

Multiple iPhoto Libraries

Pros:

Better photo organization.

Avoid slow iPhoto performance when one library contains many thousands of photos.

More efficient Backups.

Don't have to backup an entire big library periodically.

Once a library is complete (e.g. "2005 Photos") it can be backed up once and for all.

Smaller libraries fit on single backup CDs or DVDs.

Libraries can be in different locations, even on different disks.

Cons:

Applications that can link to iPhoto like iMovie, Keynote, etc., will only see the photos in the currently active library. (But iPhoto Buddy can switch libraries without having to open them.)

Libraries can't be merged or combined, or photos moved from one to another without losing most of the photos' metadata.

Multiple libraries can be created and manipulated in iPhoto by holding down the Option key while starting up iPhoto. However, a free application called [iPhoto Buddy](#) makes the organization and use of multiple libraries *much* more convenient.

Before you start, I recommend making a backup copy of your existing Library(ies). The default Library is in *Home/Pictures/iPhoto Library*. Depending on the size, you can back up to a CD* (up to 700 MB), DVD* (up to 4.7 GB) or an external Hard Drive. ***If you are going to split up an existing library into smaller ones, ABSOLUTELY POSITIVELY make a backup copy!***

*If you have the application Toast, v. 6 or newer, you can backup large files/folders that span several CDs or DVDs

What you do next depends on your situation:

- A. You have a modest size library that you want to keep as is and will add other libraries in the future.
- B. You have already created multiple libraries with iPhoto and don't need to split any of them up into smaller libraries.
- C. You have one or more libraries that you want to split up into smaller libraries.

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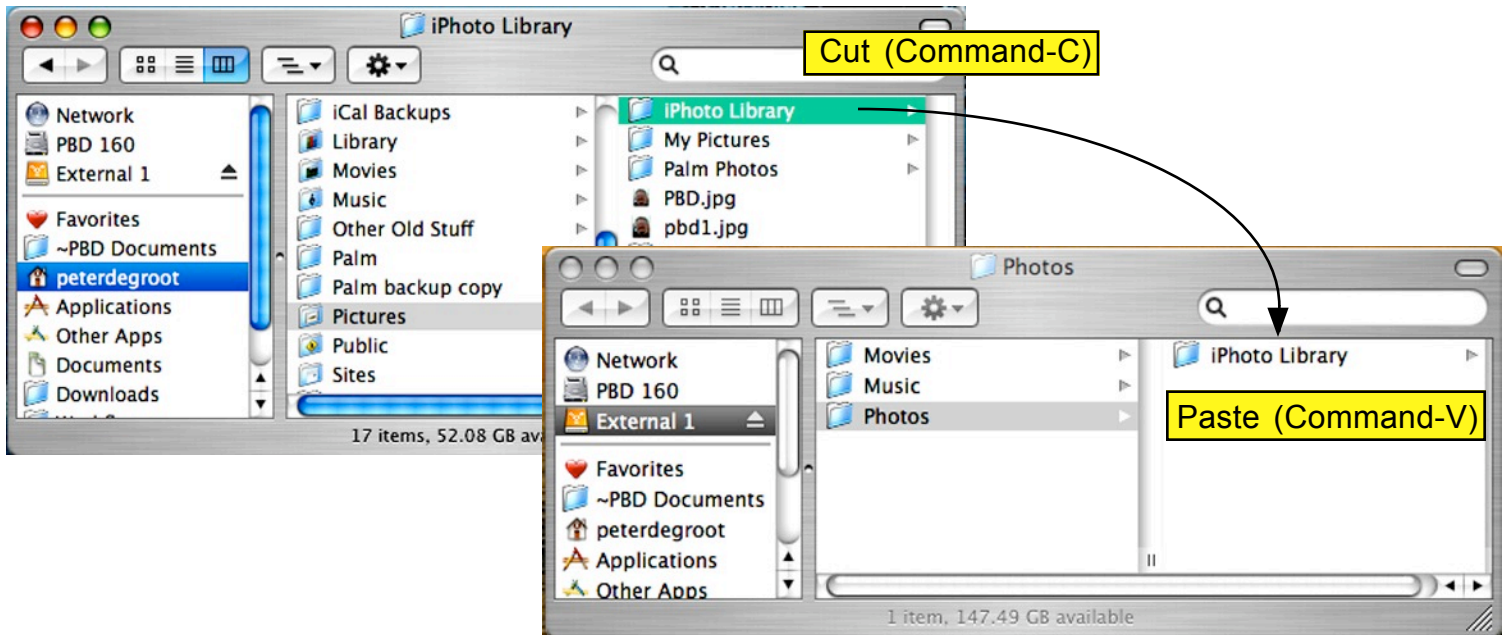
Note: examples shown are with iPhoto 5 and OS 10.4, but everything works pretty much the same way for iPhoto 6 or 7 and OS 10.5

Splitting Up An Existing Library

One way to do this would be to export pictures from your existing library, then import them into a new empty library. This is not a good way to do it because you will lose Albums, Slideshows, keywords, comments and any other information you attached to the pictures in iPhoto.

