Mail & Contacts

E mail is a fast, cheap, convenient communication medium. In fact, these days, anyone who *doesn't* have an email address is considered some kind of freak.

If you do have an email address or two, you'll be happy to discover that Mac OS X includes Mail, a program that lets you get and send email messages without having to wade through a lot of spam (junk mail). Mail is a surprisingly complete program, filled with shortcuts and surprises around every turn, and its overhaul in Mac OS X 10.7 is one of the most important and useful aspects in all of Lion.

Setting Up Mail

Mail can't get your mail unless it knows the details of your email account. The first time you open Mail, then, it asks you for your name, email address, and email account password. If you use a common email service like Gmail, Yahoo, AOL, or Microsoft Exchange, or a common Internet provider like Verizon or Comcast, you're in luck; Apple has rounded up the acronym-laden server settings for 30 popular mail services and taught Mail to fill them in for you.

All you have to do is type your email name and password into the box (Figure 18-1). If Mail recognizes the suffix (for example, *@gmail.com*), and if "Automatically set up account" is turned on, then Mail does the heavy lifting for you. Mail is ready to go online.

Lion Watch: You can perform exactly the same account setup in the new Mail, Contacts & Calendars pane in System Preferences. There's no advantage of one method or the other, except that the System Preferences pane lets you enter your account information for online calendars and address books, too.

Now, if you use a service provider that Mail doesn't recognize when you type in your email name and password—you weirdo—then you have to set up your mail account the long way. Mail prompts you along, and you confront the dialog boxes shown in Figure 18-2, where you're supposed to type in various settings to specify your email account. Some of this information may require a call to your Internet service provider (ISP).
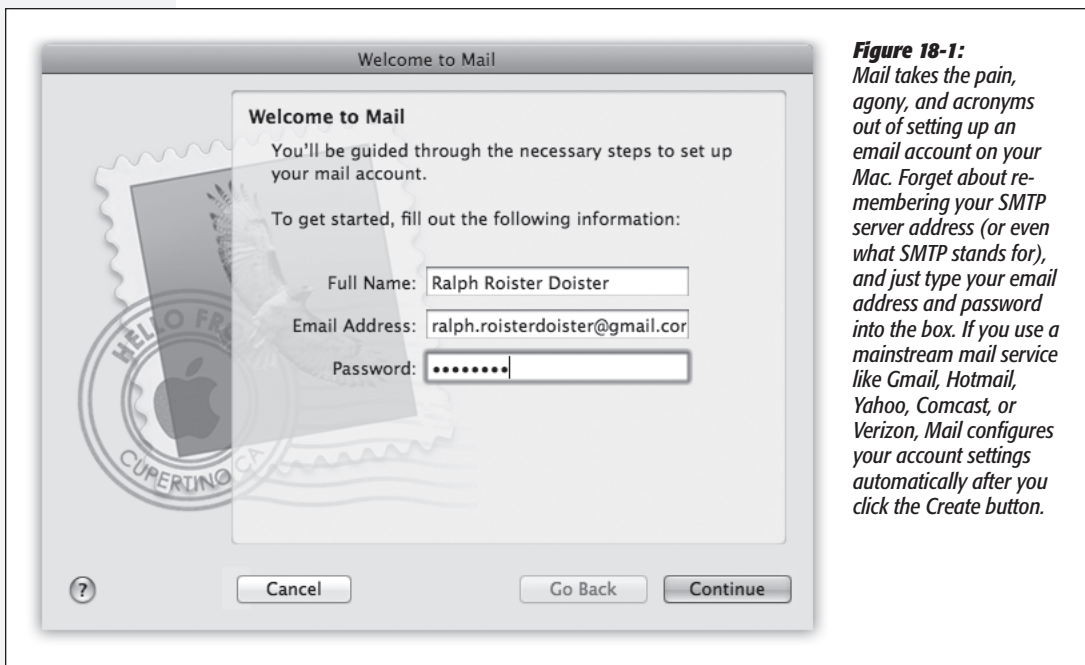

Figure 18-1:
Mail takes the pain, agony, and acronyms out of setting up an email account on your Mac. Forget about re-membering your SMTP server address (or even what SMTP stands for), and just type your email address and password into the box. If you use a mainstream mail service like Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, Comcast, or Verizon, Mail configures your account settings automatically after you click the Create button.

Here's the rundown:

- **Add Account screen.** Here Mail wants to know your Full Name (it will appear in the "From:" field of any email you send, so type it just the way you'd like it to appear); Email Address (the address you got when you signed up for Internet services, such as *billg@microsoft.com*); and Password (the name and password provided by your ISP).

- **Incoming Mail Server. This** is where you enter the information your ISP gave you about its mail servers. You specify your **Account Type** (what flavor of email account you have; see the box on page 708 for details, and check with your ISP if you're not sure which type you have); a **Description** (an affectionate nickname for your email account; for your reference only); the actual **Incoming Mail Server address** (which is usually related to the name of your ISP, such as *popmail.mindspring.com);* and the **User Name and password** provided by your ISP.

- **Incoming Mail Security.** Secure Sockets Layer? Kerberos Version 5? MD5 Challenge-Response? Only your Internet provider can tell you what to do on this screen.

- **Outgoing Mail Server.** The outgoing mail server (also called the *SMTP server*) usually looks something like *mail.mindspring.com.* Here again, the **Description** is optional, the **Outgoing Mail Server address** comes from your ISP, and the **User**

Figure 18-2:
These dialog boxes let you plug in the email settings provided by your Internet service. If you want to add another email account later, choose File→Add Account, and then enter your information in the resulting dialog box. (Or, if you like doing things the hard way, choose Mail→Preferences→Accounts tab, click the + in the lower-left corner of the window, and then enter your account information in the fields on the right.)

Authentication setting depends on your particular email provider. Your **User Name and password** is often the same for both incoming and outgoing servers.

- **Outgoing Mail Security.** Same thing here. Your ISP will have to tell you what settings to use.

When you've made it through the setup screens, turn on Take Account Online to make your new account "live." If you entered everything correctly, Mail checks for new mail right away.

POP, IMAP, Exchange, and Web-based Mail

When it comes to email, there are four primary flavors of *servers* (Internet computers that process email): *POP* (also known as POP3), *IMAP* (also known as IMAP4), *Exchange,* and *Web-based.* Each has its own distinct taste, with different strengths and weaknesses.

POP accounts (Post Office Protocol) are very common. Your Mac downloads your incoming mail from a POP server to your hard drive before you read it, which works fine as long as you're using only one computer for email.

The problem with POP, of course, is that things get complicated when you have more than one machine—a phone and a Mac, for example, or a laptop and a desktop. For example, if you usually use a desktop Mac, but you want to take your email along on the road on your laptop, you have to copy the Mail folder from your Home→Library folder into the corresponding location on your laptop's hard drive. That's the only way you'll see your messages and attachments in place when you open Mail on the laptop.

IMAP servers (Internet Message Access Protocol), a newer type, solve that problem. IMAP servers keep all your mail online, rather than making you store it on your hard drive; as a result, you can access the same mail regardless of the computer or phone you use. IMAP servers remember which messages you've read and sent, to boot. (With these accounts, you're not so much *downloading* mail as *synchronizing* your computer with what's online.) It's a great setup if, for example, you check your email on an iPhone, because the deletions and replies you process on the phone will be there on your Mac when you get home.

(You can opt for a Gmail or AOL account to be an IMAP account, too.)

Exchange servers are popular in corporations and some schools. Most of the time, employees tap into these servers using a Windows program like Outlook. Corporate geeks like Exchange servers because they're easy to set up and maintain, and because they offer many of the same features as IMAP servers. Luckily, Mail can read and send email through Exchange servers as though your Mac were just another beige PC.

Free, Web-based services like Hotmail, Yahoo, and Gmail also store your mail on the Internet, but you can use a Web browser on any computer to read and send messages. They're slower and more cumbersome to use than "regular" email accounts, but they're usually free.

Unfortunately, Mail can't check accounts that are entirely Web-based. Fortunately, the big-name Web-based email services also offer POP or IMAP servers. If you have a Gmail account, for example, you'll find that you can read your email using either a Web browser or Mail (see Gmail's help pages for details on making that work).

Conversely, more and more POP and IMAP accounts are also offering a *Web-based* component. For example, whoever provides your Internet service—EarthLink, Verizon, or Speakeasy, for instance—probably provides both POP service and a Web-based way of accessing your email, so you can access your mail either from home or from an Internet café in Bangladesh.

All Mail cares about, though, is whether your email account allows POP, IMAP, or Exchange access; what you do on the Web is, as far as Mail is concerned, your own business.


Importing Old Mail

Mail can also import your email collection from an email program you've used before—Entourage, Thunderbird, Netscape/Mozilla, Eudora, or even a version of Mac OS X Mail that's stored somewhere else (say, on an old Mac's hard drive). Importing is a big help in making a smooth transition between your old email world and your new one.

To bring over your old mail and mailboxes, choose File→Import Mailboxes. Figure 18-3 has the details.

Figure 18-3:
Top: If you go to File→Import Mailboxes, Mail offers to import your old email collection from just about any other Mac email program.

Bottom: You can even specify which email folders you want to import (bottom). When the importing process is finished–and it can take a very long time–you'll find precisely the same folders set up in Mail.
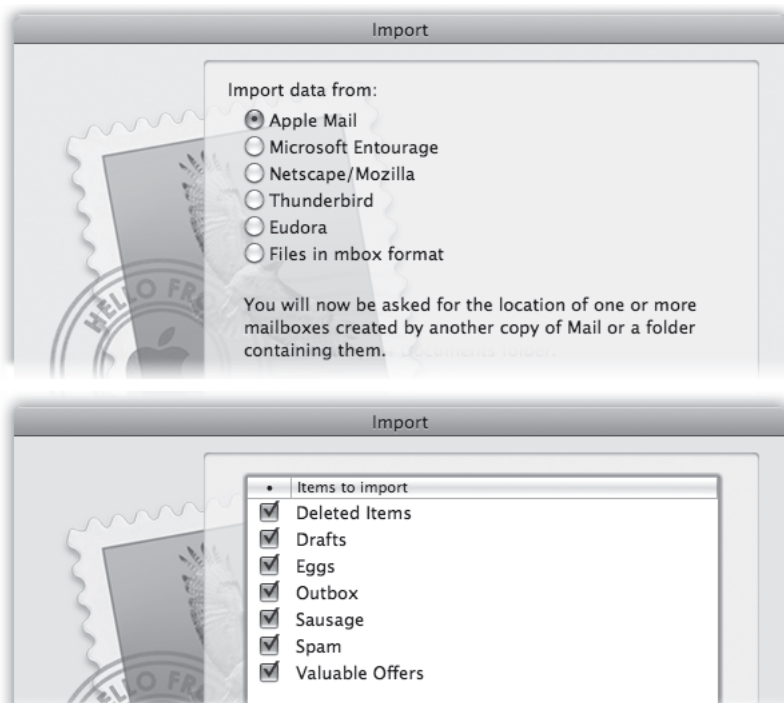
Checking Your Mail

You get new mail and send mail you've already written using the Get Mail command. You can trigger it in any of several ways:

- Click the ✉ button on the toolbar.
- Choose Mailbox→Get All New Mail (or press Shift-⌘-N).

Note: If you have multiple email accounts, you can also use the Mailbox→Get New Mail submenu to pick just *one* account to check for new mail.

- Control-click (or right-click) Mail's Dock icon, and choose Get New Mail from the shortcut menu. (You can use this method from within any program, as long as Mail is already open.)

- Wait. Mail comes set to check your email automatically every few minutes. To adjust its timing or to turn this feature off, choose Mail→Preferences, click General, and then choose a time interval from the "Check for new messages" pop-up menu.

Now Mail contacts the mail servers listed in the Accounts pane of Mail's preferences, retrieving new messages and downloading any files attached to those messages. It also *sends* any outgoing messages that couldn't be sent when you wrote them.

Tip: The far-left column of the Mail window has a tiny Mail Activity monitor tucked away; click the second button (⊡)at the lower-left corner of the Mail window to reveal Mail Activity. If you don't want to give up mailboxes-list real estate, or if you prefer to monitor your mail in a separate window, you can do that, too. The Activity window gives you a Stop button, progress bars, and other useful information. Summon it by choosing Window→Activity, or by pressing ⌘-0.

Also, if you're having trouble connecting to some (or all) of your email accounts, choose Window→Connection Doctor. There, you can see detailed information about accounts that aren't responding. If your computer's Internet connection is at fault, you can click Network Diagnostics to try to get back online.

The Mailboxes List

The mailboxes panel, the leftmost list on the screen, isn't just for mailboxes anymore. Categories like Reminders and RSS Feeds can appear there, too, as shown in Figure 18-4. But the top half of this gray-blue column on the left side lists all your email accounts' folders (and subfolders, and sub-subfolders) for easy access. Mail looks quite a bit like iTunes (and iPhoto, and the Finder)—except here you have mailboxes where your iTunes Library and connected iPods would be.

