe elsewhere in this section) should be self-explanatory. A few may not be:
 - **Announcement:** Your group's home page can have one announcement, which appears near the top of the sidebar. Enter an announcement here, or edit the existing one.

- **Manage Storage:** Click the Click Here link below “View Storage” to modify the group’s storage space (for both iDisk and messages). Each group must have at least 15 MB allocated to iDisk and another 15 MB allocated to messages; the maximum depends on the owner’s available iDisk space.
- **Manage Messages:** Click the Click Here link below “Manage Messages” to delete old messages via the Group Messages page. (messages are filed in “monthly” folders that appear on the Group Messages page):
 - To delete an entire month’s messages, check the box next to the month and then click Delete Selected.
 - To delete only specific messages from a month, click that month’s name in the list—which displays all messages from that month—and then delete the desired messages.
 - You can also view messages and compose new messages via the Group Messages page.

4. Click Save.

Your new group settings take effect immediately.

Edit Your Profile

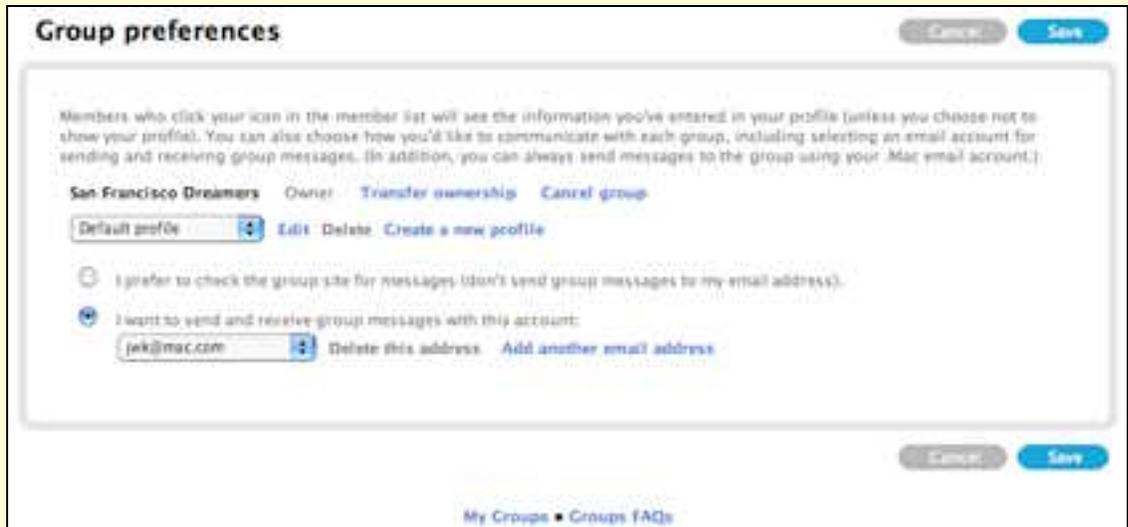
.Mac can store a *profile* for each group member that contains the member’s name, contact information (address, phone number, and email address); Web site URL; and preferences. Members are not required to enter their personal information, and if they do, they can choose to hide it from the group.

To edit your profile, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Groups link on the navigation bar, and log in.
2. Click the name of a group to go to that group’s home page.
3. At the bottom, click the Group Preferences link and log in again, if prompted. The Group Preferences page (**Figure 66**) appears.

NOTE If you try to send email to the group from any address other than your Mac.com address or the address specified in Group Preferences, your email message will bounce.

FIGURE 66



Set basic group preferences on this page.

4. For each group you belong to, set your email preferences. The following options are available:
 - To receive each message posted to the group via email, select the radio button labeled I Want to Send and Receive Group Messages with this Account (the default), and choose an email address from the pop-up menu. The menu lists your Mac.com email address, any email aliases you've configured for your account, and any alternate email addresses you've set up (as in Step 5).
 - If you prefer not to receive group messages by email, select the radio button labeled I Prefer to Check the Group Site for Messages (Don't Send Group Messages to My Email Address). If you use this setting, the only way to see group messages is to visit the group site.
5. If you wish to be able to post messages to the group, and receive messages from the group, using an address other than your Mac.com email address, click Add Another Email Address and follow the instructions. You will receive a verification message at that address containing a link you must click to confirm the

address. Following verification, the new address will appear in this pop-up menu. All messages sent to the group will then be directed to the new address, and you'll be able to send mail to the group using either the address selected in the pop-up menu or your Mac.com email address.

