

# Take Control

## *of* Apple Mail in Leopard

*by* Joe Kissell

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This is a free sample of "Take Control of Apple Mail in Leopard."  
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## READ ME FIRST

Welcome to *Take Control of Apple Mail in Leopard*, version 1.0, published in May 2008, by TidBITS Publishing Inc.

Mail, Apple's full-featured email application, is the most popular way for Mac OS X users to send and receive email. This book helps you get more out of Mail by explaining its most important features, providing useful tips, and solving problems. This book was written by Joe Kissell and edited by Tonya Engst.

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### Basics

In reading this book, you may encounter a few unfamiliar terms and conventions. Please note the following:

- **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 message in Mail is "File > New Message."

- **Multiple ways to perform a command:** You can perform many commands in Mail in more than one way—for example, using a toolbar button, a menu command, or a keyboard shortcut. In this book, for the sake of brevity, I mention only one way to perform each command. In general, I describe the most obvious way of doing things—toolbar buttons are easier to find than menu commands (as long as they’re in their default locations), and menu commands are more obvious than keyboard shortcuts—but choose whichever approach suits you best.
- **Customizing menus:** If a menu command doesn’t have a keyboard shortcut listed, note that you can add your own shortcut in the Keyboard Shortcuts view of the Keyboard & Mouse pane of System Preferences. (Sadly, any keyboard shortcuts that you’ve assigned to the Message > Move To and Message > Copy To sub-menus don’t work—but see [Running Rules on Command](#) for a workaround.)
- **Customizing toolbars:** Remember that you can customize the toolbars for Mail’s various windows to your liking (adding, rearranging, or moving controls) by Control-clicking (right-clicking) on a toolbar and choosing Customize Toolbar from the contextual menu.
- **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 a tilde (~), which is a shortcut for the currently logged in user’s home folder. For example, if a person with the account user name **joe** wants to install fonts that only he can access, he would install them in his **~/Library/Fonts** folder, which is another way of writing **/Users/joe/Library/Fonts**.

- **Finding Mail’s preferences:** I often refer to preferences in Mail that you may want to adjust. To display Mail’s preferences (not to be confused with the system-wide settings found in the System Preferences application), choose Mail > Preferences.

Within that window, click a button on the toolbar at the top to display a pane with that category of preferences. Instead of giving detailed directions each time, I use an abbreviated notation such as “go to the Junk Mail preference pane.”

**TIP** To keep up-to-date with Mail-related tips and news, see Tim Gaden’s Hawk Wings blog at <http://www.hawkwings.net/>. The site also includes a long list of third-party Mail add-ons at <http://www.hawkwings.net/plugins.htm>.

## INTRODUCTION

Back in the days of Mac OS X 10.3 Panther, I noticed that a lot of people were having trouble with Mail, Apple's descriptively named email program. I liked Mail, but I also realized that it had some significant bugs and missing features, and was poorly documented. So I wrote *Take Control of Email with Apple Mail* to try to help people make the most of Mail. (I also wrote a companion volume, *Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail*<sup>1</sup>, which dealt solely with junk mail; it's still available separately.) When Tiger came out, it featured an entirely new version of Mail with many new features—and a long list of problems to match. So I once again got busy writing, this time producing *Take Control of Apple Mail in Tiger*.

Now Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard is available, and along with it, the latest and greatest incarnation of Mail, version 3.0. And guess what? Once again, it has some significant bugs and missing features, and is poorly documented. What a surprise! Don't get me wrong: I still like Mail a great deal, and I rely on it for my personal use even though I've tried every other Mac email program. It's just that I've had to spend far too many hours figuring out how to do things that Apple didn't bother to explain in the user interface itself, in the online help, or on the Web. So I've written this book in the hope of saving other people all that time and effort.

This book is a no-nonsense guide to help you take control of a powerful email program without getting lost in extraneous information. I've worked hard to make it more compact and concise than *Take Control of Apple Mail in Tiger*, but without omitting any crucial information. To accomplish that, I've focused on the most important things that I think you need to know about Mail 3.x—I give little attention to either obvious, self-explanatory features or highly advanced topics (such as encrypting email and working with non-Roman alphabets). I do, however, occasionally refer you to articles elsewhere on the Web for more details about things I can only touch on here. If there are topics you'd like to see more about in a future edition of this book, drop me a line at [jwk@mac.com](mailto:jwk@mac.com) and let me know.