Tip: You can also collapse or expand the various sections of the mailboxes list (On My Mac and Reminders, for example) by clicking the Hide or Show button next to each one. That button doesn't appear, however, until you *point* to the capitalized section title (like MAILBOXES or ON MY MAC).

Under the Mailboxes heading, you may find these folders:

- **Inbox** holds mail you've received. If you have more than one email account, you can expand the triangles to see separate folders for each of your accounts. You'll see this pattern repeated with the Sent, Junk, and other mailboxes, too—separate accounts have separate subheadings.


Tip: If Mail has something to tell you about your Inbox (like, for instance, that Mail can't connect to it), a tiny warning triangle (⚠) appears on the right side of the Mailboxes heading. Click it to see what Mail is griping about.

If you see a wavy ⊘ icon, that's Mail's way of announcing that you're offline. Click the icon to try to connect to the Internet.

- **Outbox** holds mail you've written but haven't yet sent (because you were on an airplane when you wrote it, for example). If you have no mail waiting to be sent, the Outbox disappears.

Figure 18-4:
In Lion, Mail can have several different layouts. In the new, standard three-column view (top), all your information sources—mailboxes, Notes, and RSS feeds—are grouped tidily in the far-left column. You can hide that column, though, so that you have more space for reading (middle). You can also return to the pre-Lion layout (bottom), in which the messages list is above the message body.

Standard view (three columns)   Standard view (folder column hidden)
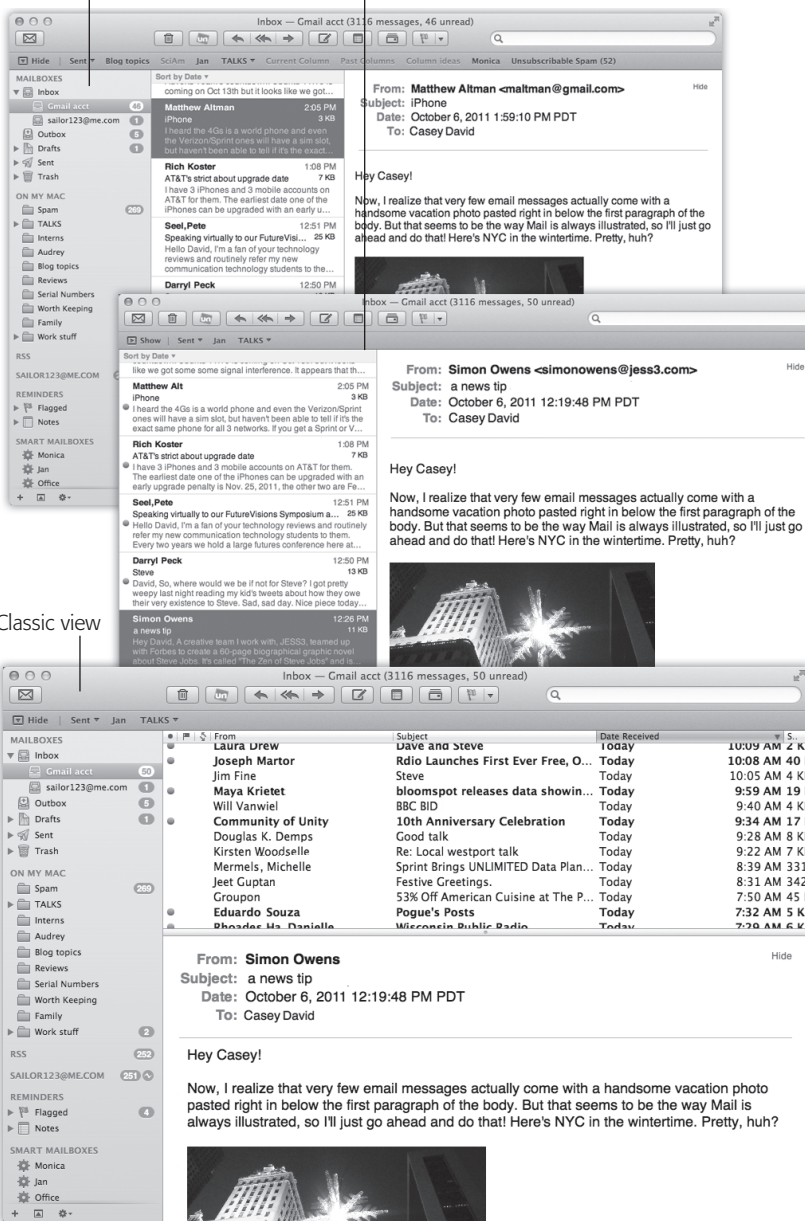
Classic view

- **Drafts** holds messages you've started but haven't yet finished and don't want to send just yet.

- **Sent,** unsurprisingly, holds copies of messages you've sent.

- **Trash** works a lot like the Trash on your desktop, in that messages you put there don't actually disappear. They remain in the Trash folder until you permanently delete them or move them somewhere else—or until Mail's automatic trash-cleaning service deletes them for you.

- **Junk** appears automatically when you use Mail's spam filter, as described later in this chapter.

- **Reminders.** Any Notes you've jotted down while working in Mail are here. If you've flagged any messages, the flag headings appear here, too. (Notes and flags are both described later in this chapter.)

- **RSS Feeds.** Who needs to bop into a Web browser to keep up with the news? Mail brings it right to you while you're corresponding, as described in a moment.

- **Mail Activity.** You don't need to summon a separate window to see how much more of that message with the giant attachment the program still has to send. To reveal the Mail activity panel, click the tiny ◪ icon below the Mailboxes list.

Tip: You can drag the mailboxes up and down in the list. Sweet.

Tailoring the Look of Mail

Apple put a lot of its Lion energy into redesigning Mail to exploit the size and shape of your screen. In a program made for managing lists and reading messages, you need all the room you can get.

You've always been able to tweak Mail's look, layout, and proportions—but now you have both the Lion layout (three columns) and the Classic layout (list above, message below), which is still around for people who don't care for the new look. The following pages offer advice in modifying the design of *both* layouts.

Tweaking the Lion layout

The Lion layout is the three-column view shown in Figure 18-5.

Here's some of the plastic surgery you can perform:

- **Try full-screen mode.** Click the ◪ in the upper-right corner of the window to make the Mail window expand to fill your monitor. (See page 11 for details on full-screen mode.) Full-screen is a natural for space-hungry email, especially on a small screen (like the 11-inch MacBook Air).

Note: In full-screen mode, any *individual* message or note that you double-click pops front and center; the rest of the screen, including all your lists and panes and other messages, fades and becomes inactive. While that special effect certainly draws your attention to the *one* open message, it also means that you can't copy and paste from another message, refer to another message, or drag to or from another message.

If you want to do something like that, you have to exit full-screen mode first.

Figure 18-5:
Click an icon in the Mailboxes column to see its contents in the messages list. The messages list now shows you the first couple of lines of each message, along with photos of the senders, if available in your Address Book. Click one of the column headings (From, Subject, and so on) to sort your mail collection by that criterion.
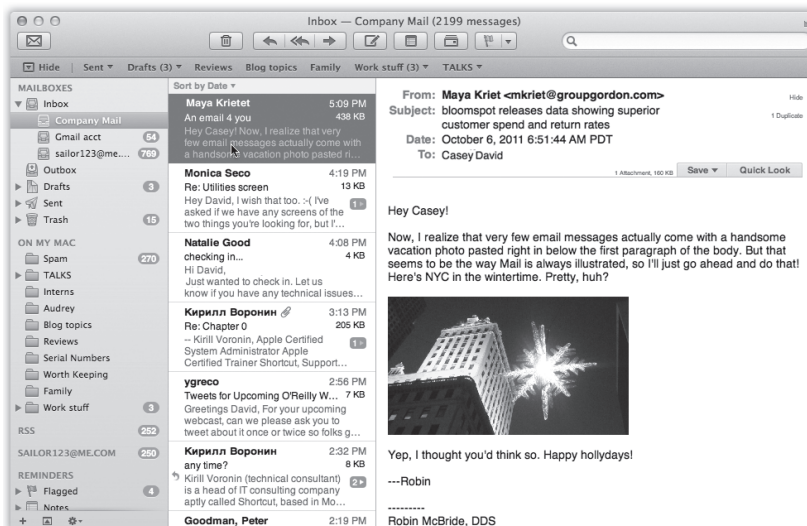
- **Install folders onto the new Favorites bar.** You can drag any icon in the mailboxes list onto the new Favorites toolbar, where it becomes a button or a pop-up menu. The button works exactly like a folder: For example, you can drag a message onto one to file it there, or you can click one of these folder buttons (or use its pop-up menu) to see what's inside.

GEM IN THE ROUGH

Favorites Bar Keyboard Shortcuts

One of the best parts of the new Favorites bar is that you have complete keyboard control over the buttons there.

The keystrokes ⌘-1 through ⌘-9 "click" the first nine buttons on the Favorites bar. Press ⌘-1, for example, to see what's in the first mailbox you've installed on the Favorites bar.

Even cooler yet, if you add the Control key, you now know the keyboard shortcuts for moving selected messages to those corresponding folders. For example, you can highlight a message and then press ⌘-Control-3, confident that you've just filed that message away in the third Favorites-bar folder.

That is, you can now file messages using only the keyboard— and when you're in the thick of things, the less time you spend using the mouse, the better.

The Favorites bar comes with starter buttons already installed, like Inbox, Sent, Notes, and so on. But you can, and should, install your *own* favorites there, and remove the ones you don't want. (To move a button around, ⌘-drag it. To get rid of it, just drag it away from the toolbar.)

Tip: You can also hide this new Favorites bar whenever you feel the urge. Choose View→Hide Favorites Bar, of course.

- **Hide the mailboxes panel completely.** To do that, click the ⊡ button above it. Now you have much more screen space to work with.

Tip: Hey, here's a thought! *Combine* the previous two ideas. Install the most important folders onto the Favorites bar, so you can get at them, and *then* hide the mailboxes list. Now you have easy access to the most important folders, but your mailboxes list isn't eating up a lot of screen space. This glorious, space-efficient result is shown back in Figure 18-4, center.

- **Label the toolbar buttons.** Out of the box, the buttons on the toolbar (⊠, 🗑, and so on) have no labels. But if you Control-click (or right-click) the toolbar, you get a pop-up menu that offers you other styles for those buttons: Icon & Text, Icon Only, Text Only (which is *very* space-efficient), and None (which is even more space-efficient—provided you know the keyboard shortcuts for all the buttons you've just hidden away).

- **Change the type size/icon size for the folders in the mailboxes panel.** To do that, open System Preferences→General. Use the "Sidebar icon size" pop-up menu to choose Small, Medium, or Large.

Note: Whatever size you choose here also affects the font and icon sizes in the *Finder window Sidebar*. Apple figures that if you're that eagle-eyed (or that vision-impaired), you'll want the same size adjustment in both apps.

- **Redesign the New Message window.** What signature do you want stamped on every outgoing message? Do you want the "Cc:" and "Bcc:" lines to show up? How about the Priority pop-up menu?

  You can make all these settings using the little ⊟▾ menu in the New Message window; see Figure 18-6.

- **Adjust the message window width.** Drag the very right edge of the window inward or outward to adjust the width of the message itself. Double-click the edge of the messages list to hide the *message* completely. Now you have only the mailboxes list and the very wide messages list; to read a message, you have to double-click it to open it into a new window. (Double-click the right edge of the window to restore the message-reading pane.)

- **Adjust the width of the mailboxes or messages list.** Similarly, you can drag the right edges of the first two columns to adjust their width. Or double-click the right edge to make the column exactly as wide as Mail thinks it should be.