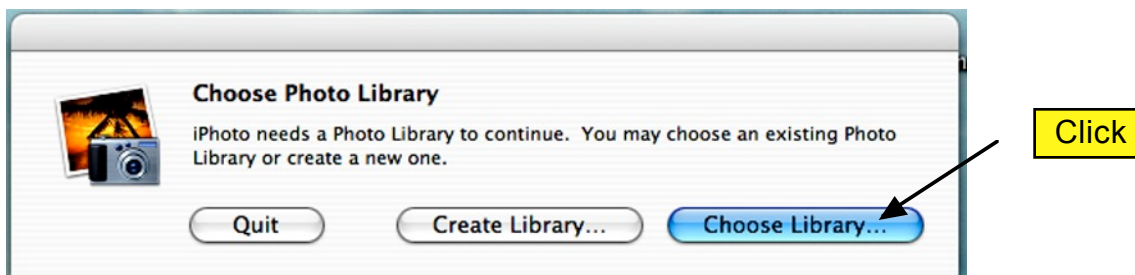
A better way is to duplicate the library, rename it to the new name, then open it and *delete* the photos you don't want in it. Here is an example:

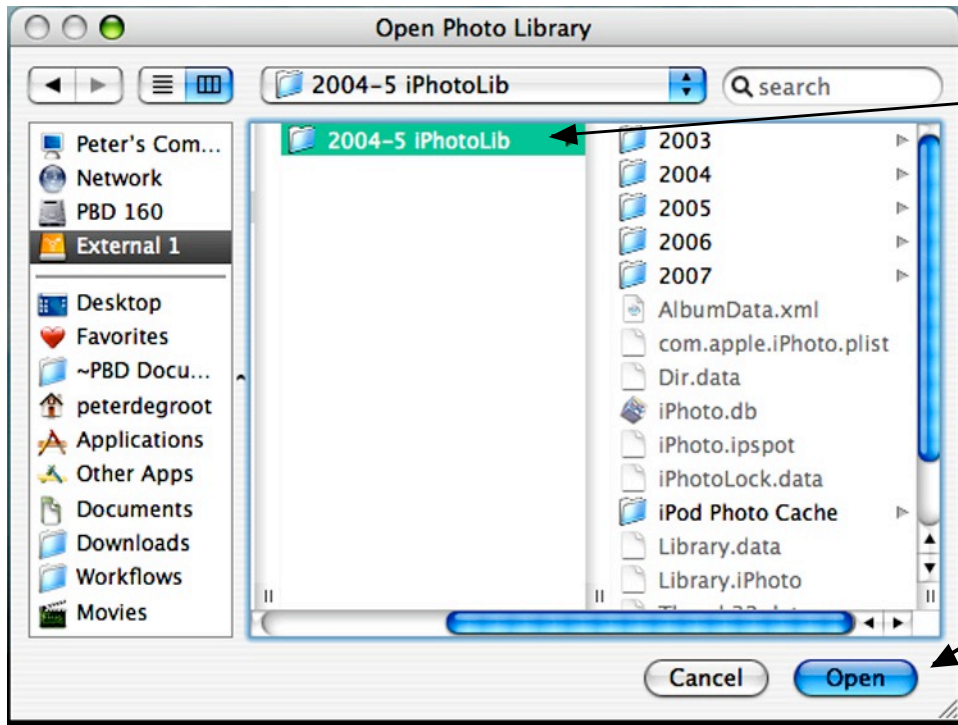
Copy your library to a chosen location. I'm copying to a folder on an external drive.



Rename the copy. I've selected "2004-5 iPhotoLib" (I like to keep "iPhotoLib" in the name so I can tell it's an iPhoto Library and not just another folder of photos.)

Hold down the Option key while starting up iPhoto (*not* iPhoto Buddy).

