



CATCH UP

After years of trial and error, Apple has delivered a suite of free internet-powered tools **that just work**. But how do they work, and what can they do for you? Here's **everything you need** to know.

BY ADAM BERENSTAIN

After watching iTools, .Mac, and MobileMe come and go, you can't blame even die-hard Mac fans for being a little skeptical of iCloud. Even if you're among the iCloud-curious, chances are you're confused by the many pieces and parts advertised on Apple's website. Exactly how, you may rightly ask, does all this stuff fit together?

The short answer is "pretty darn well." The longer answer is in these pages, but here's a spoiler: iCloud is more than just an invisible hard drive. It's Apple's digital hub reimagined with the cloud, not your Mac, at the center of your digital life. The only snag is that iCloud has been integrated so seamlessly into the apps and operating systems you already use, you might not know it's there. But it is. Whether you need convincing or just a crash course, here's what iCloud offers, how you can use it, and what you can do to get things back on track if trouble strikes.

iCloud 101

What's waiting for you in the cloud? Just about everything.

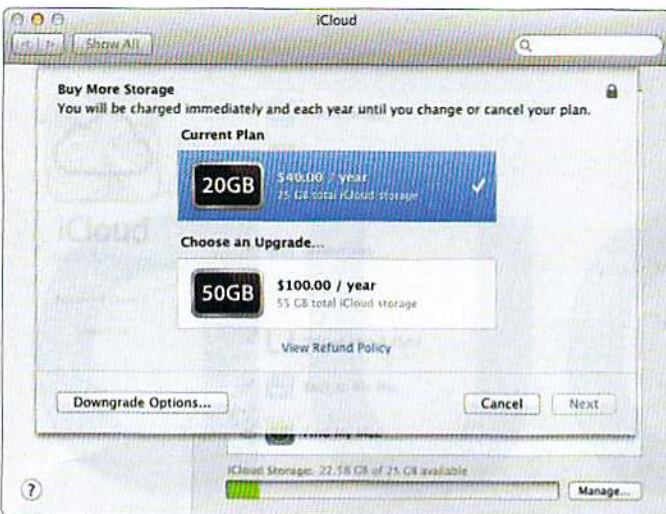
Apple's first cloud service, iTools, was introduced in 2000 and was available for free. Then came MobileMe, which added powerful features like data syncing and online storage, so Apple bumped the price to \$99 a year. But now Apple has reverted a bit, delivering MobileMe's most useful services at no charge and rebranding it

all as iCloud. And that's not all—this new service links all of your devices with Apple's North Carolina data centers to keep both your vital files and your iTunes Store purchases at your fingertips whenever you want them.

Getting Started

To use iCloud, you'll need iOS 5 on an iPhone 3GS or later, a third-gen or later iPod touch, either model of the iPad, or a Mac running OS X Lion. You can sign up for the service with your Apple ID on your iOS device in Settings > iCloud, or on your Mac in System Preferences > iCloud. You can then turn on the features you want to sync, like your complementary Me.com email address, contacts and calendars, Safari bookmarks, and more. Once the services are active on all your devices, Apple's servers should do the heavy lifting, pushing changed data on one device out to the rest automatically.

All iCloud accounts get a free 5GB of storage to save and sync personal data and other documents. That may not sound like much, but given the tiny size of most of those files, it should be enough for most people's needs. But if you find 5GB cramps your style, you can buy an additional 10GB, 20GB, or 50GB of storage for an annual subscription of \$20, \$40, or \$100 right from your device's iCloud settings.