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<sup>1</sup> This link contains a \$5-off coupon code. If you click it, and then click the Buy Ebook button, you should see the discount in the first screen of the cart.

## QUICK START TO CONTROLLING APPLE MAIL

You can read this book in any order you wish, though I recommend reading the background information listed under “Manage Mail setup” before proceeding with the rest of the book.

### **Manage Mail setup:**

- Start on the right foot as you [Learn What’s New in Leopard Mail](#) (p. 7) and [Learn about Email Protocols](#) (p. 8).
- Get Mail up and running in [Set Up Your Accounts](#) (p. 12).

### **Read email:**

- Get mail into your Inbox; then sort it, read it, and work with it. See [Read Incoming Messages](#) (p. 16).
- View RSS posts in Mail. See [Read RSS Feeds](#) (p. 30).

### **Create email:**

- Make sure your messages get to the right destinations by reading [Address Addressing](#) (p. 33).
- Get your message across with style (or even with plain text!). Read [Compose and Send Messages](#) (p. 39).

### **Get organized:**

- Get a grip on the organizational tools Mail provides. See [Manage Your Mailboxes](#) (p. 53).
- Track your tasks. See [Keep Track of Notes and To Do Items](#) (p. 55).
- Find any message in a jiffy. See [Find Your Messages](#) (p. 62).
- Keep your email consistent across Macs. See [Synchronize Mail Data Using .Mac](#) (p. 70).
- Let Mail do tedious filing and sorting for you! See [Automate Mail with Rules](#) (p. 74).

### **Make Mail work better:**

- Having problems sending, receiving, or searching email? Find a solution in [Fix Mail Problems](#) (p. 78).
- Make sure you don't lose your valuable email. Learn how to [Back Up and Restore Your Email](#) (p. 89).

## LEARN WHAT'S NEW IN LEOPARD MAIL

The version of Mail included with Leopard (3.x) looks superficially much like the version that shipped with Tiger, but it has many changes. Among them are these:

- **Data Detectors:** Automatically put contact and schedule info to use. See [Use Data Detectors](#) (p. 21).
- **Quick Look for attachments:** Open many attachments instantly. Read [Deal with Incoming Attachments](#) (p. 23).
- **Junk mail filtering changes:** Change when the Junk Mail filter runs. See [Set Mail's Junk Mail filter correctly](#) (p. 27).
- **RSS support:** [Read RSS Feeds](#) right in Mail (p. 30).
- **Forward as Attachment:** [Forward Messages as Attachments](#) rather than as text (p. 49).
- **Stationery:** [Use Mail Stationery](#) to create template-based messages such as newsletters (p. 50).
- **Rich text improvements:** Read about new formatting options available in [Handle Message Formatting](#) (p. 39).
- **Photo browser:** Attach photos from iPhoto. Read [Learn attachment basics](#) (p. 45).
- **Re-orderable sidebar:** Move certain items up or down in your sidebar. See [Arrange Your Mailboxes](#) (p. 54).
- **Notes and To Dos:** Keep track of all your reminders in Mail. Read [Keep Track of Notes and To Do Items](#) (p. 55).
- **Improved Spotlight searching:** [Find Your Messages](#) more easily than before (p. 62).
- **SMTP server options:** Read [Pick a server \(just one\)](#) (p. 83) to learn about Mail's new SMTP options.
- **Time Machine support:** Never lose a message! Read [Back Up and Restore with Time Machine](#) (p. 89).
- **Archive Mailbox command:** [Archive a Mailbox](#) for long-term storage outside Mail (p. 91).

## LEARN ABOUT EMAIL PROTOCOLS

The word “protocol” may sound complicated, but it’s just a way of describing how your email program talks to a mail server. If you understand a few basics about email protocols up front, you’ll have an easier time understanding Mail’s interface and solving problems.

