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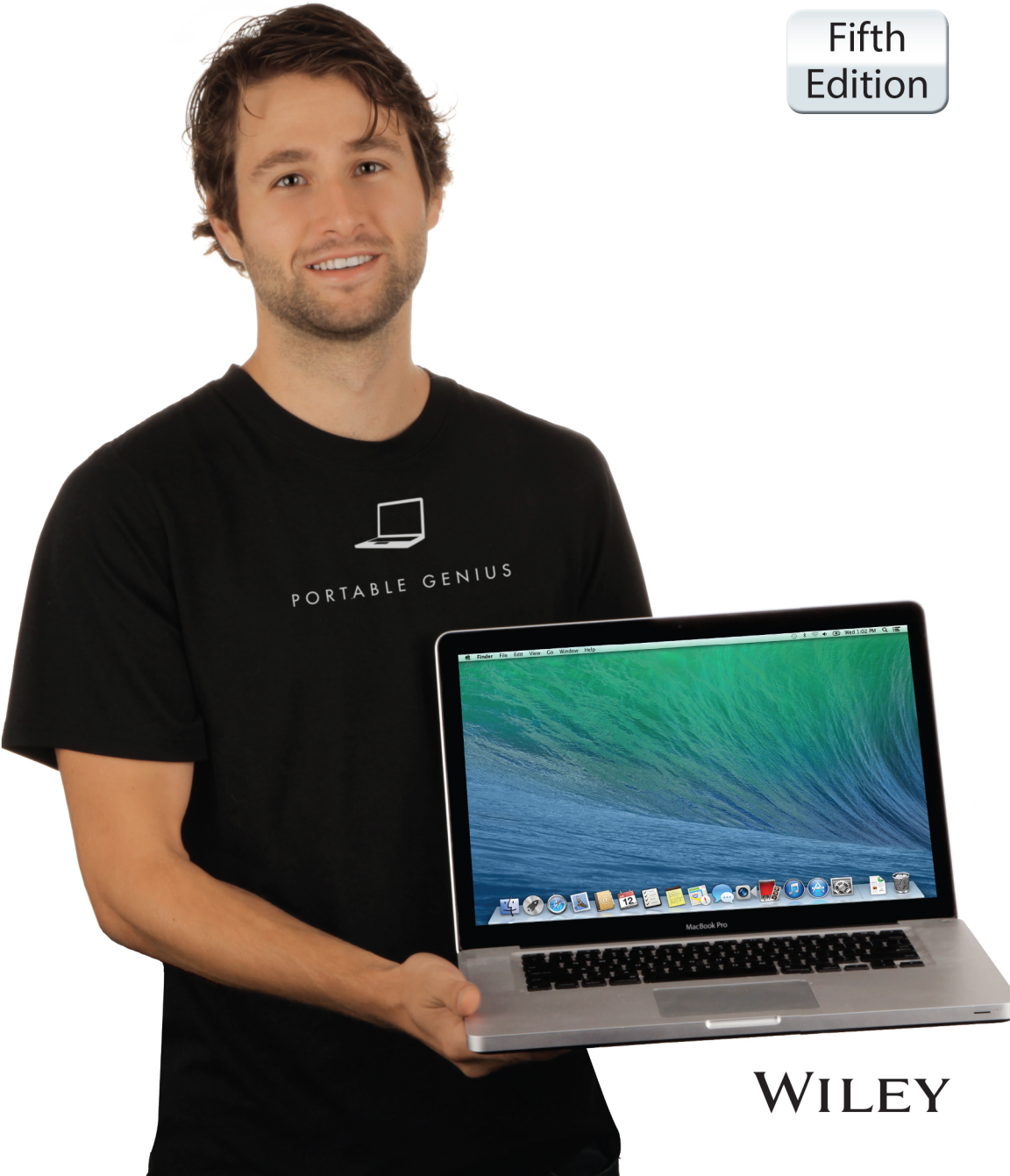
PORTABLE GENIUS

Fifth Edition



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PORTABLE GENIUS
5th EDITION

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by Galen Gruman

WILEY

MacBook Pro® Portable Genius, 5th Edition

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About the Author

Galen Gruman has written more than 35 books explaining how to use popular technology, incuding the iPad, OS X, Windows 8, iOS, Adobe InDesign, and QuarkXPress. He's the mobile columnist at the technology website InfoWorld.com, former editor of Macworld magazine, and both a Mac and PC user since 1985.