You can change your iCloud storage plan from any device.

iOS Backups

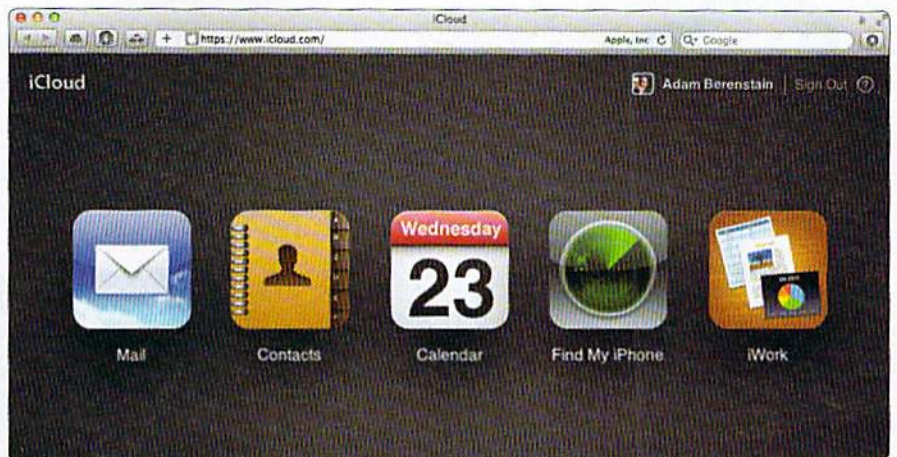
One feature that might dent your allotted storage is iOS Backup. That's right: with iCloud you now have the option of backing up your iOS devices over Wi-Fi to Apple's servers instead of to your Mac over USB. But iCloud backups use as little disk space as possible, thanks to judicious data juggling on Apple's part. Backups include data like photos and video in the Camera Roll, mail, contacts, and calendar account settings, Home screen organization, and more. To turn them on, go to Settings > iCloud > Storage & Backup. There you can also tap Manage Storage and choose your device to fine-tune what app data gets copied. Just remember that media not purchased from the iTunes Store—including music, movies, and podcasts—isn't included in the process.



One iDevice backup, hold the USB cables.

iCloud.com

When you can't get to your Mac or iOS device, iCloud.com has you covered. It's your Me.com mail, contacts, and calendars just as they look in iOS 5. The site also offers the conspicuously misnamed Find My iPhone service, which brings Apple's Mac and iOS device locator to any computer with internet access. It can even remotely lock or wipe your wayward devices to keep their data from prying eyes. You can also control how you share your iWork files with other Macs and iOS devices from iCloud.com, but we'll cover that in more depth on the next page.



Come on, how can you go back to Gmail after seeing that?

iTunes in the Cloud

iTunes in the Cloud syncs purchases on one device across all your devices and lets you re-download purchases as often as you like. To set it up, go to Settings > Store, then turn on Automatic Downloads for the media you want. On your Mac, launch iTunes, then click iTunes > Preferences > Store. To re-download purchases on your Mac, log in to the iTunes Store, then click the Purchased link in the Quick Links sidebar. In iOS, tap iTunes > Purchased to get your music and TV shows. Apps and books can be found in App Store and the Purchased section of the iBooks store, respectively. Movies and audiobooks, alas, aren't eligible yet.



Pick your purchases and whether they sync over your cellular network.

What About MobileMe?

If you're a MobileMe user considering iCloud, we have good news. You'll still get to use many of the features you rely on, like data syncing and your MobileMe email, after signing up. You can even continue using MobileMe-specific features like your iDisk side-by-side with the new iCloud services.

But you will lose some features. You'll no longer be able to sync OS X's keychains, Dock items, System Preferences, and Dashboard widgets across your Macs. And if you're the administrator of a family account, make any changes to subaccounts before moving to iCloud (you won't be able to edit them later). Those subaccounts will keep working, however, and can be moved to iCloud individually after you switch.

If you're still on the fence, you have time to decide... but the clock is ticking. On June 30, 2012 Apple will pull the plug on all MobileMe services for good, and features like iWeb publishing, iDisk, photo galleries, and your MobileMe iOS apps will no longer work (expect plenty of activity in Software Update as apps are updated). For more information about how you'll be affected, visit Apple's MobileMe transition page here: bit.ly/mQWrYS.





