



youriMac handbook

As our new Handbook moves to its second instalment, we look at getting connected

Huge
cut-out-and-keep
user manual

As we said last issue, the iMac is easy to set up, even straight out of its box. However, many people would like more reassurance when getting to know their new machine and this is precisely why we've produced this iMac manual.

The iMac is so-called because you are meant to be able to connect to the Internet within 10 minutes of getting the box into your home. This may seem a tall order and you may not even fully understand what the Internet is, how it works or what it means to you. Well, hopefully you'll be up and running by the time you've read this part of our new-look Handbook.

Subsequent instalments of the *Your iMac Handbook* will show you how to use the applications that come with your iMac, and some of the things you can do with them, like playing CDs, sending faxes and sorting your diary. We'll show you how to plug in other peripherals and get them up and running. In short, if you collect the full set of six Handbooks, you'll be well equipped to get the very best out of your iMac.

NEXT MONTH

We explain the basics of your iMac's applications, starting with databases, word processing, spreadsheets and paint programs.

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Jargon buster

Link

Most pages on the Internet have links to other pages via highlighted text or buttons. Hence the 'World Wide Web'. These links are also known as hyperlinks, they let you follow trails of information from one computer to another, even from one continent to another. Distance is no object.

PIM

Stands for personal information manager. It's like an electronic version of a Filofax, except that you don't get pages falling out and you don't have to keep crossing out all those out-of-date phone numbers. Online PIMs are stored on a centralised computer out there in cyberspace, which you can access via your own or someone else's computer using the Internet.

Web page

When you're on the Internet, you're browsing Web pages – screens full of text, graphics and links. Click on a link and you're taken to another page.



Web pages also contain words and pictures or any other content that can be recognised by a computer, such as software files and databases.

Website

A Website is a collection of pages designed by a single organisation, department or individual. To a degree, though, the terms Web page and Website are interchangeable even though, strictly speaking, they're not the same thing. You might talk about your personal Website for example, even though it only consists of a single Web page.

What's the Internet?

Baffled by talk of Websites and surfing? Our quick and easy guide to the Net will have you surfing Websites in no time

The Internet was set up by the US military as a communications system that could withstand a nuclear attack. Because it was a network rather than a centralised system, you could knock out part of it, but information would still be able to get through via a myriad other routes.

The idea of the information superhighway is actually very misleading because the Internet is nothing like a highway. Imagine, instead, a million different computers worldwide linked by a million different routes.

The Internet's military function has long since been overtaken by its civilian

applications. Initially, it was computer enthusiasts and communications experts who saw its potential, but it wasn't long before big businesses realised it was a very effective promotional tool and the ideal way of attracting customers.

Internet for all

The Internet is still a tool for individuals, though. Big companies may spend millions on Websites, but ordinary folk can set up their own Web pages too. If you've got an Internet account of any description, the chances are it comes with free Web space. Now you too can be a publisher!

There is an important distinction to make here, though. Most people tend to talk about the Internet and the Web as if they were the same.

The Internet, though, is the underlying structure that makes the whole thing possible. It's a combination of the global network and the protocol each computer on the Internet uses in order to communicate and transfer data.

Also, the obvious question is who owns the Internet and who runs it? First of all, no-one owns it and everyone runs it! Big multinational telecoms companies own and maintain the infrastructure, while thousands of other companies own the computers linked to the Internet, which hold the Web pages the rest of us read.

There are various advisory bodies which help develop standards on the Internet, like the World Wide Web Consortium, and local legislation will apply to Web content viewed and published in specific countries, but beyond that the Internet is far bigger than any single authority. Scary, huh?

What you can find on the Web



Snap up a bargain

Want to know more about that digital camera you've had your eye on? Read all about it on the manufacturer's Website, and browse some other models



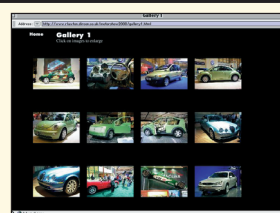
Food for thought

What about your groceries? You can buy all of these things online (Tesco, for example, will deliver your groceries to your door when you order online)



Having a current affair

Where do you get your news? You could get it from the Net. The BBC, and many papers and news agencies run Websites with the latest headlines



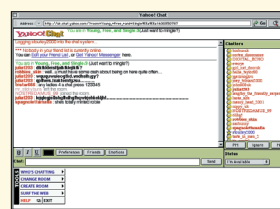
Say it yourself

Want to share your hobby? Your own personal Website is the perfect way to do it and apart from a bit of time it won't cost you a bean to set up...