Figure 18-6:
To redesign the New Message window, choose Customize from the little pop-up menu shown here (top). Now you get a full-scale model of the New Message window, with all the available parts visible. Turn on the checkboxes of the pieces you want in your everyday email composing (bottom).
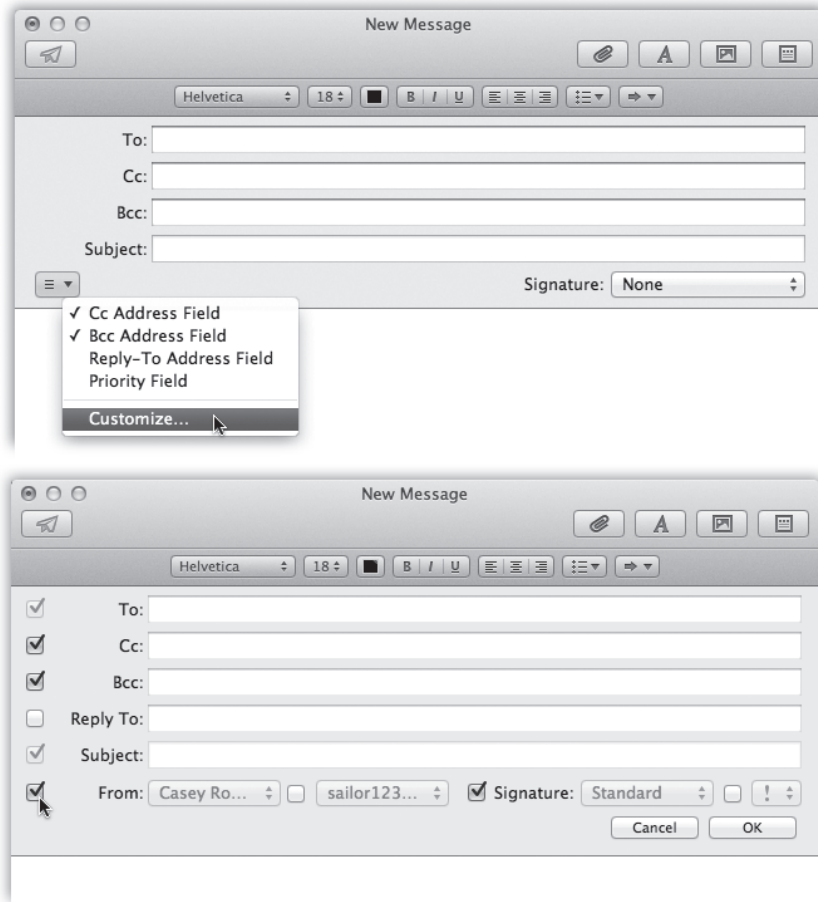
- **Change what morsels show up in the messages list.** The messages list (center column) usually shows the sender's name, subject line, and the first few lines of the message itself (an iPhone/iPad feature brought to the Mac). But you can add additional info displays to the list—message size, mailbox, date sent, and so on—by choosing from the View→Message Attributes submenu.

- **Change what details show up in the header.** The *header* is the top part of a message, where you see the details of how the message reached you. Ordinarily, Mail shields you from the geekiest details of the header; if you really want to see it all, choose View→Message→All Headers.

But if you'd rather, you can tailor the standard header so that Mail always shows you exactly the information you want. In Mail→Preferences→Viewing, use the "Show header detail" pop-up menu to choose Custom. Now you can add just the details you always want to see: Attachments, BCC, CC, Flag, From, Reply-To, Resent-CC, and so on.

- **Control how many lines of preview text appear.** In Mail→Preferences→Viewing, you can use the List Preview pop-up menu to control how many lines of each message you want to appear, in light gray, as a preview of what's in the message itself. You can choose up to five lines, or choose None to hide the preview completely.

- **Sort the messages.** Use the "Sort by" pop-up menu above the messages list (by Date, by Attachment, by Unread, and so on). Use the bottom two commands—Ascending or Descending—to control *which way* the sorting goes (A to Z, Z to A, or whatever).

Tweaking the Classic layout

Out of the box, Mail assumes a new three-column layout (Figure 18-4, top): mailboxes list at left, messages list in the middle, and the message itself at right.

There are two advantages to this layout. First, your Mac's screen is wider than it is tall, so *columns* of information make more sense than *horizontal* strips. Second, by devoting only about half of the screen to the message itself, the column of text is kept to a comfortable reading width; too wide, and your eyeballs have to scan across the whole screen, which is supposedly tiring.

You should try this new layout—give it a chance.

But if you hate it, you can always go back to the older layout, shown in Figure 18-7, by choosing Mail→Preferences→Viewing and turning on "Show Classic layout."

You have a bunch of customization options here, too:

- **Adjust the columns.** You can make a column in the messages list narrower or wider by dragging the right edge of its column *heading*, or rearrange the columns by dragging their titles. Similarly, you can *sort* your email by clicking these column headings, exactly as in the Finder. Click a second time to reverse the sorting order. You can also control *which* columns appear using the commands in the View→Columns menu.

- **Hide the message body.** You can get rid of the message-reading pane altogether by double-clicking the divider line, double-clicking just above the vertical scroll bar, or dragging the divider line's handle all the way to the bottom of the screen. Bring it back by dragging the divider line up from the bottom.

- **Control the mailboxes pane.** Drag the thin vertical line that separates this tinted column from the white messages area to make the column wider or narrower. You can make the column disappear or reappear by choosing View→Hide Mailbox List (or View→Show Mailbox List), or by pressing Shift-⌘-M.

The toolbar

In either layout—Classic or Lion—you have full control over the toolbar, which works much like the Finder toolbar.

Figure 18-7:
In the older Mail layout, the messages list appears above the message body: You have to do a lot more vertical scrolling with this design, though, because you're devoting only half the screen to each pane.
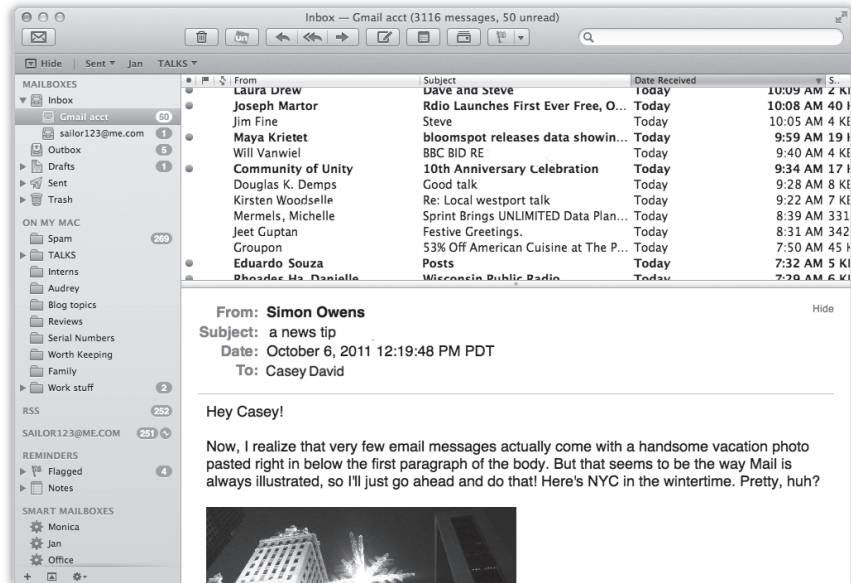
You can rearrange or remove icon buttons (by ⌘-dragging them); add interesting new buttons to the toolbar (by choosing View→Customize Toolbar); change its display to show just text labels or just icons (choose View→Customize Toolbar, then use the Show pop-up menu); or hide the toolbar entirely (using the View→Hide Toolbar command).

Tip: Even when the toolbar is hidden, you can still hit Option-⌘-F to use the search box. (Press ⌘-F by itself to search the *current message.)*

Writing Messages

To send an email, click ⬛ in the toolbar or press ⌘-N. The New Message form, shown in Figure 18-8, opens. Here's how you go about writing a message:

1. **In the "To:" field, type the recipient's email address.**

   If somebody is in your Address Book, type the first couple of letters of the name or email address; Mail automatically completes the address. (If the first guess is wrong, type another letter or two until Mail revises its guess.)

Tip: If Mail constantly tries to autofill in the address of someone you don't really communicate with, you can zap that address from its memory by choosing Window→Previous Recipients. Click the undesired address, and then click Remove From List.

As in most dialog boxes, you can jump from blank to blank (from "To:" to "Cc:," for example) by pressing Tab. To send this message to more than one person, separate the addresses with commas: *bob@earthlink.net, billg@microsoft.com,* and so on.

Tip: If you send most of your email to addresses within the same organization (like *reddelicious@apple.com, grannysmith@apple.com,* and *winesap@apple.com*), Mail can automatically turn all *other* email addresses red. It's a feature designed to avoid sending confidential messages to outside addresses.

To turn this feature on, choose Mail→Preferences, click Composing, turn on "Mark addresses not ending with," and then type the "safe" domain (like *apple.com*) into the blank.
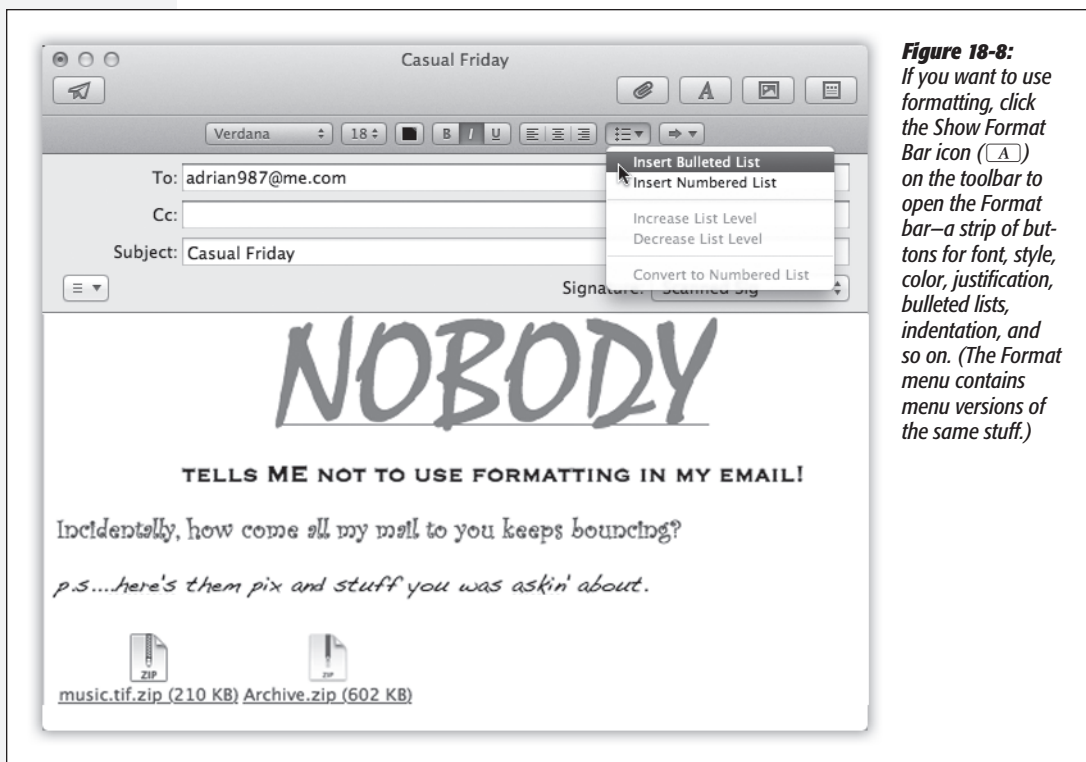

Figure 18-8:
If you want to use formatting, click the Show Format Bar icon (A) on the toolbar to open the Format bar—a strip of buttons for font, style, color, justification, bulleted lists, indentation, and so on. (The Format menu contains menu versions of the same stuff.)

2. **To send a copy to other recipients, enter their addresses in the "Cc:" field.**

   Cc stands for *carbon copy.* Getting an email message where your name is in the "Cc:" line implies: "I sent you a copy because I thought you'd want to know about this correspondence, but I'm not expecting you to reply."

Tip: If Mail recognizes the address you type into the "To:" or "Cc:" box (because it's someone in your Address Book, for instance), the name turns into a shaded, round-ended box button. In addition to looking cool, these buttons sprout a ▾ when you point to them; when you click there, you get a list of useful commands (including Show Contact Card).

These buttons are also drag-and-droppable. For example, you can drag one from the "To:" field to the "Cc:" field, or from Address Book to Mail.

3. **Type the topic of the message in the Subject field.**

   It's courteous to put some thought into the subject line. (Use "Change in plans for next week," for instance, instead of "Yo.") On the other hand, don't put the *entire* message into the subject line, either.

4. **Specify an email format.**

   There are two kinds of email: *plain text* and *formatted* (which Apple calls Rich Text). Plain text messages are faster to send and open, are universally compatible with the world's email programs, and are greatly preferred by many veteran computer fans. And even though the message itself is plain, you can still attach pictures and other files. (If you want to get really graphic with your mail, you can also use the *Stationery* option, which gives you preformatted message templates to drop in pictures, graphics, and text. Flip to page 711 for more on using stationery.)

   Resourceful geeks have even learned how to fake some formatting in plain messages: They use capitals or asterisks instead of bold formatting *(*man* is he a GEEK!),* "smileys"—like this :-) —instead of pictures, and pseudo-underlines for emphasis *(I _love_ Swiss cheese!).*

   By contrast, formatted messages sometimes appear without any formatting at all in some email programs.

   To control which kind of mail you send on a message-by-message basis, choose from the Format menu either Make Plain Text or Make Rich Text. To change the factory setting for new outgoing messages, choose Mail→Preferences; click the Composing icon; and choose from the Message Format pop-up menu.

Tip: If you plan to send formatted mail, remember that your recipients won't see the fonts you use unless their machines have the same ones installed. Bottom line: For email to Mac and Windows owners alike, stick to universal choices like Arial, Times, and Courier.

5. **Type your message in the message box.**

   You can use all standard editing techniques, including copy and paste, drag and drop, and so on. If you selected the Rich Text style of email, you can use word processor–like formatting (Figure 18-8).

