Back to My Mac User Guide

This guide shows you how to use MobileMe over the Internet to access a remote Mac with Mac OS X Snow Leopard installed, a Time Capsule, or an external hard disk connected to an AirPort Extreme Base Station.

Overview

Retrieving a file from your Mac when you're away from home may seem like a challenge, but it's simple with Mac OS X Snow Leopard and a MobileMe subscription.

Back to My Mac uses Bonjour networking technology so that when you're on the road, you'll see your other computers in the Shared section of the Finder sidebar, just as if you were at home. You can even access the files stored on your Time Capsule or a hard disk connected to an AirPort Extreme Base Station with 802.11n technology.

There are two main ways to connect to your remote computers with Back to My Mac:

- **File sharing.** Browse the entire hard drive of your remote Mac, Time Capsule, or external hard disk connected to an AirPort Extreme Base Station and drag files and folders to your local Mac. For example, you're on the road but you need a Keynote presentation that's on your Mac at home. Simply connect to your remote Mac, find the file you need, and drag it to the Mac that you're using.

- **Screen sharing.** Control your remote Mac just as if you were sitting in front of it. Launch applications, edit documents, and more. For example, you want to add photos to your MobileMe Gallery while you're at work, but your iPhoto library is on your Mac at home. Screen sharing opens a window displaying the desktop of your remote Mac. In the screen sharing window, open iPhoto on your home Mac, select the photos, and publish to your MobileMe Gallery.

Safe and secure

To make connecting to your Mac over the Internet secure, Back to My Mac uses advanced authentication and data encryption technologies to help prevent unauthorized access to your data and protect it during transit. For more information, see "Security" at the end of this guide.

What You Need for Back to My Mac

Basic requirements:

- A MobileMe subscription

- A broadband Internet connection (screen sharing requires a 300 kbps or faster bidirectional network connection between computers)

- For computer-to-computer file sharing or screen sharing: Two or more Mac computers with Mac OS X v10.5.8 (or later), each configured for use with the same MobileMe subscription

- To access files on a Time Capsule or AirPort Extreme Base Station: One or more Mac computers with Mac OS X v10.5.8 (or later) and a Time Capsule or AirPort Extreme Base Station with 802.11n technology and an external hard disk attached. Each computer and device must be configured for use with the same MobileMe subscription. Your Time Capsule and AirPort Extreme Base Station need to have firmware version 7.4.2 (or later), and your Mac needs to have AirPort Utility 5.4.2 (or later) installed.

Home network requirements:

- If you have a home network with one or more Mac computers, a Time Capsule, AirPort Extreme Base Station, or AirPort Express Base Station is recommended.

**Time Capsule**   **AirPort Extreme Base Station**   **AirPort Express Base Station**

- Back to My Mac is also compatible with many modern home routers that fully support either NAT Port Mapping Protocol (NAT-PMP) or Universal Plug and Play (UPnP).

Setting Up Back to My Mac

Follow the instructions below to set up each of your Mac computers and home network devices to work with Back to My Mac.

Enable Back to My Mac on each Mac:

1 Make sure you have the latest Mac OS X software by choosing Apple menu > About This Mac. If you're not using v10.5.8 (or later), click Software Update and install the necessary updates.
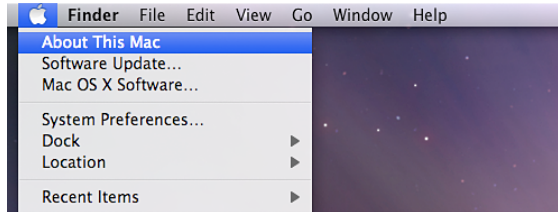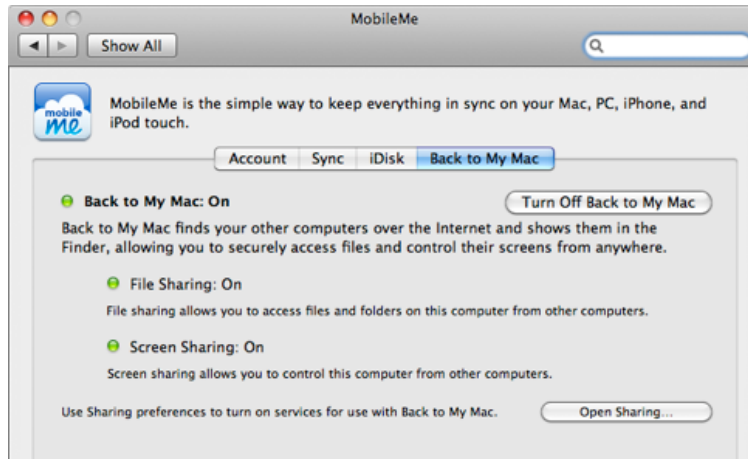