Get organised

Computers are great at storing contacts, appointments and reminders. With an online PIM, you can access your diary on any computer with a Net connection



Let's talk together

What the Internet does best of all is help people communicate, no matter where they are. Chat rooms let you talk to people in real-time, in virtual 'rooms'



What's a browser?

Having an Internet connection is all very well, but you'll also need a clever bit of software to help you view the pages of a Website

To view Web pages on the Internet, you need a Web browser. This is a program which controls the link to remote computers holding the Web pages. Using your modem and phone line, a browser fetches the Web page data, which is stored as an HTML file on the remote computer.

This contains not just the text on the page, but the names of the graphics files used on the page, where to find them and how to lay the page out. And your browser does all this and reconstitutes the page on your screen in just a handful of seconds. Not bad, eh?

Which one?

There are two main browsers to choose: Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. Each has its fans, but if the truth be known there's

little to choose between them since the Internet's interaction and usefulness comes from the Web pages themselves, not the browser you use.

Internet Explorer is the most popular browsers on the PC, because it's built into the Windows operating system. On the iMac it's a very different story because it doesn't benefit from this kind of integration. Even without that, though, it's a very well-designed and effective Web browser which many people will use because it's on all iMacs.

There are those, though, who think that Microsoft gets things too much its own way and who opt to use its rival Netscape Navigator instead. Indeed, many prefer its more colourful, 'chunkier' appearance, and it's every bit as easy to use. You can make your own mind up which you system

you prefer, since both are supplied as standard on your iMac software package.

Where to get them

Internet Explorer comes with the Outlook Express email program. Netscape has a rival email program, but this isn't supplied with iMacs – you only get the browser. For email and other tools you'll need to buy the full Netscape Communicator suite.

Netscape Communicator is free, and you can find it on the *Your iMac* cover CD or you can visit www.microsoft.com or www.netscape.com to download the software.

Browsers do more than display Web pages. They give you an Address Bar for typing in Web addresses and they can store your favourite Websites and addresses for quick access in the future.

Jargon buster

Browser cache

Web browsers store your most recently-viewed pages as files on your hard disk. This is why, when you hit the Back button to view a page you've already seen, it reloads much faster.

HTML

Stands for hypertext markup language, the language used to design and lay out Web pages. Only professional designers these days need to know HTML code.

Search engine

A Website that stores descriptions and keywords for millions of Websites. Type in your search criteria and it'll give you a list of matching Websites.

Software suite

When a software package is described as a 'suite', it's a collection of programs designed to work both together and on their own. The Netscape Communicator suite has a browser, email program, Web page creation package and a few other utilities.

A tour of your browser

They may be rival Web browsers, but Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator do the same thing. They fetch, format and display Web pages. Here's how the same page looks in both browsers and the tools and controls each offer for surfing the Web

Forward/Back buttons
Use the Back button to revisit the pages in the current session. Use the Forward button to retrace your steps

Refresh/Reload
Pages that don't load properly or need to be reloaded. The Refresh/Reload button forces your browser to fetch, format and display the page again

Address bar
Type in the address of the page you want to visit. You don't need to type in 'http://' or the 'www' part if you use a new browser

Explorer Bar
Internet Explorer has this tabbed bar for displaying your favourite sites, your browsing 'history', a search engine and the 'page holder'

Favourite links
You can store your favourite links on these toolbars – just drag the Web page address from the field above on to the toolbar. Then, click on the button you've created a shortcut to that page

Web page
Our Web page looks the same in both browsers. It's fairly rare for pages to look significantly different in other browsers

Collapsible toolbars
Netscape Navigator lets you 'collapse' your toolbars when you're not using them

Scrollbars
Only badly-designed Web pages will be wider than your browser window, so you're unlikely to need the horizontal scrollbars. Many pages are longer than the available screen height, though, so you'll need the vertical scrollbars



Jargon buster

JPEG

The graphics used on Web pages are usually in one of two graphic formats. The JPEG format is used for photos, where you've got millions of colours in the image and you need to preserve subtle tones. The great advantage of JPEG photos is that they use far less space than conventional photo files.

GIF

The other graphic format is GIF, which is poor at reproducing photos and subtle variations. Because any GIF image can only contain a maximum of 256 colours it's a very compact way of storing graphics. GIFs are very good for logos, icons and buttons, where a restricted number of colours have been used and you need to be able to download them quickly.