To my brother Stephen and his adventure, with MacBook Pro in hand, in China

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Contents

Acknowledgments xi

Introduction xxi

chapter 1

How Can I Use My Desktop Space Efficiently? 2

Setting the Finder Desktop's Icon Preferences 4

Working with Finder Windows 5

- Using Finder windows 5
- Using and configuring the Sidebar 6
- Using and configuring the toolbar 9

Working with the Dock 12

- Understanding how applications and folders work in the Dock 14
- Changing the Dock's appearance and behavior 17

Using the Launchpad 18

Managing Your Desktop's Windows 21

- Managing windows on the Desktop 22
  - Showing the Desktop 23
  - Showing the active application window 23
  - Showing all windows 24
- Using multiple Desktops 24
- Configuring Mission Control 26

Using Applications in Full-Screen Mode 28

Configuring Notifications 29

- Working with the Notification Center 29
- Configuring Notifications's display 32

Working with Monitors 35

- Configuring the MacBook Pro's LCD screen 35
- Connecting and configuring an external monitor with a cable 37
- Connecting and configuring an external display with AirPlay 40

Using a projector 41
Using mirroring versus showing separate screens 43
Setting the Desktop Background 44

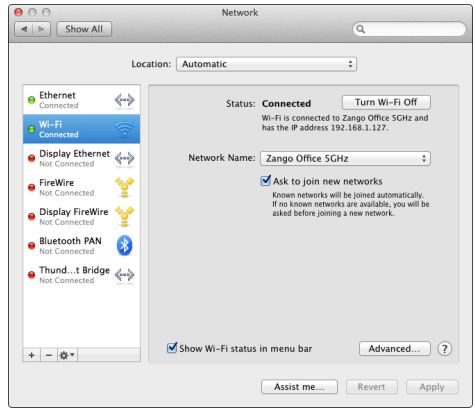
chapter 2

How Do I Manage User Accounts? 48

Working with User Accounts 50
Creating Administrator or Standard user accounts 52
Setting Login Items for a user account 57
Creating Group user accounts 58
Creating Sharing Only user accounts and enabling sharing 58
Changing user accounts 60
Deleting accounts 60
Configuring e-mail, contacts, calendar, and social service accounts 61
Limiting access with parental controls 63
Restricting system resources 64
Restricting content 65
Limiting people 65
Setting time limits 67
Setting other limits 69
Using Automatic Login 69
Configuring the Login Window 70
Requiring a Password to Awaken the MacBook Pro 72
Working with Fast User Switching 73
Working with the Root User Account 75

chapter 3

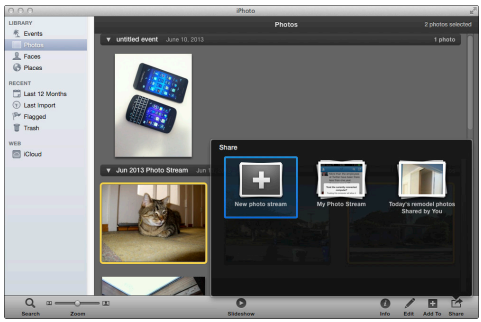
What Are My Internet Connection Options? 78



Setting Up a Local Network 80
Building a local network 80
Connecting your MacBook Pro and other devices 83
Connecting via Wi-Fi 83
Connecting via Ethernet 87
Connecting via cellular modem 90
Connecting via iPhone or iPad 92
Managing Multiple Network Connections 93
Configuring network connections 94
Managing network connections with locations 94
Troubleshooting an Internet Connection 97
Solving a network connection problem 98
Solving a MacBook Pro connection problem 100
Finding help for Internet connection problems 101

