TAKE CONTROL OF

iCLOUD

by JOE KISSELL

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Welcome to *Take Control of iCloud, Sixth Edition*, version 6.1, published in November 2018 by alt concepts inc. This book was written by Joe Kissell and edited by Tonya Engst.

iCloud is Apple’s suite of internet services. This book helps you make sense of iCloud, configure it for your needs, and choose the best ways of using each feature.

If you want to share this ebook with a friend, we ask that you do so as you would with a physical book: “lend” it for a quick look, but ask your friend to buy a copy for careful reading or reference. Discounted classroom and Mac user group copies are available.

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You can access extras related to this book on the web (use the link in *Ebook Extras*, near the end; it’s available only to purchasers). On the ebook’s Take Control Extras page, you can:

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Basics

To review background information that might help you understand this book better, such as finding System Preferences and working with files in the Finder, I suggest reading Tonya Engst’s book *Take Control of Mac Basics*.

What’s New in Version 6.1

Version 6.1 of this book is a relatively small update to cover a few changes in iCloud that have occurred since the previous version of the book was released in October 2017, and to make a handful of other corrections and improvements. This book now includes coverage of macOS 10.14 Mojave and iOS 12, plus the following significant changes:

- Added mentions of additional Apple apps that now sync using iCloud in Mojave and iOS 12: News, Stocks, Home, and Voice Memos; see Major iCloud Features, Sync Other iCloud Data, and Sync Data from Other Apps

- In About Your Apple ID, referenced a new book, *Take Control of Your Apple ID*, by Glenn Fleishman

- Updated the sidebar The All-Purpose iCloud Troubleshooting Procedure with additional details

- In Set Up iCloud on an iOS Device, clarified which devices support the Wallet feature

- Explained in Use iCloud Family Sharing that in-app purchases cannot be shared within a family

- Updated the chapter Manage Your Photos to cover the feature now named Shared Albums (called iCloud Photo Sharing in High Sierra and earlier, iOS 11 and earlier, and Windows)

- Added a note in Activate iCloud Drive about syncing System Preferences

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• Expanded Enable Desktop & Documents Folder Syncing to describe in greater detail the steps to follow if you enable this feature on multiple Macs, and updated Disable Desktop & Documents Folder Syncing with more details as well

• Added a discussion about backing up files from iCloud Drive locally, and using the Unclouder app, to the sidebar iCloud Drive and Backups

• Clarified in Use In-App Data Syncing and Sync Your Contacts that Mail’s VIPs and previous recipients sync as part of Contacts

• In Use Mail Drop, noted that POP accounts aren’t supported

• Added a description of how iMessage/SMS sync now works in Sync Messages

• Rewrote significant portions of the chapter Work with iCloud Key-chain to cover new behavior in current versions of Safari

• Included a warning in Activate Find My Device about a simple way an attacker could potentially disable Find My Mac

• Noted in Use Back to My Mac that this feature has been removed from Mojave

What Was New in the Sixth Edition

The sixth edition covered changes in macOS 10.13 High Sierra and iOS 11, as well as significant feature changes in the iCloud service itself since the previous edition of the book was published in late 2016. Numerous topics were added and, in some cases, rearranged or rewritten—and there were hundreds of changes throughout the book. Here are the highlights:

• Explained what’s new in iCloud since the last edition of this book; see iCloud Feature Changes

• Expanded the Major iCloud Features list to include newly added capabilities
• Updated About iCloud Storage and Upgrade Your Storage to reflect the new pricing for the 2 TB tier and the removal of the 1 TB tier

• Added a topic, Share Storage Space, that explains how to share additional (paid) iCloud storage space with your family members

• Updated iCloud Photo Library to mention that it now syncs the People album

• Replaced the discussion of the iCloud Drive app for iOS with coverage of the new Files app, including how to share files stored in iCloud Drive; see Use the Files App for iOS

• Added topics to cover new types of data you can now (or soon) sync via iCloud; see Sync Data from Other Apps and Sync Messages

• Brought the information in Work with iCloud Keychain up to date with the latest setup and usage instructions, including how to use credentials from iCloud Keychain in apps other than Safari

• Added AirPods to the list of devices you can find with Find My Nouns and mentioned that you can use iCloud to pair them, and then play sound to them, from your Apple TV in Set Up iCloud Account Features

• Updated Use Two-Factor Authentication and Use App-Specific Passwords to cover recent changes in Apple’s policies for using two-factor authentication

• Changed Check Activation Lock to explain the new procedure that’s now required to do this
Introduction

Anyone who has been using Apple devices for more than a few years has surely heard of—and most likely uses—iCloud, Apple's collection of online services. Although iCloud, which launched in October 2011, replaced MobileMe (which, in turn, followed .Mac and iTools), it has morphed into something much different from its predecessors.

The basic concept of iCloud is that your documents, music, TV shows, movies, photos, contacts, calendars, passwords, and other data should propagate to all your devices so immediately and automatically that you never think about where your data is anymore.

But iCloud goes far beyond the concept of syncing. Many features you use on a Mac, iOS device, Apple TV, or Apple Watch want to involve iCloud in some way. You can use your Apple device without an iCloud account, but many common tasks will be more awkward or even impossible. And, from Apple’s point of view, why would you want to use a device without iCloud? Accounts are free, and the iCloud infrastructure makes everything work together much more smoothly.

That’s not to say iCloud always works smoothly! iCloud is great when it works, but it’s so complex that problems are bound to occur, and frequently do. Since Apple has made so much of your experience dependent on iCloud, network outages, software bugs, and server malfunctions can make the simplest tasks frustrating.

And what about privacy? You can sync your photos and videos instantly across all your devices—great! And the data from your iOS devices is automatically backed up to the cloud—great! And you can share anything with a couple of taps or clicks—great! But if someone guesses or finds your iCloud password, or you tap the wrong button by mistake, your private moments, your home address, and tons of other personal details could be plastered all over the internet. That’s no longer a hypothetical worry, and it can be front-page news when it happens.
Another sore spot is that, although iCloud is pretty good at keeping your own data in sync across your own devices, it’s less good at sharing data between users. Features like Shared Albums and Family Sharing are steps in the right direction, and they’re useful as far as they go. But you still can’t easily share a whole address book with your spouse, a folder full of mixed documents with a work group, or a keychain containing usernames and passwords with your family.

There’s also the question of hardware support. A handful of iCloud’s features are available in Windows, and a smaller subset can be used (after a fashion) on Linux and Android devices. But Apple is in the business of selling hardware, so it stands to reason that iCloud works best on Apple devices. Recent-vintage Macs, iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod touch), Apple TVs, and Apple Watches offer the best support for iCloud.

In this thoroughly updated sixth edition of Take Control of iCloud, I focus on what I think of as the interesting parts of iCloud. I show you what iCloud is capable of, how to think about it, and how to put its key features to good use. In the process, I hope to expose you to useful capabilities you never knew existed. But I also tell you how to keep private information secure (even if it reduces iCloud’s utility), point out cases in which iCloud may not be the best tool, and occasionally mention other options you can consider.

iCloud is constantly changing. Therefore, I don’t attempt to give you specific instructions for using every last feature—I’m confident that you can figure out how to send an email message or delete a contact, even if the exact steps change tomorrow. But I do try to help you grasp what iCloud is capable of and decide how best to use it.