2 Choose Apple menu > System Preferences.

3 Click MobileMe.

4 If you're not already signed in, sign in using your MobileMe subscriber name and password. Remember to use the same MobileMe subscription information on each Mac.

5 Click the Back to My Mac button.

6 If Back to My Mac is not already on, click "Turn On Back to My Mac."

Note: If you're using a third-party router and see a message that Back to My Mac isn't working because your router doesn't support NAT Port Mapping Protocol (NAT-PMP) or Universal Plug and Play (UPnP), you need to check if the technology is enabled on your router. If you're not sure whether your third-party router device supports NAT-PMP or UPnP, review the user documentation that came with it or contact the manufacturer. If NAT-PMP or UPnP technology has been enabled on your router device and you can reach MobileMe services but are unable to use Back to My Mac, check if a firmware update is available for your router. For more information, see the documentation that came with your router, contact the router manufacturer, or contact your ISP (if your ISP provided the device) or the manufacturer for information about enabling UPnP.

Enable sharing on each Mac you want to access remotely:

1 In the Back to My Mac pane, click Open Sharing.

2 If screen sharing and file sharing are not already enabled on the Mac you're setting up, click the checkboxes for screen sharing and file sharing.
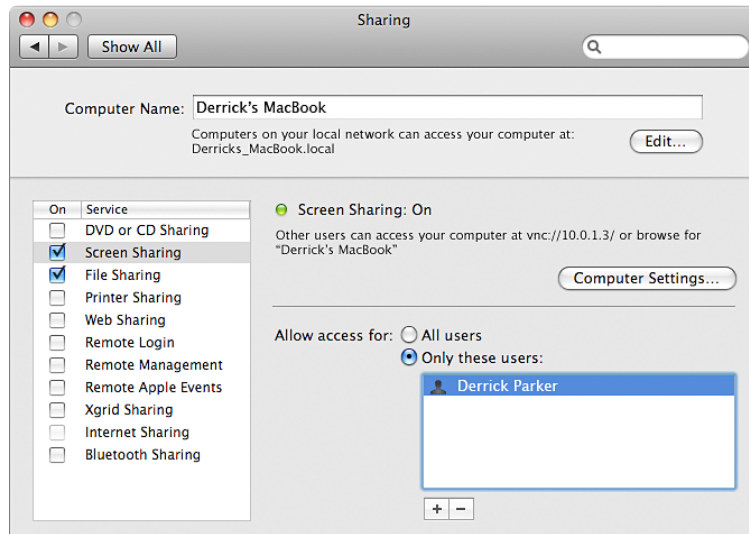

Important: For added security, you should select the "Only these users" button below "Allow access for," and add your user name to the list. To do so, click the Add (+) button, select "Users and Groups" from the left column, and choose your user name from the column on the right.

Set up your home network:

To use Back to My Mac on a home network, Apple recommends a Time Capsule or an AirPort Extreme Base Station or AirPort Express with NAT Port Mapping Protocol (NAT-PMP) enabled. Alternatively, you can use a third-party Internet router with Universal Plug and Play (UPnP) technology enabled (check the documentation that came with your router), and skip the instructions in this section.