As you type, Mail checks your spelling, using a dotted underline to mark questionable words. You can read much more about Mac OS X's built-in spelling/grammar checker (and typing expander) in Chapter 6.

If you're composing a long email message, or if it's one you don't want to send until later, click the Save as Draft button, press ⌘-S, or choose File→Save. You've just saved the message in your Drafts folder. It'll still be there the next time you open Mail. To reopen a saved draft later, click the Drafts icon in the mailboxes column and then double-click the message you want to work on.

6. **Click Send 🖅 (or press Shift-⌘-D).**

   Mail sends the message.

Tip: To resend a message you've already sent, click it and then choose Message→Send Again, or press Shift-⌘-D.

Bcc:, Reply-To, and Priority

A blind carbon copy is a secret copy. This feature lets you send a copy of a message to somebody secretly, without any of the other recipients knowing that you did so. To view this field when composing a message (if it's not already visible), choose View→Bcc Address Field.

You can use the "Bcc:" field to quietly signal a third party that a message has been sent. For example, if you send your coworker a message that says, "Chris, it bothers me that you've been cheating the customers," you could Bcc your supervisor to clue her in without getting into trouble with Chris.

The "Bcc:" box is useful in other ways, too. Many people send email messages (corny jokes, for example) to a long list of recipients. You, the recipient, have to scroll through the long list of names the sender placed in the "To:" or "Cc:" field.

But if the sender used the "Bcc:" field to hold all the recipients' email addresses, you won't see anybody else's names at the top of the email. In the "To:" box, you might see the sender's name, or "undisclosed recipients," or nothing at all. (Spammers have also learned this trick, which is why it usually looks like you're the only recipient of a junk message when there are actually millions of other people who received the same message.)

Another hidden field you can add to your messages is *Reply-To.* (Choose View→Reply-To Address Field.) That field has one simple purpose: to make the recipient's email program reply to a different email address than the one you sent the message from.

For example, if your business email address isn't working but you absolutely *have* to send a field report to your boss, you can send the message from your personal email account but put your business address in the Reply-To field. That way, when your boss emails you back to congratulate you, the email goes to your business account.

Finally, if you click the 🔽 on the left side of an email message and choose Customize, you can enable one more hidden header option: Priority. (It's the pop-up menu with an exclamation mark in it.) If you turn on the checkbox next to that pop-up menu and click OK, all your email messages let you set how important they are on a three-tiered scale.

The good part about this system is that it lets your recipient see that an email you've sent is, for example, urgent. The bad part is that not every email program displays the priority of email—and even if your recipient's email program *does* display your message's priority, there's no guarantee that it'll make him respond any faster.

If you'd rather have Mail place each message you write in the Outbox folder instead of connecting to the Net when you click Send, choose Mailbox→Take All Accounts Offline. While you're offline, Mail refrains from trying to connect, which is a great feature when you're working on a laptop at 39,000 feet and didn't feel like paying for WiFi. (Choose Mailbox→Take All Accounts Online to reverse the procedure.)

Attaching Files to Messages

Sending little text messages is fine, but it's not much help when you want to send somebody a photograph, a sound, or a Word document. To attach a file to a message you've written, use one of these methods:

- Drag the icons you want to attach directly off the desktop (or out of a folder) into the New Message window. There your attachments appear with their own hyperlinked icons (visible in Figure 18-8), meaning that your recipient can simply click to open them.

POWER USERS' CLINIC

Attachment Tricks

Nowadays, what's attached to an email message is often more important than the message itself. You might send a PowerPoint file to a coworker or send your aunt a picture of your new dog, for example, without bothering to write anything more than "See attached" in the body of the message.

That's why it's such a pain when email attachments don't go through properly—or when they're too big to send at all. Luckily, Mac OS X provides three tools for making attachments smaller and more compatible with Windows, so you'll never get another angry "I *can't* see attached!" reply again.

If you're sending images along with your message, you can shrink them down right in Mail. Use the Image Size pop-up menu in the lower-right corner of the window to pick a smaller size for the images (like Medium or Small).

You can keep tabs on the total size of your attachments in the lower-left corner of the window, too. Ideally, you should keep the total under 2 MB, so dial-up sufferers don't get annoyed—and so your message doesn't get rejected by your recipient's ISP for being too big.

Use the Finder to compress big files before you send them. It makes the Finder creates zip-compressed files, which gener-

ally take up much less space than the originals.

You can pick from two different formats for your attachments: normal or Windows-friendly. Normal attachments open correctly on both Macs and PCs. Trouble is, a normal attachment may show up on a PC accompanied by a useless second attachment whose name starts with "._" (which often frustrate your recipients).

Windows-friendly attachments, on the other hand, always work correctly on PCs—but when sent to Macs, they lose minor details like color labels and originating Web site information.

Bottom line: Unless you work in an all-Mac company, stick with the Windows-friendly setting.

To use the Windows-friendly setting for an open message, choose Edit→Attachments→Send Windows-Friendly Attachments. (If no message is open, the command says *Always* Send Windows-Friendly Attachments instead). You can also adjust the setting on a per-email basis using the Send Windows-Friendly Attachments checkbox at the bottom of the attachment dialog box.

Mail makes it look as though you can park the attached file's icon (or the full image of a graphics file) *inside* the text of the message, mingled with your typing. Don't be fooled, however; on the receiving end, all the attachments will be clumped together at the end of the message (unless your recipient also uses Mail or you've sent pictures with Stationery).

- Drag the icons you want to attach from the desktop onto Mail's *Dock icon.* Mail dutifully creates a new outgoing message, with the files already attached.

- Click the (✐) on the New Message toolbar, choose File→Attach Files, or press Shift-⌘-A. The standard Open File sheet now appears so you can navigate to and select the files you want to include. (You can choose multiple files simultaneously in this dialog box. Just ⌘-click or Shift-click the individual files you want as though you were selecting them in a Finder window.)

Once you've selected them, click Choose File (or press Return). You return to the New Message window, where the attachments' icons appear, ready to ride along when you send the message.

To remove an attachment, drag across its icon to highlight it, and then press the Delete key. (You can also choose Message→Remove Attachments.)

Signatures

Signatures are bits of text that get stamped at the bottom of your outgoing email messages. A signature might contain a name, a postal address, a pithy quote, or even a scan of your *real* signature, as shown in Figure 18-9.

You can customize your signatures by choosing Mail→Preferences→Signatures. Here's what you should know:

- **To build up a library of signatures that you can use in any of your accounts:** Select All Signatures in the leftmost pane, and then click the **+** button to add each new signature (Figure 18-9). Give each new signature a name in the middle pane, and then customize the signatures' text in the rightmost pane.

Tip: If you ever get tired of a signature, you can delete it forever by selecting All Signatures→[your signature's name], clicking the **—** button, and then clicking OK.

- **To make a signature available in one of your email accounts:** Drag the signature's name from the middle pane onto the name of the account in the leftmost pane. In other words, you can make certain signatures available to only your work (or

personal) account, so you never accidentally end up appending your secret FBI contact signature to the bottom of a birthday invitation you send out.

- **To assign a particular signature to one account:** In the left pane, click an account; pick from the Choose Signature pop-up menu. Each time you compose a message from that account, Mail inserts the signature you selected.

Tip: To make things more interesting for your recipients, pick At Random; Mail selects a different signature each time you send a message. Or, if you're not that much of a risk-taker, choose In Sequential Order; Mail picks the next signature in order for each new message you write.

Figure 18-9:
After naming your signature in the middle pane and typing the text on the right, don't miss the Format menu, which you can use to dress up your signature with colors and formatting. You can even paste a picture into the signature box. Click OK when you're finished. (You can use formatted signatures only when sending Rich Text messages.)
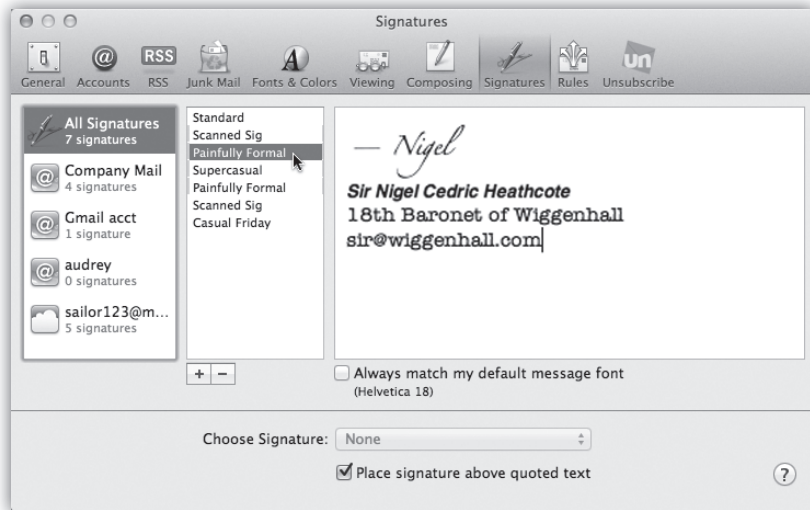
Remember that you can always change your signature on a message-by-message basis, using the Signature pop-up menu in any new email message.

- **To use the signature feature as a prefix in replies:** Turn on "Place signature above quoted text." If you turn on this setting, your signature gets inserted *above* any text that you're replying to, rather than below. You'd use this setting if your "signature" said something like, "Hi there! You wrote this to me!"

Tip: If you're into consistent typographical styling, also turn on "Always match my default font." That setting makes sure that any messages you send contain the signature in the same font as the rest of the message, lending it an air of professionalism.

Stationery

Rich Text—and even plain text—messages are fine for your everyday personal and business correspondence. After all, you really won't help messages like, "Let's have a meeting on those third-quarter earnings results" much by adding visual bells and whistles.

But suppose you have an occasion where you *want* to jazz up your mail, like an electronic invitation to a bridal shower or a mass-mail update as you get your kicks down Route 66.

These messages just cry out for Mail's *Stationery* feature. Stationery means colorful, predesigned mail templates that you make your own by dragging in photos from your own collection. Those fancy fonts and graphics will certainly get people's attention when they open the message.

Note: They will, that is, *if* their email programs understand HTML formatting. That's the formatting Mail uses for its stationery. (If *HTML* rings a bell, it's because this HyperText Markup Language is the same language used to make Web pages so lively and colorful.)

It might be a good idea to make sure everyone on your recipient list has a mail program that can handle HTML; otherwise, your message may look like a jumble of code and letters in the middle of the screen.

Here's how to make a stylized message with Mail Stationery:

1. **Create a new message.**

   Click File→New Message, press ⌘-N, or click the ⬚ button on the Mail window toolbar.

2. **On the right side of the toolbar in the New Message window, click the ⬚ button.**

   A panel opens up, showing you all the available templates, in categories like Birthday and Announcements (Figure 18-10).

3. **Click a category, and then click a stationery thumbnail image to apply it to your message.**

   The body of your message changes to take on the look of the template.

4. **If you like what you see, click the ⬚ button on the toolbar again to fold up the stationery-picker panel.**

   Now, Apple's canned stationery looks fantastic. The only problem is, the photos on most of the templates are pictures of *somebody else's* family and friends. Unless you work for Apple's modeling agency, you probably have no clue who they are.

   Fortunately, it's easy enough to replace those placeholder photos with your *own* snaps.

5. **Add and adjust pictures.**

   Click the Photo Browser icon (⊡) on the toolbar to open up a palette that lists all the photos you've stored in iPhoto, Aperture, and Photo Booth.

Tip: If you don't keep your pictures in any of those programs, you can drag any folder of pictures onto the Photo Browser window to add them.

Figure 18-10:
To use Stationery, start by clicking a template, and then add your own text in place of the generic copy that comes with the template.
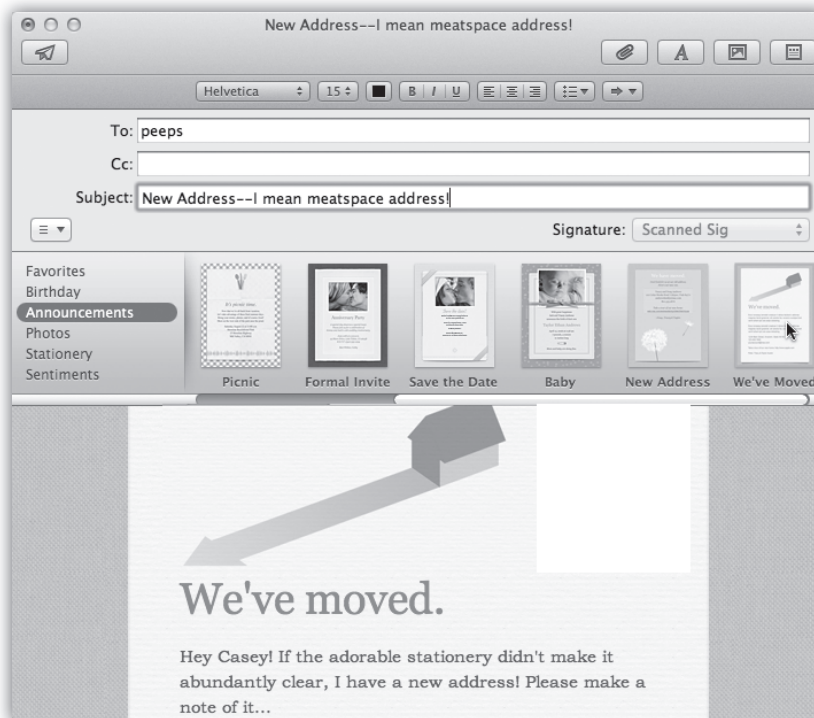
Now you can drag your own pictures directly onto Apple's dummy photos on the stationery template. They replace the sunny models. You don't have to know a lick of HTML to use the templates—it's all drag, drop, and type, baby.