For the most part, I assume your operating system(s) are recent—namely, macOS 10.13 High Sierra or later, iOS 11 or later, Windows 10 or later, and Apple TV software version 7.2.1 or later. I also assume that all your iCloud-connected apps (such as iTunes, Photos, and Pages) are up to date. Although I occasionally call attention to differences in operating systems, I don’t give detailed instructions for using iCloud with older software.

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Although you can skip around freely in this book to learn about the topics that interest you most, I encourage you to read (or at least skim) two early chapters—Get to Know iCloud and Set Up iCloud—before moving on to the rest. Those chapters provide important foundational information, without which much of the material later in the book may not make sense. But if you already read an earlier edition, you can start with Catch Up with iCloud Changes and then skip those foundational chapters.

Get started:
- Discover what’s new in the last year or so—and do a quick Storage Checkup of your iCloud online data storage needs and costs—in Catch Up with iCloud Changes.
- Learn about iCloud features in Get to Know iCloud.
- Set up your Mac(s), PC(s), iOS device(s), and Apple TV(s) to use iCloud. See Set Up iCloud.
- Get your family set up to share purchases, calendars, location data, and more. See Use iCloud Family Sharing.

Keep your data in sync across devices:
- Apple has two cloud-based music services: Apple Music and iTunes Match. Learn how these services work and interact, and find details about iTunes Match in Use iCloud Music Library.
- Use iCloud Photo Library to sync all your photos between Macs and iOS devices and with the cloud, My Photo Stream to put your recent photos on all your devices, and Shared Albums to share photos with other people. See Manage Your Photos.
- Keep your documents and app data current everywhere using iCloud Drive and other forms of in-app syncing. See Keep Documents and App Data in Sync.
• Make sure your major forms of personal data (email, contacts, and calendars) are automatically mirrored across all your devices. See Keep Mail, Contacts, and Calendars in Sync.

• Learn about syncing data from other apps, including Messages, News, Safari, Siri, and more. See Sync Other iCloud Data.

• Keep usernames, passwords, and credit card numbers in sync across devices, generate new random passwords, and edit your saved credentials as you Work with iCloud Keychain.

Use the other iCloud features:
• Cut, copy, and paste from one device to another when you Use Universal Clipboard.

• Access web-based versions of the core iCloud apps on nearly any platform. See Use the iCloud Website.

• Locate a wayward Mac or iOS device, or find a friend or family member. See Find My Nouns.

• Learn how iCloud can back up and restore crucial data from your iOS devices in Back Up and Restore iOS Data.

• Apple TV owner? Find out which iCloud features your set-top box can use and how. Read Use iCloud on an Apple TV.

• Access stuff on a faraway Mac (10.13 High Sierra or earlier). Read Use Back to My Mac.

• Update your iCloud account details. See Manage Your Account.

• Keep your account safe and protect your private data. See Manage iCloud Security and Privacy.
Catch Up with iCloud Changes

If you’ve been using iCloud awhile—and especially if you read the previous edition of this book—you may be most interested in the bits that have changed recently. This chapter highlights the major changes you’ll want to take advantage of, points you to chapters where I discuss those features in detail, and offers a suggestion about managing your iCloud data storage.

iCloud Feature Changes

Although iCloud itself didn’t see any major changes when Apple released iOS 12 and 10.14 Mojave, a few apps picked up the capability of syncing data through iCloud (see Sync Data from Other Apps); in addition, Apple made a variety of changes to the user interface for certain iCloud features.

More significant changes took place in 2017 with the release of iOS 11 and macOS 10.13 High Sierra:

• **Shared storage space:** If you use iCloud Family Sharing, you can now share extra storage space at the 200 GB level or above with your family members; see Share Storage Space.

• **Syncing People album:** iCloud Photo Library now syncs your People album across devices; see iCloud Photo Library.

• **Files app:** A new app called Files replaced the iCloud Drive app in iOS; see Use the Files App for iOS.

• **Messages sync:** As of iOS 11.4 and 10.13.5 High Sierra, iCloud can sync all your iMessage conversations in the Messages app across devices; see Sync Messages.
• **Additional sync options:** You can now sync data from additional Apple apps among your devices using iCloud; see [Sync Data from Other Apps](#).

• **Two-factor authentication changes:** As of June 15, 2017, two-factor authentication is required if you want to access data from your iCloud account (such as email and calendars) using a third-party app. See [Use Two-Factor Authentication](#) and the topics that follow, especially [Use App-Specific Passwords](#).

• **Check Activation Lock change:** Although Apple no longer has a webpage that lets you check the Activation Lock status of any iOS device, there’s still a way to get that information. See [Check Activation Lock](#).

## Storage Checkup

Some iCloud features (especially Desktop and Documents folder syncing) eat into your storage quota quickly, but the cost of extra storage is low enough that it shouldn’t be a hardship for most users to store as much data as they want. If you’re still trying to make do with the 5 GB Apple offers for free, my professional advice is to **give up**! It’s no longer worth the effort to avoid what could be a 99-cent monthly charge. (Even the top, 2 TB tier is now remarkably affordable at $9.99 per month, and if you have that much space available, you may find interesting uses for it that hadn’t occurred to you before.)

A backup of a single iOS device can easily surpass 5 GB, after all, and by the time you add saved email, files in iCloud Drive, and other smaller bits of information, you’re in for some frustration if you try to whittle the figure down to avoid paying a dollar a month. With upgraded storage, you can freely back up your iOS devices, add files to iCloud Drive, and so on, without worrying that you’ll bump into your limit.

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**Note:** I talk about what data Apple includes in your iCloud storage ahead, in [About iCloud Storage](#). I cover how to buy more storage in [Manage Your Storage](#).
Get to Know iCloud

Before you dive in and start setting up and using this mysterious thing called iCloud, you should take a few moments to get your bearings and understand what you’re dealing with.

In addition to explaining what you can and cannot do with iCloud, this chapter discusses what you need to know About iCloud System Requirements, About Your Apple ID, and About iCloud Storage.

What Is iCloud?

While iCloud has a few features in common with other online services such as Dropbox, Google Docs, and Microsoft Office 365, iCloud is designed to achieve different goals, making it more different from these services than alike. In fact, it’s rather hard to put a finger on exactly what iCloud is.

iCloud doesn’t have much...thingness. It’s not a physical object you can touch, and it’s not software you can install. It’s not a website—at least, not entirely. You can’t buy it, although you may pay for extra features. In fact, referring to iCloud as a single entity is misleading. The name iCloud is just an arbitrary label for a collection of features, services, settings, and APIs (application programming interfaces), joined by a thread of relying on communication over the internet between Apple devices (Macs, iOS devices, Apple TVs, and Apple Watches) and Apple’s servers in the cloud.

Perhaps a more interesting question to begin with is “What is iCloud for?” I have a few answers to that one:

• **iCloud lets iOS devices stand alone.** Originally, the only way to move certain kinds of data on and off your iOS device was to connect it to a Mac or PC—at first, with a USB cable, and later, via Wi-Fi. The computer was required to activate the device; to back up or restore its data; to sync photos, music, movies, books, and apps; to
transfer documents to and from certain apps; and to install iOS updates.

With iCloud, your iOS device can operate as a completely stand-alone product. If you don’t have a Mac or PC to connect to, there must be some other repository for your data, and some other mechanism to get it to and from your device. iCloud serves those purposes, letting you transfer data to and from Apple’s servers using either a Wi-Fi or cellular connection.