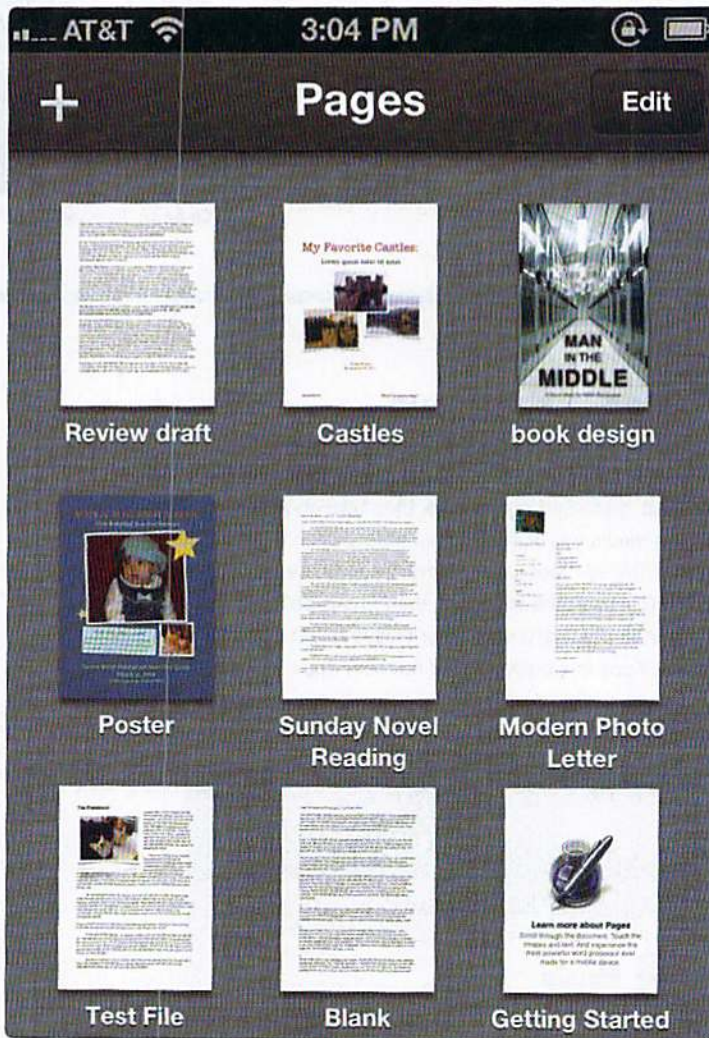
Documents in the Cloud

iWork just got a lot more mobile.

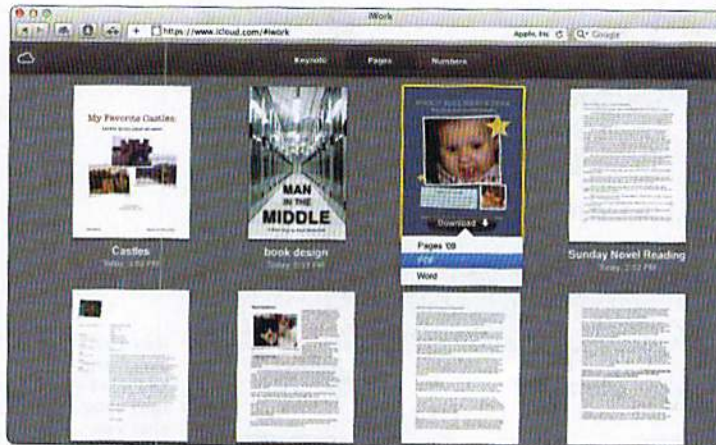
Besides contacts and calendars, your documents are some of the most important files in your digital life. With the iWork suite, and a trip to iCloud.com on your Mac or PC, you can keep them in sync across all your computers and iOS devices. Just log in, click the iWork icon, and then choose an iWork application at the top of the screen. Drag files associated with the application (including iWork '09, Office, or .txt and .csv documents) into your browser to upload them to iCloud. You can also click the gear icon to upload files through a conventional Finder interface, and even search for documents. Once files are in the cloud, you can browse them by application, select and Control-click documents to duplicate or delete them, or download files on other computers in their original formats (and alternates like .pdf). Documents stored on iCloud.com count against your storage limit, just like your other synced data.