QuickTime

Apple's own multimedia player, can cope with video footage, audio clips and even MP3 files. QuickTime is available free and will already be installed along with your iMac's System software. However, don't be surprised if you're prompted to update your copy of QuickTime when you use it, since newer versions are coming out all the time (don't upgrade to QuickTime Pro, though, unless you need the programming features it offers, because you'll have to pay for it).

Frame

Some designers use tables to produce complex layouts on their Web pages. Other designers use 'frames'. A frames-based page actually displays two or more separate pages at the same time, in different panels within the browser window. You can scroll within the separate windows. Frames are often used to hold navigation buttons and to give a Website an overall 'feel'.

Context menu

If you hold down the Control key while you click on a link, both Navigator and Internet Explorer will display a pop-up context menu which lets you open the link in a new window, amongst other things.

Web pages

Web pages are really very simple publications that can be easily understood once you know what you're looking for

The sheer visual diversity of Web pages on the Internet may lead you to think that they're fantastically complex things. But they're not. The basic parts of Web pages are really quite straightforward, and it's simply the skill of the designers that makes them look so radically different.

In the beginning, before designers and programmers got in on the act, Web pages were indeed very simple. Essentially, they consisted mostly of text with, if you were lucky, a few

graphics embedded in the text for a bit of light relief. Part of the whole principle of the Web, of course, is links, and the ability to follow them from one page to the next. Even these primitive early Web pages had hyperlinks, then.

Designer pages

Once the Internet became commercially interesting, along came a new generation of innovative designers who could really make the very basic HTML layout options jump through hoops. Along, too,

came programming experts and the ability to 'plug in' interactive objects like menus, buttons, animations and even small movies.

The result is the interactive, multimedia Web experience we enjoy today. Underneath, though, Web pages are still pretty straightforward. So don't let their apparent complexity put you off creating your own, because it's a lot simpler than you think. Your personal Web pages can be just as simple, or just as complex as you want to make them.

A trip round a Web page

Graphic

Graphics are as important as text in Web pages. They are stored as separate files on the remote computer. Your browser knows what to do with them

Banner

Most Web pages have a banner, which either contains the page title or an ad. Some banners are animated, showing a sequence of ads or images

Field

This Web page lets you search for information on a chosen topic. You type in your word into this box or 'field'

Hyperlinks

HTML text can be linked to another page. Linked text is coloured blue and underlined for easy identification

Graphics links

Any graphic on a Web page can be designed to act as a link to another page when the cursor changes to a pointing finger

Page background

The background of this page is white, but designers can use any one of a couple of hundred different colours. It's also possible to use images and textures made up of repeating 'tiles'

Button

Buttons usually take you to another page, but make the page look more interactive

Movie/sound clips

You can listen to audio clips and watch video footage using Apple's QuickTime software

HTML text

You can change the fonts and sizes of HTML text via your browser preferences

Graphical text

Headings, and other short text often look better if they're designed as a graphic

Pop-up menu

Programmers can build pop-up windows using a programming language called Java, which lets you embed 'applets' (like this pop-up menu) in Web pages

Multi-column layout

HTML language includes provision for 'tables', which lets designers create multi-column layouts like this one



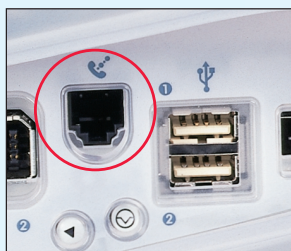


What's a modem?

If you put the words modulation and demodulation together, what do you get?

Your iMac can't communicate with the Internet by itself. It's not that your computer and those on the Internet don't talk the same language, it's just that there's that awkward little thing in the middle called the phone line.

Ordinary phone lines are designed for voices, and signals are sent as analogue waveforms. This is very different to digital data, which is sent as simple ons and offs. A modem converts digital data into an analogue waveform suitable for transmission over phone lines. Not surprisingly, another



Your iMac has a modem built in. Just connect the modem socket to the telephone socket

modem at the other end has to convert it back into digital data.

This is why, incidentally, your iMac may occasionally get an engaged tone when it tries to connect to your ISP. This just means all the modems at the other end are currently busy – try again, and the chances are you'll get through straight away, since other users will be connecting and disconnecting all the time.

Now the iMac comes with a modem built in, as do most consumer-orientated PCs these days. Some older computers and specialised office models don't, though, hence the fact that you can buy external modems separately.