chapter 4

How Do I Share Files, Printers, Videos, and More? 102



Using the Share Sheet 104
Sharing Photos, Music, and Movies 106
Sharing Calendars 109
Sharing Maps with an iOS Device 109
Sharing Files 110
- Sharing files with AirDrop 111
- Sharing with file sharing 112
  - Configuring sharing user accounts 112
  - Configuring file sharing 113
  - Setting sharing permissions from the Finder 118
- Accessing shared files 119
  - Using the Sidebar to access shared files 119
  - Accessing shared files using a URL 121
- Sharing files with Windows PCs 123
  - Sharing files on a MacBook Pro with a Windows PC 123
  - Accessing files from a Windows PC 124
  - Sharing files from a Windows PC 127
  - Accessing shared files from a Windows PC using a Mac 127
- Sharing files via Bluetooth 128
- Sharing Screens 131
  - Sharing your MacBook Pro screen with other Macs 131
  - Sharing another Mac's screen on a local network 133
- Sharing Printers and Scanners 135
- Sharing an Internet Connection 137

chapter 5

How Can I Control My MacBook Pro and Maintain Battery Power? 140

Using the Trackpad Effectively 142
Using the Keyboard Effectively 145
- Configuring the keyboard 145
- Configuring language settings 147
  - Selecting the keyboard layout 147
  - Setting OS X's language and regional settings 149
  - Controlling spelling, quotation marks, dashes, and text substitution 151
- Controlling your MacBook Pro with keyboard shortcuts 152
  - Configuring keyboard shortcuts 154
  - Creating your own keyboard shortcuts 154
  - Navigating with the keyboard 156

Using the Character Viewer 158

Using Voice Recognition Effectively 160
Using dictation 160
Using voice commands 161
Maintaining the Battery 164
Saving power with App Nap 164
Monitoring battery status 165
Extending battery life 166
Using the Energy Saver system preference 166
Adopting low-energy habits 169
Powering your MacBook Pro while traveling 170

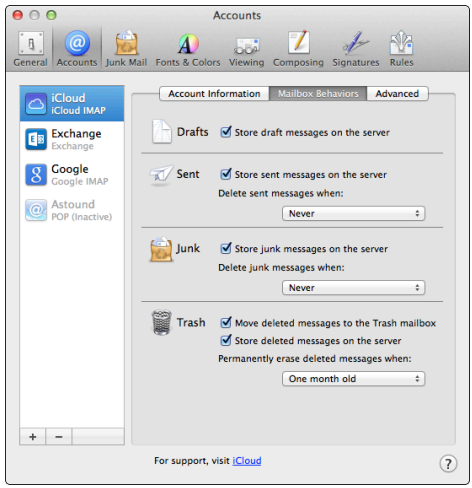
chapter 6

How Do I Take Advantage of iCloud? 172

Getting Started with iCloud 174
Synchronizing Data on Multiple Devices 175
Configuring iCloud on a MacBook Pro 175
Configuring iCloud on an iOS device 179
Using iCloud Keychain 180
Using iCloud with Documents 183
Working with iCloud's Web Applications 185
Managing your iCloud account 185
Working with iCloud's e-mail and information management applications 187
Using iWork in the Cloud 189

chapter 7

How Do I Manage Contacts and E-mail? 192

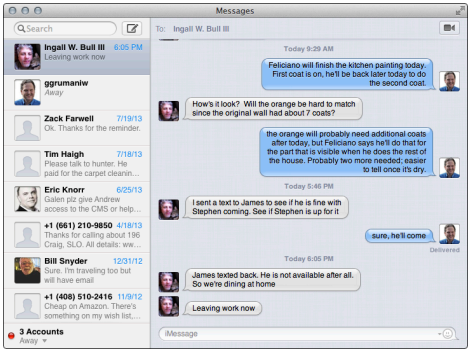


Using Accounts in Contacts 194
Adding Contact Information to Contacts 196
Configuring the card template 197
Creating and editing contact cards 198
Finding People in Contacts 202
Setting format and sort preferences 202
Browsing for cards 203
Searching for cards 203
Acting on Card Information 204
Organizing Cards with Groups in Contacts 205
Creating groups manually 206
Creating smart groups 206
Configuring E-mail Accounts in Mail 208
Setting Account Information preferences 210
Setting Mailbox Behaviors preferences 211
Setting Advanced preferences 213
Testing e-mail accounts 214