Files on iCloud.com are immediately available in the file browsers of your iOS iWork apps (or as immediately as your internet connection allows). If you're opening a file created in a desktop version of your application, you may get a warning that the document contains features incompatible with the iOS app, but it should still open normally. Then you can edit it just as you would any document, and edits made on your iOS devices are automatically pushed back to the cloud. Of course, new documents created in an iOS iWork app aren't left out of the fun, either. They're available to all your other iCloud devices as soon as they're created.

But just as Apple's cloud-based services have simplified the evolution from MobileMe to iCloud, so have its document-syncing tools. Cupertino's earlier effort at online productivity, iWork.com, was built with collaboration in mind. It featured the ability to view a document's contents, leave annotations, and invite people to share files with you in a browser. Documents in the Cloud lacks these features in favor of an iOS-centric approach to sharing, and any documents you've exported to iWork.com won't show up in iCloud. You'll have to download them first, then re-upload them manually. We're not sure what Apple's plans for iWork.com might be, but one thing's for sure: syncing documents has gotten a whole lot simpler, and that's fine by us.



Change a file here and it's changed everywhere.



You can download iWork files in their native formats, or an alternate.

Photo Stream

Say hello to picture-perfect photo syncing.

Of all iCloud's features, Photo Stream is the closest to being truly magical. No, really. It's a photo album in the cloud that contains up to 1,000 of your latest photos, storing new ones for 30 days, and it doesn't count against your standard iCloud storage capacity. Best of all, you only have to keep doing what you're doing now to use it. Take pictures with your iOS device, or import .jpg, .tif, .png, and most RAW files into iPhoto or Aperture, and they're all available automatically to your iCloud devices—even Apple TV. Don't worry about burning through your iPhone or iPad's data plan, either, since Photo Stream syncs only over Wi-Fi. In iOS, you can also use Wi-Fi or 3G to download shots at space-saving resolutions sized for your device, and all Photo Stream images are automatically downloaded at full resolution to your Mac or PC. After you do so, you can back them up for safekeeping.

You can do more with Photo Stream pictures than just view and save them. You can edit them, too. In iOS, just go to Photos > Albums > Photo Stream, and tap the picture you want to tweak. After you make changes, you'll be prompted to save a copy to your Camera Roll, leaving the original picture intact. And since any image added to your Camera Roll—including those from third-party photo apps—gets synced to Photo Stream, your new file will be pushed to the cloud, too. In iPhoto, you can browse your last 1,000 masterpieces in the Photo Stream album in the sidebar. Similarly, selecting a picture and clicking anything but the Info button will prompt you to continue the operation on the copy that's already been saved to your iPhoto library. Yep, Apple takes protecting your Photo Stream seriously, and that may not always be a good thing, depending on who (or what) you took pictures of at last weekend's party. While you can't delete individual pictures from your Photo Stream, you can log in to iCloud.com and click Advanced > Reset Photo Stream to nuke 'em all. This measure of last resort won't remove saved Photo Stream pictures from your devices, but it will give you a clean slate going forward.



As if your Photo Stream Isn't filled with cat pictures.



Edits to your Photo Stream pics are nondestructive.



iTunes Match

Your music and playlists anywhere, anytime, Apple-style.

Costing \$24.99 annually, iTunes Match is a service that scans your iTunes music library and makes it all available from Apple's servers, allowing you to sync the songs, albums, and playlists on your Mac to up to 10 devices. Sure, you can already re-download iTunes Store music purchases, but iTunes Match lets you download them—even the lower-quality DRM-laden tracks Apple used to sell—in the latest DRM-free 256Kbps AAC format. It's like getting iTunes Plus for free. Better yet, songs in your library from other sources, such as low-fi MP3 rips, can be replaced with new copies in the same high quality if they're among the 20 million tracks Apple sells in the iTunes Store. Songs that don't match are uploaded as-is to Apple's servers, where they're available to your devices just like purchased and matched tracks. If your subscription expires, you'll lose cloud storage and syncing, but new tracks you've downloaded to replace old ones will be yours to keep, just like any iTunes Store purchase.