To resize a photo in the template, double-click it. A slider appears that lets you adjust the photo's size within the message. Drag the mouse around the photo window to reposition the picture relative to its frame.

6. **Select the fake text and type in what you really want to say.**

   As you type over the dummy text, your words are autoformatted to match the template design.

Once you've got your message looking the way you want it, address it just as you would any other piece of mail, and then click the Send ⬚ button to get it on its way.

Tip: You're not stuck with Apple's designs for your stationery templates; you can make your own. Just make a new message, style the fonts and photos the way you want them, and then choose File→Save as Stationery. You can now select your masterwork in the Custom category, which appears down at the end of the list in the stationery-picker panel.

If you decide that the message would be better off as plain old text, click Show Stationery on the message window. In the list of template categories, click Stationery and then Original to strip the color and formats out of the message.

Tip: If you find you're using one or two templates a lot (if, for example, all your friends are having babies these days), drag your frequently used templates into the Favorites category so you don't have to go wading around for them.

To remove one from Favorites, click it, and then click the ⊗ in the top-left corner of the thumbnail.

Reading Email

Mail puts all incoming email into your Inbox; the statistic after the word *Inbox* lets you know how many messages you haven't yet read. New messages are also marked with light-blue dots in the main list.

Tip: The Mail icon in the Dock also shows you how many new messages you have waiting; it's the number in the red circle. In Mail→Preferences→General, you can specify *which* mailbox it's tallying up–or have it tally up all of them.

Click the Inbox folder to see a list of received messages. If it's a long list, press Control-Page Up and Control-Page Down to scroll. (Page Up and Page Down without the Control key scroll the message pane instead.

Tip: If you ⌘-click more than one mailbox folder, you can combine them (and their total-message counts) into one unified messages list.

Click the name of a message once to read it in the message window, or double-click a message to open it into a separate window. (If a message is already selected, pressing Return also opens its separate window.)

When you click the name of a message in the messages list (or press the ↑ and ↓ keys to highlight successive messages in that list), you see the message itself, along with any attachments, in the message pane.

Tip: Instead of reading your mail, you might prefer to have Mac OS X read it *to* you, as you sit back in your chair and sip a strawberry daiquiri. Highlight the text you want to hear (or choose Edit→Select All), and then choose Edit→Speech→Start Speaking. You'll hear the message read aloud, in the voice you've selected on the Speech pane of System Preferences (Chapter 9).

To stop the insanity, choose Edit→Speech→Stop Speaking.

At the top of each message, you see the *header*—a bunch of details like date, subject, to/from addresses, and so on. Figure 18-11 has more on headers.

Figure 18-11:
The little blue Hide button, new in Lion, pares down all this gunk (top) to a simpler look—sender, subject, date. (Click Details to expand the header again.) Bottom: If you point to the header without clicking, you get to see the ghosts of four useful buttons: Trash, Reply, Reply All, and Forward.
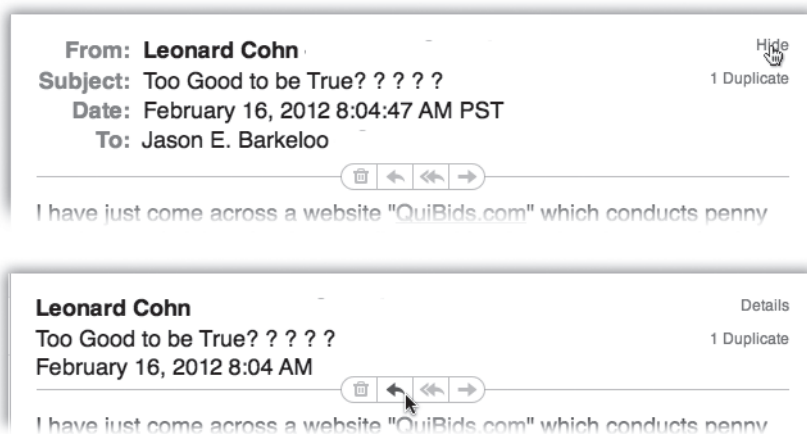
Once you've viewed a message, you can respond to it, delete it, print it, file it, and so on. The following pages should get you started.

Conversation View

Threading is one of the most useful mail-sorting methods to come along in a long time. It groups all messages that are part of the same back-and-forth conversation as a *single item* in the main messages list. (In this discussion, let's call that one item the *main message.* In Mail, it's always the most recent message in the conversation.)

Less sophisticated email programs figure out which messages go together by matching only their subject lines. But Mail is much smarter; it also studies the message headers, senders, recipients, and dates. Even if someone changes the subject line along the way, Mail still knows that a conversation is a conversation.

In Lion, Apple has taken threading to new heights of usefulness. As shown in Figure 18-12, Conversation View, as it's now called, hides all the usual awful indents, repetitions, forwards of forwards, and so on. You see only neatly numbered scrolling blocks, each representing the *newly added* text in each back-and-forth.

To turn on threading, choose View→Organize by Conversation. Each main message in the messages list sprouts a little numbered badge, like "3 ▸," to indicate messages that have been clustered together (Figure 18-12).

Note: When Organize by Conversation is turned on, you might be wondering: What happens to chronological order? In other words, if the messages in a certain thread took place over several days or weeks, where does Mail wind up listing them when it sorts your messages list by date?

Answer: They're all clumped together in the main message—the *most recent* message. That is, if the messages on a certain topic arrived July 1, 4, 7, and 11, you'll find all four grouped with the July 11 message. They're essentially pulled *out* of the chronological list to join the latest one, for your reviewing pleasure.

Figure 18-12:
In Mail's new, improved version of threading, called Conversation View, the back-and-forths are represented extremely concisely. All the duplication and redundancy is hidden. (You can see it, if you really want to, by clicking the See More link at the bottom of each message.) Lower right: Click the tiny number, as shown here by the cursor, to view a list of the messages within the clump.

Here are some powerful ways to use threading:

- **View all the messages in a conversation** by clicking the main message in the messages list. In the message pane, you see all of the back-and-forths, minus all the duplication and the replies to replies.

- **Expand a list of the messages in a conversation** by clicking the small gray number-of-messages badge—or by clicking the main message and then pressing the → key. A tiny message-conversation list sprouts out of the one listed message, as shown in the inset in Figure 18-12. (Or you can make *all* conversations display their sub-messages like this; to do that, choose View→Expand All Conversations.)

  Once you've expanded the mini-list, you can walk through it by pressing the up/down arrow keys.

  The messages from the current mailbox are numbered—those are the big gray digits in the upper-right corner. Those numbers help you figure out where you are in all the back-and-forths.

- **Examine messages from multiple mailboxes.** Normally, conversations display only messages held in the *same* mailbox, but that's not especially convenient when you want to see, for example, both messages you've received (from your Inbox) and your replies (from your Sent box). To work around that problem, click the Show Related Messages (⬚) button in the toolbar (or turn on "Include related messages" in Mail→Preferences→Viewing). These options mean, "Include messages in *other* mailboxes, too, like Sent messages—not just this one mailbox." Now your conversations seamlessly combine related messages from all mailboxes.

Note: When "Include related messages" is turned on, the related messages do *not* display the big gray numbers in the corner—only the ones in the current mailbox sprout numbers.

- **Move all the messages in a conversation to a new mailbox** by dragging the main message. You might find this useful, for example, when you've just finished a project and want to file away all the email related to it quickly. You can even delete all the messages in a thread at once by deleting its main entry.

Note: If you just drag *one* message of a conversation to a different folder, though, it becomes a "related" message, no longer numbered, as described in the previous Note.

- **Send someone all the messages in a thread** by selecting the main message and then clicking Forward as usual. Mail automatically copies all the messages of the thread into a new message, putting the oldest at the top. You might find this useful, for instance, when you want to send your boss all the correspondence you've had with someone about a certain project.

- **Manipulate an individual message in a conversation** by first clicking it in the message-reading pane. For example, if you have five messages in a conversation, and you want to forward only the juicy one, which happens to be message #2, click #2 and then use the Forward command—or Reply, Delete, or whatever. (You can

also click one of the four light-gray buttons that appear when you point to the message header—Delete, Reply, Reply All, Forward.)

Tip: In Mail→Preferences→Viewing, you'll find a bunch of fine-tuning tweaks that apply to conversations. For example, you can ask that messages that are part of the same conversation show up highlighted in a color you choose—even when conversation grouping is turned *off.* And you can request that, when a conversation message is clicked in the messages list, the resulting messages are shown in reverse chronological order—oldest at the top.

Adding the Sender to Your Address Book

When you choose the Message→Add Sender to Address Book command, Mail memorizes the email address of the person whose message is on the screen. In fact, you can highlight a huge number of messages and add *all* the senders simultaneously using this technique.

Thereafter, you'll be able to address a new message to somebody just by typing the first few letters of her name or email address.

Data Detectors

Data detectors are described on page 249. They're what you see when Mac OS X recognizes commonly used bits of written information: a physical address, a phone number, a date and time, a flight number, and so on. With one quick click, you can send that information into the appropriate Mac OS X program, like iCal, Address Book, the Flight Tracker widget in Dashboard, or your Web browser (for looking an address up on a map).

UP TO SPEED

All the Little Symbols

The left edge of the messages list shows little symbols that let you know at a glance how you've processed certain messages. The most common one is, of course, the light-blue dot (●), which means "new message." (After reading a message, you can mark it once again as an *unread* message by choosing Message→Mark→As Unread [Shift-⌘-U]–or by Control-clicking the message's name and then choosing Mark→As Unread from the shortcut menu.)

You might also see these symbols, which represent messages you've replied to (↩), forwarded (→), redirected (↱), or flagged (⚑).

A well-guarded secret, however, is that the "replied to" and "forwarded" symbols aren't just indicators–they're also *buttons.*

When you see one of these symbols next to your original message, click it to jump straight to your reply (or forwarded message). You're spared the trouble of having to search through all your mailboxes.

Incidentally, you may have noticed that Mail marks a message as having been read the moment you click it. You can change it back to unread by using its shortcut menu–but there's also a more permanent workaround.

If you hide the message pane by double-clicking the divider bar to its right (or, in Classic view, above it), Mail no longer marks messages "read" just because you clicked them in the list.

This is just a public-service reminder that data detectors are especially useful—*primarily* useful, in fact—in Mail. Watch for the dotted rectangle that appears when you point to a name, address, date, time, or flight number.

Opening Attachments

Just as you can attach files to a message, so can people send files to you. Sometimes they don't even bother to type a note; you wind up receiving an empty email message with a file or two attached. Only the presence of the file's icon in the message body tells you there's something attached.

Tip: In Classic view, Mail doesn't ordinarily indicate the presence of attachments in the messages list. It can do so, however. Just choose View→Columns→Attachments. A new column appears in the messages list—at the far right—where you see a paper-clip icon and the number of file attachments listed for each message.

Mail stores downloaded files in a hidden folder on your hard drive. To bring them out into the open, you must proceed in one of these ways:

- Click the Quick Look button in the message header. Instantly, you're treated to a nearly full-size preview of the file's contents. Yes, Quick Look has come to email. It works exactly as described in Chapter 1.

Tip: If the attachments are pictures, clicking Quick Look gives you a full-screen slideshow of every attached image.

If you jiggle the mouse a little during the slideshow, you get a useful row of slideshow-control buttons along the bottom of the screen, too.

- Click the Save button in the message header to save it to your Downloads folder, nestled within easy reach in the Dock. (It's a pop-up menu, which is handy if there's more than one attachment. You can either save *all* attachments at once, or choose from the pop-up menu to save them individually.)

Tip: If you don't want to use the Downloads folder, you can choose a new autosave location for attachments by choosing Mail→Preferences→General→Downloads folder.

- Drag the attachment icon (it appears at the bottom of the message) out of the message window and onto any visible portion of your desktop, or any visible folder window.
- Double-click the attachment's icon, or single-click the blue link underneath the icon. If you were sent a document (a photo, Word file, or Excel file, for example), it now opens in the corresponding program.

