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1

Introducing iMacs

The iMac is one of the most iconic computers of all time.

This chapter introduces the latest version and details some of its main features.

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About iMacs

In many ways, the iMac is the product that transformed the fortunes of Apple Computers and helped turn it into the world's most valuable technology company. The first iMac was introduced in 1998 and it was a major breakthrough in the world of personal computing. This was for two reasons: it was designed to be stylish rather than being just a functional beige box; and it combined the monitor and hard drive into one unit, as opposed to two separate ones.

Since its introduction, the iMac has gone through five major versions. Some of these involved a change of the processor which they use and some involved the physical design of the body of the iMac. But throughout this process, the principle of an all-in-one computer has remained.

The evolution of the iMac

The first appearance of the iMac, the iMac G3, was in 1998 with the brightly colored, all-in-one machines that made everyone in the computing world sit up and take notice. It was the first Mac computer to have a USB port, but not a floppy disk drive. The iMac was firmly aimed at the consumer computer market, rather than the professional market that was catered for with the Power Macintosh. However, a number of creative professionals, such as graphic designers and photographers, adopted the iMac, partly because of its eye-catching design.

The first iMacs came in a line of bright, translucent colors that were unique for the design of personal computers at the time:



...cont'd

iMac G4

The first major physical redesign of the iMac came in 2002 with the introduction of the iMac G4. This was more than a mere upgrade; it was another revolutionary design that quickly made its mark. It was still an all-in-one design, but the monitor and the hard drive were connected by an adjustable arm. The hard drive was contained within a white, dome-shaped base and the monitor, which was now LCD, could be moved and left in any position via the flexible arm. In contrast to the earlier models, the G4 came in white only and was the first Mac to use the OS X operating system that has now evolved into the current OS X Mountain Lion. The G4 iMac was discontinued in 2004, to be replaced by the G5 version.



Intel iMacs

The next redesign of the iMac was the G5. This was a more prosaic design, although still very stylish. The G5 had a PowerPC chip but in 2006 the processor for the iMac was changed to Intel processors. This continued across the range of Mac computers and the current iMacs are now powered by i5 or i7 Intel processors. The current iMacs also have a unibody aluminum body that is similar to other Apple products, such as the MacBook.



Don't forget



The latest version of the iMac is the neatest yet in terms of input devices. They are all wireless so there are no more cables to clutter up your desk.

iMac Specifications

There are currently two models of the iMac available, with 21.5-inch and 27-inch displays. There are two slightly different versions for each model and their specifications are:

iMac 21.5-inch

- 21.5-inch (diagonal) LED-backlit glossy widescreen TFT display with support for millions of colors
- 1920 x 1080 pixels resolution
- 2.5GHz, or 2.7GHz, quad-core Intel Core i5 processor with 6MB on-chip shared L3 cache
- 4GB (two 2GB) of 1333MHz DDR3 memory
- 500GB, or 1TB, (7200 rpm) hard drive storage
- AMD Radeon HD 6750M, or 6770M, graphics processor with 512MB of GDDR5 memory
- Built-in stereo speakers
- Built-in FaceTime HD camera
- One Thunderbolt port
- Mini DisplayPort output with support for DVI, VGA, and dual-link DVI (adapters sold separately)
- One FireWire 800 port
- Four USB 2.0 ports
- SDXC card slot
- Slot-loading 8x SuperDrive with 4x double-layer burning (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- 802.11n Wi-Fi wireless networking; 2 IEEE 802.11a/b/g compatible
- Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR (Enhanced Data Rate) wireless technology
- Wireless Keyboard
- Magic Mouse or Magic Trackpad