1 Open AirPort Utility in the Utilities folder in the Applications folder.

2 Click the Internet button.

3 In the NAT section, verify that Enable NAT Port Mapping Protocol is selected.
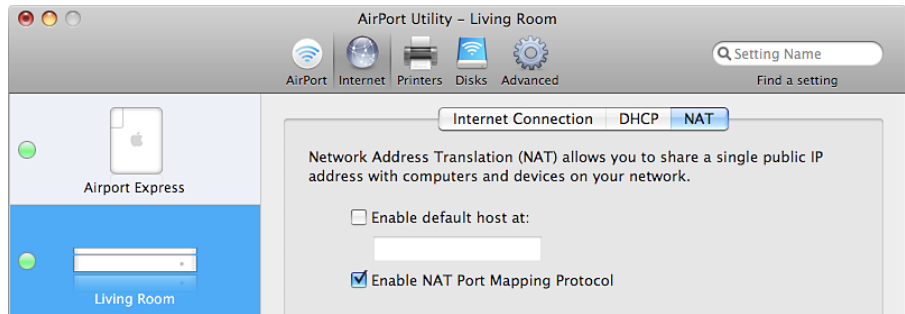
4 Click Update, if needed.

5 Quit AirPort Utility.

Set up Back to My Mac on your Time Capsule or AirPort Extreme Base Station:
If you plan to connect to a remote Time Capsule or external hard disk connected to an AirPort Extreme Base Station, you need to set up Back to My Mac on your remote device:

1 Open AirPort Utility 5.4.2 (or later) in the Utilities folder in your Applications folder.

2 Select the Time Capsule or AirPort Extreme Base Station from the list on the left.

3 If the version is not 7.4.2 or later, click Update Firmware.

4 If necessary, enter your password for the device, and then install the updates.

5 Click Advanced in the toolbar, and then click MobileMe.

6 Type your MobileMe subscriber name and password.

7 Click Update to apply the changes.

Set up "Wake on Demand":
If you have a compatible AirPort Extreme Base Station or Time Capsule (with firmware 7.4.2 or later), or Apple TV (1st or 2nd generation) on your network, you can set up your computer to automatically wake when you want to use Back to My Mac to access it from another computer.

1 If the computer you're setting up is a portable, make sure it's plugged in and open (or connected to an external monitor).

2 Choose Apple menu > System Preferences, and then click Energy Saver.

3 Click the Power Adapter button.

4 Select the "Wake for network access," "Wake for Ethernet network access," or "Wake for AirPort network access" checkbox, and then click OK.

The options differ depending on the capabilities of your Mac. For example, "Wake for network access" appears if your computer can be woken using either an Ethernet or AirPort wireless connection.
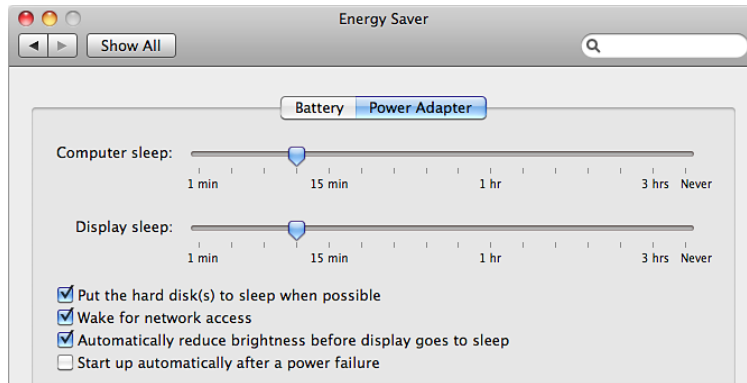
5 Drag the "Computer sleep" slider to set the number of minutes of inactivity before your computer goes to sleep.

Your Mac will go to sleep at the sleep interval chosen, but if you need to connect to it using Back to My Mac, it will automatically wake from sleep.

For more information, see "Mac OS X v10.6: About Wake on Demand" at http://support.apple.com/kb/HT3774?viewlocale=en_US.

Using Back to My Mac

After your Mac and home network are set up, using Back to My Mac is simple. The Finder displays your remote Mac computer, Time Capsule, or external hard disk connected to an AirPort Extreme Base Station in the sidebar where you can connect to it with a click.