Working with File Attachments in Mail 215
Sending files through e-mail 215
Working with received files 217
Organizing E-mail in Mail 220
Using mailboxes 220
Using smart mailboxes 222
Making Mail Work Your Way 222
The General preferences 222
The Junk Mail preferences 223
The Viewing preferences 223
The Composing preferences 224
The Signature preferences 225

chapter 8

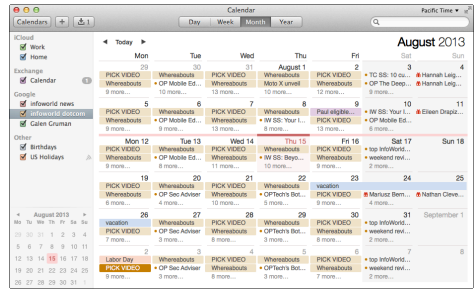
How Do I Communicate in Real Time? 228



Conversing with FaceTime 230
Configuring FaceTime 230
Starting a call 231
Receiving a call 231
Conducting a call 231
Messaging with Messages 232
Configuring Messages 233
Using Messages to text-chat 234
Using Messages for audio chat or video chat 237
Sharing your screen during a chat 240
Using the Buddy List 242

chapter 9

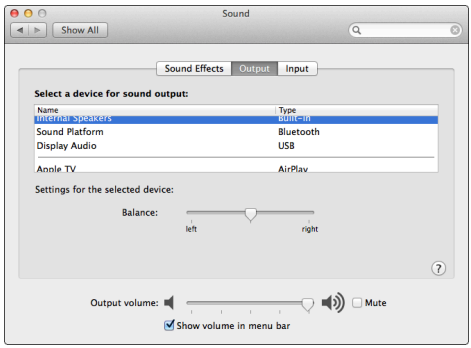
How Can I Manage My Calendars? 244



Managing Calendars 246
Configuring Calendar preferences 246
The General preferences 246
The Accounts preferences 248
The Advanced preferences 248
The Alerts preferences 249
Managing calendars 250
Navigating calendars 252
Creating calendars 253
Adding events to calendars 254
Working with event invitations and availability 258
Printing Calendars 260
Sharing Calendars 261
Publishing calendars via iCloud 262
Sharing calendars via iCloud 262
Subscribing to public calendars 264

chapter 10

How Can I Make Better Use of the MacBook Pro's Audio Features? 266



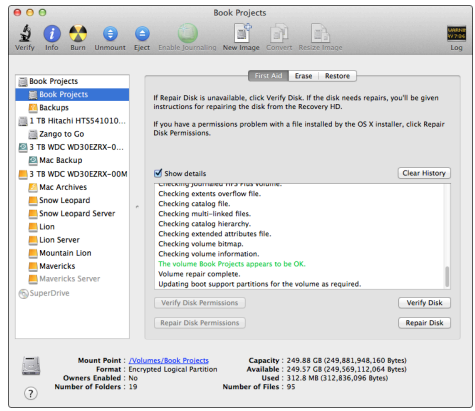
Getting Sound out of a MacBook Pro 268
- Understanding sound output options 268
- Controlling sound output 269

Creating and Using Sound Effects 272
- Configuring sound effects 273
- Creating and using custom sound alerts 274
  - Creating a sound alert 274
  - Adding a custom sound alert 276

Recording and Working with Sound 276
- Recording sound with a microphone 277
- Recording sound with a video camera 278
- Recording sound from musical instruments 279
- Recording sound in QuickTime Player 279
- Recording sound in iMovie 280
- Recording sound with an iOS device 281

chapter 11

How Do I Add and Manage Storage Space? 284



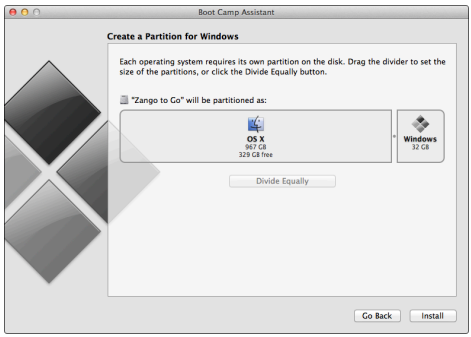
Using External Hard Drives 286
- Connecting an external hard drive 287
- Preparing an external hard drive with Disk Utility 288
- Working with external hard drives 292