6. To make your profile available to other group members, choose a profile name from the pop-up menu under the group's name ("Default Profile" is the only option initially); to hide your profile from other members, choose Do Not Show a Profile.
7. To change the settings of the selected profile, click the Edit link or, to create a new profile, click Create a New Profile. The Edit Profile page (**Figure 67**) appears.

FIGURE 67

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Profile' form with the following fields and values:

- Profile name:** Default profile
- Display name:** Joe Kissell
- Address 1:** Business, City, State/Province (California), Zip/Postal Code, Phone Number (818 888 1234)
- Address 2:** City, State/Province (California), Zip/Postal Code, Country (United States)
- My website:** http://ah.kissj/

Enter personal information you want to share with other group members on the Edit Profile page.

8. Edit the profile description, using these tips if you need extra help:
 - Your .Mac member name doesn't show as an editable choice, because it is not optional, and is always available to other group members.
 - For the profile name, enter any short, descriptive label as a name for this profile.
 - For the display name, use your first and last name or, if you prefer, a pseudonym.

- In the “My website” field, type (or paste in) the URL to any site that you wish other group members to associate with you. Typically, you would use a URL to a personal site.

9. Click Save on the Edit Profile page, and then click Save again on the Group Preferences page.

Your new settings take effect immediately.

If you wish to leave a group—and you’re not the group’s owner—instead follow Steps 1–3 and then click the Cancel membership link. If you *are* the group’s owner, you must transfer ownership before you can remove yourself from the group. I explain the procedure in [Transfer Group Ownership](#), ahead.

Contact Another Member

Your group’s home page lists each of the group’s members in the sidebar under “Members”; if there are too many members to fit in the sidebar, you can use the arrows at the bottom of the Members section to page through the list, or enter a portion of a member’s name in the Search field and press Return.

If the person’s name (or Mac.com email address) is gray, it means that member has chosen to hide her profile from the group. If it’s blue, you can send the member an email message by clicking her email address (or the  icon), or you can click the member’s name (or the  icon next to it) to display the profile information the member has entered. You can visit the member’s Web site by clicking its URL or the  icon in the profile information.

Exchange Messages with the Group

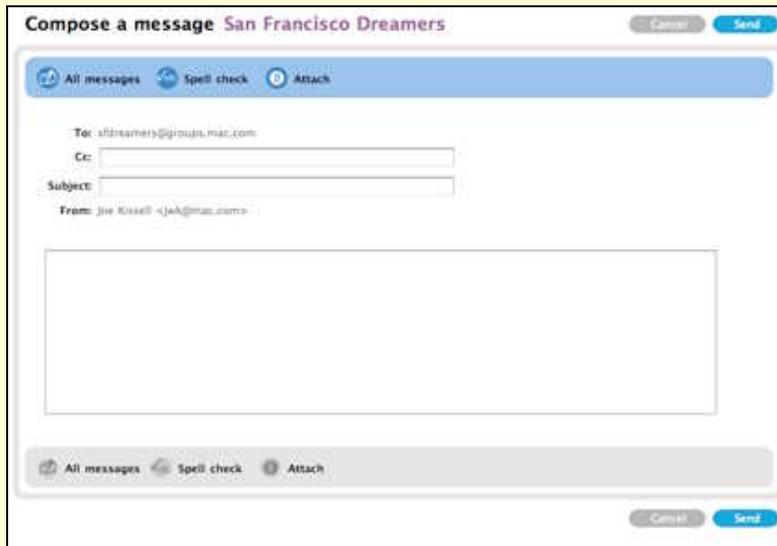
Any group member can send a message that appears on the group’s home page and is sent by email to all members who have chosen to receive messages that way (the default setting). You can post a message in either of two ways.