Although you may not be aware of it, any email account involves two entirely separate systems—one for sending and another for receiving—and these often use entirely different servers. You probably use the same user name and password for each, but behind the scenes, each Mail account functions as two separate accounts:


- Your incoming account fetches email from your mail server and delivers it to you using a mail delivery protocol—such as POP (Post Office Protocol) or IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol). Just ahead, I explain more about [POP](#) and [IMAP](#), and I mention a few quirks of [.Mac](#) and [Exchange](#) accounts.
- Your outgoing account uses a mail transfer protocol called [SMTP](#) (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) to send outgoing email from your machine to your mail server, and then (usually through a number of intermediate steps) to the recipient’s mail server.

### POP

In a nutshell, a POP account works like this: First, your client (that is, your email program) asks the server for the list of messages in your Inbox. Then, depending on your client’s capabilities and settings, it downloads all the messages, selected messages, or all messages under a specified size, to your local computer. Finally (and optionally), your client instructs the server to delete its copy of some or all of the messages. The server does not store information about whether or not a message has been downloaded, read, or deleted; only your local client knows this, and the overall assumption is that you wish to read, organize, and store your mail on a single computer, using the server only as a conduit to receive it.

However, you can usually leave messages on the server and then check your email with a different client (or on a different machine), but then all the messages will appear to be unread.

## SET UP YOUR ACCOUNTS

In Mail 3.x, account setup is as easy as it gets. You start in Mail's Accounts preference pane by clicking the  button at the bottom. Fill in your name, email address, and password, make sure Automatically Set Up Account is checked, and click Create.

Mail then attempts to figure out everything else it needs to know, such as your account type ([POP](#), [IMAP](#), [.Mac](#), or [Exchange](#)), the names of your incoming and outgoing mail servers, and whether to use SSL. This works surprisingly well for most of the major email providers, including AOL, Yahoo!, and Verizon (see below for a further explanation about Gmail).

If Mail can't figure out how to set up your account automatically, it does the next best thing, which is to run an assistant that walks you through entering your account details. As long as you have the basic setup information that every email provider supplies to its customers, you should be ready to go in under two minutes.

Rather than walk you through every step of this self-explanatory process, I'd like to offer a few account setup tips, beginning with a special set of instructions for Gmail users.

### Use IMAP with Gmail

If you have a Gmail account, Mail can check it—and it can even do the account setup automatically. But the automatic setup defaults to POP, whereas IMAP is generally a better way to access Gmail; with IMAP, you'll be able to access all your messages both in Mail and on the Gmail Web site. To access your Gmail account via IMAP in Mail, you must first turn on Gmail's IMAP support (if you haven't already done so). To do this:

1. Go to <http://mail.google.com/>, and log in if necessary.
2. At the top of the window, click the Settings link.
3. Click the "Forwarding and POP/IMAP" link.
4. Select Enable IMAP and click Save Changes.

## READ INCOMING MESSAGES

No email-related task is more basic than reading messages that other people send you. In this section, I get you going with the basics and cover what I consider to be the most essential aspects of reading your email. Later on, I look at advanced topics that relate to reading messages, particularly [Manage Your Mailboxes](#), [Find Your Messages](#), and [Automate Mail with Rules](#).

### Check Your Email

Before you can read your email, you must download it (or some portion of it) into Mail so you can see that you have it. By default, Mail checks your active email accounts automatically when you launch the application and every 5 minutes thereafter. You can also retrieve email manually or change the automatic checking interval.

To check mail manually, click the Get Mail button on the toolbar. To change the automatic checking interval, open Mail's General preference pane and choose a new setting using the Check for New Mail pop-up menu. (I recommend the default, Every 5 Minutes, for most people with fast, always-on Internet connections. But if you get as much mail as I do, you might want to turn off the alert sound that plays when new mail arrives to avoid having constant interruptions. To do this, go to the General preference pane and choose None from the New Mail Sound pop-up menu,)

Although you cannot adjust the frequency of checking for each account individually, you can exempt individual accounts from *automatic* checking. To do this, open Mail's Accounts preference pane, select the account, and go to the Advanced view. Uncheck the box labeled Include When Automatically Checking for New Mail, close the window, and save your changes when prompted. Mail then retrieves messages from that account only when you check your mail manually or when another action, such as sending mail, triggers an automatic check.