Maintaining Hard Drives 293
- Managing free space on a hard drive 294
- Checking or repairing an external drive with Disk Utility 295
- Checking or repairing the internal drive with Disk Utility 297
- Erasing an external hard drive with Disk Utility 297

Working with SD Cards and Flash Drives 300

chapter 12

How Can I Run Windows Applications? 302



Choosing a Windows Option 304
- Apple's Boot Camp 304
- Desktop virtualization applications 304

Running Windows with Boot Camp 305
- Configuring Boot Camp and installing Windows 305
- Running Windows using Boot Camp 309

Running Windows Virtually 311

chapter 13

How Can I Protect My MacBook Pro's Data? 314

Keeping Software Current 316
- Keeping OS X and Mac App Store software current 316
- Keeping other applications current 318

Protecting Your MacBook Pro with General Security 319

Preventing Internet Attacks 321
- Shielding your MacBook Pro with a router 322
- Shielding your MacBook Pro with the OS X firewall 322

Protecting Data with Time Machine 324
- Setting up Time Machine 325
- Backing up to Time Machine 327
- Restoring files with Time Machine 329
  - Restoring files in the Finder 329
  - Restoring files in applications 331
  - Restoring your entire MacBook Pro 331

Using the OS X Document Protection Features 332
- Using Auto Save 333
- Restoring documents with Versioning 333

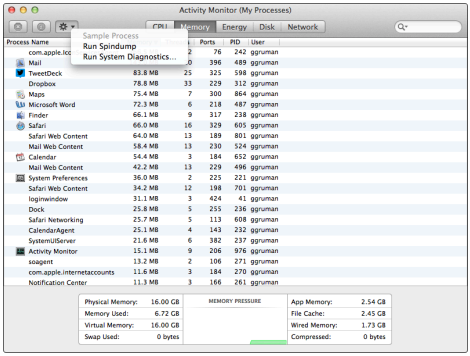
Protecting Data with Encryption 334

Using Find My iPhone to Locate Your MacBook Pro 338
- Using Firmware Password Utility 341

Protecting Information with Keychains 341
- Viewing and configuring keychains 342
- Adding keychains 344
- Adding items to a keychain 344
- Working with keychains 346

chapter 14

How Do I Solve MacBook Pro Problems? 348



Looking for Trouble 350

Understanding and Describing Problems 352

- Recognizing user errors 352
- Recognizing software problems 352
- Recognizing hardware problems 354
- Describing problems 354

Trying Fast and Easy Solutions 356

- Forcing applications to quit 356
- Forcing the Finder to relaunch 356
- Restarting or restoring 357
- Shutting down soft 358
- Shutting down hard 358
- Using a troubleshooting user account and deleting preferences 358
- Repairing external hard drives 360
- Repairing the internal hard drive 361
- Repairing permissions 361
- Reinstalling applications 362
- Starting up from the Recovery HD partition 364
- Starting up from an alternate external drive 364

Getting Help with MacBook Pro Problems 365

- Using the Mac Help system 366
- Describing a problem in detail 367
  - Profiling a MacBook Pro 368
  - Monitoring MacBook Pro activity 368
  - Capturing screenshots 369
- Getting help from others 371

Starting Over 372

- Reinstalling OS X 372
- Starting completely over 373

Index 376

Introduction

From its distinctive metallic finish to its backlit keyboard, dazzling display, and inviting design, the MacBook Pro is amazing technology that looks as great as it works. Running OS X and including lots of amazing software, a MacBook Pro allows you to do more right out of the box more easily than any other computer. In fact, a MacBook Pro does so much that it's easy to overlook even more of the great things it can do. That's where this book comes in.

Although you probably already know how to turn on your MacBook Pro, you might not know how to create virtual working spaces on the desktop, so you can keep many applications and windows open at the same time and move among them easily. Although you likely know how to use the trackpad to point to objects on the screen and select them, you might not know how to create your own keyboard shortcuts for just about any command in any application you use. Although you have probably thought about how you need to back up your important data, you might not have actually done it. Also, although you've probably surfed the web, you may not have taken advantage of all the options that being connected can give you, from sharing files locally to communicating with people around the world, easily and inexpensively.