Post a message on the Web

To post a message via the Web site, log in to your .Mac account and go to the group’s home page. Then follow these steps:

1. Click the Compose link (above the Messages list, to the right of the word Messages). The Compose page (**Figure 68**) appears.

FIGURE 68



Compose a new message to the group on this Web page, which is similar to—but not quite the same as—the one used to compose .Mac Mail messages.

2. On this page, the To field is already filled in with the group's email address. Enter a subject for your message, one or more Cc addresses, if desired (separate multiple addresses with commas), and the text of your message.

NOTE To see all the messages that have been sent to the group (without returning to the group's home page), you as the group's owner can click All Messages. A window appears where you can view or delete any messages sent to the group so far.

3. To attach a file (such as a graphic) to your message, click Attach. To check your spelling, click Spell Check.
4. To send the message, click Send.

.Mac sends your message to all group members, and posts it on the group's home page.

Post a message by email

As a group member, you can also post a message by sending an email to the group's email address (which takes the form *group-email-address@groups.mac.com*).

NOTE You can post a message to the group *only* using an address specified in your profile—either your Mac.com email address or an alternate email address (see [Edit Your Profile](#)). If someone tries to send a message to the group from another address, that message will bounce. This feature prevents the group from receiving spam (or other unwanted messages) from outsiders.

As when posting messages on the Web, .Mac sends your message to all group members and posts it on the group's home page.

View and reply to messages

The group's home page displays only a two-line excerpt from each message; click its title to view the entire message. If your group has more messages than fit on the home page, click the View All link to see them on a separate page, which also permits searching by From, To, Cc, or Subject fields (but not message content).

To reply to a message when viewing it on the Web, click Reply. To reply to a message received by email, simply use your email program's reply function. (But remember that you must send your reply from an email address configured in your profile for this .Mac group.)

Delete messages

If you want to remove a message from your site, you can do this in any of several ways:

- If you posted the message, you can click its title on your group's home page, and then click Delete on the message page.
- If you are the group's owner, you can delete *any* message. To do so, click the View All link above the Messages list. Check the checkbox next to one or more messages and click Delete Selected.

NOTE The only people who can delete a message are the person who posted it and the group's owner.

- If you are the group's owner and you want to delete older messages en masse, click Manage Group Messages on the Group Messages page. Check the checkbox for one or more months, and then click Delete Selected to delete *all* the messages from those months.

Use the Group iDisk

Each group has associated iDisk storage space allocated to files for the group's use. This space can contain files the members wish to share with each other, as well as the Web pages, pictures, movies, and other media that appear on the group's Web sites.

As a group member, you can access these files from any Web browser by clicking the  icon next to the Group iDisk heading on the sidebar of the group's home page. Or, if you mount your iDisk (in the Finder, in Windows, or using a WebDAV client), you can access the group's folder inside your iDisk's Groups folder. (If you have an expired or email-only account, which does not include iDisk access, you can mount the group iDisk in the Finder by choosing Go > Connect to Server and entering `http://idisk.mac.com/groups.group-email-address`, where *group-email-address* is the part of the address before @groups.mac.com.)

Place files you wish to share with other group members directly—or on a file-sharing Web page—in the group's Public folder. Place pictures or movies that you want to include on group Web pages in the Pictures or Movies folders, respectively.

Transfer Group Ownership

If at some point you, as the group owner, decide not to renew your .Mac membership—or if for some other reason you no longer wish to manage a group—you can transfer ownership to someone else. When you do so, you recover iDisk storage space used for group files, and that space is taken from the other user's iDisk quota.

You can transfer ownership only to someone who is already a member of the group, who has a full individual or Family Pack membership, and whose account is currently active.

To transfer ownership, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Groups link on the navigation bar, and log in.
2. Click the name of the group you want to transfer in order to go to that group's home page.