...cont'd

iMac 27-inch

- 27-inch (diagonal) LED-backlit glossy widescreen TFT display with support for millions of colors
- 2560 by 1440 pixels resolution
- 2.7GHz, or 3.1GHz, quad-core Intel Core i5 processor with 6MB on-chip shared L3 cache (upgradeable to an i7 processor)
- 4GB (two 2GB) of 1333MHz DDR3 memory
- 1TB (7200 rpm) hard drive storage
- AMD Radeon HD 6770M, or 6970M, graphics processor with 512MB, or 1GB, of GDDR5 memory
- Built-in stereo speakers
- Built-in FaceTime HD camera
- Two Thunderbolt ports
- Mini DisplayPort output with support for DVI, VGA, and dual-link DVI (adapters sold separately)
- One FireWire 800 port
- Four USB 2.0 ports
- SDXC card slot
- Slot-loading 8x SuperDrive with 4x double-layer burning (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- 802.11n Wi-Fi wireless networking; 2 IEEE 802.11a/b/g compatible
- Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR (Enhanced Data Rate) wireless technology
- Wireless Keyboard
- Magic Mouse or Magic Trackpad

Hot tip



By default, a new iMac comes with a Magic Mouse. If you want a Magic Trackpad instead, you have to specify this.

iMac Jargon Explained

Although the iMac is one of the most user-friendly computers on the market, it is unavoidable that there is some jargon connected with it:

- **Processor.** Also known as the central processing unit, or CPU, this refers to the processing of digital data as it is provided by apps on the computer. The more powerful the processor, the quicker the data is interpreted. As with the rest of Apple's computers, iMacs use Intel processors
- **Memory.** This closely relates to the processor and is also known as random-access memory, or RAM. Essentially, this type of memory manages the apps that are being run and the commands that are being executed. The greater the amount of memory there is, the quicker apps will run. With more RAM they will also be more stable and less likely to crash. In the current range of iMacs, memory is measured in gigabytes (GB) and both models have 4GB
- **Storage.** This refers to the amount of digital information the iMac can store. It is frequently referred to in terms of hard disk space and is measured in gigabytes or terabytes (TB). The minimum storage space on a standard iMac is 500GB on the 21.5-inch models and 1TB on the 27-inch models
- **Magic Mouse.** This is a wireless mouse that comes with all new iMacs. It connects via Bluetooth (page 13) and is a multi-touch device. This means that many operations such as scrolling through web pages or documents can be done on the surface of the mouse. There are no buttons on a Magic Mouse but different parts of it can be clicked on and they are assigned separate functions

Don't forget



Memory can be thought of as a temporary storage device, as it only keeps information about the currently-open apps. Storage is more permanent, as it keeps the information even when the iMac has been turned off.



...cont'd

- **Magic Trackpad.** This is an input device that performs the same functions as a trackpad on a MacBook laptop. As with the Magic Mouse it connects via Bluetooth and supports a wider range of Multi-Touch Gestures than the Magic Mouse. It also sits at the same angle as the iMac Wireless Keyboard so the two can sit comfortably side by side. (For an in-depth look at Multi-Touch Gestures on the Magic Trackpad and Magic Mouse, see Chapter Six.)



- **Wireless Keyboard.** New iMacs come with a Wireless Keyboard which, like the Magic Mouse and Magic Trackpad, connects via Bluetooth to the iMac
- **Graphics card.** This is a device that enables images, video and animations to be displayed on the iMac. It is also sometimes known as a video card. The faster the graphics card, the better the quality relevant media will be displayed at. In general, very fast graphics cards are really only needed for intensive multimedia applications, such as video games or videos. On an iMac this is the AMD Radeon HD Graphics card
- **Wireless.** This refers to an iMac's ability to connect wirelessly to a network, i.e. another computer or an Internet connection. In order to be able to do this, the iMac must have a wireless card, which enables it to connect to a network or high-speed Internet connection. This is known as the AirPort Extreme Wi-Fi wireless networking card
- **Bluetooth.** This is a radio technology for connecting devices wirelessly over a short distance. It can be used for items such as a wireless mouse, or for connecting to a device, such as an iPhone for downloading photos

Beware



The wireless input devices (keyboard, mouse and trackpad) are battery powered and can use up a lot of charge. It is a good idea to use rechargeable batteries to save having to buy a lot of new batteries.