(Some IMAP servers, however, automatically notify Mail when new mail arrives, prompting it to download the messages immediately. If you want to disable this feature, go to Mail's Accounts preference pane, select your IMAP account, and click Advanced; then uncheck Use IDLE Command If the Server Supports It.)

## READ RSS FEEDS


Starting with Tiger, Safari has been able to display *RSS feeds*, which many blogs, news sites, and other online publications use to distribute information on an article-by-article basis. But frankly, Safari was never a great RSS reader; it does the job, but not with the wealth of features or flexible interface of stand-alone RSS readers such as NetNewsWire (<http://www.newsgator.com/Individuals/NetNewsWire/>, free). With Leopard, Apple has tried a different approach: putting RSS support in Mail.

In principle, this makes more sense. Mail's interface is better than Safari's for displaying RSS feeds, and many of the tasks you perform in Mail (marking messages as read, searching, using smart mailboxes, and so on) can be done exactly the same way with feeds. Having spent several months giving Mail's RSS capabilities a good workout, my opinion is that if I were stuck on a desert island with only Mail to meet my RSS needs, I'd manage, but I'd prefer a more capable tool.

With that in mind, I want to provide a quick overview of using RSS in Mail. But if you read more than a handful of RSS feeds on a regular basis, I suggest you look seriously at NetNewsWire, because Mail is likely to prove unsatisfying.

### Configure Mail's RSS Preferences

Mail has three new feed-related preferences, all found in the RSS preference pane. Before adding any feeds, take a moment to set these preferences to your liking:

- **Default RSS Reader:** When you click a link on a Web page to subscribe to an RSS feed (or when you click the RSS icon in Safari's address bar), the application shown in this menu will display that feed. Oddly, the default RSS reader in Leopard is still Safari, even though Mail is much better. Unless you have a favorite third-party RSS reader, choose Mail.
- **Check for Updates:** Choose the frequency with which Mail checks for new RSS articles. I suggest the shortest value, Every 30 Minutes. (If at any time you want to force an immediate update of all articles, click on the pop-up Action () menu at the bottom of Mail's Viewer window—or Control-click (right-click) on the feed or mailbox icon—and choose Update All RSS Feeds.)

## ADDRESS ADDRESSING

You can create outgoing messages in various ways—by clicking New Message or Forward in the toolbar, for example, or by replying (see [Reply to Messages](#)). In every case, the message needs one or more addresses, which I discuss in this section.

When addressing an outgoing email message, you can, of course, simply type email addresses into the provided address fields (To and Cc). However, you may wish to easily enter email addresses that you have not memorized and you may wish to display the hidden address fields, Bcc and Reply-To. In this section, I explain how to handle each of these addressing scenarios, and I discuss sending email to groups.

At the end of this section, in [Choose an Account to Send From](#), I look at how to change the address from which you send your message, something you'll likely need to know how to do if you have more than one email account configured in Mail.

### Put Addresses in Address Book

Mail relies on the system-wide Address Book to store frequently used email addresses. If you haven't already filled in your Address Book with your most frequently used email addresses, consider doing so—it will make your life a lot easier.

**TIP** To make an Address Book card for the sender of a message you're viewing in Mail, choose Message > Add Sender to Address Book.

### Address an Email Message

In Mail, you can address your email using the [Address Panel](#) (which provides a little portal to Address Book), or you can use [Automatic Address Completion](#). In addition, if you work for a larger organization, you may be able to access addresses from an [LDAP server](#).