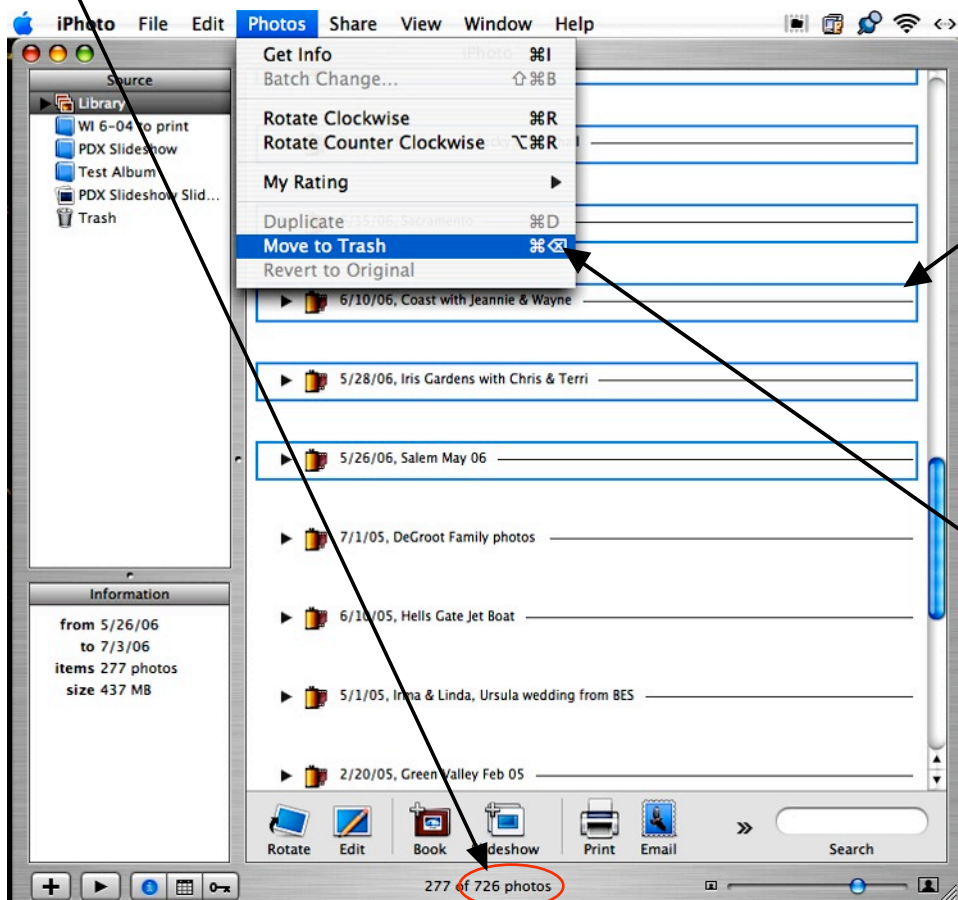




Select the renamed duplicate

Click

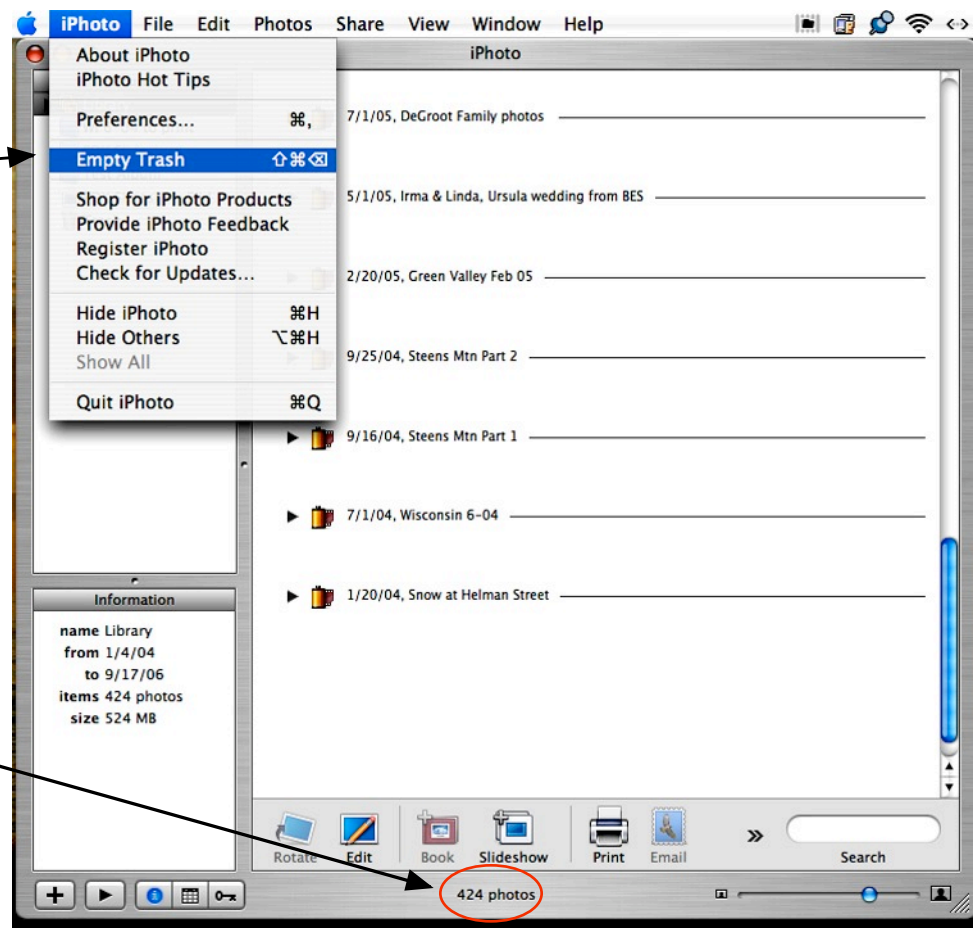
Important! Before you start deleting photos, note the total number of photos in the library and write it down.



Select the photos you DON'T want in this library. You can select multiple rolls and/or photos with Shift-Click

Move them to the Trash by dragging or choosing the Menu item above

277 of 726 photos