3. Click the Group Preferences link at the bottom of the page and log in again if prompted to do so.
4. Under the Group Preferences heading, click the Transfer Ownership link next to the group's name.
5. Select the radio button for the name of the member to whom you want to transfer ownership, and click Send.

The member you selected receives an email invitation to become the group's new owner. If the other member agrees, you receive notification by email. If the other member declines, you also receive notification; you can then repeat the process and select another person to take over ownership.

If the other member does not respond—or if you change your mind before the invitation is accepted—you can cancel the transfer. To do so, follow Steps 1–3 just previously, and then click the Cancel Transfer of Ownership link next to the group's name.

After you transfer ownership of a group, you remain a group member. You can remove yourself later, if you wish (see [Edit Your Profile](#), earlier).

Delete a Group

If you wish to completely discontinue a group—deleting all its files and Web pages and disabling the group's email address—you can do so; Apple calls this canceling a group. When you cancel a group, you recover the iDisk storage space used for group files.

WARNING! Canceling a group deletes the contents of that group's iDisk folder, erasing all photos, Web pages, messages, and other content on the group site. If any of this information is important to you, make sure you have a backup copy before canceling the group.

To cancel a group, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.mac.com/>, click the Groups link on the navigation bar, and log in.
2. Click the name of the group you want to cancel in order to go to that group's home page.
3. Click the Edit Group link at the bottom and log in again if prompted to do so.
4. Under the Cancel Group heading at the bottom of the page, click the Click Here link.
5. A confirmation message appears; click Yes to confirm deletion.

The group is deleted immediately.

SAVE MONEY ON YOUR .MAC MEMBERSHIP

Whether you're joining .Mac for the first time or renewing your annual membership, you can often save a considerable amount of money if you know a few tricks.

Buy a Retail Box (at Below-Retail Cost)

Buying a membership or renewal directly from Apple costs \$100 for individual members and \$180 for a Family Pack. But I've seen prices well under \$80 and \$150, respectively, at other sites. Although you may not always be able to find a great deal, it pays to shop around!

If you purchase a .Mac membership from a source other than Apple, you will receive a box containing a CD (which you don't need) and a card with an activation code (which you do need!). You can enter this activation code in lieu of a credit card number when activating a new account, reactivating an expired account, or renewing or upgrading an existing account. Some good places to check for discounted .Mac retail boxes are:

- Amazon.com: <http://www.amazon.com/>
- dealmac: <http://www.dealmac.com/>
- Buy.com: <http://www.buy.com/>

NOTE Apple once offered a program that provided a 20 percent discount on your .Mac renewal fee for each new paying member you referred. Although this program is no longer active, check the .Mac home page regularly to see if any other promotional offers exist.

Become an Affiliate

If you have a Web site frequented by people who may be interested in .Mac, you can apply to the .Mac Affiliate Program (administered by LinkShare). If you are accepted, you get a special URL you can place on your Web site. If someone clicks that link and then buys a .Mac membership, Apple pays you \$15. If you can turn just seven people into paying .Mac members, you'll be reimbursed for the cost of your next renewal. You can learn more about the program at <http://www.mac.com/1/affiliates/>.

As you have undoubtedly figured out by now, I'm a strong supporter of .Mac—I think every Mac user should join. Nevertheless, you may find yourself running into data transfer or storage limitations (even after purchasing more storage). You may need to run server-side code on your Web site, or set up an e-commerce site for your business. Or you may be on such a strict budget that even \$100 per year for a .Mac subscription is out of the question. For these reasons (and others), you may wish to supplement or replace your .Mac subscription with comparable services from other providers.

Given the sheer number of alternatives, I can only begin to scratch the surface. But I'd like to point out a few ways you can get features similar to those offered by .Mac from other sources. I highlight what I consider the best options in each category.

Web Hosting

If I had a nickel for every Web hosting company out there...I could start my own. A quick search on Google should turn up thousands of providers, each angling to sell you more features, for less money, than its competitors. You may even find a few that run their services on Macintoshes, although that doesn't necessarily make an otherwise unremarkable service more attractive.