• **iCloud helps your devices integrate with each other.** If you have more than one digital device—say, two Macs; or a PC and an iPhone; or an iPhone, an iPad, and an Apple Watch; or an iPad and an Apple TV—it’s only natural to want all your devices to share data.

  With iCloud, syncing encompasses many kinds of data and requires less effort than before. In fact, the word “sync” almost becomes an anachronism; for the most part, iCloud pushes new or changed data almost instantly to all your devices. You can switch between devices with impunity, knowing your data is always wherever you need it.

• **iCloud replaces (some) local storage with streaming.**

  Related to the last point, iCloud reduces the need to keep all your important media on all your devices. As long as you have a good wireless internet connection, your Mac and iOS devices can now do what the Apple TV has done for many years—fetch the content you want, in near-real time, from the cloud. This makes it practical to get by with less storage space. You no longer have to decide which content to put on which device; in a sense, everything can be everywhere, automatically. Yet you can still store local copies of crucial data for times when an internet connection is unavailable.

• **iCloud facilitates (limited) sharing.** Although sharing data between people has never been one of iCloud’s strengths, iCloud does help you do certain kinds of sharing. For example, Family Sharing enables family members to easily share purchases, photos, a calendar and reminder list, location information, and more.

  iCloud Drive lets you send read-only or read-write links to selected
Set Up iCloud

iCloud setup, in and of itself, is easy and largely self-explanatory—you enter your Apple ID and password, and click a few buttons, on each of your devices. There’s no software to install on a Mac or iOS device (assuming you already have a recent version of the operating system) and only a few options you can turn on or off. You have to go through a few more steps, but only a few, under Windows.

However, you may encounter questions about certain settings, wonder how to handle multiple iCloud accounts, or need help disabling iCloud. So in this chapter I walk you through those topics for Macs and iOS devices. (The Apple TV is covered later, in Use iCloud on an Apple TV. And, for help with the iCloud website, see Use the iCloud Website.)

If you’ve already set up iCloud, you can skim most of this chapter, starting with Set Up iCloud on a Mac—just to make sure you’ve enabled all the features you may want to use.

Update Your Software

If you want to access all the latest iCloud features, make sure the Apple software that uses iCloud is up to date on each platform you use. Here’s what you need to do:

- **iOS:** For any iOS device you haven’t already upgraded to iOS 12 or later, tap Settings > General > Software Update and follow the prompts to install the latest update.

- **Mac:** Choose Apple  > App Store and click Updates. If newer versions of macOS, Photos, iTunes, or the iWork apps (Pages, Numbers, and Keynote) are found, follow the prompts to install them. In particular, be sure to install 10.14 Mojave—a free upgrade—if you have not already done so and your Mac supports it. (If you are contemplating a major upgrade from an earlier version of macOS, look for steps in my book Take Control of Upgrading to Mojave.)
• **Windows:** Download and install the latest version of [iTunes]; if you have a previous version installed, you can use Start > Apple Software Update.

Then download [iCloud for Windows] and run [iCloudSetup.exe]; or, if it appears in Apple Software Update (because you had a previous version of the iCloud app installed), install it from there.

• **Apple TV:** For information on updating the Apple TV software, see Apple’s article [Update the software on your Apple TV].

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### Set Up iCloud on a Mac

Your Mac may already have prompted you to set up iCloud (in which case, just skim this section to make sure everything is configured to your liking). If not, you can set it up manually. The exact sequence of steps depends on your circumstances.

**Note:** Each user account on a Mac can have its own iCloud account, although only one account per Mac can use Find My Mac at a time. In addition, you can (with some limitations) set up multiple iCloud accounts within a single user account; for more on such configurations, see [Work with Multiple iCloud Accounts], later in this chapter.

For the sake of illustration, I'll show you what to do under Mojave if you ignored any prompts to set up iCloud earlier. What you see under earlier versions of macOS may differ slightly:

1. Go to System Preferences > iCloud.

   The window shows Apple ID and Password fields ([Figure 1]). Enter the Apple ID you want to use (see About Your Apple ID for more details) and your password and click Sign In. (In the unlikely event that you don’t yet have an Apple ID, click Create New Apple ID and follow the prompts to create one now.)
Use iCloud Family Sharing

If you live in a household where multiple family members would like to share the digital media they purchase from Apple (music, movies, TV shows, books, and apps)—and especially if your family includes children who use Apple devices—you're the target audience for iCloud's Family Sharing feature. (If not, there’s nothing to see in this chapter—skip ahead to Use iCloud Music Library.)

Family Sharing requires Yosemite or later, or iOS 8 or later, so I recommend using it only if all your family’s devices meet these requirements. If your family fits that profile, here’s what you’ll get for up to six family members:

• All family members’ purchases of media from Apple are charged to the credit card of the person designated as the family organizer. (Family members who have enough credit in their own Apple ID accounts can use that credit to buy something without using the shared card.)

• Kids (who can get special Apple IDs of their own even if they’re under 13) can request media purchases from a parent, who must approve each one individually.

• All family members can access each others’ media, although you can hide particular items of your own that you don’t want to share.

• A shared family photo album, calendar, and reminder list are created.

• Family members can more easily share their locations (with Find My Friends) and locate their devices (with Find My Device).

• A family can join Apple Music as a group for $14.99 per month instead of paying $9.99 per person per month—or $4.99 per college student.

• If the family organizer is paying for iCloud Drive space, that storage quota can be applied to the family instead of just the organizer.
Starting in iOS 12, parents can limit their kids’ screen time; see Tonya Engst’s article Parents Rejoice! iOS 12 Provides More Helpful Parental Controls at Simply Mac.

I won’t pretend Family Sharing is perfect—for example, in-app purchases can’t be shared, and I’m also annoyed that Family Sharing offers no way to share data like contacts, bookmarks, and passwords within a family—but it’s definitely helpful for what it does.

Enable Family Sharing

You can enable Family Sharing on either a Mac or an iOS device. Once it’s enabled on one of your devices, it’s enabled on all of them. I’ll explain the steps on a Mac here; if you use an iOS device, the process is similar except you go to Settings > Your Name to start. Do this:

1. On a Mac, go to System Preferences > iCloud.
2. Click Set Up Family.
3. Click through several informational screens, confirming that you really want to do this, that the Apple ID shown is the one you want to use as the family organizer, that you want to share your purchases (or not), that you agree to the terms and conditions, and that you understand purchases will be charged to the credit card associated with your Apple ID.
4. Choose whether you want to share your location with family members, and click Continue.
5. On the Family Members pane of the dialog that appears, click Add Family Member to add one or more family members:
   - For adults (and children with existing Apple IDs): Select “Enter a family member's name, email address or Game Center nickname,” enter the name or address, click Continue, and follow the prompts. Each invited family member must either enter their password on your computer or follow the steps in an email invitation they receive to join the family account.
Use iCloud Music Library

Apple has two different services—iTunes Match and Apple Music—that enable you to sync music to the cloud and share it across your devices (among other capabilities). Both of them use online storage that Apple refers to as iCloud Music Library, although Apple describes only one of the services as an iCloud feature—and an optional one, at that.