Repeat the process of copying the original library and deleting selected photos until you have divided the original into as many smaller libraries as you like.

A final check: The number of photos in the original library should equal the sum of the number of photos in each of the new libraries.

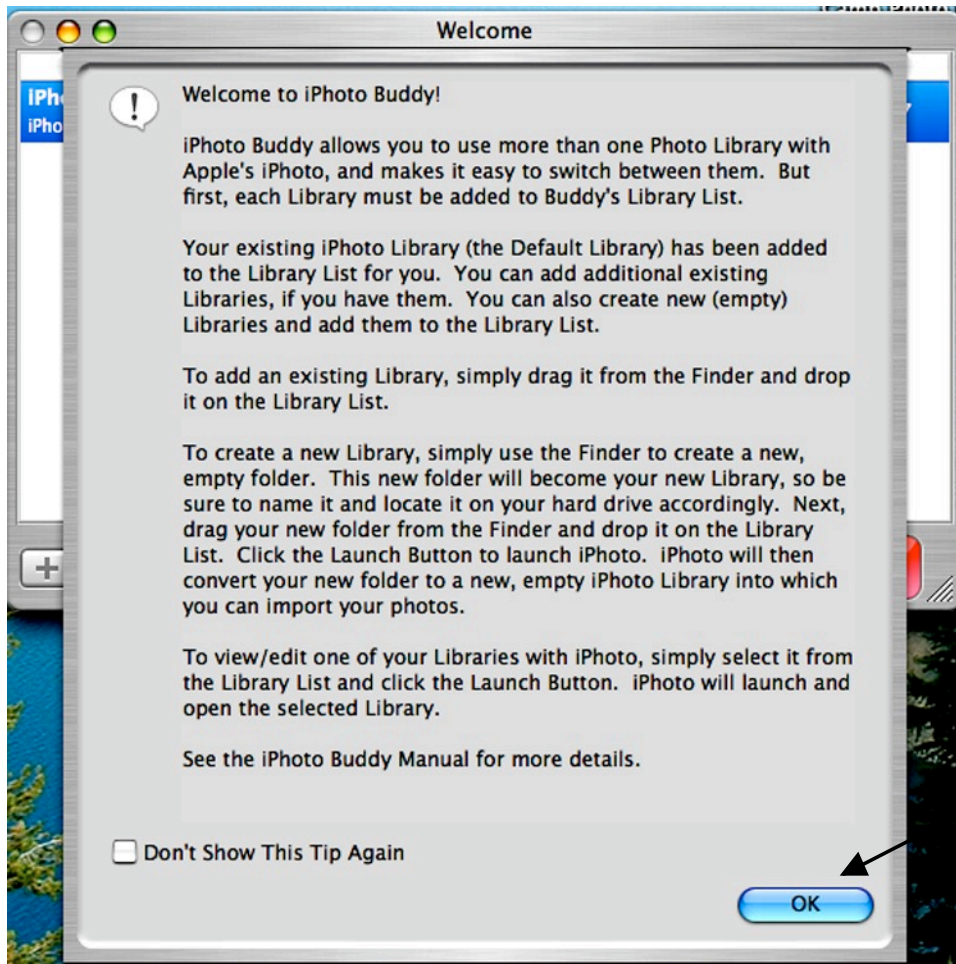
When you are sure you haven't lost any photos, you can delete the original library.