Share your files:
Using the file sharing feature, you can drag files from your remote Mac, Time Capsule, or hard disk to the Mac that you're using. You can also drag new files to your remote Mac, Time Capsule, or hard disk; create and delete folders; and arrange files however you like. Here's how:
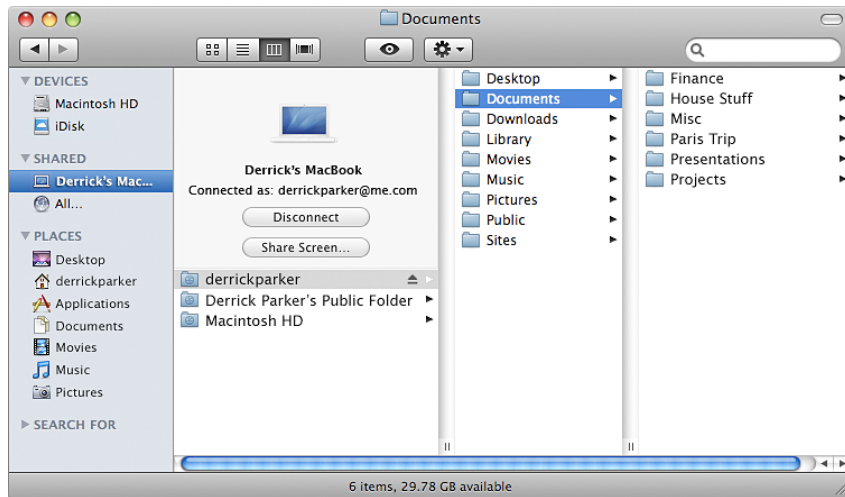
1 Open the Finder window.

2 Below Shared in the sidebar, select the Mac, Time Capsule, or AirPort Extreme Base Station to which you want to connect.
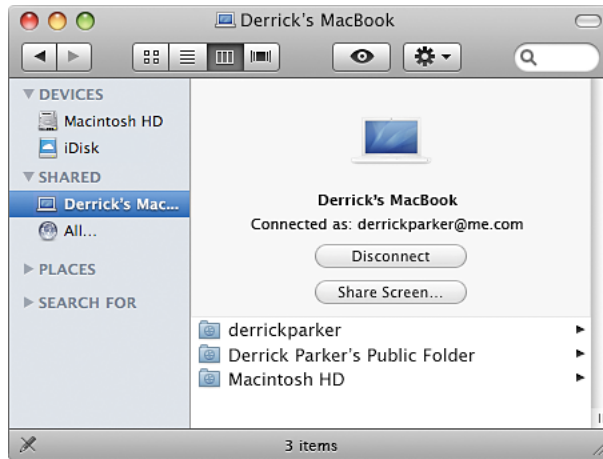
3 If necessary, enter the password for the device, and then click Connect As.

After you're connected, you can browse the hard drive of the remote device, and then drag any files you need to the Mac that you're using.

Share your screen:

With the screen sharing feature, you control your remote Mac through a special window on the Mac that you're using. You can open applications, edit and save files, and even use many keyboard shortcuts. Here's how:

1 Open the Finder window.

2 Below Shared in the sidebar, click the Mac you want to control.
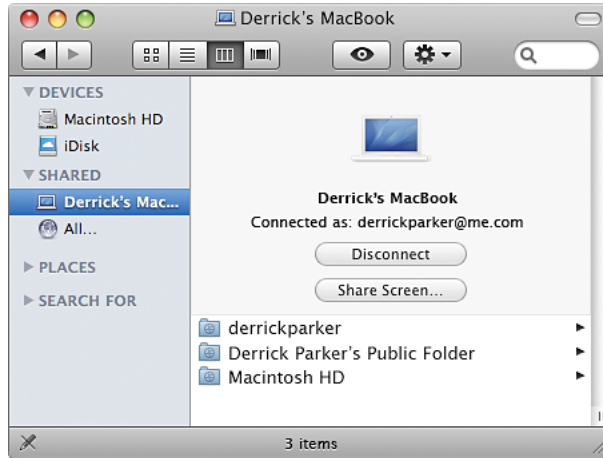
3 Click Share Screen.

A new window opens, displaying the desktop for that Mac.

If shared computers or disks don't appear in the Finder sidebar:
If you've set up Back to My Mac on each Mac, Time Capsule, and external hard drive you want to share, and don't see them in the Finder sidebar, you might need to turn on the sidebar item.

