

Contents

1

Apple Macs and More

7

The World of Apple	8
About Mac Computers	10
About Apple iCloud	12
Setting up iCloud	13
Inside a Mac	14
Ports and Slots Explained	15
The Mac Desktop	16
Customizing Your Mac	17
Changing the Background	18
Changing the Screen Size	19
Making Things Accessible	20
The Spoken Word	21
Shutting Down and Sleeping	22

2

Finding Your Way Around

23

Finder: the Core of Your Mac	24
Quick Look	27
Finder Tabs	28
Finder Tags	29
Using the Dock	30
Mission Control	34
Launchpad	35
Mac Apps	36
The App Store	37
Downloading Apps	38
Full-Screen Apps	40
A New Way of Navigating	42
Multi-Touch Preferences	43
Removing Items	46

Creating Files	48
Sharing Files	49
Opening Items	50
Creating a Folder Structure	51
Compiling an Address Book	52
Adding a Calendar	53
Making Notes	54
Setting Reminders	56
Getting Notifications	58
Finding Things	60
Adding a Printer	61
External Drives	62

Using the Photos App	64
Viewing Photos	66
Editing Photos	68
Creating Albums	69
Sharing Photos	70
Using iPhoto	71
Playing a Music CD	72
Organizing Your Music	73
Downloading Music	75
Adding an iPod	77
Earbuds and Headphones	78
Creating Music	79
Listening to the Radio	81
Reading Books	82
Creating a Home Movie	84
Playing Chess	86

Productivity Options	88
----------------------	----

Accessing a Dictionary	89
Creating a Letter	91
Formatting a Newsletter	94
Using a Calculator	98
Doing Household Accounts	99
Creating a Presentation	102

6

Getting Online

105

Accessing the Internet	106
Around the Web	107
Setting a Homepage	110
About Safari	111
Adding Bookmarks	114
Viewing Your Online History	115
Safari Reader	116

7

Being Interactive Online

117

Shopping Online	118
Booking a Vacation	120
Travel Apps	122
Getting Around with Maps	124
Researching Family History	126
Saving Money	128
Social Networking	129
Shopping on eBay	130
Online Finances	131
Online Games	132

8

Keeping in Touch

133

Setting up Email	134
Adding Mailboxes	135
Creating Email	136
Email Conversations	137

Attaching Photos	138
Email Stationery	139
Dealing with Junk Email	140
FaceTime	141
Messaging	142

9**Apple Mobility****145**

About Yosemite and iOS 8	146
Linking it Together	147
iPhone	148
iPad	149
Using iOS 8	150
About Family Sharing	152
Using Family Sharing	154
About the iCloud Drive	158

10**Expanding Your Horizons****159**

Adding Users	160
Login Options	162
Switching Between Users	164
Parental Controls	165
Creating Your Own Network	170
Sharing on a Network	173

11**Safety Net****177**

Mac Security	178
Updating Software	179
Checking Your System	180
Dealing with Crashes	183
Backing Up	184

Index**187**

1

Apple Macs and More

Apple Mac computers are renowned for their ease-of-use, stability and security, with good reason. This chapter looks at the types of Macs and their general functions. It also shows how you can expand your Apple computing through the use of the online iCloud service.

- 8 The World of Apple**
- 10 About Mac Computers**
- 12 About Apple iCloud**
- 13 Setting up iCloud**
- 14 Inside a Mac**
- 15 Ports and Slots Explained**
- 16 The Mac Desktop**
- 17 Customizing Your Mac**
- 18 Changing the Background**
- 19 Changing the Screen Size**
- 20 Making Things Accessible**
- 21 The Spoken Word**
- 22 Shutting Down and Sleeping**



Mac users are usually very devoted to the Apple brand and support it with very enthusiastic fervor.



The New icon pictured above indicates a new or enhanced feature introduced with the latest version of OS X Yosemite.