I've listed a few examples here of Web hosting providers I know of that seem, based on their marketing materials, to have services that could meet most of the needs of people looking for a .Mac alternative or supplement. I make no judgments about these companies, except to say that they all offer *at least* as much Web space and bandwidth as the basic .Mac membership, and at the same or lower cost.

In general, these Web hosting providers also support server-side scripts, applications, and databases—typically including programs like PHP, Perl, MySQL, and Ruby on Rails, as well as blogging platforms that depend on those tools, such as WordPress. Each plan also includes Web statistics; one or more email accounts (in some cases, *thousands* of email accounts!) with POP, IMAP, and Web-based access; and many other features. Plans shown in parentheses

meet the criteria I just mentioned and cost less than .Mac; higher-end plans are generally available, too, as are (in some cases) less-expensive, less-powerful options:

- 1&1 Internet (1&1 Home plan): <http://order.1and1.com:80/xml/order/Hosting>
- DreamHost (Crazy Domain Insane! plan, two-year prepayment): <http://www.dreamhost.com/shared/>
- FatCow Web Hosting (FatCow plan): <http://www.fatcow.com/>
- iPowerWeb (Business Pro plan): <http://www.ipowerweb.com/>

Email

If your primary need is for an email account, you can choose from any number of free or low-cost providers, some of which offer more storage space than .Mac. For example:

- **1&1 Mail:** The 1&1 Instant Mail package offers 5 email accounts, 2 GB of storage, webmail, IMAP or POP access, spam protection, and aliases—all for \$1 per month (<http://www.1and1.com/>).
- **FastMail:** Accounts with this provider range from a free Guest account (with advertising added to messages) to a \$40 per year Enhanced account with 2 GB of storage space plus a Web site. Depending on the plan you choose, you can access your account using webmail, IMAP, or POP (<http://www.fastmail.fm/>).
- **Google Gmail:** A free Gmail account has 2 GB+ of storage, with access via webmail or POP (no IMAP support—at least not yet) (<http://gmail.google.com/>).
- **Pobox.com:** Their Mailstore service, at \$50 per year, includes webmail, IMAP, and POP access plus spam protection, auto replies, forwarding, and aliases. The account comes with 2 GB of storage (<http://www.pobox.com/>).

NOTE I know that you can still get free email accounts from the likes of Yahoo! and Hotmail, but my experience has been that you get what you pay for with these providers—not to mention lots of spam.

Online Storage

All the Web hosting companies listed earlier provide online file storage space. In some cases you can even access the files using WebDAV (meaning that the Mac OS X Finder, Windows, or a stand-alone FTP/WebDAV client will do the trick).

However, if you want online storage without Web hosting, you still have numerous options. Here are some examples:

- **DavDrive:** Basic WebDAV hosting—\$10 per month for 1 GB of space (<http://www.davdrive.com/>).
- **IBackup:** Offers 5 GB of storage for \$10 per month or \$100 per year, with more space available at (significantly) higher cost. Access via FTP or WebDAV (<http://www.ibackup.com/>).
- **Strongspace:** Gives you 5 GiB (*gibibytes*, each of which is 1.07 GB) of space for \$15 per month, with secure access via SFTP or HTTPS (but not WebDAV). More-expensive plans provide as much as 100 GiB of storage (<http://www.strongspace.com/>).
- **xMailHardDrive:** This free service deserves an honorable mention. It enables you to use your free Google Gmail storage space for ordinary files (in addition to email). Just one problem: their desktop software is currently available for Windows only, so Mac users must upload and download files via a Web browser (<http://www.xmailharddrive.com/beta>).
- **gDisk:** Similar in concept to xMailHardDrive, gDisk lets you store files on your Gmail account. But gDisk has a functional Mac OS X client—and it's free (<http://gdisk.sourceforge.net/>).

Online Backups

If you want to back up your files online, you could use one of the online storage services listed just previously, but you may find that they don't offer enough storage space, or that they're missing some feature you need (such as encryption or automated backup software).