Modem types

A separate 'external' modem for your iMac is one that plugs into a spare USB socket. There's not much point, though, since all modems these days are much the same. The modem built into your iMac is a 'V90' model. The V90 standard is the latest and best, and it squeezes just about as much reliability and speed out of ordinary phone lines as you're likely to get.

This question of modem 'speed' governs just about everything that happens on the Internet. A V90 modem can download data at a maximum of 56kbps (kilobits per second), though the actual speed may be lower depending on the quality of the connection.

Pardon? What does that all mean, exactly? Good question. There are eight bits in a byte (stop us if we're boring you, but we'll get there soon), so your modem can fetch data at up to 7K per second (that's 56 divided by 8, see?).

Faster than a tortoise

In normal use, the figure is more likely to be 5-6K per second. It only needs some simple maths to work out how long it will take to download typical items from the Internet.

Every single object on every single page will have been pared down to the smallest file size possible with the limited speed of modems in mind.

The Web pages themselves aren't much of a challenge. The basic HTML file for an average page may be just a few K, so it will arrive in a second or so. But the graphics on the page may be 10-100K each, so that's why the basic page appears quickly but the pictures take longer.

The worst culprits for downloads, though, are

Digital delights

ISDN

ISDN isn't new, exactly fast... or cheap. You need a special ISDN line (Home Highway is an ISDN variant) and you'll need an adaptor instead of your modem – you can get USB adaptors for iMacs. The maximum data transfer rate is 64Kbps (8K per second), but this goes up to 128Kbps (16K per second) if you pay for two simultaneous phone calls. ISDN has almost instant connection times.

ADSL

BT's brand new digital data transfer system is going online in certain parts of the country. To find out if it's available in your area, go to www.bt.com/openworld and type in your phone number. ADSL promises to be up to 40 times faster than a conventional modem. We'll see when it arrives.

applications, movies, big images and sound files. Sites which offer any of these for download will usually quote the file sizes involved so that you can decide whether or not to go ahead. A few quick taps on our office calculator reveals that each megabyte of data will take around 3-4 minutes to arrive. Even if you don't mind waiting, there's the phone bill to consider. Time to look into those low-cost or unlimited access tariffs then, eh?

Is there no alternative? Well, there are two – one's been around for a while, the other may or may not be available, depending on where you live... see our Digital Delights box above for more details.

Jargon buster

V90

The latest and greatest modem 'standard' of all. It's important that everyone uses the same standard if all these modems are to communicate with each other, and the V90 specifications squeeze just about as much performance and reliability out of ordinary phone lines.

Fax modem

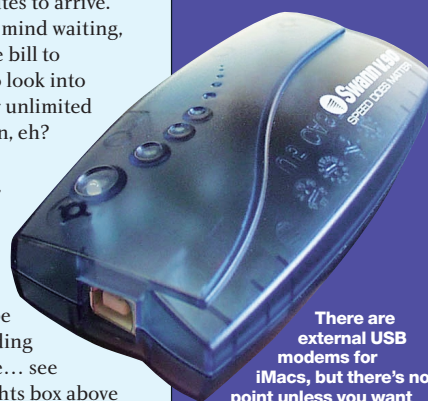
Modems can send and receive faxes, too! If you think about it, faxes are digital data sent via phone lines, which is exactly what modems are built for. With a fax modem, incoming faxes are saved on your hard disk and you can send faxes from any application – it's as easy as printing them.

Serial devices

You may come across many iMac peripherals, notably in the secondhand market, with 'serial' connections. Before the iMac, serial ports were the standard way of connecting devices like external modems to Macintosh computers. iMacs don't have serial ports, so, forget about using serial devices right now.

Ethernet

Your iMac has a modem socket for plugging the phone lead into. There's also a very similar-looking 'Ethernet' port. Ethernet is a cable-based networking system used in office and school environments – it's not the same thing at all so don't confuse the two or plug your phone line into the Ethernet port.



There are external USB modems for iMacs, but there's no point unless you want to run two connections



Jargon buster

Server

All the Web pages you see on the Internet are stored on computers (or servers) which are permanently connected to the Net. Your emails are stored on your ISP's email server and you join newsgroups via a news server.

Newsgroup

Just like email, except that messages are displayed in a public forum. Anyone can join and contribute, and all you need is 'newsreader' software, which is built into Outlook Express and Netscape Communicator.

Chat room

Chat rooms are like newsgroups, but conversations take place in real time, your comments appearing on the screen almost as soon as you send them. Designed for smaller groups (20 or so) and shorted messages, they can be taken over by hostile little groups or frequented by unsavoury characters, so mind your step.