The World of Apple

Apple, the makers of Mac computers and mobile devices such as the iPhone and the iPad, was founded in California in 1976 by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Ronald Wayne. Originally called Apple Computer, the initial emphasis of the company was very much on personal computers. After some innovative early machines, Steve Jobs decided that the next Apple computer had to have a Graphical User Interface (GUI). This is a computer that can be controlled by the user with a device such as a mouse or a joystick. In many ways this was the breakthrough that has shaped the modern face of personal computing.

The first Macintosh computer, using a GUI, was released in 1984. The sales of the first Mac were good, particularly because of its strength using graphics and for desktop publishing. However, shortly afterwards Steve Jobs left Apple which was the beginning of a downturn for the company. The increasing development of Microsoft Windows and IBM-compatible PCs became a real threat to the existence of Apple.

The rise of the iMac

During the 1990s, Apple experienced several commercial setbacks and the company was in trouble.

However, shortly afterwards Steve Jobs returned and, in 1998, the iMac was launched. With its ground-breaking, all-in-one design and bright, translucent colors it transformed people's attitudes towards personal computers.



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Apple goes mobile

The iMac was followed in 2001 by the iPod, a portable digital music player. Like the iMac, this caught the public's imagination and Apple has exploited this with dramatic effect with the addition of products such as iTunes, iPhone, iPad and its OS X operating system. Much of this has been aimed at capturing market share in the lucrative mobile computing sector, which has expanded rapidly during the 21st century and is now a key area for digital hardware and software manufacturers.

The death of Steve Jobs in October 2011 created a potential challenge for Apple but the company has built on his legacy with several updates to their flagship products such as the iPhone and the iPad and also regular updates to their operating systems, which are currently iOS 8 for mobile devices and OS X Yosemite for desktops and laptops.

Up in the iCloud

Apple's products are not created in isolation though: the aim is to create a seamless experience whether using a Mac computer, an iPhone or an iPad and ensure that content from one device can easily be accessed and opened on another device. This is done largely through the online iCloud service, which can be used to store and backup content from Apple devices and then make this content available to other compatible Apple devices. This is done with a unique Apple ID and can be used to view items such as photos, documents, calendars, address books and notes on Mac computers, iPhones, iPads and iPod Touches.

Although this book focuses on the use of Mac computers it also covers using mobile Apple devices with iOS 8 and also the iCloud service.

Computing is no longer a standalone activity on a single device and Apple has created a range of products to help with all of your computing needs, whether you are using a Mac computer, an iPhone, an iPad or an iPod Touch, or a combination of all three.



See Chapter Nine for details about using devices with iOS 8 and also linking devices together with iCloud.



All new Macs come with the latest Mac operating system pre-installed. At the time of printing this is OS X (pronounced "ten"), or 10.10 to be precise, known as Yosemite.

About Mac Computers

As with most things in the world of technology there is a wide range of choice when it comes to buying a Mac computer. This includes the top-of-the-range Mac Pro, which is a very powerful desktop computer, to the MacBook Air, which is a laptop that is thin enough to fit into an envelope – if required! In between these two extremes is a variety of desktops and laptops that can match most people's computing needs. For the senior user some of the best options are:

Desktop

As a good, all-purpose, desktop computer the iMac is hard to beat. This is the machine that helped to turn around Apple's fortunes in the 1990s and it remains one of its most popular computers.

The iMac is a self-contained computer which means the hard drive and the monitor are housed together as a single unit. There are two models that offer different levels of computing power and different monitor sizes: a 21.5-inch model and a 27-inch model. Both models come with wireless connectivity for Wi-Fi connection to the Internet. There is also a 27-inch Retina Display model which boasts a higher quality screen.



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Another desktop option is the Mac Mini, which is a smaller, cheaper, computer that consists of just the hard drive.

This means that you have to buy the mouse, keyboard and monitor separately.



This is a reasonable option if your computing needs are mainly email, the Internet and word processing. For anything more, the iMac is a better option.

Laptop

More and more people are using laptops these days, as mobile computing takes over from static desktops. In the Mac range, the MacBook is probably the best all-round option. Although not as powerful as the iMac, it has enough computing power for most people's needs. The MacBook Pro comes in 13- and 15- inch models, both with Retina Display high resolution screens. The MacBook Air is ultra-thin and a great option for when traveling: it is available in 11- and 13-inch models.