Hot tip



To turn off the Magic Trackpad, press and hold the button on the side for a few seconds.

Don't forget



The iMac also has an ambient light sensor on the side of the body. This adjusts the display brightness, depending on the amount of available ambient light.

Don't forget

USB stands for Universal Serial Bus and is a popular way of connecting external devices to computers.

Don't forget

There are also ports for an external microphone and one for headphones.

...cont'd

- **Ports.** These are the parts of an iMac where external devices can be plugged into, using a cable such as a USB, FireWire or Thunderbolt. They are located at the back of the iMac:



- **USB.** This is a method for connecting a variety of external devices, such as digital cameras, MP3 music players, scanners and printers
- **Ethernet.** This is for connecting an Ethernet cable to a router, for accessing the Internet, rather than doing it wirelessly
- **FireWire.** This is a similar method of data transfer to USB but is much faster. For this reason, it is generally used for devices that need to transfer larger amounts of data, such as digital video cameras
- **Thunderbolt.** This is a port for transferring data at high speeds, up to 12x faster than FireWire. It can also be used to attach a Thunderbolt Display monitor
- **CD/DVD players or re-writers.** On an iMac this is known as a SuperDrive, and is a thin slot on the side of the iMac. Discs are inserted by simply pushing them into the SuperDrive slot. The SuperDrive can be used to play music CDs, watch DVDs, copy data from CDs or DVDs, and copy data from your iMac onto CDs or DVDs



- **Webcam (FaceTime).** This is a type of camera fitted into the top of the iMac and it can be used to take still photographs or communicate via video with other people. It works with the FaceTime app

Input Devices

iMacs have four options in terms of input devices:

- Wireless Keyboard
- Magic Mouse
- Magic Trackpad
- Standard mouse

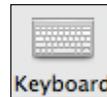
Each item has its own preferences that can be selected from the System Preferences section. These preferences can be accessed by clicking on this button on the Dock at the bottom of the iMac screen (see Chapter Two for more details about System Preferences and Chapter Four for more details about the Dock).



Keyboard options

To access options for the Wireless Keyboard:

- 1 Access the System Preferences and click on the Keyboard button
- 2 Click on the Keyboard tab to set the speed at which keystrokes are repeated and how long until the next one is active. There are also options for setting F key functionality and showing the keyboard settings in the Menu bar
- 3 Click on the Keyboard Shortcuts to set shortcut keys for accessing specific options and apps



Don't forget



Although new iMacs come with either a Magic Mouse or a Magic Trackpad they can also be used with a standard mouse.

Don't forget

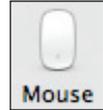
For more information on Multi-Touch Gestures with the Magic Mouse and the Magic Trackpad, see Chapter Six.

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Mouse options

There are different options for the mouse depending on whether it is a standard one or the Magic Mouse. Both are accessed in the same way:

- 1 Access the System Preferences and click on the Mouse button



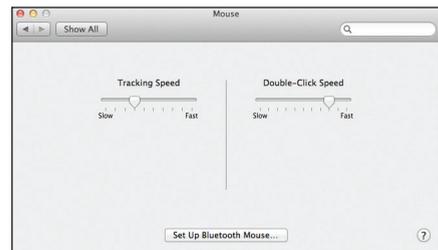
- 2 For a Magic Mouse, click on the Point & Click tab for options for how you select items by clicking in different ways with the Magic Mouse



- 3 Click on the More Gestures tab for options for moving between pages and accessing full-screen apps and the Mission Control function



- 4 For a standard USB mouse, there are options for how quickly the cursor tracks the mouse and also the speed for double-clicking



...cont'd

Trackpad options

Options for the functioning of the Magic Trackpad can also be set within the System Preferences. To do this:

- 1 Access the System Preferences and click on the Trackpad button



- 2 Click on the Point & Click tab for options for how you select items by clicking, tapping and dragging in different ways with the Magic Trackpad



- 3 Click on the Scroll & Zoom tab for options for moving around Web pages and documents



- 4 Click on the More Gestures tab for options for accessing additional items using the Magic Trackpad



Don't forget



The battery level for all of the wireless devices is shown in their respective System Preferences windows.