Now you are ready to start up iPhoto Buddy

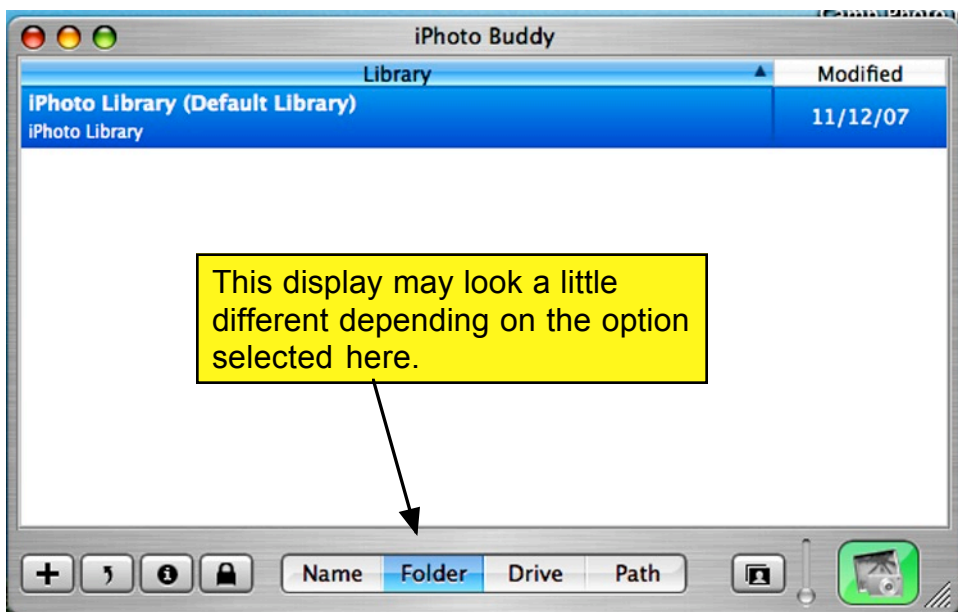


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Download iPhoto Buddy from <http://www.iphotobuddy.com/> and install it. Double click on the application to launch it. The first screen you see will be an appeal for donations. You don't have to donate, but I think this is a program that is worth a few bucks. The next screen will be:



This gives you some basic information about creating and adding libraries. All of this is also in the excellent .pdf documentation that comes with iPhoto Buddy, so you can check the box "Don't show this tip again" if you don't want to see this every time.