If you plan on traveling a lot with a laptop, the MacBook Air may feel a bit flimsy due to its very thin design. However, it is surprisingly robust.



The standard iCloud service is free and this includes an iCloud email address and 5GB of online storage.
(Correct at the time of printing.)



For details about using System Preferences on your Mac, see page 17.



There is also a version of iCloud for Windows, which can be accessed for download from the Apple website at
[www.apple.com/
icloud/setup/
pc.html](http://www.apple.com/icloud/setup/)

About Apple iCloud

Cloud computing is an attractive proposition and one that has gained greatly in popularity in recent years. As a concept, it consists of storing your content on an external computer server. This not only gives you added security in terms of backing up your information, it also means that, with your unique login ID, the content can then be shared over a variety of mobile devices.

iCloud is Apple's consumer cloud computing product that consists of online services such as email, a calendar, notes, contacts and saving documents. iCloud provides users with a way to save and backup their files and content to the online service and then use them across their Apple devices such as other Mac computers, iPhones, iPads and iPod Touches.

About iCloud

iCloud can be set up from this icon within System Preferences:



You can use iCloud to save and share the following between your different devices, with an Apple ID:

- Music
- Photos
- Documents
- Apps
- Books
- Calendars
- Notes
- Reminders
- Backups

When you save an item to the iCloud it automatically pushes it to all of your other compatible devices; you do not have to manually sync anything, iCloud does it all for you.

Setting up iCloud

To use iCloud with OS X Yosemite on your Mac you need to first have an Apple ID. This is a service you can register for to be able to access a range of Apple facilities, including iCloud. You can register with an email address and a password. When you first start using iCloud you will be prompted for your Apple ID details. If you do not have an Apple ID you can apply for one at this point:

- 1 Sign in with your Apple ID, or



- 2 Click on the **Create Apple ID...** button

Create Apple ID...



For more information about using iCloud and linking a Mac to mobile devices such as an iPhone and an iPad, see Chapter Nine.

Setting up iCloud

To use iCloud:

- 1 Open System Preferences and click on the **iCloud** button



- 2 Check on the items you want included within iCloud. All of these items will be backed up and shared across all of your Apple devices



When you have an Apple ID and an iCloud account, you can also use the iCloud website to access your content. Access the website at **www.icloud.com** and log in with your Apple ID details.



To find out more about your current operating system, click on the Apple symbol at the top left of the screen and click on **About This Mac**.



The range of Mac computers have a minimum of 4GB of onboard memory for dealing with the operations of the computer. This is in the form of memory chips and more memory can be added to iMacs, Mac Minis and MacBooks.

Inside a Mac

Operating system

The Mac operating system (the software that is the foundation of how the computer works) is known as OS X (pronounced “ten”). This is now on version 10.10, which is more commonly known as Yosemite. This is based on UNIX, a system that is both secure and robust.

OS X is not only easy to use it also has a very attractive graphical interface. This is created by a technology known as Quartz and the interface itself is known as Aqua,



which is a set of graphics based on the theme of water. The OS X Yosemite interface is immediately eye-catching as soon as any Mac is turned on.

Storage

The iMac, Mac Mini and MacBook ranges have innovative storage solutions to ensure that you can save your documents, photos, music, videos, and more, as quickly and as efficiently as possible. This is done through either a traditional hard drive, or flash storage, or a combination of the two using the Fusion Drive storage option. Flash storage has no moving parts and is up to five times faster than a traditional hard drive. This means that your Mac will start up more quickly, apps will open more quickly and viewing and saving multimedia items such as photos and videos will also be quicker. iMacs and Mac Minis have a combination of hard drive and flash storage while MacBooks rely solely on flash storage.

Processors

The range of Mac computers use either dual-core or quad-core Intel processors for optimum speed of operation. Quad-core processors are available in iMacs.