The two services have some stark differences, but all the capabilities of iTunes Match are incorporated into Apple Music. So if you subscribe to Apple Music, there’s no reason to use iTunes Match too. In this chapter I help you understand what the two services do and decide whether you should use either. I also walk you through setting up and using iTunes Match—but not Apple Music, because Apple Music isn’t part of iCloud (and is large enough and complex enough to warrant its own book).

Understand Apple’s Music Services

Let me begin by listing what iTunes Match and Apple Music have in common. With either service, both of which are optional, you pay a fee to subscribe, and then activate the service on each of your devices. On a Mac, you must also select iCloud Music Library in iTunes > Preferences > General. After that, two things happen:

- iTunes scans the music library on your Mac or PC and compares what you have to Apple’s vast iTunes Store selection—more than 30 million tracks. This process should take just a few minutes (though it can take longer if you have a huge music library).

- Whenever iTunes finds a track in your library that wasn’t purchased from the iTunes Store but matches a track in Apple’s library, it makes Apple’s version available for download or streaming on all your devices (including your Apple TV and HomePod). The music in Apple’s library is stored as high-quality 256 Kbps AAC
files. So, if the song already on your Mac was stored at a lower quality, the version now available to all your devices will be superior. Furthermore, any matched (i.e., previously owned) tracks that you download come without DRM (digital rights management), commonly known as copy protection. And you get to keep those upgraded, DRM-free tracks, even if you later cancel iTunes Match or Apple Music.

**Note:** When you download a higher-quality track from Apple, it maintains your existing metadata (such as play count).

- When iTunes encounters a track it can’t match—for example, a rare version of a song, or a track you recorded yourself, or music by an artist who’s not in the iTunes Store—it uploads that track to iCloud, after which it’s available to all your other devices for download or streaming. (This may take a while, depending on the quantity of music and the speed of your internet connection.) Unmatched tracks are uploaded at their existing quality, even if that’s less than 256 Kbps AAC.

**Note:** Apple limits you to 100,000 tracks, although tracks purchased from the iTunes Store don’t count toward this limit.

- Tracks stored in iCloud Music Library (whether purchased or uploaded) don’t count against your iCloud storage quota.

So far so good? OK. Now, here’s where the two services differ:

- **iTunes Match:** iTunes Match costs $24.99 per year and does only the things described above. iTunes Match is especially useful for those without lots of storage space on their Macs and iOS devices—it lets you safely delete tracks from local storage, knowing that you can stream or download them from the cloud whenever needed (as long as you keep paying that annual fee).

- **Apple Music:** Apple Music is more expensive, at $9.99 per month for an individual, $4.99 per month for a college student, or $14.99 per month for a family (which requires that you first sign up for
Manage Your Photos

As we’ve seen, iCloud’s main modus operandi is “just put all my data everywhere,” and you’ll undoubtedly want to include your photos and videos among that data. iCloud handles photos and videos using iCloud Photos, which is actually a collection of three different features.

The first two—iCloud Photo Library and My Photo Stream—are for syncing photos. iCloud Photo Library keeps your entire photo library in sync automatically across your devices via the cloud, but counts synced photos (and videos) against your iCloud data storage quota. My Photo Stream, on the other hand, doesn’t affect your storage quota but makes only your most recent photos available on all your iCloud-compatible devices. (The two sync methods have other differences, too, as I explain ahead.)

The third feature, Shared Albums (previously called iCloud Photo Sharing), makes it possible to share photo streams with other people—although shared photo streams follow different rules from My Photo Stream.

These three features can be confusing individually, and they overlap in various ways. In this chapter I untangle them for you, explaining which feature does what, and which you should use in various situations.

Note: I also compare the Dropbox Camera Upload feature to iCloud’s various offerings in the sidebar at the end of this chapter, iCloud Photos vs. Dropbox Camera Uploads.

Warning! If you use Photos to store photos of, shall we say, an intimate nature and want to reduce the risk that they’ll escape onto the internet, don’t enable any of the syncing features discussed in this chapter! See Manage iCloud Security and Privacy for details.
Compare iCloud Photo Options

iCloud Photo Library and the older My Photo Stream both sync photos across your devices via the cloud, but they differ in almost every other detail. You can use either or both, though most people will probably find that iCloud Photo Library alone is all that’s needed, as it essentially makes My Photo Stream superfluous (at least for those who have paid for enough iCloud storage to hold all their photos and videos).

iCloud Photo Library

I say more about iPhoto Library ahead in Use iCloud Photo Library, but for now, here are its main characteristics:

• Gives you a single library across your Macs and iOS devices, and the iCloud website (using the Photos app on each platform), as well as on the fourth-generation (or later) Apple TV
• Supports both photos and videos
• Counts against your iCloud storage quota
• Can store as many photos as you like, for as long as you keep paying
• Works over Wi-Fi or cellular connections
• Replaces Camera Roll (and the My Photo Stream album) in iOS
• Disables copying photos directly from a Mac or PC via iTunes sync
• Uploads original, full-resolution photos but optionally stores smaller, optimized copies on each device
• Syncs the People album (which groups photos by the people in them, as determined through facial recognition and your own decisions) across your devices

My Photo Stream

My Photo Stream has been around since the beginning of iCloud, although it has changed a bit over the years. You can learn all about it in Use My Photo Stream. For now, notice how, in contrast to the
Keep Documents and App Data in Sync

With iCloud Drive, Macs have Finder access to online file storage in iCloud. iCloud Drive gives you a single location where you can (in theory) see any of the documents that any of your apps have stored in iCloud or that you’ve manually copied to iCloud Drive. You can organize files in any manner you choose, even creating your own folders. Any Mac app can store documents there, even if it hasn’t been designed specifically to work with iCloud. And you can access iCloud Drive not only from your Mac but also through the iCloud website, in the Files app for iOS, and from many iOS apps.

iCloud Drive’s predecessor, Documents in the Cloud, still exists—but only for users running 10.9 Mavericks or earlier, or iOS 7. Because it’s essentially obsolete, however, and because most users have upgraded to 10.10 Yosemite or later, or iOS 8 or later, this book no longer covers Documents in the Cloud.

To learn all about iCloud Drive, read the next topic, Use iCloud Drive. In addition, you’ll want to read Use In-App Data Syncing, later in this chapter, for information on working with apps that don’t rely on documents but do need to sync data across devices.

Use iCloud Drive

iCloud Drive is cloud-based storage you can access on any of your devices—either independently (for example, in the Finder on a Mac, or in the Files app on an iOS device) or from within apps that have been updated to support it.

With iCloud Drive, master copies of your documents are stored in the cloud. Your Mac normally maintains a local copy of these documents, too—you can’t turn off syncing—and any changes you make to the
contents of your iCloud Drive on one device immediately sync, via Apple’s servers, to the others. (However, your Mac might delete the local copies of some files if you’ve enabled Optimize Mac Storage and your disk starts running low on free space.)

That sounds simple enough, but iCloud Drive has quite a bit of hidden complexity and doesn’t always make sense. You’ll be able to use iCloud Drive more effectively if you understand at least some of Apple’s logic. After I tell you how to turn on iCloud Drive (next), I’ll give you a quick overview of how it ought to work in normal situations (see Explore iCloud Drive). Then I’ll delve into what actually happens (see Understand iCloud Drive Peculiarities), which can be quite a bit different.