Of the many companies offering online backups at a reasonable price, here are three I particularly recommend for Mac users:

- **CrashPlan:** Back up your computer to CrashPlan's servers, to another computer you own, or to a friend's computer anywhere on

the Internet. Software costs \$20 or \$60, depending on the version; online storage starts at \$5 per month for 50 GB (<http://www.crashplan.com/>).

- **Mozy:** Store an *unlimited* amount of data online for only \$5 per month (<http://www.mozy.com>).
- **Steekup:** Chose any of five different pricing plans, offering as much as 100 GB of storage (which costs \$100 per year) (<http://www.steekup.com/>).

Photo Sharing

Exporting your iPhoto albums to your iDisk (or another Web site) is one way to get your photos online. Another way is to use a photo-sharing service, with which you can store *all* your photos online (even if you have many gigabytes worth of data), organize them in albums, share them with friends and family, and even order prints. Several such sites exist, but my favorites (because they play well with Mac OS X in general and iPhoto in particular) are SmugMug and the Kodak EasyShare Gallery. Here's a list of photo-sharing services:

- **Flickr:** Basic accounts, which limit monthly uploads to 20 MB of bandwidth usage and store only scaled-down images, are free. Flickr Pro Accounts cost \$25 per year and include a 2 GB monthly upload limit and unlimited storage of full-resolution images (<http://www.flickr.com/>).

TIP If you use Flickr, you'll want to install the Flickr Export Plugin for iPhoto, available from <http://connectedflow.com/flickrexport>.

- **Fotki:** Free accounts give you 30 MB of space initially, and add 10 MB every 30 days. Premium accounts, which cost \$50 per year, provide unlimited storage and a number of advanced features (<http://www.fotki.com/>).
- **SmugMug:** You pay \$30 per year for *unlimited* photo storage. You can download free software that uploads selected albums from iPhoto directly to their site. It's not quite as easy as publishing directly from iPhoto, but you'll never run out of storage space—and as a bonus, you get an offsite backup of all your images (<http://www.smugmug.com/>).

- **The Kodak EasyShare Gallery:** This option is similar in concept to SmugMug, though more corporate in its look and feel. You can store an unlimited number of photos free, but there's a catch: you must make at least one purchase per year (which could be prints, film processing, photo calendars, or other products) (<http://www.kodakgallery.com/>).
- **Snapfish:** Like the Kodak EasyShare Gallery, Snapfish provides free, unlimited storage as long as you make at least one purchase annually (<http://www.snapfish.com/>).

Except for Fotki, all these services offer Mac-compatible, photo-upload software; Fotki Premium members can upload photos via FTP.

Web Site Creation

If your main need is to build simple but nice-looking Web pages or blogs, but you're disinclined to learn HTML or to buy iLife, consider the nearest competitor to iWeb—Sandvox from Karelia (Regular version, \$49; Pro version, \$79). Sandvox gives you more control over the appearance of your pages; the Pro version even lets you work with the raw HTML if you wish (<http://www.sandvox.com/>).

Alternatively, sign up for a free account at FreeSiteDesigner.com. This site provides a template-based, fill-in-the-blanks approach to Web site creation in the same vein as .Mac's HomePage feature (<http://www.freesitedesigner.com/>).

Address Book, Calendar, and Synchronization

For online access to contacts and calendar data—and the capability to sync that information between Macs—your options are more limited.

- **Plaxo:** Sign up for their free basic service to store your calendar and contact information online and access it via the Web. You can also enable your contacts to update their own records when their information changes. Then, using their free Plaxo Toolbar software, you can synchronize your Address Book data automatically with your Plaxo account (<http://www.plaxo.com/>).
- **iSynCal:** This \$25 application synchronizes iCal calendars between two Macs directly (without going through an intermediate server, as .Mac does) (<http://ww2.unime.it/flr/isyncal/en/>).

APPENDIX B: ACCOUNT CONVERSION METHODS

To convert a .Mac account from one type to another, find your existing account type in the table below and follow the instructions.