Ports and Slots Explained

Every Mac computer has a number of ports and slots for different functions to be performed or additional devices to be attached. Some of these are the same for iMacs, Mac Minis and MacBooks, while others are specific to particular models, depending on their functionality.

USB ports

These are the ports that are used to connect a variety of external devices such as digital cameras, memory card readers, pen drives or external hard drives. On most Macs there are a minimum of two USB ports.



iMacs, Mac Minis and the MacBook range no longer have an internal CD/DVD drive. However, an external one can be attached via a USB cable.

15

Thunderbolt ports

These are ports for transferring data at high speeds, up to 12 times faster than FireWire. FireWire was used on some previous models of Macs and, at the time of printing, is still available on the Mac Mini. Thunderbolt ports can be used to attach external devices and also be used to connect a Thunderbolt screen to a MacBook.



USB stands for Universal Serial Bus and, at the time of printing, the latest version is USB 3.

SD card

This is a slot that can be used to download content from an SD card. This is usually for photos or videos.



HDMI ports

These are ports for connecting your Mac to another screen, such as a High Definition (HD) TV.



The latest models of iMacs and MacBooks do not have a FireWire port. However, a FireWire-to-Thunderbolt adapter can be used if you have FireWire devices.

Ethernet port

This is for the connection of an Ethernet cable, for a cable or broadband Internet connection. This is now only available on the iMac and Mac Mini as the MacBook range relies on Wi-Fi for Internet connections.



The Mac Desktop

The first thing to do with your new Mac is to turn it on. This is done by pressing this button once (on the MacBook this is on the body next to the keyboard; on the iMac it is at the back of the screen).



If the Finder is not showing, click on this icon on the Dock. The Dock is the collection of icons at the bottom of the screen.



The Finder Sidebar (the panel at the left-hand side of the Finder) is semi-transparent and shows some of the background behind it.



The first thing you will see is the Mac Desktop. This is the default layout and, as we will see in the next few pages, this can be customized to your own preferences.

Some of the specific elements of the Desktop are:

Apple Menu

Finder Menu bars



Dock

The Finder

Background

Customizing Your Mac

All of us have different ideas about the way we want our computers set up, in terms of layout, colors, size and graphics. Macs allow a great deal of customization so that you can personalize yours to genuinely make it feel like your own computer.

The customization features are contained within the System Preferences. To access these:

- 1 Click here on the Dock (the full workings of the Dock will be covered in detail in Chapter Two)



- 2 The **System Preferences** folder contains a variety of functions that can be used to customize your Mac



Click on the **Show All** button at the top of the **System Preferences** folder to show all of the items in the folder, regardless of which element you are currently using.



Use the **General** option to customize items such as the color of buttons and menus.

Changing the Background

Background imagery is an important way to add your own personal touch to your Mac. (This is the graphical element upon which all other items on your computer sit.) There is a range of background options that can be used. To select your own background:



You can select your own photographs as your Desktop background, once you have loaded them onto your Mac. To do this, select the Pictures Folder in Step 3, and browse to the photograph you want.



Click on the **Screen Saver** tab to select options for what is displayed on the screen when your Mac is not in use.

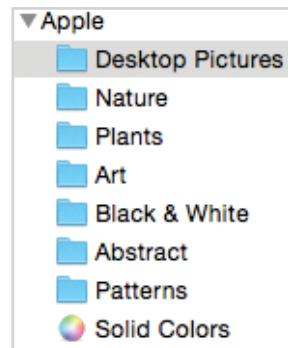
Screen Saver

- 1 Click on this icon in the **System Preferences** folder



Desktop

- 2 Click on the **Desktop** tab



- 3 Select a location from where you want to select a background

- 4 Click on one of the available backgrounds



- 5 The background is applied as the Desktop background imagery

Changing the Screen Size

For most computer users the size at which items are displayed on the screen is a crucial issue: if items are too small this can make them hard to read and lead to eye strain; too large and you have to spend a lot of time scrolling around to see everything.