### Activate iCloud Drive

For most users, iCloud Drive was already activated at some point within the past few years—typically while upgrading to a new version of macOS or iOS. If you deliberately skipped enabling iCloud Drive for some reason, you can activate it whenever you’re ready by going to System Preferences > iCloud (Mac) or Settings > Your Name > iCloud (iOS) and turning on iCloud Drive.

There are a few other iCloud settings you can change. While the default settings are fine for almost anyone, you should be aware that they exist, just in case.

First, you can prevent a particular app from using iCloud Drive (for added security or to save space):

- **Mac:** Go to System Preferences > iCloud and click Options next to iCloud Drive. Then uncheck any app’s name and click Done. This hides that app’s folder in iCloud Drive on this Mac, but does not affect the data already saved to iCloud Drive, or its appearance on other devices. This setting doesn’t prevent you from manually selecting iCloud Drive as a destination for unchecked apps.

  Note that one of the items you can select or deselect is Desktop & Documents Folders, but that requires its own discussion; see Sync Your Desktop and Documents Folders (or Don’t), ahead.
Keep Mail, Contacts, and Calendars in Sync

Email, contact, and calendar data work together to help you with many day-to-day tasks, and they’re the ones you’ll most likely want to keep in sync across your Mac(s) and iOS device(s). Behind the scenes, they rely on different technologies to do their work—IMAP for email, CardDAV for contacts, and CalDAV for calendars—but the end result is that when you change email, contact, or calendar data on one device, iCloud pushes those changes to your other devices immediately.

This chapter discusses these three data types, but in the interest of simplicity, I’ve deliberately left out most of the boring instructions for doing things you may already know how to do or can figure out easily (or get help with by consulting the Help menu on your Mac or clicking the Help icon on the iCloud website).

In this chapter, I also explain how to Use Mail Drop, an iCloud feature that simplifies sending large attachments.

Work with iCloud Mail

Your iCloud account includes an email address in the icloud.com domain (and grandfathers in me.com addresses for those who had them before iCloud appeared—as well as, in some cases, mac.com addresses). Among other things, you also get 5 GB of free storage (shared with other iCloud services) and a lovely web interface for checking your email (see The Mail Web App).

In most respects, iCloud Mail is a conventional IMAP account. (For more on what that means, read my article FlippedBITS: IMAP Misconceptions.) It stores all your filed and sent messages on a server, which also tracks which messages you’ve read, replied to, or forwarded. The result is that you can access your email on any device (even with a
third-party email client) or in a web browser, and see exactly the same messages, in the same locations, with the same status.

With default settings, as soon as you enable Mail in iCloud’s settings on each device, your iCloud Mail stays in sync across devices without any manual intervention—not because iCloud does anything special but because that’s the way IMAP works. However, iCloud Mail differs from run-of-the-mill IMAP accounts in several respects:

- Setting up an iCloud Mail account on any Apple device is as easy as it gets—all you have to do is make sure Mail is turned on after entering your iCloud username and password.

- When used with iOS devices, iCloud Mail offers optional push updates, meaning you’ll see messages the instant they come in rather than having to wait for the next scheduled check.

- iCloud Mail has a good webmail interface that supports searching message contents, setting up auto-responses, forwarding email to another account, uploading attachments with Mail Drop (see Use Mail Drop), and creating rules that automatically sort messages.

- Apple’s mail servers provide basic spam and virus filtering. (Unfortunately, the mail servers don’t seem to get smarter over time regarding what is spam and what isn’t, unlike the spam filter built into Mail for macOS.) However, when iCloud Mail encounters an incoming message that matches certain criteria that Apple doesn’t disclose, it doesn’t merely label the message as Junk or move it to a Spam mailbox—the iCloud server summarily deletes it without any notice to the sender or recipient. (You can read about this in Silent email filtering makes iCloud an unreliable option, at Macworld.) I find this approach disagreeable because all spam filters sometimes make mistakes.

- You can add up to three aliases—extra email addresses whose incoming mail is automatically forwarded to your main Inbox.

- iCloud Mail offers no way for you to use your own custom domain name. You may be able to forward email from another address to your iCloud Mail account, but you can’t change your iCloud email...
Sync Other iCloud Data

In much the same way that iCloud delivers immediate push updates to your email, contacts, and calendars, it syncs several other types of information—browser bookmarks; your Safari tabs and Reading List; data from the iPhone’s Health app; Siri data; Reminders (a.k.a. tasks or to do items); Notes; iMessage conversations; and data from the News, Stocks, Home, and Voice Memos apps. (I discuss yet another type of data syncing in the next chapter, Work with iCloud Keychain.)

These features aren’t at all flashy and there’s not a great deal to say about them, but in this chapter I give you an overview of how they work and point out a few cool things you may not have noticed.

Work with Browser Bookmarks, Tabs, and Reading List

The list of iCloud services on your Mac, PC, or iOS device includes either Safari (Mac and iOS) or Bookmarks (Windows). Either way, this item, when enabled, syncs these items:

• **Bookmarks:** When this setting on, iCloud syncs Safari bookmarks (or, in Windows, Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Google Chrome bookmarks) among your devices. (iCloud no longer syncs bookmarks with the Windows version of Safari; conversely, it won’t sync Firefox or Google Chrome bookmarks on a Mac.)

• **Safari’s Reading List:** For Macs and iOS devices, this feature also syncs Safari’s Reading List—webpages that you’ve saved to read later—either by choosing Bookmarks > Add to Reading List (Mac) or by tapping the Share icon and then Add to Reading List (iOS).

• **Safari’s open tabs:** In a manner of speaking, iCloud also syncs Safari’s open tabs—that is, it shows you which tabs are open on other devices, but doesn’t automatically open the same tabs on each device.
If you click the Show All Tabs button to the right of the Smart Search field in Safari on a Mac, the Tabs view appears with thumbnails of open tabs on the Mac as well as lists of the open Safari tabs on all the other devices signed in to the same iCloud account (Figure 15). Click a tab or tab name to open it.

**Figure 15:** See open Safari tabs on your other devices in this view.

**Tip:** If you hover over the name of a tab from another device, an X icon appears. Click this icon to close the tab on the other device (after a brief delay).

In Safari for iOS, tap the Tabs icon and swipe up (past the thumbnails of any open pages on the current device) to see a list of the tabs that are open in Safari on your other devices, grouped by device (Figure 16).

Click here to buy the full 203-page “Take Control of iCloud” for only $14.99!
iCloud Keychain, a feature available in macOS and iOS (sorry, Windows users), enables you to sync a keychain—which may contain passwords, credit card numbers, and other sensitive data—across your Apple devices securely via the cloud.

One big benefit of iCloud Keychain is that Safari and other apps on your iOS device can autofill usernames and passwords that you stored in a keychain on your Mac (and vice versa). Another benefit is that once you enter a Wi-Fi password on one device, it syncs to all your other devices, so you don’t have to reenter it numerous times.

iCloud Keychain includes several other capabilities:

• A strong password generator built into Safari
• The capability to store and enter credit card information (except the CVV number) in web forms
• Support for multiple sets of credentials per site
• A way to view and remove passwords within Safari

In addition, if iCloud Keychain is turned on, your iMessage and SMS data can sync among all your devices (see Sync Messages), and the following items sync automatically amongst your other Macs (but not, alas, iOS devices):

• Settings for the accounts listed in the Internet Accounts system preference pane, such as email accounts and, for systems prior to 10.14 Mojave, Twitter, Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn
• Signatures you scanned or wrote in Preview (see Take Control of Preview, by Josh Centers and Adam Engst), or using the Markup feature of Mail

iCloud Keychain is a useful tool—especially for people who use Apple devices exclusively, and who use only Safari on macOS. Some third-
party password managers, including my favorite, 1Password, offer additional features such as greater flexibility in password creation, support for web browsers other than Safari as well as non-Apple operating systems, auto entry of CVV numbers, shared vaults, and storage of other types of information (for example, software licenses). But even if you use a third-party password manager, you may still find iCloud Keychain useful for things like Wi-Fi passwords and certain other applications.