Once you're signed up and the matching process is done, you can select your Music library and click View > View Options, then click iCloud Status to see which tracks have been marked as Not Eligible, Purchased, Matched, or Uploaded. Most ineligible files are rejected because of audio quality. To force iTunes to rescan them, select them and click Advanced > Create AAC Version. When the conversion is done, click Store > Update iTunes Match. The new versions should upload to the cloud, and you can delete the



original tracks. Deleting eligible tracks won't remove them from your iTunes library by default, but it will move those files to the Trash. You can then stream those tracks or re-download the files by clicking the cloud icon beside their names.

This is gonna take a while. But it's worth it.

To access your library on another computer, launch iTunes and click Store > Turn On iTunes Match on that machine. Tracks you're authorized to play in that library will be merged with your library in the cloud, and your entire library will then be available to stream or download. In iOS, tap Settings > Music > Turn On iTunes Match. You can't stream to iOS devices, but you can download files for local playback. Or you can continue syncing them directly with your Mac's iTunes library, if that's how you roll.



This is your library on iTunes Match. Any questions?



Back to My Mac

Many Macs make light work, especially on the go.

One of iCloud's coolest features, Back to My Mac, began life as a seldom-discussed MobileMe service. We think it deserves to be a bigger deal. With Back to My Mac, you can access your Mac's hard drive and swap files from any internet-connected Mac running OS X 10.7.2. You can also use Screen Sharing to open applications and edit files on another Mac, to access other machines on your home network, or even to upload important files to iCloud.com.

To get started, enter your iCloud account information on each Mac you want to "get back to" in System Preferences > iCloud, then check Back to My Mac to turn on the feature. If you need to activate built-in OS X services like Wake For Network Access, File Sharing, or Screen Sharing, you'll be prompted to do so in the Sharing preference pane. You'll also need a router that supports NAT-PMP (NAT Port-Mapping Protocol) or UPnP (Universal Plug and Play) to share services. Most routers do support this, and if you're using any modern AirPort or Time Capsule base station, you're all set. (Speaking of routers, AirPort Disks, a MobileMe feature that lets you access hard drives connected to your AirPort base station, no longer works in iCloud. Bummer.) Once your Macs are set up, turned on, and connected to the internet, you'll see each of them in the Shared section of the Finder sidebar. From there you can connect to their drives just as if they were on your local network. How cool is that?

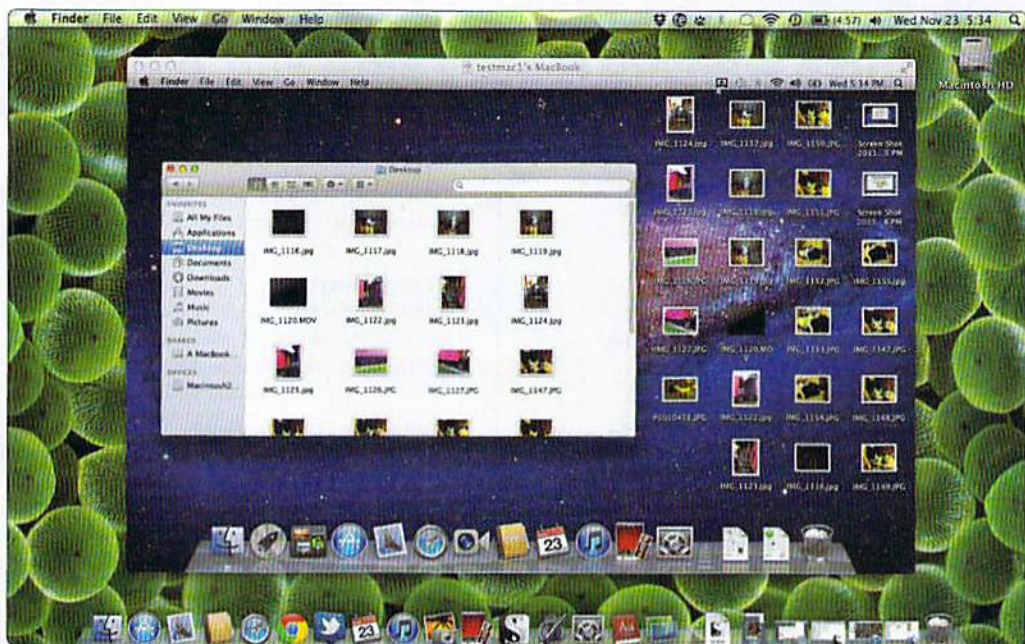
What's not cool is the possibility of creeps getting access to your Macs while they're available to log in to online. Apple uses IPsec (Internet Protocol Security) and SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) to encrypt traffic between your Macs and iCloud, but there's a lot you can do to keep you and your data safe when you head back to your Mac. Choose strong passwords—over eight characters long with upper- and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols—for your iCloud account and the user