The size of items on the screen is controlled by the screen's resolution, i.e. the number of colored dots displayed in an area of the screen. The higher the resolution the smaller the items on the screen, the lower the resolution the larger the items. To change the screen resolution:

- 1 Click on this button in the **System Preferences** folder



- 2 Click on the **Display** tab

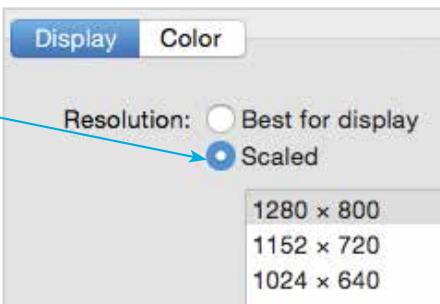


- 3 Click on the **Best for display** button to let your Mac select the most appropriate resolution



- 4 Drag this slider to change the screen brightness. Check on the box to have this done automatically

- 5 Click on the **Scaled** button and select a resolution setting to change the overall screen resolution



A higher resolution makes items appear sharper on the screen, even though they appear physically smaller.



Experiment with the VoiceOver function if only to see how it operates. This will give you a better idea of how visually-impaired users access information on a computer.



The Audio, Keyboard, and Mouse & Trackpad accessibility options have links to additional options within their own System Preferences.



Another option in the Accessibility window is for **Switch Control**, which enables a Mac to be controlled by a variety of devices, including the mouse, keypad and gamepad devices.

Making Things Accessible

In all areas of computing it is important to give as many people access to the system as possible. This includes users with visual impairments and also people who have problems using the mouse and keyboard. In OS X this is achieved through the Accessibility System Preferences. To use these:

- 1** Click on this button in the **System Preferences** folder
- Accessibility
-
- 2** Click on the **Display** button for options for changing the display colors, contrast and increasing the cursor size
 - 3** Click on the **Zoom** button for options to zoom in on the screen
 - 4** Click on the **VoiceOver** button to enable VoiceOver which provides a spoken description of what is on the screen
 - 5** Click on the **Audio** button to select an on-screen flash for alerts and how sound is played
 - 6** Click on the **Keyboard** button to access options for customizing the keyboard
 - 7** Click on the **Mouse & Trackpad** button to access options for customizing these devices
 - 8** Click on the **Dictation** button to select options for using spoken commands

The Spoken Word

Yosemite not only has numerous options for adding text to documents, emails and messages; it also has a dictation function so that you can speak what you want to appear on screen. To set up and use the dictation feature:

- 1 Click on this button in the **System Preferences** folder



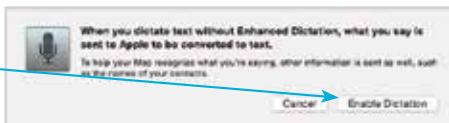
- 2 By default, Dictation is Off



- 3 Click on the **On** button to enable dictation



- 4 Click on the **Enable Dictation** button



- 5 Once Dictation has been turned On, it can be accessed in relevant apps by selecting **Edit > Start Dictation** from the menu bar

Start Dictation

- 6 Start talking when the microphone icon appears. Click **Done** when you have finished recording your text



- 7 Click on the **Text to Speech** tab to make selections for dictation



Punctuation can be added with the dictation function, by speaking commands such as 'comma' or 'question mark'. These will then be converted into the appropriate symbols.

Shutting Down and Sleeping

When you are not using your Mac you will want to either shut it down or put it to sleep. If you shut it down this may close all of your applications and open files. This is the best option if you are not going to be returning to your Mac for a reasonable length of time (say, more than one day).

If you put the Mac to sleep, it will retain your current work session so that you can continue when you wake up the Mac. This option is useful if you know you will be returning to your Mac within a few hours.

The process for shutting down or putting a Mac to sleep is very similar in both cases:

- 1 Click on this icon on the main Menu bar



- 2 Click on either
Sleep, Restart or
Shut Down...



- 3 If you are shutting down, a window appears asking you to confirm your request



- 4 Click on the **Shut Down** button



Check on the **Reopen windows when logging back in** box when you shut down. This ensures that the next time you turn on your Mac, it will resume at the place where you closed it, i.e. all open apps and files will appear in their previous state.