Note: After the attachment is open, use the File→Save As command to save the file into a folder of your choice. Otherwise, any changes you make to the document will be lost.


- Control-click (or right-click) the attachment's icon at the bottom of the message. From the shortcut menu, you can open it, save it, Quick Look it, and so on.

Replying to a Message

To answer a message, click the Reply ⬅ button on the message toolbar (or choose Message→Reply, or press ⌘-R). If the message was originally addressed to multiple recipients, you can send your reply to everyone simultaneously by clicking Reply All ⬅⬅ instead (Shift-⌘-R).

A new message window opens, already addressed. As a courtesy to your correspondent, Mail places the original message at the bottom of the window, set off by a vertical bar, as shown in Figure 18-13.

Figure 18-13:
If you highlight some text before clicking Reply, Mail pastes only that portion of the original message into your reply. That's a great convenience to your correspondent, who now knows exactly which part of the message you're responding to.
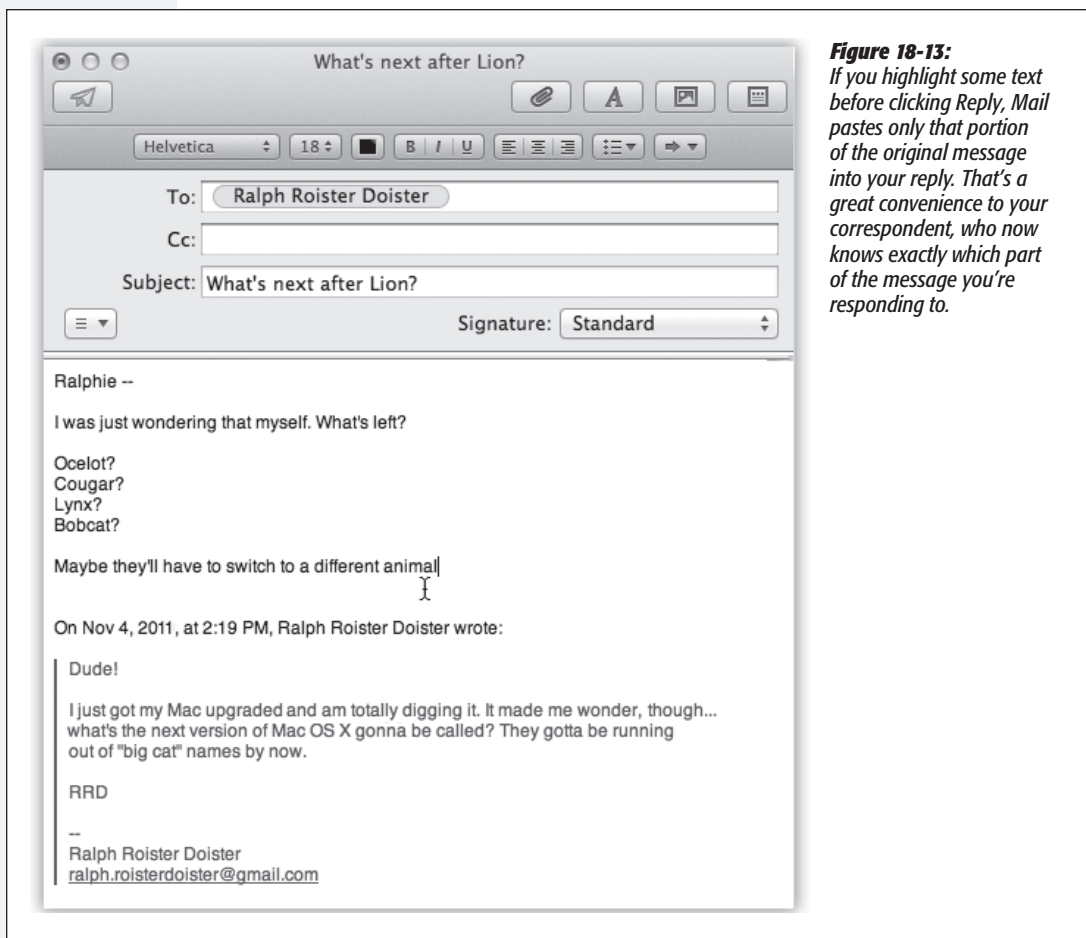
In Mail messages formatted with Rich Text (not to be confused with Rich Text Format word processing format, which is very different), a reply includes the original message, marked in a special color (which you can change in Mail→Preferences)

and with a vertical bar to differentiate it from the text of your reply. (In plain-text messages, each line of the reply is >denoted >with >brackets, although only your recipient will see them.)

The original sender's name is automatically placed in the "To:" field. The subject is the same as the original subject with the addition of Re: (shorthand for Regarding). You're now ready to type your response.

At this point, you can add or delete recipients, edit the subject line or the original message, attach a file, and so on.

Tip: Use the Return key to create blank lines in the original message. Using this method, you can splice your own comments into the paragraphs of the original message, replying point by point. The brackets preceding each line of the original message help your correspondent keep straight what's yours and what's hers.

When you're finished, click Send (⌐⊿).

Forwarding Messages

Instead of replying to the person who sent you a message, you may sometimes want to pass the note on to a third person.

To do so, click the Forward ➡ toolbar button (or choose Message→Forward, or press Shift-⌘-F). A new message opens, looking a lot like the one that appears when you reply. You may wish to precede the original message with a comment of your own, along the lines of: "Frank: I thought you'd be interested in this joke about your mom."

Finally, address it as you would any outgoing piece of mail.

Redirecting Messages

A *redirected* message is similar to a forwarded message, with one useful difference: When you forward a message, your recipient sees that it came from you. When you redirect it, your recipient sees the *original* writer's name as the sender. In other words, a redirected message uses you as a low-profile relay station between two other people.

Treasure this feature. Plenty of email programs don't offer a Redirect command at all. You can use it to transfer messages from one of your own accounts to another, or to pass along a message that came to you by mistake.

To redirect a message, choose Message→Redirect, or press Shift-⌘-E. You get an outgoing copy of the message—this time without any quoting marks. (You can edit redirected messages before you send them, too, which is perfect for April Fools' Day pranks.

Printing Messages

Sometimes there's no substitute for a printout. Choose File→Print, or press ⌘-P to summon the Print dialog box.

Filing Messages

Mail lets you create new mailboxes (mail folders) in the mailboxes list. You might cre-ate one for important messages, another for order confirmations from Web shopping, still another for friends and family, and so on. You can even create mailboxes *inside* these mailboxes, a feature beloved by the hopelessly organized.

Mail even offers *smart mailboxes*—self-updating folders that show you all your mail from your boss, for example, or every message with "mortgage" in its subject. It's the same idea as smart folders in the Finder or smart playlists in iTunes: folders whose contents are based around criteria you specify (Figure 18-14).
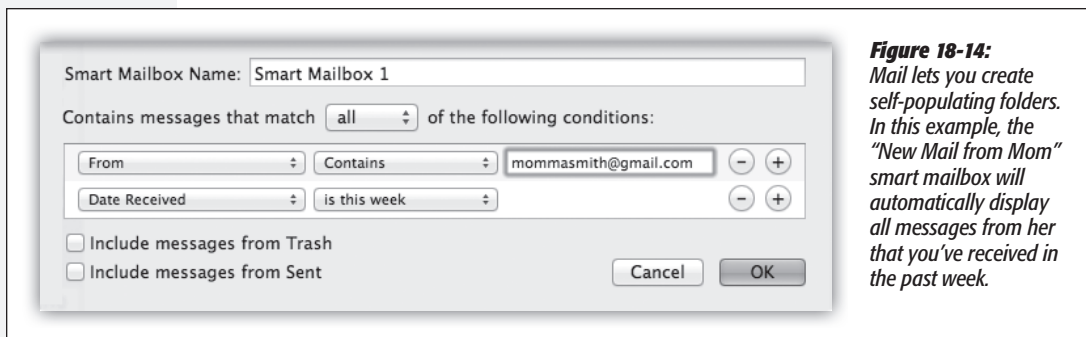

Figure 18-14:
Mail lets you create self-populating folders. In this example, the "New Mail from Mom" smart mailbox will automatically display all messages from her that you've received in the past week.

The commands you need are all in the Mailbox menu. For example, to create a new mailbox folder, choose Mailbox→New Mailbox, or click the **+** button at the bottom of the mailboxes column. To create a smart mailbox, choose Mailbox→New Smart Mailbox.

TROUBLESHOOTING MOMENT

Rebuilding Your Mail Databases

Mail keeps your messages in your Home→Library→Mail folder. (Your Library folder is usually invisible, but you can jump to it by pressing Option as you choose Go→Library in the Finder.)

Over time, as you add and delete hundreds of messages from these database files, some digital sawdust gets left behind, resulting in general Mail sluggishness. You also wind up with *massive* message files hidden on your hard drive, which can consume hundreds of megabytes of disk space. That's a particular bummer if you like to copy your message databases to your laptop when you go on a trip.

Fortunately, it's easy enough to *rebuild the message data-bases.* Doing so cleanses, repairs, and purges your message files. As a result, you wind up with a much more compact and healthy database.

To rebuild a mailbox, highlight it in the mailboxes column in Mail. (Highlight several by ⌘-clicking, if you like.) Then choose Mailbox→Rebuild. Mac OS X takes several minutes (or hours, depending on the size of your mailboxes) to repair and compact your database—but if you're experiencing Mail weirdness or slowness, it's well worth the sacrifice.

Mail asks you to name the new mailbox. If you have more than one email account, you can specify which one will contain the new folder. (Smart mailboxes, however, always sit outside your other mailboxes.)

Tip: If you want to create a folder-inside-a-folder, use slashes in the name of your new mailbox. (If you use the name *Cephalopods/Squid,* for example, then Mail creates a folder called Cephalopods, with a subfolder called Squid.) You can also drag the mailbox icons up and down in the drawer to place one inside another.

None of those tricks work for smart mailboxes, however. The only way to organize smart mailboxes is to put them inside a smart mailbox *folder,* which you create using Mailbox→New Smart Mailbox Folder. You might do that if you have several smart mailboxes for mail from your coworkers ("From Jim," "From Anne," and so on) and want to put them together in one collapsible group to save screen space.

When you click OK, a new icon appears in the mailboxes column, ready for use.

You can move a message (or group of messages) into a mailbox folder in any of three ways:

- Drag it out of the messages list onto a mailbox icon.

- Highlight one or more messages, and then choose from the Message→Move To submenu, which lists all your mailboxes.

- Control-click (or right-click) a message, or one of several that you've highlighted. From the resulting shortcut menu, choose Move To, and then, from the submenu, choose the mailbox you want.

Of course, the only way to change the contents of a *smart* mailbox is to change the criteria it uses to populate itself. To do so, double-click the smart mailbox icon and use the dialog box that appears.

Flagging Messages

Sometimes you'll receive email that prompts you to some sort of action, but you may not have the time (or the fortitude) to face the task at the moment. ("Hi there… it's me, your accountant. Would you mind rounding up your expenses for 1999 through 2011 and sending me a list by email?")

That's why Mail lets you *flag* a message, summoning a little flag icon in a new column next to the message's name. In fact, in Lion, you can now use seven differently *colored* flags.

These indicators can mean anything you like—they simply call attention to certain messages.

Once you've applied some flags, you can use their power in all kinds of ways. For example, you can sort your mail list by flag color (choose Sort by Flags at the top of the messages list). You can search for flagged messages using the search box. Better

yet, you can view all messages with a certain flag color—magically rounded up from all your different accounts and mailboxes—by clicking the corresponding icon in the Flagged folder of the mailboxes list.

Tip: Just in case you don't find "Red," "Orange," "Yellow," and so on to be the most descriptive possible flag names, you can change them.

First, though, make sure you've applied a couple of flags to different messages already. That's necessary to make the new Flagged mailbox appear in the mailboxes list. If you open the flippy triangle, you'll see the names of the flags you've applied so far. You can change a flag's name just the way you'd name a file—start by double-clicking it.

To flag a message in this way, select the message (or several messages) and then choose one of the colored flags in the Message→Flag submenu. Or Control-click (right-click) the message's name in the list and, from the shortcut menu, choose one of the seven flag colors. (To clear the flags, repeat the procedure, but use the Message→Flag→Clear Flag command instead.)

If you're using only one flag to simply mean "flag this," and you don't need all the colors, you can also press Shift-⌘-L.

Finding Messages

When you deal with masses of email, a fast, powerful search command is essential. In Lion, Mail's search command has grown deeper and better.