Table 1: Account Conversion Methods		
To convert from this:	To this:	Do this:
Trial or expired .Mac membership, expired iTools account, email-only account, or Family Pack sub-account	Full .Mac membership or Family Pack primary account	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to http://www.mac.com/ and log in with your existing member name and password. 2. Click your member name on the navigation bar and log in again. 3. Click Join Now and follow the instructions.
Trial or expired .Mac membership, or expired iTools account	Email-only account	<p>Have a .Mac member purchase an additional email-only account. That member must then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to http://www.mac.com/ and log in. 2. Click their member name on the navigation bar and log in again. 3. Click the Manage Accounts button. 4. Enter the member name and password for your (trial or expired) membership. 5. Choose Email-Only Account from the pop-up menu. 6. Click Convert, and then click Continue.
Family Pack sub-account	Email-only account	<p>Have the .Mac member who is the Family Pack's primary account holder do this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to http://www.mac.com/ and log in. 2. Purchase a new email-only account (see Add Email-Only Accounts). 3. Return to the .Mac home page, click their member name on the navigation bar, and log in again. 4. Click the Manage Accounts button. 5. Enter the member name and password for <i>your</i> sub-account. 6. Choose Email-Only Account from the pop-up menu. 7. Click Convert, and then click Continue.

To convert from this:	To this:	Do this:
Full .Mac membership	Family Pack primary account	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to http://www.mac.com/ and log in. 2. Click your member name on the navigation bar and log in again. 3. On the Account Settings page, click the Buy More button. 4. Choose Upgrade from the pop-up menu under Family Pack, and then click Continue. 5. Follow the instructions to enter your billing information.
Trial or expired .Mac membership, expired iTools account, or email-only account	Family Pack sub-account	<p>Have the .Mac member who is the Family Pack's primary account holder do this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to http://www.mac.com/ and log in. 2. Click their member name on the navigation bar and log in again. 3. Click the Manage Accounts button. 4. Enter the member name and password for your (trial or expired) membership. 5. Choose Family Pack Sub-account from the pop-up menu. 6. Click Convert, and then click Continue.

TIP If you purchase a retail boxed copy of .Mac (individual or Family Pack), the box will contain an activation code that you can use to create, upgrade, or renew your account. To enter this code, go to <http://www.mac.com/activate> and follow the instructions.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

In contrast to traditional print books, Take Control books offer clickable links, full-text searching, and free minor updates. We hope you find them both useful and enjoyable to read.

About the Author

Joe Kissell is Senior Editor of *TidBITS*, and the author of many books about the Mac, including *Real World Mac Maintenance and Backups* (Peachpit, 2007) and *Take Control of Running Windows on a Mac*. He's also a frequent contributor to *Macworld* magazine. Joe has worked in the Mac software industry since the early 1990s. He also runs an Internet publishing business called alt concepts (<http://alt.cc/>).



In his increasingly imaginary spare time, Joe likes to travel, cook, and practice t'ai chi. He lives in Paris with his wife, Morgen Jahnke, and their cat, Zora. To contact Joe about this book, send him email at jwk@mac.com and be sure to include the words **Take Control of .Mac** in the subject of your message.

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Shameless Plugs

Although I write about computers as my day job, I have a great many other interests, which I write about on several Web sites.

Interesting Thing of the Day is my virtual museum of interesting things. Topics include food, travel, technology, language, science, history, and more. Please visit us at <http://itotd.com/>.



SenseList is a compendium of lists. Ranging from whimsical to practical, these lists create order out of the chaos of everyday life. You can find SenseList at <http://senselist.com/>.



In **The Geeky Gourmet**, you can read about culinary science, cooking gadgets, and other topics relating to food and technology. The site is located at <http://geekygourmet.com/>.

Truffles for Breakfast is the ongoing story of how my wife and I are living our version of the dream in Paris. Visit us at <http://trufflesforbreakfast.com/>.