**Note:** If you’re interested in using 1Password instead of, or in addition to, iCloud Keychain start with Use iCloud Keychain with Another Password Manager, at the end of this chapter. To look more deeply at 1Password, you might enjoy reading my book *Take Control of 1Password*. For a thorough introduction to password security, read *Take Control of Your Passwords*.

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**Enable and Configure iCloud Keychain**

iCloud Keychain isn’t very useful if you set it up on only one device; since syncing passwords is the main point of the features, you’ll want to enable it on each of your Macs and iOS devices. Unlike most iCloud features, you can’t simply flip a switch and turn it on. The initial setup process is considerably more involved. In addition, the steps you follow with whichever device you set up first will be different from the steps for setting up all subsequent devices.

If you’ve already set up your first device to use iCloud Keychain, skip ahead to Approve Additional Devices; if all your devices are already set up, move right on to Use iCloud Keychain in Safari. Otherwise, start here.

**Note:** The instructions that follow assume that you have *not* enabled two-factor authentication for your Apple ID (see Use Two-Factor Authentication). If you have, setting up iCloud Keychain is much simpler—you’ll simply turn it on, on each device, and enter your security code when prompted to do so.
iCloud is mostly about keeping data in sync across all your devices, but several key types of data can also be viewed and edited on the iCloud website in robust web apps—Mail, Contacts, Calendar, Photos, iCloud Drive, Find iPhone (that is, Find My Device), Find Friends (that is, Find My Friends), Notes, Reminders, Pages, Numbers, and Keynote. (If you’ve enabled it, there’s also a News Publisher web app, which appears only on the iCloud website, with no Mac or iOS version.)

You may consider the web apps irrelevant, because you find the native apps running on the Mac and in iOS more powerful and convenient. But, if you use other operating systems (Windows, Linux, Android) where these apps aren’t available natively, the iCloud site can make crucial features available to you. And, even if you almost always use your own Mac or iOS device, you may occasionally use someone else’s computer (or a public computer), and in such cases, find that the iCloud website is the best way to access your iCloud data.

The iCloud website’s features and user interface have been updated numerous times, and I expect that trend to continue. As a result, I make no attempt to provide detailed instructions for each of the ever-changing iCloud web apps. Instead, I provide a general overview of what’s on the site (as of November 2018) and how to navigate it. I then offer a few tips for getting the most out of the web apps and locating obscure features.

**Navigate the iCloud Website**

When you visit the iCloud website, you see fields for entering your Apple ID and password, an optional Keep Me Signed In checkbox, and a few informational links at the bottom.
Once you are signed in, keep in mind just a few things:

- **Opening apps:** On the home screen that appears after you sign in (Figure 24), click an app’s icon to go to that app (or, if you prefer, press the arrow keys to move between icons and press Return or Enter to open the selected one).

  ![Figure 24](image)

  **Figure 24:** It doesn’t get much simpler than this: click an icon on the home page to go to the corresponding web app.

- **Switching or closing apps:** Click the current app’s name in the upper-left corner (or press Shift-Esc) and then click the name of another app (Figure 25). Or, to return to the home screen, click the app’s name and then click Launchpad.

  ![Figure 25](image)

  **Figure 25:** The iCloud app switcher appears when you click the current app’s name in the corner of the window.
Find My Nouns

First there was Find My iPhone, a feature that allowed you to, you know, find your iPhone if it was lost or stolen. Even though Apple later extended the capability to the iPod touch, the iPad, Macs, the Apple Watch, and even AirPods, the “Find My iPhone” name is still used generically to describe this feature. I find that somewhat confusing, so to reduce ambiguity, in this book I use “Find My Device” when talking about the feature as it applies generically to various Apple devices.

What complicates things is that you can find other people, too, using the Find My Friends app. This is limited, of course, to people carrying iOS devices (or cellular-enabled Apple Watches)—so really it’s “Find My Friends’ iOS Devices or Apple Watches.” So, for want of a better term that encompasses people and assorted Apple devices (plus whatever else may be added in the future), I’m calling all these capabilities collectively “Find My Nouns.”

Understand What Find My Device Can and Can’t Do

You can use the iCloud website, Apple’s Find My iPhone app on any iOS device, or (starting in iOS 12 and Mojave) Siri to locate a lost or stolen Mac, iPad, iPhone, iPod touch, Apple Watch, or AirPod.

You can also play a sound, lock a Mac or iOS device (optionally adding or changing its passcode in the process), or erase all its data (to keep it private in case you’re unable to retrieve the device). You can even see your wayward device’s battery level—and you can activate Lost Mode on an iOS device or Apple Watch, which displays the phone number and message of your choice on the missing device’s screen, in the hope that whoever has your device will call you to arrange for its return.

Find My Device works more reliably on devices with cellular capabilities, such as the iPhone, certain iPads, and certain Series 3 or later
Apple Watch models. These devices are more likely to have an always-on network connection—cellular access is pretty ubiquitous, whereas Wi-Fi is spotty. (Series 2 and later Apple Watch models, and iOS devices with cellular support, also have GPS chips, so their reported location is more precise than for Macs and for iOS devices that lack GPS.)

In addition, the iPhone and iPad maintain their mobile connections even when “sleeping,” whereas a Mac or iPod touch won’t display any messages or report its location until it’s woken up. (An exception to this rule is any Mac laptop that uses solid-state storage—such Macs support Power Nap, which among other things enables Find My Device to work when they’re sleeping. See Apple’s article How Power Nap works on your Mac for more information.)

### Does Find My Device Increase Hacking Risks?

In late 2014, a number of online publications reported hacks in which someone obtained users’ iCloud usernames and passwords, used them with Find My Device to lock the owners’ Macs, and displayed messages demanding a ransom (in Bitcoin) to unlock them. Unfortunately, the design of Find My Device made this possible even if the user had two-factor authentication enabled.

Because of the possibility of this hack, several prominent sources recommended disabling Find My Device. But that’s terrible advice! This feature is there for your security, and disabling it is the wrong response to the problem, like leaving a door open because someone may have found the key.

The right response is to make sure your iCloud password is long, strong, and different from all your other passwords. The only reason this exploit worked is that the hackers stole usernames and passwords from other sites, and some people injudiciously used the same password for iCloud as they had for the compromised sites. To learn more about password security, Choose a Good Password.
iCloud can automatically back up most of the important data from your iOS device to Apple’s servers. This feature is usually invisible once you’ve set it up, but there are a few options you may want to adjust, and, of course, you’ll want to know how to Restore an iOS Device from a Backup should the need arise—a procedure that’s not obvious!

Understand How iCloud Backup Works

Backups are as important on an iOS device as on your computer—after all, your iOS device stores lots of crucial personal data, not to mention photos and videos that may be irreplaceable. If it ever dies or needs replacing, backups can also save you time and aggravation.