## COMPOSE AND SEND MESSAGES

After you open a new message window (for example, by clicking New Message in the toolbar) and address the message (covered just previously in [Address Addressing](#)), the rest should be a matter of filling in the text and clicking Send, right? Well, it can be...but you may want to know about some additional topics, which I cover in this section. Feel free to read these in any order:

- “Handle Message Formatting,” next, discusses the use of plain versus formatted text.
- Read [Personalize Email with Signatures](#) (p. 41) to understand Mail’s Signature feature.
- See [Work with Outgoing Attachments](#) (p. 44) if you want to send files to other people.
- Flip ahead to [Reply to Messages](#) (p. 48) for information on special options Mail provides when replying.
- [Forward Messages as Attachments](#) (p. 49) discusses a new way Leopard Mail offers for forwarding messages.
- Read [Use Mail Stationery](#) (p. 50) to learn about Mail’s templates for sending newsletters, announcements, and the like.

### **TIP DRAFTS OF UNSENT MESSAGES**

As you compose a new message, Mail periodically saves a copy of the as-yet unsent email in the Drafts mailbox for the account selected in the Account pop-up menu. You can also manually save your message to the Drafts mailbox by clicking the Save as Draft button on the toolbar or choosing File > Save as Draft.

*Drafts then remain in the Drafts mailbox until you open them and click Send—or you manually delete them.*

### **Handle Message Formatting**

You can make sure that your messages arrive with the optimal formatting for your recipients by considering whether to use plain text or rich text, and by being aware of a few special formatting tips.

## MANAGE YOUR MAILBOXES

Each account in Mail typically has several *mailboxes*—basically folders for holding email—including In, Drafts, Sent, Junk, and Trash. You can also add your own mailboxes. Your mailboxes appear in the sidebar, on the left of the main Viewer window.

If you have more than one account, Mail consolidates all mailboxes of a particular type under a single icon in the Mailboxes category in the sidebar. For example, if you have three accounts, Mail displays a single Inbox icon; select this icon to list the incoming messages for all three accounts. If you click the triangle next to the Inbox icon, each account appears individually; click any one of these icons to display the contents of just that account's Inbox.

### Special Mailboxes

Five mailboxes that appear in most accounts—Inbox, Drafts, Sent, Junk, and Trash—have distinctive icons and behave differently from other mailboxes; I refer to these as “special” mailboxes. What makes them special is that Mail automatically stores messages in them when you take certain actions (such as sending or deleting mail):

- **Inbox:** Every account has an Inbox, if nothing else; it's the mailbox where new messages are delivered.
- **Drafts:** Messages you've started, but not yet sent, are stored here.
- **Sent:** When you send a message, Mail keeps a copy here for your future reference.
- **Junk:** This mailbox is designated for spam. If you've enabled junk mail filtering and set it to Move It to the Junk Mailbox (in the Junk Mail preference pane), Mail moves messages marked as junk to this mailbox. If junk mail filtering is disabled or set to Mark As Junk Mail, But Leave It in My Inbox, the Junk mailbox will appear as an ordinary folder icon in your sidebar. (For more info about setting up junk mail filtering, see [Stop Spam](#), earlier.)
- **Trash:** When you delete a message, Mail can either remove it immediately or move it to a Trash mailbox. To make sure deleted messages go into the Trash mailbox, in Mail's Accounts preference pane, in the Mailbox Behaviors view, select Move Deleted Messages to the Trash Mailbox.

## KEEP TRACK OF NOTES AND TO DO ITEMS

In recognition of the fact that many people use their email Inbox as a de facto to-do list, Apple added two related features to Leopard Mail that make it easier to manage tasks and other information without having to open another program—Notes and To Dos:

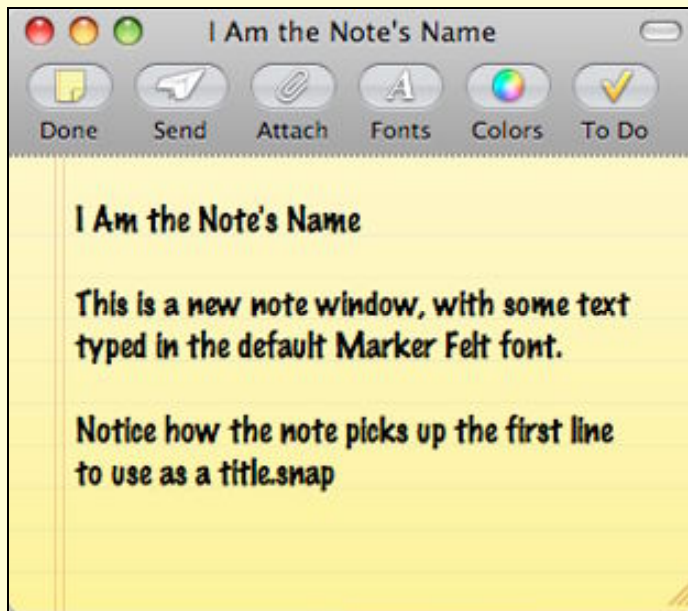
### Notes

Notes can hold any sort of information (styled text, graphics, and so on) and are automatically stored in a special mailbox without your having to actually mail yourself a message; you can edit these notes whenever you want. Notes behave just like regular messages for the purposes of searching and smart mailboxes.

### Create a note

To start a new note, click the Note button in Mail's toolbar to open a new window that looks like a yellow legal pad (**Figure 7**).

**FIGURE 7**



The basic note window can hold any text you type or paste; you can also drag in graphics or other files.

In the New Note window, type (or paste) anything you want—you can even drag in graphics and other files from the Finder. Here are a few quirky things that you might like to know about creating a note:

- **Dragged-in files:** Just as with attachments, you can Control-click (right-click) an added file's icon to show a contextual menu that lets you choose whether to view the file in place or as an icon.

## FIND YOUR MESSAGES


Spotlight automatically indexes all your messages for super-fast searching. And with Leopard, Spotlight gains interesting new capabilities in Mail, such as support for finding whole phrases enclosed in quotation marks and searching by date. Unfortunately, Leopard Mail also *loses* the capability of performing Boolean searches, though I describe another approach to achieving approximately the same result.

### NOTE SAVE YOUR EMAIL

Quite often, someone writes to ask me for some information that I sent earlier—each time accompanied by the apology, “Sorry, I know you sent it to me, but I deleted it.” When this happens, I shake my head, sigh, and ask, “But why?”

I know many people have the habit of deleting email messages as soon as they’ve read them. I applaud the tidiness such a habit lends to one’s Inbox, and I recognize that in some cases this habit was borne out of limited disk space or online mail storage. But look—it’s 2008. With modern tools, modern ultra-large hard drive sizes, modern high-capacity email accounts, and fast Spotlight searching, you can afford to break this habit.

### Perform a Basic Search

To find an email message, begin by (optionally) selecting one or more mailboxes in the sidebar in which you want to search. Then start typing in the Search field in Mail’s toolbar. (To jump right to the Search field, press Command-Option-F.) Mail begins displaying results in the message list immediately—sometimes even before you finish typing. To hide the results and return to the message list, click the  icon in the search box.

**TIP** To quickly search for all messages from a given sender, drag any message from that sender into the Search field. Mail fills the From email address in automatically.

Searches in Mail are insensitive to case, and encompass accented characters. For example, searching for **ical** will match **iCa1**, and searching for **creme brulee** will match **Crème Brûlée**.

## SYNCHRONIZE MAIL DATA USING .MAC

If you have more than one Mac, and a .Mac membership, you can synchronize much of your Mail data across computers fairly easily. That word “much” requires some clarification. Account settings (such as mail server addresses, user names, passwords, and preferences for each account), notes, to do items, rules, signatures, and smart mailboxes all synchronize, as do your Address Book contacts. In fact, almost everything except—minor detail—your actual email messages can sync between computers.

As a matter of fact, your email can remain perfectly in sync between computers at all times too, as long as you use exclusively IMAP, .Mac, and Exchange accounts—all of which store copies of your mail on a server—and have no “On My Mac” mailboxes. (This is what I do with multiple Macs, by the way, and this approach has worked remarkably well for me over—try it if you switch between computers frequently.)

But if you use POP accounts, or if you move messages from IMAP servers to local mailboxes, synchronizing messages between computers is much harder. The only reliable way to do it for two Macs is to quit Mail on both machines and then copy one Mac’s entire `~/Library/Mail` folder to the other’s. But doing so overwrites *all* the messages on the second Mac, which may result in lost data.