iCloud almost sets everything up for you, but not quite.

accounts on your computers. In System Preferences > Security & Privacy, click General, then enable the Require Password After Sleep option and choose Immediately as its timeframe. While you're in System Preferences, click the Users & Groups pane, Login Options, and then turn off automatic logins to help keep the bad guys at bay.

Apple heard you like Macs, so they put a Mac in your Mac...

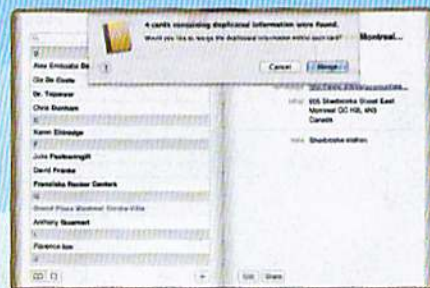


iCloud Tips and Tricks

Solve problems and unlock iCloud's hidden superpowers.

Banish Duplicate Contacts

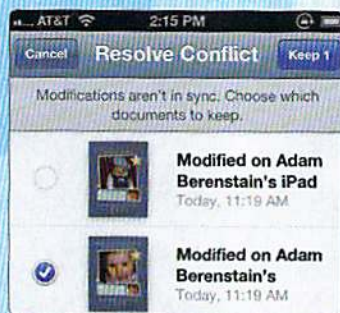
Having a lot of friends is great, but not if they're duplicates in your Address Book. If iCloud has left you with multiple copies of some or all of your contacts, open Address Book on your Mac, click Card > Look For Duplicates, then click Merge in the resulting dialog. This will combine multiple cards with the same name but different contact details into single cards with all information associated with the name. After merging, your cleaned-up contact data will be synced back to iCloud and your other devices.



When duped contacts strike, don't fight the urge to merge.

Recover from Document-Syncing Snafus

Revising files with Documents in the Cloud is supposed to be seamless. And it usually is, unless you edit a file on one device and then make changes to the same file on another device before the first changes are pushed out by iCloud. When that happens, your application will display an alert asking which version of the file you'd like to save. You can save them all or just one by selecting each version you like and tapping the Keep button. The files will be saved to your device—and the cloud—with a number appended to the name, so you know which is which.



iCloud plays peacemaker when it has to.

Master iTunes Match with Smart Playlists

After turning on iTunes Match, it's easy enough to see the status of your music files (Matched, Uploaded, and more), but it's not so easy to organize tracks that are eligible for new high-quality downloads. To do that, you need to build a Smart Playlist. Set its media type to Music media with a bit rate less than 256Kbps. Option-click on the next plus button to create a condition in which any of the following are true: iCloud Status is Matched and iCloud Status is Purchased.



Now you've got some downloading to do!

Make a Smart Playlist like this one to see all upgradable tracks.

Roll Your Own Dropbox Service

If you wish Documents in the Cloud was more like Dropbox, take matters into your own hands. On your Mac, go to System Preferences > iCloud and turn on Documents & Data. In the Finder, Option-click Go > Library, and then navigate to the Mobile Documents folder inside. Leaving the folders there alone (they belong to applications already using your iCloud storage), you can now drop your own files and folders into Mobile Documents to push them to the same folder on other Macs with Documents & Data enabled. It's a slick workaround for older machines that can't use AirDrop.

Uncover iCloud's Inner Dropbox.