The purpose of this book is to provide a resource for you when you are wondering how to do something better, how to do it more easily, or even how to do it at all. Each chapter is organized around a question. In each chapter are answers to that question. These answers are task-focused so you learn by doing rather than just by reading. If you start at Step 1 and work through each one in sequence, you'll end up someplace you want to go.

The MacBook Pro Portable Genius is intended to be your companion, to guide you on your in-depth exploration of your MacBook Pro. After you've been through a topic's steps, you'll be prepared to go even further by extending what you've learned to other tasks.

This book is designed to cover a broad range of topics in which most MacBook Pro users are interested. There's no particular order to the topics in this book, so you can jump to any chapter without having read the preceding ones. To get started, I recommend that you look at the table of contents and decide which question you want answered first. Turn to the appropriate page, and off you go!

How Can I Use My Desktop Space Efficiently?

The MacBook Pro's Desktop is the area displayed on its screen. Like a physical desktop, you place things (in this case, icons and windows) on it to focus your attention on them and use their content. As you work, your Desktop naturally becomes cluttered with windows for applications, documents, and system tools. Keeping control of all these windows helps you make the most of your Desktop space. With all the great Desktop management tools that the Mac's OS X operating system offers, it's much easier to keep your MacBook Pro's Desktop neat and tidy than it is a physical desktop.

Setting the Finder Desktop's Icon Preferences 4

Working with Finder Windows 5

Working with the Dock 12

Using the Launchpad 18

Managing Your Desktop's Windows 21

Using Applications in Full-Screen Mode 28

Configuring Notifications 29

Working with Monitors 35

Setting the Desktop Background 44

Setting the Finder Desktop's Icon Preferences

By default on a new MacBook Pro or in a new installation of OS X on a MacBook, icons for the MacBook Pro's hard drive, external hard drives, DVDs, CDs, and servers do not appear on the Desktop. This keeps the entire space on the Desktop clear for your files and folders. (If you upgraded to a new version of OS X or used the Migration Assistant to transfer the contents of another Mac to your MacBook Pro, the drive icons that display are whatever was previously set.)

To access drives, whether or not they appear on the Desktop, open a Finder window (choose File➪New Finder Window or press ⌘+N in the Finder, or double-click a folder or drive icon) and click them in the Sidebar to open their contents.

Note

The folders and files you see on the Desktop are determined by the contents of the Desktop folder, which is located within your Home folder (choose Go➪Home in the Finder to see the Home folder's contents). If you don't want a folder or file taking up space on your Desktop, move it into a different folder within your Home folder. In addition to having a neater appearance, this also helps you work more efficiently because it's easier to find folders and files if they're here rather than scattered on your Desktop.

Perform the following steps to show or hide Desktop icons:

1. **Choose Finder➪Preferences.** The Finder Preferences dialog appears.
2. **Go to the General pane, if it isn't already visible.**
3. **Select and deselect the check boxes for the icons that you want to see and don't want to see, respectively, on your Desktop.** For example, to hide the icon for the MacBook Pro's internal hard drive or any external hard drive connected to it, deselect the Hard Disks check box. As you deselect the check boxes, the related icons disappear from your Desktop.

Note

To set the size, grid spacing, text size, and other options for the Desktop, click the Desktop so no Finder windows are selected. Choose View➪Show View Options, and use the resulting panel to configure these settings for your Desktop. The title of this panel indicates the object for which you are configuring the view options, so it should be Desktop. You can use this same command with any folder to set its view options.

Working with Finder Windows

Much of the time that you are working on your Desktop will involve Finder windows. Two areas of Finder windows that you will use frequently are the Sidebar and the toolbar, in addition to the window itself. You can use these features as they are, but you can also customize them to make your Desktop space more efficient.

Using Finder windows

Finder windows are essentially lists of what's in whatever drive or folder you opened. Double-click a drive or folder to open a Finder window. If you open a drive or folder from the Desktop, a new Finder window opens for its contents. If you open a drive or folder from within a Folder window, the Finder window displays its contents in place of whatever it was previously showing.