Doing a bidirectional, message-by-message sync is possible but messy. You could use a synchronization utility (such as ChronoSync from Econ Technologies, (<http://www.econtechologies.com>, \$40) to synchronize the two computers’ `~/Library/Mail` folders—but then both copies of the envelope index, which keeps track of which messages are where, will be incorrect. To fix them, you’d have to quit Mail, delete the file `~/Library/Mail/Envelope Index` on each Mac, relaunch Mail, and let it reimport all your messages. Needless to say, that’s more bother than most of us want to go through regularly!

### TIP MAIL ON THE MAC AND THE iPhone OR iPod touch

For a detailed discussion of how to best read email in the Mail app on an iPhone or touch and in Mail on a Mac, consult Ted Landau’s [Take Control of Your iPhone](#).

## AUTOMATE MAIL WITH RULES

Mail applies *rules* (sometimes called *filters*) automatically to incoming messages. Among other things, rules can highlight messages or move them to specific mailboxes based on criteria like the name of the sender or the nature of the message content. For example, you can sort messages from mailing lists into a mailbox you only check when you have time, while highlighting messages from your boss in a special color.

Because they are so powerful, rules are one of my favorite Mail features. The rest of this section includes a quick primer on creating rules, along with a few examples and tips.

### Create a Rule

To create a basic rule, follow these steps:

1. Go to the Rules preference pane and click Add Rule.

A dialog appears showing the condition(s) the rule checks for and the action(s) Mail takes if the conditions match.

2. Enter a name for the rule in the Description field.
3. Set a condition to check for: Start by choosing something from the left-hand pop-up menu in this area; depending on what you choose, you may now see a second pop-up menu, a text field, or both. Here are some examples of a completed condition:

```
[From] [contains] apple.com  
[Subject] [Begins with] Take Control  
[Date Sent] [Is Less Than] 3 days old  
[Message Content] [Does not contain] Leopard
```

4. From the provided pop-up menus, choose the action you want the rule to perform on a message if (and only if) it matches the condition you just specified. Here are some examples:

```
[Move Message] to mailbox: [Filed]  
[Set Color of Message] [of background] [Blue]  
[Reply to Message] (Click the button and fill in your reply)  
[Mark as Read]
```

## FIX MAIL PROBLEMS

As much as I love Mail, it does have its share of problems. Although a complete troubleshooting guide to Mail could run hundreds of pages, I've compiled solutions to some of the most common (and egregious) problems in the pages ahead, including difficulties receiving and sending mail, problems with damaged mailboxes, and misbehaving Spotlight searches

### Fix Incoming Mail Problems

If Mail cannot download incoming messages, the cause may be anything from an incorrect setting in Mail, to a server problem, to a loss of Internet connectivity. Work through each of the following sections until you resolve the problem.

**TIP** To see what Mail is doing behind the scenes, choose Window > Activity Viewer. A small floating window appears, displaying detail about each activity Mail is performing. To cancel any task, click the red "Stop" button next to it.

### Try Connection Doctor

To open Connection Doctor, choose Window > Connection Doctor. In the Connection Doctor window, Mail lists every incoming and outgoing email account you've configured. It attempts to log in to each account, and if it fails with any of them, it displays an explanation as to why it failed. These explanations aren't always helpful, but they often give you a good starting point in debugging problems, and are written in refreshingly plain English. If the Connection Doctor window suggests a specific fix, try that first. Otherwise, proceed with the following steps.

### User name and password errors

If you enter your password in Mail's Accounts preference pane, Mail stores the password in your Keychain (which is usually what you want). If, for security reasons, you prefer for Mail to prompt you for your password each time you connect, leave the Password field blank.