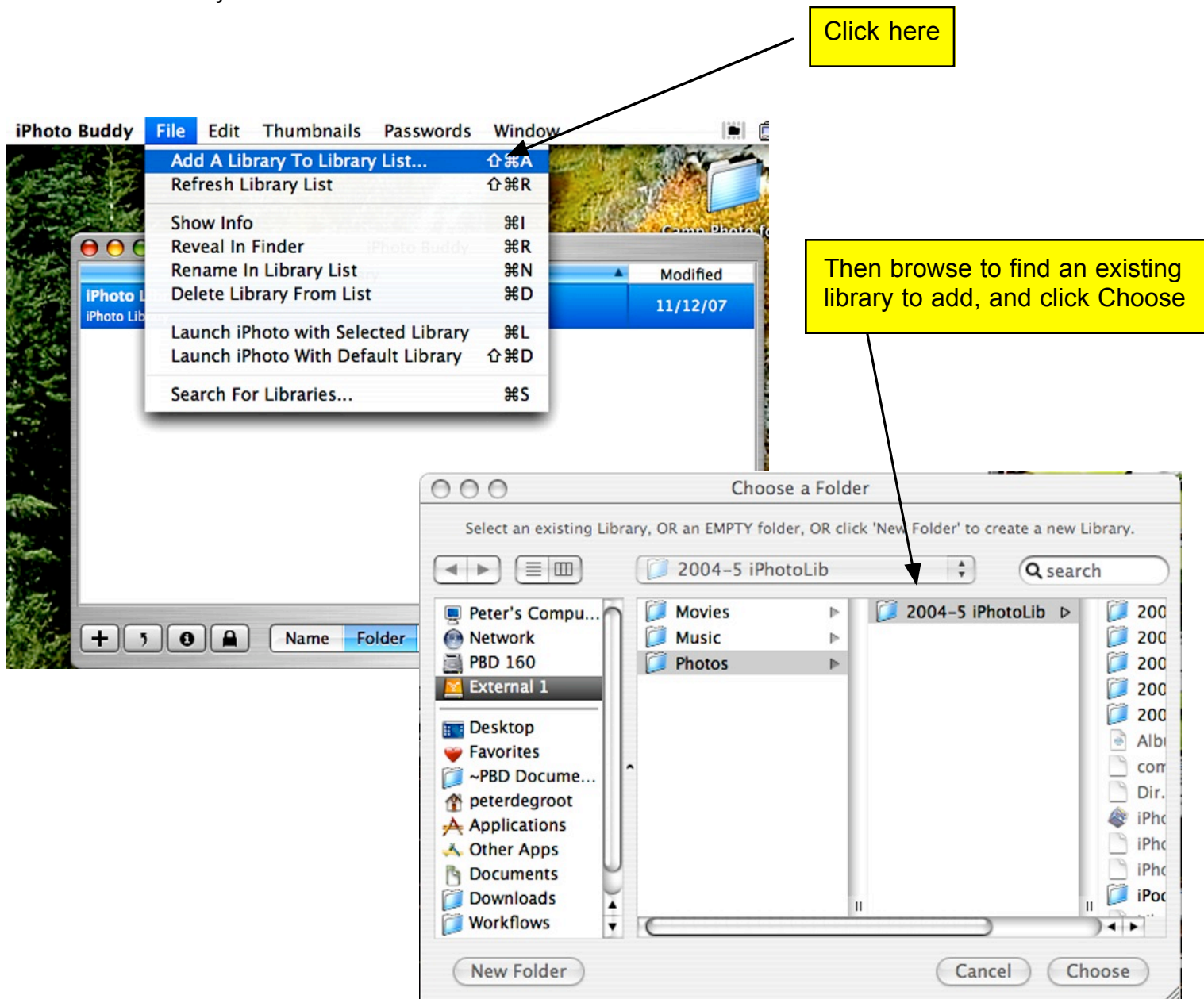


If you already have an iPhoto Library in its default location (Home/Pictures) it will find it and add it. If you don't, you will get a blank window.