But backing up an iOS device is a different sort of process from backing up a Mac or PC. Because iOS devices have no browsable file system (the Files app notwithstanding) and each app is sandboxed—prevented from interacting with other apps’ data—conventional backup methods are out. One way to back up your iOS device is to connect it to your Mac or PC via Wi-Fi or with a USB cable, select the device in iTunes, and click Back Up Now.

But with iCloud, you can back up over Wi-Fi directly to Apple’s servers. This means:

• You can back up your data while traveling or otherwise away from your computer—or even if you have no Mac or PC at all.

• You can restore an iOS device—for example, one whose data was corrupted, or that had its data wiped as part of a repair—or set up a new device to use your existing data without a computer.
• As with iTunes backups, when you back up via iCloud, only the first backup copies all your personal data. Subsequent backups upload only information that’s new or different since last time, making iCloud backups faster on subsequent backup runs (if not quite as fast as iTunes backups).

For all these reasons, I generally recommend using iCloud Backup. But, as I said in About iCloud Storage, backups can consume lots of space. To solve this problem, you can buy more storage, limit which types of data are backed up (as I describe ahead), or delete old backups. But if you’re short on space and unwilling to buy more, you might stick with iTunes-based backups.

**Note:** For the privacy implications of iCloud Backup, flip ahead to Protect Your Privacy.

What does iCloud Backup back up, anyway? It covers the following:

• The photos and videos you’ve taken on your iOS device—located in Camera Roll unless you’ve enabled iCloud Photo Library, in which case they’re in All Photos

• Photo albums you’ve created on the iOS device (but not those synced from your computer, because they’re already “backed up” on that computer)

• Documents and settings for all your apps, including Health (on an iPhone)

• All account data and iOS settings (including those configured in the Settings app, HomeKit configuration, and your Home screen and folder organization)

• Conversations in the Messages app (iMessage, SMS, and MMS)—but only if you have not turned on Messages in the Cloud

• Your call history

• Ringtones

• Apple Watch backups
Use iCloud on an Apple TV

The Apple TV is a small set-top box that gives you access to streaming media from Apple and other providers, as well as media stored on other Apple devices on your network. Although the third-generation Apple TV supports several iCloud features, this chapter covers the current (4K and fourth-generation) models only.

Set Up iCloud on an Apple TV

There are two main places to set iCloud-related preferences on your Apple TV. Depending on the choices you made when you set up the Apple TV, either or both of these may already be configured, but it doesn’t hurt to check.

Set Up iCloud Account Features

To configure an Apple TV to work with iCloud Photos, iMovie Theater, Family Sharing, and the AirPods paired with your iPhone (if you have them), navigate to Settings > Accounts > iCloud. If your Apple ID isn’t already listed, select Sign In. If you’ve already entered your Apple ID for the iTunes Store, you may be asked if you want to use that same Apple ID for these other features. If you do, select Yes (and enter your password); if not, select No, Use a Different Apple ID (and enter both the Apple ID and password for a different iCloud account).

On the iCloud screen, you can turn any of the following on or off:

- One Home Screen (when enabled, your Home screen will be the same on every Apple TV signed in to your iCloud account)

- iCloud Photo Library (but turning on iCloud Photo Library removes My Photo Stream as an option; you can enable either one but not both at the same time)

- Shared Albums (previously called iCloud Photo Sharing)
• My Photo Stream

After that one-time setup procedure, to view your photos, follow the steps ahead in Use iCloud Photos on an Apple TV; and to view your movies, follow the directions in Use iMovie Theater.

**Set Up iTunes Store and iTunes Match**

To set up your Apple TV to use iCloud for streaming purchased media, navigate to Settings > Accounts > iTunes and App Store. If your Apple ID isn’t already listed, select Sign In and enter your credentials. Then select Yes, if prompted, to remember your password for rentals and purchases. (You may want to avoid doing so if your Apple TV is accessible by kids or guests who might rent or buy things on your account without your permission.)

You may enter more than one Apple ID (for example, if multiple people in your household have purchased content from the iTunes Store that you want to view), and switch between them easily. To enter an additional account, once again go to Settings > Accounts > iTunes and App Store, select Add New Apple ID, and enter that account’s credentials. (To switch between accounts, return to the iTunes and App Store screen and select a different account under Switch Apple ID.) If you have enabled iCloud Family Sharing, you can also use this screen to select the family member whose Apple ID will be used for purchases.

If you subscribe to iTunes Match, it’s automatically enabled when you add your iCloud account, though you will need to turn on iCloud Music Library in the Music app the first time you use it.

**View Shared Purchases on an Apple TV**

If you’ve enabled iCloud Family Sharing, you can’t access other family members’ music on an Apple TV, but you can view movies and TV shows purchased by other family members. Go to Movies > Purchased > Family Sharing or TV Shows > Purchased > Family Sharing. Then select a family member to see that person’s purchased content.
Use Back to My Mac

Back to My Mac (BtMM), an iCloud feature exclusively for Mac users, lets you easily connect to one of your Macs—or an AirPort Time Capsule or AirPort Disk—from another Mac located elsewhere on the internet in ways that would otherwise be very difficult to set up.

**Note:** While Back to My Mac has been around for many years, and still works on Macs running 10.13 High Sierra or earlier, *it is no longer available in 10.14 Mojave or later*. This chapter is here strictly for the benefit of people running older versions of macOS. If you’re running Mojave, move along—there’s nothing to see here!

Once BtMM is active, using it is every bit as simple as (in fact, it’s exactly the same as) connecting between two Macs on the same local network in your home or office—generally just a bit slower.

When I say “connect,” I’m talking about three separate options:

- **File sharing:** You can mount a remote Mac’s drive on your local Mac and then copy files between them, delete or rename remote files, or do anything else you normally could do with a network file server. The same goes for an AirPort Time Capsule or an AirPort Disk.

  This is entirely different from using cloud-based storage such as Dropbox or iCloud Drive; Back to My Mac uses iCloud only as a means of locating and connecting to the remote device. Once the connection is made, you can transfer files directly between the local Mac and remote device in either direction. Of course, the remote device must be on and connected to the internet.

- **Screen sharing:** You can see a live view of a remote Mac’s screen on your local Mac, and control the remote Mac with your local keyboard and mouse, as though you were sitting at the remote computer. In this way, for instance, you can run applications on your home Mac that you don’t have with you on your laptop.
• **Configuration:** You can change the settings of an AirPort base station or AirPort Time Capsule in a remote location using AirPort Utility on the Mac.

As cool as Back to My Mac is, it involves considerable behind-the-scenes complexity, and because some of the many variables required for success may be beyond your (or Apple’s) ability to address, you may not be able to get it working in every situation.

On a Mac, activating BtMM is a simple matter of making sure the Back to My Mac switch is on in System Preferences > iCloud. (You must also have File Sharing, Screen Sharing, or both enabled in System Preferences > Sharing; if you don’t, clicking a Details button next to the Back to My Mac switch prompts you to turn them on.) But if you see an error message there, you’re unable to connect to your Mac remotely, or you want to set up an AirPort Time Capsule or AirPort Disk to use BtMM, you may need additional help. Fortunately, Apple has a couple of useful support articles:

• [Set up and use Back to My Mac](#)

• [If multiple-NAT configurations cause issues with Back to My Mac](#)

Once everything’s set up, go on a field trip. Take your laptop somewhere else. Make sure you’re connected to the internet. If you look in the sidebar of a Finder window, you should see the icon for your remote Mac, AirPort Time Capsule, or AirPort Disk under Shared, just as you would if it were on the same local network. You can now connect to it as follows:

• **Share another Mac’s screen:** To control your remote Mac’s screen, select its icon in the sidebar, click Share Screen, and enter your Mac account’s login credentials if prompted to do so.