Sometimes, even after successfully checking your email many times with the password you entered, Mail displays a dialog claiming that

## BACK UP AND RESTORE YOUR EMAIL

A number of years ago, my computer suffered a severe hard drive crash that wiped out years of saved email. At that time, I had not yet switched to IMAP, and I backed up perhaps once a year, so most of those messages were unrecoverable. The loss was devastating, but the shame was worse: I knew better than to put all my data in one basket, but I had done it anyway. I learned a valuable lesson, and today I back up my email (along with the rest of my files) religiously. If you back up your email properly, you can recover from nearly any disaster; if you don't, your chances are slim. So please get in the habit of backing up your email regularly.

### Back Up and Restore with Time Machine

Under Leopard, Time Machine is the easiest way to back up and restore all your data—including email. After attaching an external hard drive, you can turn on Time Machine (and, if necessary, select which volume to use and whether to exclude any files) in the Time Machine pane of System Preferences. With Time Machine running, your data is automatically backed up every hour, and you can go back to see how your Inbox (or another mailbox) looked at many points in the past.

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***To don't:*** *You can't use Time Machine to restore to do items from within Mail, because they're backed up as part of your iCal data.*

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To restore messages or notes in Mail that Time Machine previously backed up:

1. Navigate to any view in which the item you're looking for should appear—say, your Inbox, another mailbox, or the Notes folder.

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***Not so smart:*** *Time Machine doesn't let you select smart mailboxes, though this may be a bug that will later disappear.*

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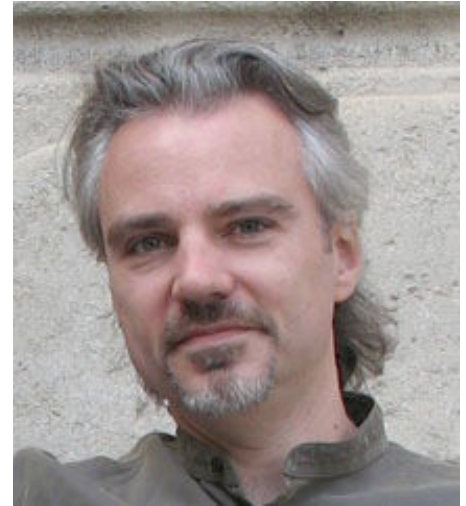
2. Click the Time Machine icon in the Dock or choose Enter Time Machine from the Time Machine status menu on the menu bar (the menu first appeared in Leopard in Mac OS X 10.5.2). Mail becomes the center of the “time warp” screen.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

Thank you for purchasing this Take Control book. We hope you find it both useful and enjoyable to read. We welcome your comments at [tc-comments@tidbits.com](mailto:tc-comments@tidbits.com). Keep reading in this section to learn more about the author, the Take Control series, and the publisher.

### About the Author

Joe Kissell is Senior Editor of *TidBITS*, a Web site and email newsletter about the Macintosh and the Internet, and the author of numerous print and electronic books about Macintosh software, including *Real World Mac Maintenance and Backups* (Peachpit, 2007), *Take Control of Running Windows on a Mac*, and *Take Control of .Mac*. He's also a frequent contributor to *Macworld*.



Joe has worked in the Mac software industry for over 10 years, including positions managing software development for Nisus Software and Kensington Technology Group. He also runs several blogs under the auspices of 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](mailto:jwk@mac.com) and be sure to include the words **Take Control of Apple Mail in Leopard** in the subject of your message.

### Author's Acknowledgements

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## Shameless Plug

Although I write about computers as my day job, I have a great many other interests, which I write about on several Web sites, including [Interesting Thing of the Day](#), [Truffles for Breakfast](#), and [I Am Joe's Blog](#). You can find links to all my sites, a complete list of my publications, and more personal details about me at <http://JoeKissell.com/>.

## About the Publisher

Publishers Adam and Tonya Engst have been creating Mac-related content since they started the online newsletter *TidBITS*, in 1990. In *TidBITS*, you can find the latest Macintosh news, plus read reviews, opinions, and 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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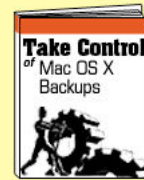


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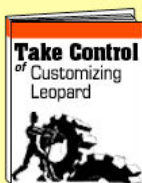


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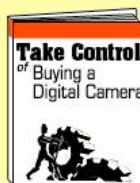


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