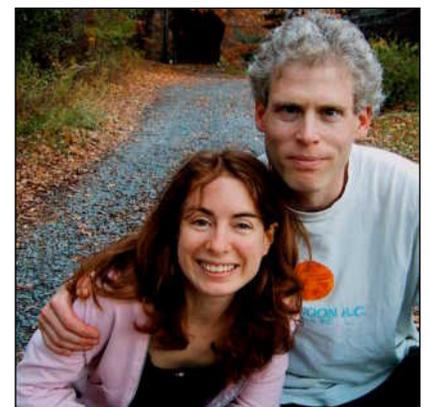
Last but not least is my personal blog, **I Am Joe's Blog**. Learn what it's like to be me at <http://IAmJoesBlog.com/>.

About the Publisher

Publishers Adam and Tonya Engst have been publishing Mac-related content since they first created their online newsletter, *TidBITS*, about Macintosh- and Internet-related topics in 1990. *TidBITS* has been in continuous, weekly production since then. At the TidBITS Web site you can read the latest Macintosh news, check out software reviews, find out what's fun and interesting in the world of the Mac, and much more (<http://www.tidbits.com/>).



Adam and Tonya are known in the Mac world as writers, editors, and speakers. They are also parents to Tristan, who thinks ebooks about clipper ships and castles would be cool.



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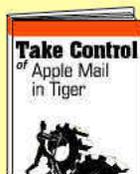
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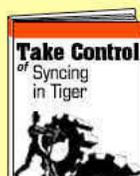


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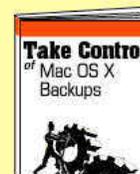


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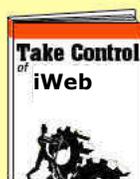


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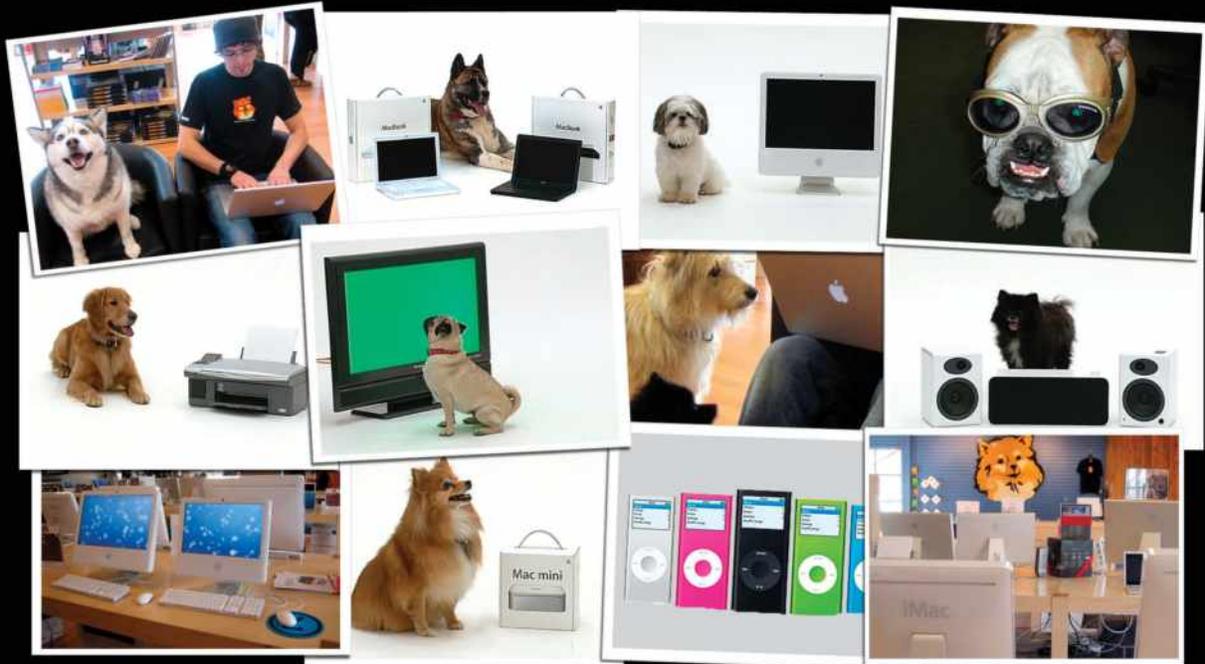
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