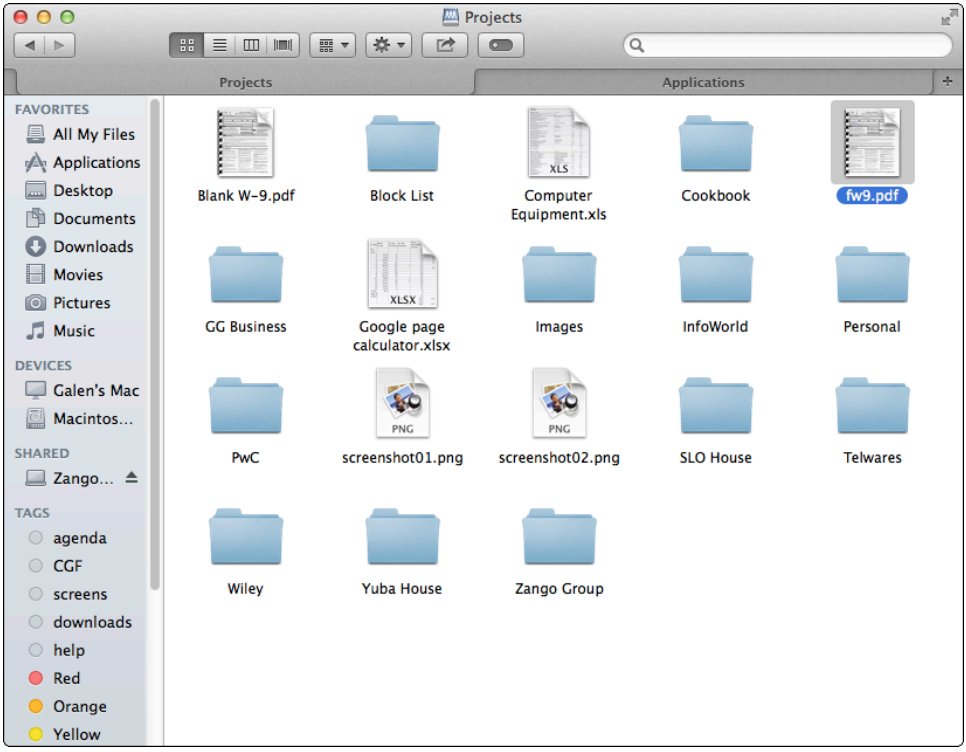
A quick way to open a new Finder window in the Finder is to choose File➪New Window or to press ⌘+N. That way, you can look at contents from different locations at the same time, and even copy or move items across them.

If you drag items from one Finder window to another, the items are moved if the Finder windows are showing contents from folders on the same drive. They are copied if the Finder windows are showing the contents of folders from different drives. Hold down the Option key when dragging to copy files on the same disk, and hold down the Option key when dragging to move files to a different disk; holding Option reverses the standard behavior.

Close unwanted Finder windows by clicking the Close button at the upper left of the window or by pressing Shift+⌘+W. Note that this shortcut is new to OS X 10.9 Mavericks and had been just ⌘+W in previous versions of OS X.

Mavericks introduces a new capability in Finder windows called Finder tabs that reduces clutter on the Desktop. It works just like a browser's tabbed panes do: Each pane has its own tab that you click to switch to that pane, as Figure 1.1 shows. Create a new tabbed pane by choosing File➪New Tab or pressing ⌘+T. You can drag items from one tab to another: From the open pane, just drag the item to the tab of the other pane.

To close a tabbed pane, hover the pointer over its tab, and click the X icon that appears on the left side of the tab, or just press ⌘+W to close the active (open) pane.



1.1 OS X Mavericks lets you have multiple tabbed panes in the same Finder window, to decrease Desktop clutter.

Using and configuring the Sidebar

The Finder's Sidebar makes it easy to get to specific locations, meaning folders, drives, and even files. It comes preloaded with a set of aliases (shortcuts) to common locations, but you can add items to, or remove them from, the Sidebar so it contains aliases to the items you use most frequently.

The Sidebar is organized into sections, as shown in Figure 1.2. You control which ones display by using the Finder Preferences dialog (choose Finder➪Preferences). The process is similar to how you control which disk icons appear on the Desktop, except that you go to the Sidebar pane in the dialog rather than the General pane, and then check and uncheck the desired options to control what displays, as shown in Figure 1.3.