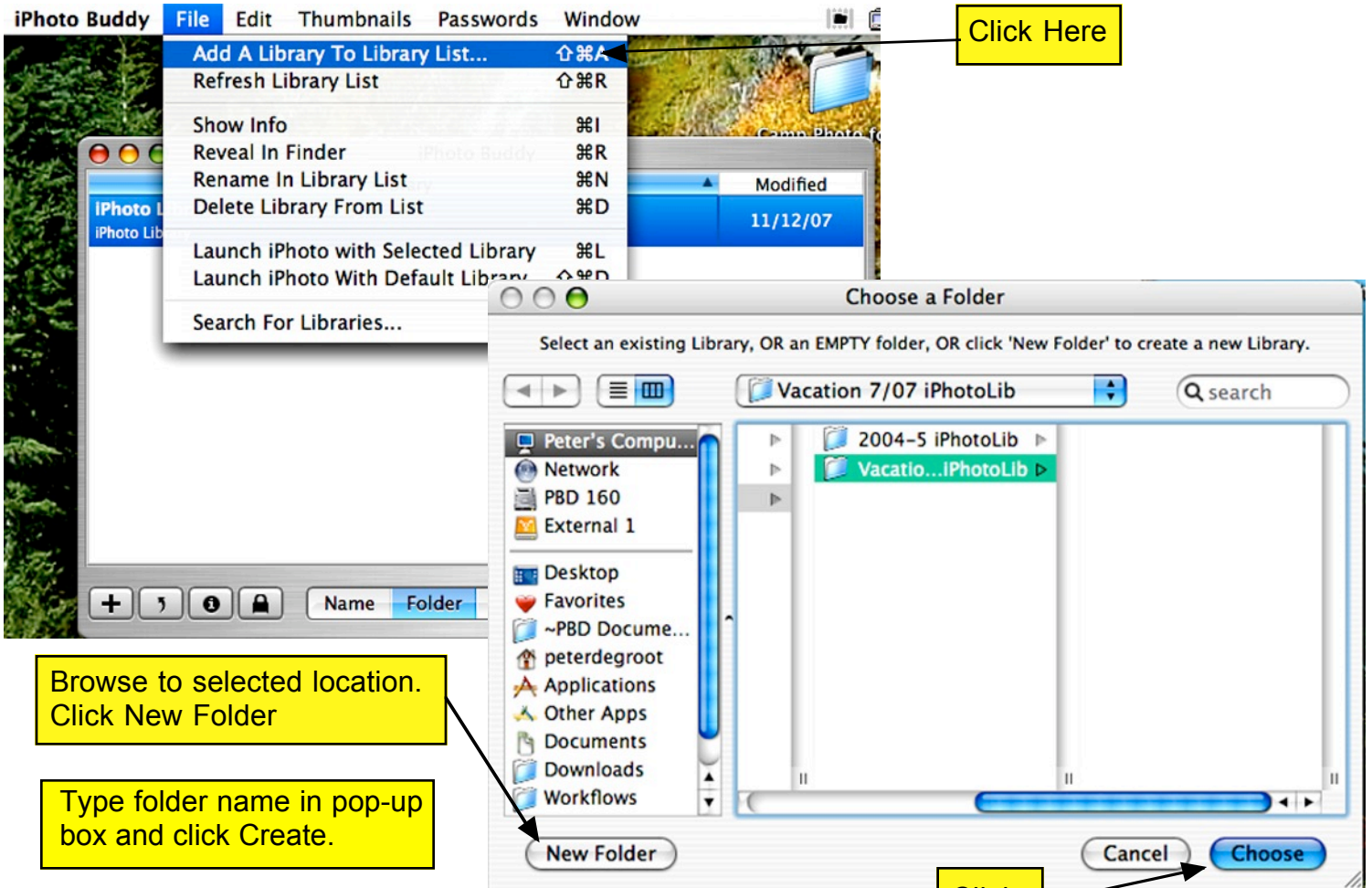
If iPhoto Buddy found your library and you don't want to add another library immediately, you can skip to Renaming Libraries on page 8.

Adding Existing Libraries

If iPhoto Buddy didn't find your library, or you already have more than one library, then you will have to add them manually.



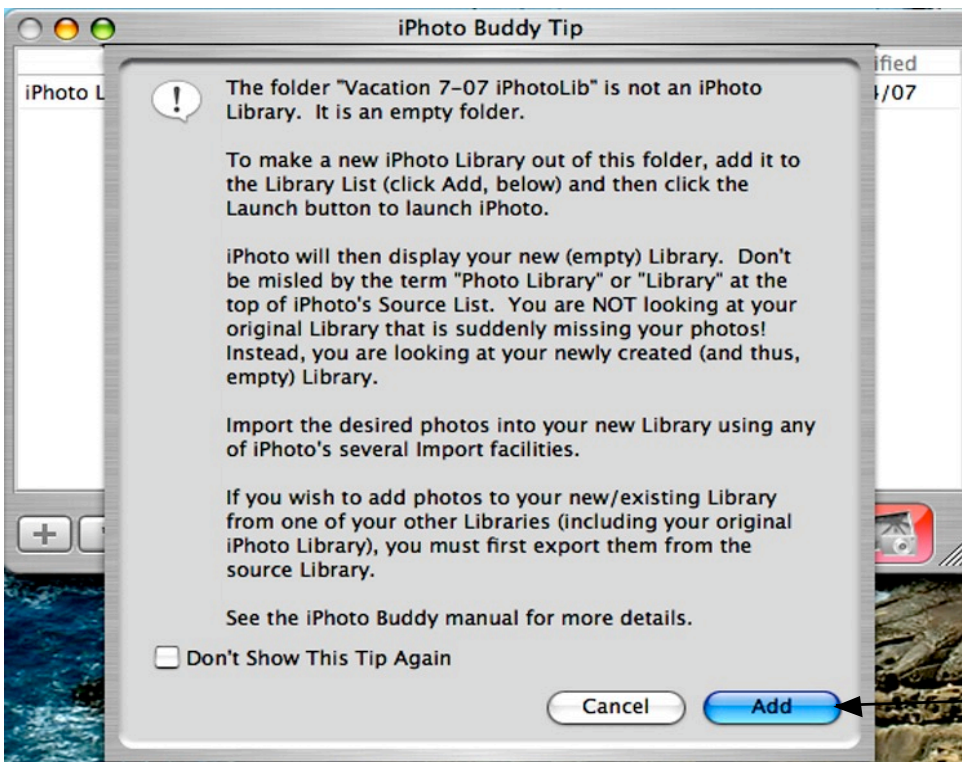
Creating a New (Empty) Library



Browse to selected location. Click New Folder

Type folder name in pop-up box and click Create.