The box in the upper-right corner of the main mail window is Mail's own private Spotlight. You can use it to hide all but certain messages, as shown in Figure 18-15.
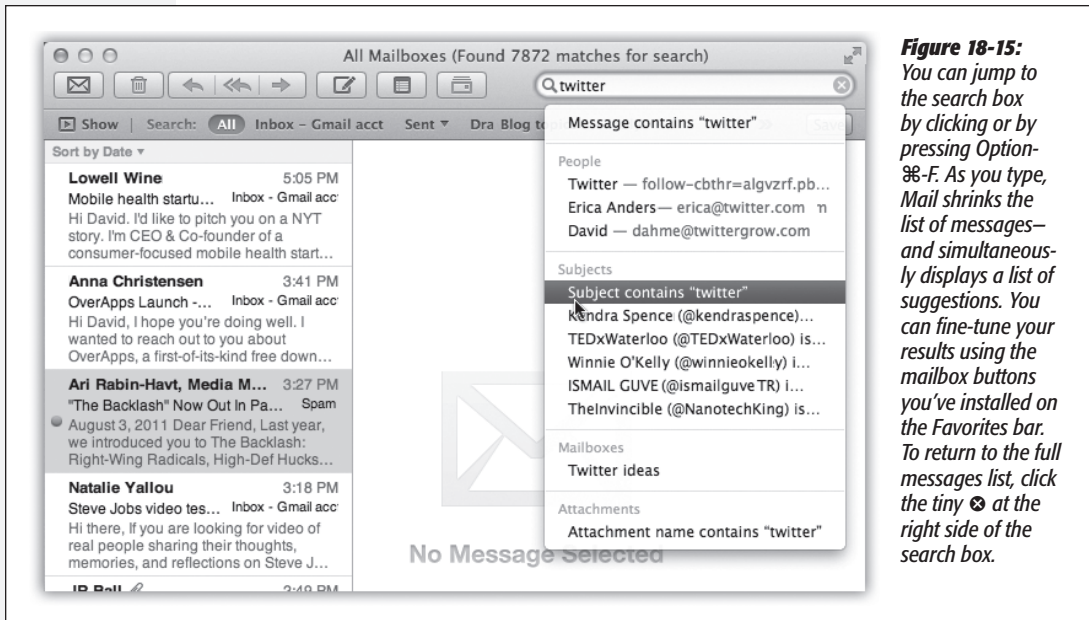

Figure 18-15:
You can jump to the search box by clicking or by pressing Option-⌘-F. As you type, Mail shrinks the list of messages—and simultaneously displays a list of suggestions. You can fine-tune your results using the mailbox buttons you've installed on the Favorites bar. To return to the full messages list, click the tiny ⊗ at the right side of the search box.

In Lion, this search box is powerful indeed. In fact, it incorporates the same pop-up suggestions lists and "search tokens" as regular file searching in the Finder (page 113). Here's how it works:

1. **Press Option-⌘-F (or click in the search box).**

   The cursor jumps up there.

2. **Start typing what you're looking for.**

   As you type, the messages list changes to show only the matching messages from all your mail folders.

   If you see the message you're looking for, great. Click it, and off you go.

   But this initial search is a pretty broad one. Mail is rounding up messages that match your search term *in any way.* If you type *veg,* you see messages from Murray Vegelstein, messages from vegan@militanteaters.org, and messages with the subject line "HOT DEALS IN VEGAS." All of them in one big stew.

   To help you sort through it, Mail produces a new Suggestions list, which sprouts from the search box. As in the Finder, it's Mail's way of asking what sort of *thing* your search term is. Is it a person? A subject? The status of a message? A date? Figure 18-15 shows the idea.

3. **Click the suggestion you want.**

   Mail filters the list. For example, if you click Murray Vegelstein, you'll see *only* the messages to or from Murray.

4. **Edit the search token.**

   The *search token* is the little bubble that appears in the search box after you've clicked one of the suggestions. You can click the little ▾ in the search token to change it. For example, if you've clicked somebody's name, that pop-up menu says To, From, or Entire Message (including the header and the body).

   You can also type more into the search box to add *another* search token. For example, the first token might limit the search to messages from one person; you could then create another one that limits the search to a certain date.

Tip: Once you've built up a complicated search like this, save yourself the effort next time by *saving* that search. Click the Save button just below the search box. You get the Smart Mailbox dialog box, shown in Figure 18-15, already filled out with the search setup you've specified. All you have to do is give it a name and click OK to transform your search into a smart mailbox that you can open anytime.

You've done a lot of refining of this search. But you still haven't limited your results by *account or folder.* Mail is showing you results from either *all* mailboxes, or from only the most recent mailbox you've searched. Fortunately, your Favorites bar has now sprouted two new buttons: one called All, and one that names the folder you most recently clicked.

5. **Click a button on the Favorites bar to change which mailbox is being searched.**

   The results list updates itself.

Tip: If you ⌘-click *several* mail folders before you search, you can limit the search to that particular *set* of mailboxes. (In that case, you see a button on the Favorites bar called Selected Mailboxes.)

When you're finished hunting around, you can empty out the search box, and get back to your regularly scheduled lists of email, by clicking any other mailbox, or by clicking the ⊗ button at the right end of the search box.

A few last notes on searching:

- The Mail search is almost exactly like Finder searching, right down to the saved-search mechanism. See Chapter 3 for details.

- As with regular Spotlight, Mail matches your search term by looking only at the *beginnings* of words. Searching for *flag* will find messages that contain the words *flagstone* and *flagellum,* but not *Redflag Incorporated.*

- In Mail→Preferences→General, you can specify whether or not you want Mail to include the Trash folder, Junk folder, and encrypted messages when you search all mailboxes.

- Notes show up in the search results, too.

- You can also search for certain text *within* an open message. Choose Edit→Find→ Find (or press ⌘-F) to bring up the Find dialog box (Figure 18-16).
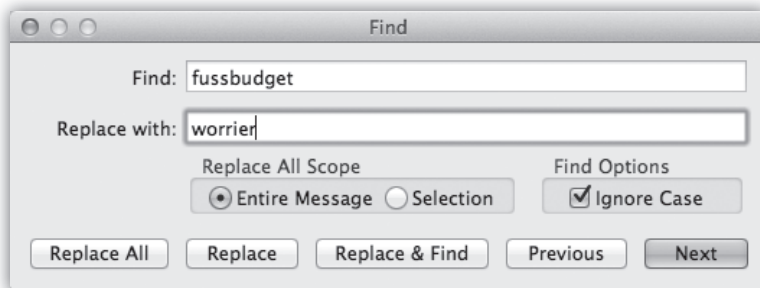

Figure 18-16:
The Find box works just as it does in a word processor, except that the Replace function works only on messages you've written yourself—Mail doesn't let you change the words of mail you've received. (Lawyers would have a field day with that one.)

Deleting Messages

Sometimes it's junk mail. Sometimes you're just done with it. Either way, it's a snap to delete a selected message, several selected messages, or a message that's currently before you on the screen. You can press the Delete key, click the Delete 🗑 button on the toolbar, choose Edit→Delete, or drag messages out of the list window and into your Trash mailbox—or even onto the Dock's Trash icon.

Tip: If you delete a message by accident, the Undo command (Edit→Undo or ⌘-Z) restores it.

All these commands move the messages to the Trash folder. If you like, you can then click its icon to view a list of the messages you've deleted. You can even rescue messages by dragging them back into a mailbox (back to the Inbox, for example).

Emptying the Trash folder

Mail doesn't vaporize messages in the Trash folder until you "empty the trash," just like in the Finder. You can empty the Trash folder in any of several ways:

• Click a message (or several) within the Trash folder list, and then click the Delete 🗑 icon on the toolbar (or press the Delete key). Now those messages are *really* gone.

• Choose Mailbox→Erase Deleted Items (Shift-⌘-Delete). (If you have multiple accounts, choose Erase Deleted Items→In All Accounts.)

• Control-click (or right-click) the Trash mailbox icon, and then choose Erase Deleted Items from the shortcut menu. Or choose the same command from the ⚙ pop-up menu at the bottom of the window.

• Wait. Mail will permanently delete these messages automatically after a week.

   If a week is too long (or not long enough), you can change this interval. Choose Mail→Preferences, click Accounts, and select the account name from the list at left. Then click Mailbox Behaviors, and change the "Permanently erase deleted messages when" pop-up menu. If you choose Quitting Mail from the pop-up menu, Mail will take out the trash every time you quit the program.

Turning deleted mail invisible

Mail offers another—and very unusual—method of deleting messages that doesn't involve the Trash folder at all. Using this method, pressing the Delete key (or clicking the Delete 🗑 toolbar button) simply hides the selected message in the list. Hidden messages remain hidden, but they don't go away for good until you use the Rebuild Mailbox command described in the box on page 734.

If this arrangement sounds useful, choose Mail→Preferences; click Accounts and select the account from the list on the left; click Mailbox Behaviors; and then turn off the checkbox called "Move deleted messages to a separate folder" or "Move deleted messages to the Trash mailbox." (The checkbox's wording depends on what kind of account you have.) From now on, messages you delete vanish from the list.

They're not really gone, however. You can bring them back, at least in ghostly form, by choosing View→Show Deleted Messages (or pressing ⌘-L). Using this system, in other words, you never truly delete messages; you just hide them.

At first, you might be concerned about the disk space and database size involved in keeping your old messages around forever like this. Truth is, Mac OS X is perfectly capable of maintaining many thousands of messages in its mailbox databases—and with the sizes of hard drives nowadays, a few thousand messages aren't likely to make much of a dent.

Meanwhile, there's a huge benefit to this arrangement. At some point, almost everyone wishes he could resurrect a deleted message—maybe months later, maybe years later. Using the hidden-deleted-message system, your old messages are always around for reference. (The downside to this system, of course, is that SEC investigators can use it to find incriminating mail that you thought you'd deleted.)

When you do want to purge these messages for good, you can always return to the Mailbox Behaviors dialog box and turn the "Move deleted mail to a separate folder" checkbox back on.

Archiving messages

There's one final option for getting unwanted messages out of your hair, new in Lion: *archiving.* It just means, "Get it out of my sight for now." Archiving sweeps the selected message into a folder called Archived, where it will stay until you deal with it further (by moving or deleting it). There's one of these folders per account.

To archive a selected message, a group of selected messages, or a conversation, choose Message→Archive, or click the Archive icon on the toolbar.

Exporting Mailboxes

Time Machine (Chapter 6) keeps a watchful eye on your Mac and backs up its data regularly—including your email. If you ever delete a message by accident or otherwise make a mess of your email stash, you can duck into Time Machine right from within Mail.

But not everybody wants to use Time Machine, for personal reasons—lack of a second hard drive, aversion to software named after H.G. Wells novels, whatever.

Yet having a backup of your email is critically important. Fortunately, there's a second good way to back up your email—*export it,* like this:

1. **In the mailboxes column, choose which mailbox or mailboxes you want to archive.**

   If you have multiple mailboxes in mind, ⌘-click each one until you've selected all the ones you want.

2. **At the bottom of the Mail window, open the ✿ pop-up menu and choose Export Mailbox(es).**

Secrets of the Mailbox Files

Mail keeps your messages in a series of mailbox folders in your Home→Library→Mail folder, inside folders (Outbox, Deleted Messages, and so on) named for each account.

Knowing this permits you to perform a number of interesting tricks. First of all, now you know what files to back up for safekeeping. (To see the invisible Library folder, press Option as you choose Go→Library in the Finder.)

Second, if you have messages on an old Mac that you'd like to copy to your new one, now you know where they're stored.

You can also get to this command by choosing Mailbox→Export Mailbox.

3. **In the box that appears, navigate to the place you want to stash this cache of valuable mail, like a server, a flash drive, or a folder. Click Choose.**

   Your exported mailboxes are saved to the location you've chosen. You can now go back to work writing new messages.

   Later, if you need to pull one of those stashes back into duty, choose File→Import Mailboxes. Choose the Apple Mail option and then navigate back to the place where you stored your mailboxes.

Note: Before Lion, this feature was called *archiving.* Apple changed the terminology, and the menu commands, to avoid confusion with the new feature of archiving *messages,* as described above.

Message Rules

Once you know how to create folders, the next step in managing your email is to set up a series of *message rules* (filters) that file, answer, or delete incoming messages automatically based on their contents (such as their subject, address, and/or size). Message rules require you to think like the distant relative of a programmer, but the mental effort can reward you many times over. Message rules turn Mail into a surprisingly smart and efficient secretary.

Setting up message rules

Here's how to set up a message rule:

1. **Choose Mail→Preferences. Click the Rules icon.**

   The Rules pane appears, as shown at top in Figure 18-17.

2. **Click Add Rule.**

   Now the dialog box shown at bottom in Figure 18-17 appears.

GEM IN THE ROUGH

The Email Answering Machine

If you're going on vacation, you can turn Mail into an email answering machine that sends a canned "I'm away until the 15th" message to everyone who writes you.

To do so, set the first set of pop-up menus in the Rules dialog box so that they say Account and the name of your account. In the bottom half of the dialog box, select Reply to Message from the pop-up menu. Click "Reply message text," and then type your outgoing message in the resulting box.

Keep in mind, though, that mail rules work only when Mail is open and connected to the Internet. If your computer is set to turn off after a certain period of time, therefore, make sure to disable that feature before you go on vacation.