Getting Started

When you start using your iMac there are a few steps to undertake before it is ready for normal use. These include powering on the iMac itself and also any input devices. You will then be able to proceed through the setup process. To do this:

Don't forget



The power cable for the iMac is connected at the back in the middle of the iMac body.

Don't forget



The Wireless Keyboard, Magic Trackpad and Magic Mouse all require batteries in order to operate. For the Wireless Keyboard and the Magic Trackpad these go in the compartment at the front-left of the respective devices. For the Magic Mouse the batteries go into the compartment underneath.

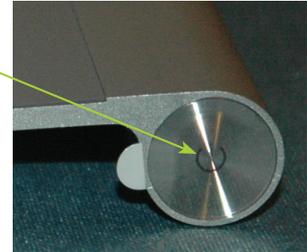
1

Turn on the iMac by pressing this button on the bottom-right corner on the back of the iMac



2

Turn on the Magic Trackpad and the Wireless Keyboard with this button at the front-right of the device



3

Turn on the Magic Mouse with this button underneath the device



4

If you are using a Magic Trackpad, click on the bottom-left corner for single-click operations during setup



...cont'd

Once the iMac has been powered on there is a short setup process. This covers:

- Selecting the language you want to use on your iMac
- Finding the Wireless Keyboard and either the Magic Mouse or the Magic Trackpad
- Selecting the country in which you are located
- Selecting the country for the keyboard layout you want to use
- Detecting a Wi-Fi router, if you have one. If it is turned on the iMac will detect the router and you will be able to select it for network connection
- Entering an Apple ID, if you have one. If not, you can apply for one at this point
- Entering registration information for your iMac. This will be sent to Apple to confirm ownership of the iMac
- Entering information for your iMac computer account. This is used to administer the iMac
- Taking a photo for your user account. This is done by the built-in FaceTime camera

Once these steps have been completed the iMac is ready for use:



Hot tip



When the iMac is turned on it should automatically recognize the Wireless Keyboard and Magic Mouse/Magic Trackpad and 'pair' with them, i.e. associate them with the iMac. However, if this does not happen they can be set up within their respective System Preferences by clicking on the Set Up Bluetooth Keyboard/Mouse/Trackpad button.

Hot tip



During the setup process you will be asked to enter a user name and a password. These are your administrator details, which allow you to change settings on your iMac. Take a note of your user name and password and keep it in a safe place, but away from the iMac itself.

Accessories

Adding accessories to your iMac can be a fun and productive way to get even more out of it. There are options for adding both hardware and software:

Hardware

- **Time Capsule.** This is a backup device that works wirelessly with the OS X backup app, Time Machine, to automatically back up everything on your iMac. It comes in 2TB or 3TB models
- **Apple Mini DisplayPorts.** These are connectors which enable you to connect to a larger monitor such as one of the Apple Cinema Displays or a TV
- **AirPort Express or Extreme Base Stations.** These are units which can be used to create a wireless network in your home or office. They connect to your iMac via its wireless card. The AirPort Express is smaller and therefore more portable so that it can be taken with you if you are traveling with a laptop. The AirPort Extreme is larger and more powerful but still relatively portable if needed
- **Pen drive.** This is a small device that can be used to copy data to and from your iMac. It connects via a USB port and is about the size of a packet of chewing gum
- **Cleaning material.** A lint-free cloth and screen cleaning spray can be used to clean your iMac's screen

Software

New software apps, or apps, can be downloaded directly from the Mac App Store. Some useful apps are:

- **iWork.** This is the Apple productivity suite which includes Pages for word processing, Numbers for data and spreadsheets, and Keynote for presentations
- **Aperture.** This is the high-end Apple image-editing app, the Mac equivalent to Photoshop
- **Logic Express.** This is a powerful app for creating and editing your own music
- **Final Cut Pro.** This is one of the best, and most powerful, apps for editing and publishing video