• **Access remote files:** To access files on a remote Mac, AirPort Time Capsule, or AirPort Disk, select its icon in the Finder window sidebar, click Connect As, and enter your credentials if prompted. A list of shares—volumes and shared folders—on your remote device appears. Double-click any share to mount it and display its files.
Manage Your Account

Your iCloud account has a handful of settings you may want to adjust, including your photo, default language, and time zone. And, if you’ve inadvertently deleted something from Contacts, Calendars, Reminders, or iCloud Drive within the last 30 days, you can restore it using the Settings app on the iCloud website; see Restore Deleted Data. You can also use account-level controls to Upgrade Your Storage.

Change iCloud Website Settings

A few settings related to your use of the iCloud website as a whole—your photo, language, and time zone—are all set in the same place. To adjust them, log in to the iCloud website and either click the Settings icon on the home screen or click your name at the top and choose iCloud Settings from the menu. You can then change settings in any of several categories. Any changes you make take effect immediately.

Change Personal Information

The top portion of the window, which is unlabeled, lets you adjust certain pieces of personal information:

- **Picture:** Your iCloud account can have a photo or other picture associated with it, which other iCloud members will see in certain contexts (such as in email messages). You can do the following:
  - *Add a picture.* If you don’t already have a picture assigned to your account, click Add Photo and then either drag in a picture or click Choose Photo, select a photo on your disk, and click Choose. Drag the slider to adjust the zoom level; drag the photo around to reposition it, if desired; and then click Done.
  - *Change your picture.* Hover over it with your pointer, click Edit at the bottom of the picture region, and then follow the procedure in the previous bullet point.
• **Delete your picture.** Hover over it and click the Delete icon.

• **Manage your Apple ID:** To make changes to your Apple ID settings (such as choosing a new password or changing the security settings), click the Manage link under Apple ID.

• **Language:** To change the language of the iCloud website user interface, choose a language from the Language pop-up menu.

• **Time Zone/Region:** To change your time zone (as shown in the Calendar web app) or region, click the current zone name under Time Zone to display a map. Click an area on the map to set your time zone. Then, if the city name shown at the bottom isn’t correct, click the city name and choose another city from the pop-up menu.

To change your Region setting (which affects iWork apps, iCloud Drive, Photos, and Notes), choose a country or other location from the Formats pop-up menu. Optionally choose a language from the second pop-up menu (this language determines the formats used for time, date, and money in some iCloud apps); or, select “Make formats match language” to use the formats associated with the language you selected on the main Settings page.

Click Done to dismiss the Time Zone & Formats dialog.

### View Storage Details

A multicolored graph under the Storage heading shows how your iCloud storage is being used. Hover over a colored slice to see a popover with details. Apple provides more information when you view your storage details from a desktop computer or iOS device, and I talk about that in **Manage Your Storage**, later in this chapter.

### View or Remove Devices

Look under My Devices to see all your Macs (running Yosemite or later), iOS devices (running iOS 8 or later), Apple Watches, and Apple TVs. Click a device to see the last several characters of its serial number (and, for iPhones, cellular iPads, and cellular Apple Watches, its IMEI). Then, if you no longer have or use a device, you can remove it
Throughout this book I’ve mentioned security and privacy issues connected to iCloud. But because of recent high-profile incidents involving data theft from iCloud users, I want to end the book with some advice about protecting your data.

In the digital world, the words security and privacy are often used interchangeably, but even though they’re related, they’re not the same. Security is freedom from danger or harm, whereas privacy is freedom from observation or attention. Someone can harm you by impersonating you, taking over your account, stealing or deleting data, and so on; security makes such harm less likely to occur. On the other hand, if someone reads your email messages, sees your photos, or learns your location without your permission, you’ve lost your privacy.

It’s possible to have security without privacy and vice versa. But when it comes to a service like iCloud, it turns out that all the steps you might take to improve your security also protect your privacy. For example, choosing an excellent password reduces the likelihood that a stranger might log in to your account and thereby obtain access to your private data.

Start by enhancing your security with a good password and two-factor authentication, discussed just ahead. Before buying a used iOS device, you should also Check Activation Lock to decrease the risk of using a stolen device. And you can take additional steps to Protect Your Privacy, such as turning off syncing for sensitive data and using a passcode on your iOS devices.
Choose a Good Password

The password associated with the Apple ID you use for iCloud is incredibly valuable. With your username and that password, someone can see all your email, contacts, calendar events, backed up photos, and even your current location. And, as I mentioned in Does Find My Device Increase Hacking Risks?, using Find My Device, anyone with your password can remotely lock or wipe your Macs and iOS devices!

So, choosing a good password is a big deal. You don’t want a password that any other person can guess, or that an automated cracking tool could uncover by brute force. For complete details on what makes one password stronger than another, how an attacker might go about guessing your password, and techniques for increasing password strength while not overtaxing your memory, read my book Take Control of Your Passwords. If you don’t have time to read that whole book, at least follow these tips:

- **Make your iCloud password unique.** Don’t use your iCloud password for any other site or service, because if your password for one site is compromised, every account that uses the same password is at risk.

- **Choose a long, random password.** Your iCloud password should be at least 12 characters long. It should include uppercase and lowercase letters, at least one digit, and at least one punctuation character. And it should be random—any sort of pattern weakens your password. (If you don’t already have a random password generator, a quick web search should turn up many options.)

- **Use a password manager.** Apps such as 1Password, Dashlane, and LastPass can create random passwords for you, store them, sync them across your devices, and fill them in automatically. That takes most of the effort and pain out of using good passwords.

If you want to change your password now, go to appleid.apple.com, click Manage Your Apple ID, and follow the instructions.
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Joe Kissell is the author of more than 60 books about technology. As of May 2017, he also became the publisher of Take Control Books, when alt concepts inc.—the company he runs along with his wife, Morgen Jahnke—acquired the Take Control series from TidBITS Publishing Inc.’s owners, Adam and Tonya Engst.

Joe is also a contributing editor to TidBITS and a senior contributor to Macworld. Before he began writing full-time in 2003, Joe spent nearly eight years managing software development. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Philosophy and a master’s degree in Linguistics.

When not writing or speaking, Joe likes to travel, walk, cook, eat, and practice t’ai chi. He lives in San Diego with Morgen; their sons, Soren and Devin; and their cat, Zora. To contact Joe about this book, send him email and please include Take Control of iCloud in the subject.

**Shameless Plug**

On my site [Interesting Thing of the Day](http://interestingthingoftheday.com), which I recently resurrected after many years, I write about all sorts of interesting topics—including food, history, language, science, technology, and much more. I’d be delighted if you stopped by for a visit! You can also sign up for [joeMail](http://joe-mail.com), my free, low-volume, no-spam mailing list, or follow me on Twitter [@joekissell](https://twitter.com/joekissell). To learn more about me personally, visit [JoeKissell.com](http://joe-kissell.com).
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