Click

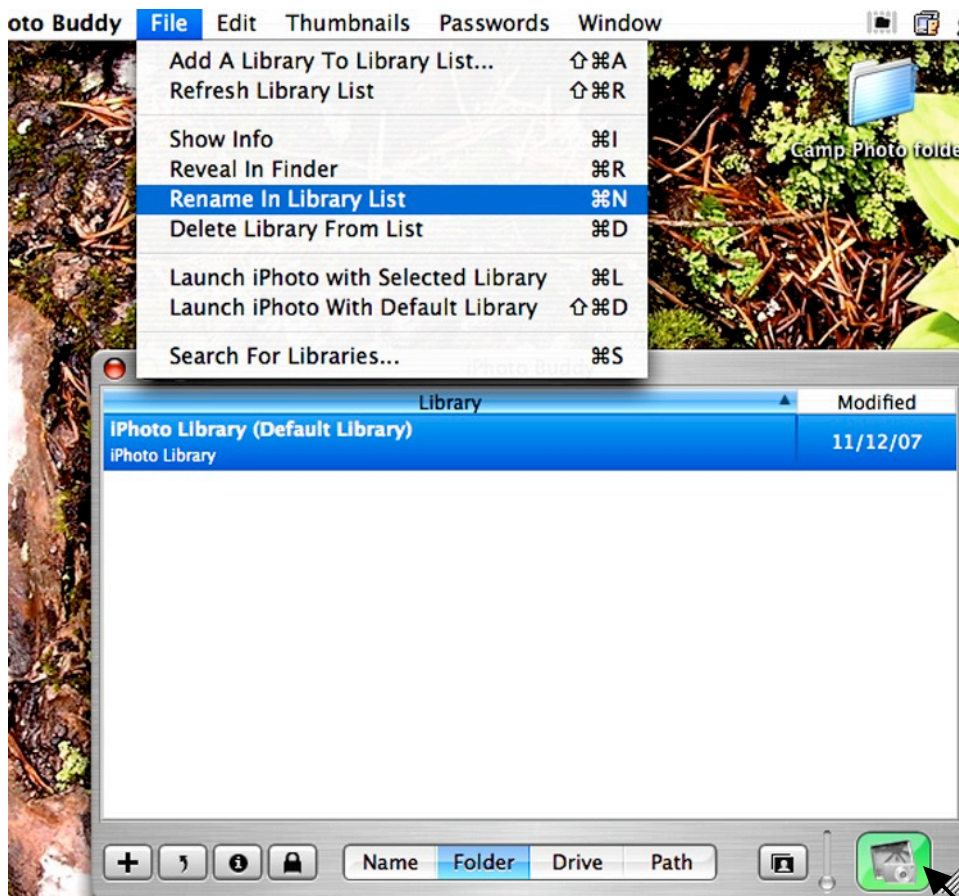


Click

Renaming Libraries

This will allow you to rename libraries to a more descriptive name in the iPhoto Buddy list.

Note, however, that this does not rename the library folder in the Finder. I usually go into the Finder and rename the folder to match the name in the iPhoto Buddy list. This makes things a lot less confusing.



Moving Libraries

If you move a library to a new location on the same disk, iPhoto Buddy will almost always keep track of it. If you move it to new disk, however, you will have to delete it from the iPhoto Buddy list, then add it again.

Other Applications that use iPhoto Libraries

Thanks to Apple's fabulous integration, other applications like iMovie, iWeb and iDVD can access the photos in iPhoto. iPhoto Buddy can also launch these applications so they are linked with any selected library. Holding down the Control, Option or Command keys will change the Launch button symbol from iPhoto to one of the other apps. Control=iDVD Option=iMovie Control+Option=iWeb You can also simply change the default library to the selected library for all of these other apps without launching anything by holding down the Command+Option keys and clicking the launch button.