Also: If you subscribe to mailing lists, set up another mail rule that intercepts and files them *before* your answering-machine rule kicks in. Otherwise, you'll incur the wrath of other Internet citizens by littering their email discussion groups with copies of your auto-reply message.

---

3. Use the criteria options (at the top) to specify how Mail should select messages to process.

For example, if you'd like the program to watch out for messages from a particular person, you would set up the first two pop-up menus to say "From" and "Contains," respectively.

To flag messages containing *loan, $$$$, XXXX, !!!!,* and so on, set the pop-up menus to say "Subject" and "Contains."
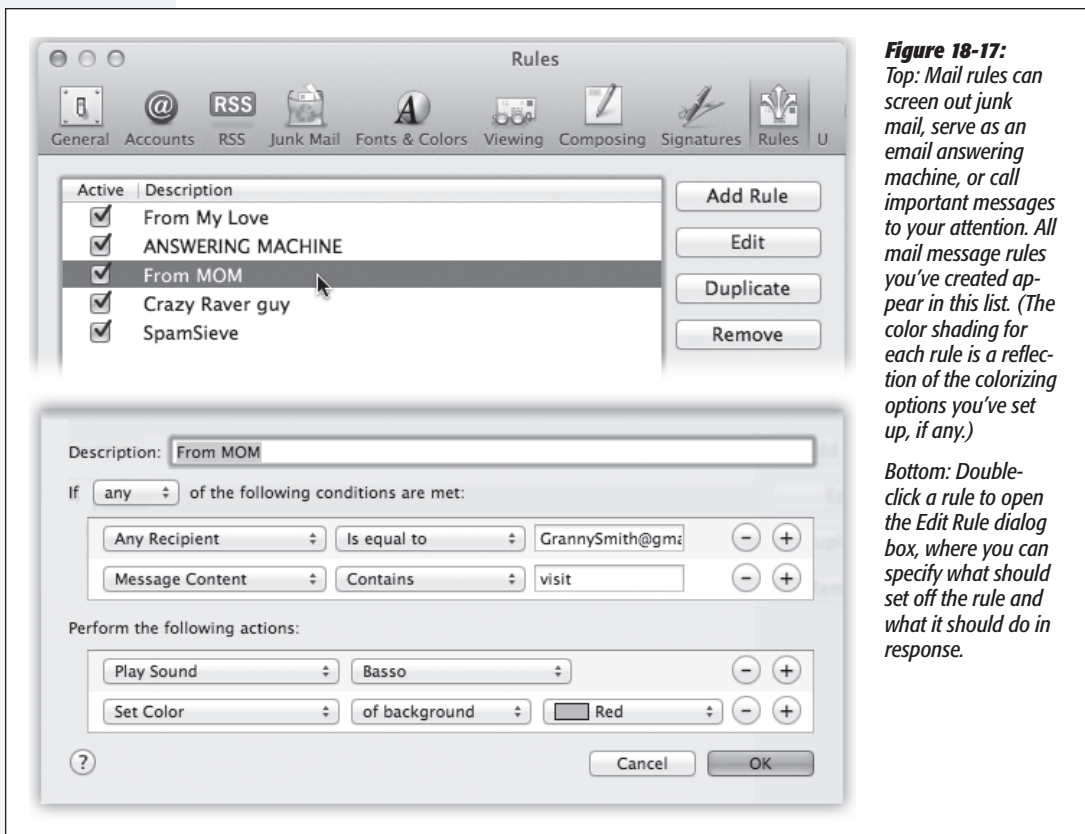

Figure 18-17:
Top: Mail rules can screen out junk mail, serve as an email answering machine, or call important messages to your attention. All mail message rules you've created appear in this list. (The color shading for each rule is a reflection of the colorizing options you've set up, if any.)

Bottom: Double-click a rule to open the Edit Rule dialog box, where you can specify what should set off the rule and what it should do in response.

You can set up *multiple* criteria here to flag messages whose subjects contain any one of those common spam triggers. (If you change the "any" pop-up menu to say "all," then *all* the criteria must be true for the rule to kick in.)

4. Specify which words or people you want the message rule to watch for.

In the text box to the right of the two pop-up menus, type the word, address, name, or phrase you want Mail to watch for—a person's name, or *$$$$,* in the previous examples.

5. **In the lower half of the box, specify what you want to happen to messages that match the criteria.**

   If, in steps 1 through 4, you've told your rule to watch for junk mail containing *$$$$* in the subject line, here's where you can tell Mail to delete it or move it into, say, a Junk folder.

   With a little imagination, you'll see how the options in this pop-up menu can do absolutely amazing things with your incoming email. Mail can colorize, delete, move, redirect, or forward messages—or even play a sound when you get a certain message.

   By setting up the controls as shown in Figure 18-17, for example, you'll have specified that whenever your mother sends something to you that mentions a visit, you'll hear a specific alert noise as the email is highlighted in a bright red, so it will jump out at you in the Inbox.

6. **In the very top box, name your mail rule. Click OK.**

   Now you're back to the Rules pane (Figure 18-17, top). Here you can choose a sequence for the rules you've created by dragging them up and down. Here, too, you can turn off the ones you won't be needing at the moment, but may use again one day.

Tip: Mail applies rules as they appear, from top to bottom, in the list. If a rule doesn't seem to be working properly, it may be that an earlier rule is intercepting and processing some messages before the "broken" rule even sees them. To fix this, try dragging the rule (or the interfering rule) up or down in the list.

The Anti-Spam Toolkit

Spam, the junk that now makes up more than 80 percent of email, is a problem that's only getting worse. Luckily, you, along with Mail's advanced spam filters, can make it better—at least for *your* email accounts.

Using the Junk Mail Filter

You'll see the effects of Mail's spam filter the first time you check your mail: A certain swath of message titles appears in brown. These are the messages that Mail considers junk.

Note: Out of the box, Mail doesn't apply its spam-targeting features to people whose addresses are in your Address Book, to people you've emailed recently, or to messages sent to you *by name* rather than just by email address. You can adjust these settings in the Mail→Preferences→Junk Mail tab.

During your first couple of weeks with Mail, your job is to supervise Mail's work. That is, if you get spam that Mail misses, click the message, and then click the Junk button on the toolbar. On the other hand, if Mail flags legitimate mail as spam, slap it gently on the wrist by clicking the Not Junk button. Over time, Mail gets better and better at filtering your mail.

The trouble with this so-called Training mode is that you're still left with the task of trashing the spam yourself, saving you no time whatsoever.

Once Mail has perfected its filtering skills to your satisfaction, though, open Mail's preferences, click Junk Mail, and then click "Move it to the Junk mailbox." From now on, Mail automatically files what it deems junk into a Junk mailbox, where it's much easier to scan and delete the messages en masse.

Tip: Don't miss the "Trust Junk Mail headers" option in the Junk Mail pane of the Preferences window. If you turn on that checkbox, Mail takes your Internet provider's word that certain messages are spam, giving you a *double* layer of spam protection.

More Anti-Spam Tips

The Junk filter goes a long way toward cleaning out the spam from your mail collection—but it doesn't catch everything. If you're overrun by spam, here are some other steps you can take:

- **Rules.** Set up some message rules, as described on the preceding pages, that autoflag as spam messages that have subject lines containing trigger words like "Viagra," "Herbal," "Mortgage," "Refinance," "Enlarge," "Your"—you get the idea.

- **Create a private account.** If you're overrun by spam, consider sacrificing your current address, using it for the public areas of the Internet, like chat rooms, online shopping, Web site and software registration, and newsgroup posting. Reserve a separate email account for person-to-person email.

  Spammers use automated software robots that scour every public Internet message and Web page, recording email addresses they find. (In fact, that's probably how they got your address in the first place.)

  Using this technique, at least you're now restricting the junk mail to a secondary mail account.

- **For goodness' sake, don't *order* anything sold by the spammers.** If only one person in 500,000 does so, the spammer makes money.

RSS Feeds

Mail gets more than *mail.* It also helps you keep yourself up to date with the world outside—and within your own little corner of it.

For example, the ability to subscribe to those constantly updating news summaries known as *RSS feeds* has saved a lot of people a lot of time over the years. After all, why waste precious minutes looking for the news when you can make the news find you?

In fact, you don't even have to waste the seconds it would take to switch from your Inbox to your browser or dedicated RSS program to get a fresh dose of headlines.

With Mail, they can appear right in the message window, making it easy to find out which political candidate shot his foot off while it was still in his mouth.

In fact, if you find it too exhausting to click the RSS icon in the mailboxes list, you can choose instead to have all your RSS updates land right in your Inbox along with all your other messages.

Adding RSS Feeds

With just a few clicks, you can bring the news of the world right in with the rest of your mail. Choose File→Add RSS Feeds, and then proceed as shown in Figure 18-18.

Tip: As you turn on the feeds you want to see in Mail, ⌘-click to select a bunch of feeds at once.

Figure 18-18:
In the Add RSS Feeds box, you can click to add sites you've already subscribed to in Safari. If you don't already have the feed bookmarked in Safari, click "Specify a custom feed URL" and paste the feed's address into the resulting box. If you've got a ton of feeds and don't want to wade through them all, use the search box to seek out the specific feed you need.
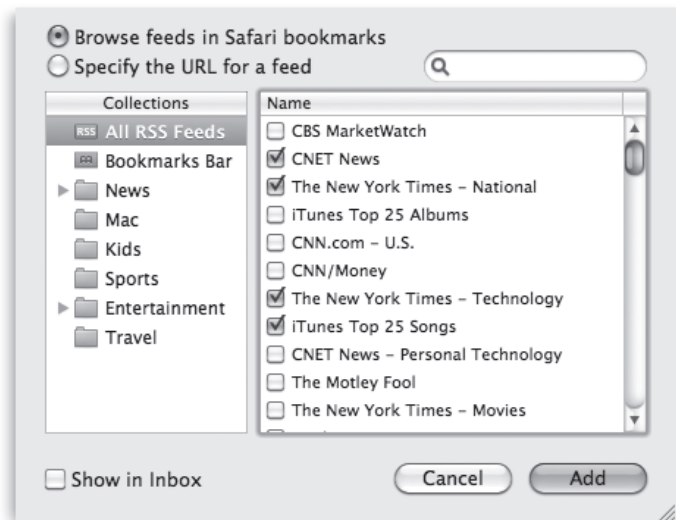
If you want the RSS headlines to appear in your Inbox like regular email messages, then turn on Show in Inbox. Finally, once you've chosen the feeds you want to see, click Add. Your feeds now appear wherever you told them to go: to either the Inbox or the mailboxes column.

Now, in the RSS category of your mailboxes list, you see the names of your RSS feeds; the number in the small gray circle tells you how many unread headlines are in the list. If a feed headline intrigues you enough to want more information, click "Read

More…" to do just that. Safari pops up and whisks you away to the Web site that sent out the feed in the first place.

Tip: Click the ↑ button next to a feed's name to move all its updates into your Inbox; there, they appear with the same blue RSS label, but they behave as though they're an Inbox category, to spare you having to flip back and forth between two distant areas of the mailboxes list.

If you *accidentally* click that arrow, and you don't really want 57 headlines from RollingStone.com peppering your daily dose of mail, click the feed's name and then click the ↓ next to it; it returns to the RSS section of the list. Alternatively, you can Control-click (or right-click) the feed name on the mailboxes list and turn off Show in Inbox from the shortcut menu.

Managing Feeds

Now that you've got your feeds in Mail, you may want to fiddle around with them.

- **Updating.** You can change the frequency of your news updates by choosing Mail→Preferences→RSS→Check for Updates. You can automatically update them every half hour, every hour, or every day. You can also command Mail to update a certain feed *right now;* Control-click the feed's name in the mailboxes list and, from the shortcut menu, choose "Update BBC News" (or whatever its name is).

- **Exporting.** You can save and store a whole batch of feeds in an archive file, just as you can do with regular mailboxes; choose Mailbox→Export Feed. A dialog box walks you through saving a copy of all the messages to a backup drive or other location for safekeeping.

- **Sharing.** If you want to share the news with a friend, Control-click a headline; from the shortcut menu, choose Forward (or Forward as Attachment) to pop the info into a new Mail message that you can send off to your pal.

- **Renaming.** You don't have to use the site's full name in your Mail window—after all, "WaPo" fits much better in the Mailboxes column than "Washington Post." To rename a feed, select it and then choose Mailbox→Rename Feed. Type in the new name and press Return.

- **Deleting.** After you've read a news item and are done with it, click the Delete button at the top of the window. You can tell Mail to dump all the old articles after a certain amount of time (a day, a week, a month) in Mail→Preferences→RSS→Remove Articles.

  Or, to get rid of an RSS feed altogether, select it and then choose Maibox→Delete Feed.

Notes

No operating system is complete without Notes. You *have* to have a place for little reminders, phone numbers, phone messages, Web addresses, brainstorms, shopping-list hints—anything that's worth writing down, but too tiny to justify heaving a whole word processor onto its feet.