1 Click anywhere on your desktop to go to the Finder.

2 Choose Finder > Preferences and click Sidebar.

3 Make sure the checkbox for Back to My Mac (below Shared) is selected.

Important Tips

Create a good password
Back to My Mac uses advanced authentication and data encryption technologies to protect your data. However, creating a good password is essential to keeping your data safe.

Make sure your password:

- Has at least 8 characters. A password can be up to 32 characters long.
- Uses a combination of numbers, letters, and symbols (for example, @, $, %).
- Doesn't use words found in the dictionary, number sequences ("1234"), or keyboard patterns ("qwerty").
- Isn't the same password for multiple services or websites.

To change your password:

1 Log in to MobileMe at www.me.com/account.

2 Click Password Settings, type your current password, type your new password twice, and then click Save.

3 Update your MobileMe password in System Preferences on all of your Mac computers.

If your Mac is lost or stolen, you should immediately change your MobileMe password (at www.me.com/account) to prevent unauthorized access to your other computers.

For more information on passwords, refer to "Choosing good passwords in Mac OS X" at http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1506.

Adjust sleep settings
If your home router does not fully support either NAT Port Mapping Protocol (NAT-PMP) or Universal Plug and Play (UPnP), Back to My Mac can connect to your remote computer only if it is not in sleep mode. If your computer is in sleep mode, it does not automatically wake up when you try to connect using Back to My Mac. To adjust your sleep settings, go to the Energy Saver pane of System Preferences on the computers you wish to access remotely.

Set screen saver locking

For added security, it's a good idea to turn on "Require password to wake this computer from sleep or screen saver" in Security preferences.

In System Preferences, you can set the screen saver to come on after a short period of inactivity, or use hot corners to turn it on instantly if you're stepping away.

Check firewall settings

Mac OS X Snow Leopard has a built-in firewall, which is accessible from the Firewall pane of Security preferences. You should verify that the firewall is set to either "Allow all incoming connections" or "Set access for specific services and applications."
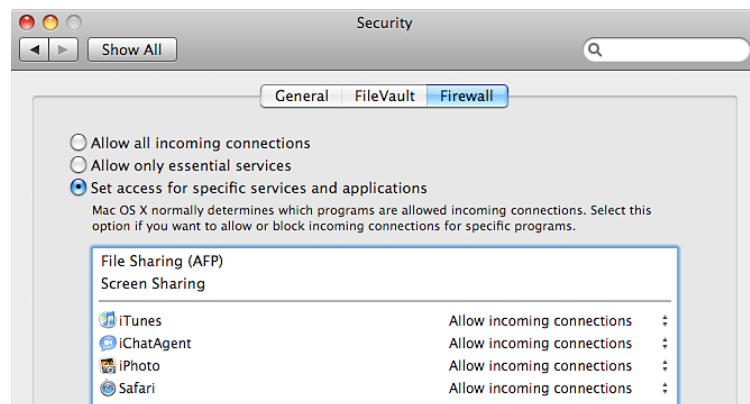
If you use a third-party firewall, you may need to modify the configuration to permit Back to My Mac to function correctly. In some corporate (or managed) network environments, you may need to consult your system administrator. When signing in to MobileMe and enabling Back to My Mac, TCP ports 443 and 5354 are used. For connections between machines, Back to My Mac typically uses UDP port 4500.

Security

Back to My Mac uses advanced authentication and security technologies to help prevent unauthorized access to your data and protect it while it is in transit over the Internet. When you first sign in to MobileMe on a system using Mac OS X Leopard or Mac OS X Snow Leopard, you automatically receive a digital certificate and private key for your Back to My Mac Encryption Certificate. When you connect to another system using Back to My Mac, authentication is performed using the standard Public Key Cryptography for Initial Authentication in Kerberos (PKINIT) protocol with the Back to My Mac Encryption Certificate. Communication over the public Internet between Back to My Mac computers is encrypted using IPSec.

For More Information

For more information about Back to My Mac and other MobileMe services, visit www.apple.com/mobileme.

For Back to My Mac tips and troubleshooting, visit http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1109.