Web-based email

This is where your emails aren't downloaded to your computer at all. Instead, they're kept on the email server and viewed via a browser. The advantage is that you can read your emails using any computer, anywhere in the world – that's handy.

What is an ISP?

Before you can connect to the Internet you'll need an account with an Internet service provider... or an ISP, for short

We've already mentioned that you need a modem to connect to the Internet, and we've already mentioned ISPs (Internet service providers) too. But who are these people, and why do you need them?

It costs a lot of money to connect permanently to the Internet, both in terms of phone charges and hardware. You can't afford it, we can't afford it, but ISPs can. They recoup their costs by charging a monthly subscription fee or by selling ads. They'll give you free Web space for your own Website, access to newsgroups and maybe even chat rooms, Web-based email and more.

A single ISP may have tens, even hundreds of thousands of subscribers, and all they have to do is make sure they have enough modems at their end for everyone to get online. Your modem dials up the ISP's modem, and connects your computer to the Internet for as long as you keep your phone connection open.

Why use a free ISP?

There is one potential source of confusion to iron out here, though. When is an ISP 'free'?

Back in the bad old days, you always had to pay your ISP a monthly or annual fee. This might only be £10-15 a month, but it soon added up.

Then along came a whole bunch of 'free' ISPs who would give you an Internet account for nothing. They did this by recouping their outlay using advertising revenue or by various other means – the upshot was that we, the users, now only had to pay for our phone calls.

Yes, and that's the catch. You don't pay your ISP any cash, but you still have to pay your telecoms provider for all the time you spend online.

That's all set to change, though. Many ISPs have plans for access that, even if it's not entirely free, will only cost you a fixed amount a month – no matter how long you spend on the Internet.

One of the biggest, Alta Vista, has been in trouble in the

news recently for promising unlimited access and not delivering it. But less well-known is the fact that FreeServe has been offering it for some time, albeit to a limited number of subscribers. For £10 a month you can surf the Net absolutely free... if you see what we mean.

So why pay for an ISP? Well, some ISPs still charge a monthly fee, and you've got to pay for your call charges on top of that.

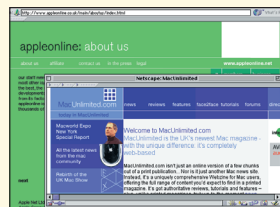
Your choice

It all comes down to the type of service you want. You can go the 'free' route, for example, in which case you will, sadly, be just a number, and your calls to the technical support team will cost 50p+ per minute.

This could be a good option for most domestic users. Or you can pay a company like Direct Connection and get a more professional range of services, low-cost technical support and a lot of technical expertise and advice too. If you're using a Net connection for your business, it's a small outlay that could bring big gains.

At your service

What type of service provider do you need? There are so many out there right now that it's next to impossible to provide a definitive list. Here, though, are four you might like to consider... they're also good examples of their type



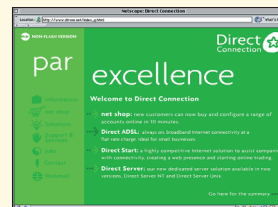
Apple Online is an ISP dedicated specifically to Mac users – and that includes the iMac, of course. You get genuinely Mac-savvy support (most ISPs are geared towards PCs) and an online Mac magazine called MacUnlimited



AOL is a 'content provider'. It doesn't just provide an Internet connection, but news, features and other information. AOL is offering flat rate Internet access, but you need to install their own browser/access software that can be a bit clunky



FreeServe is one of the biggest 'free' ISPs. With no monthly charges and unmetered access scheme, it's easy on the pocket, though you'll pay for technical support calls. You get news and features, too, plus Web-based email and more



Direct Connection is one of the 'old school' ISPs which still charges its subscribers a monthly fee. For that, though, you get cheap and competent technical support and a full range of packages designed for growing businesses



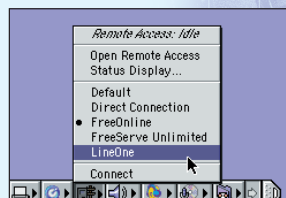
Internet Setup Assistant

There's no mystery to setting up an ISP connection. We show you how

Not connected to the Internet yet? Even if you are, you might want to set up another Internet account. Either way, you need to configure your iMac with your ISP's settings, and there are two ways of doing this. You can use the Internet Setup Assistant,

which walks you through the whole process, step-by-step, or you can do it yourself.

This isn't difficult. Indeed, the Internet Setup Assistant simply automates settings you can easily apply yourself. If you do configure things manually, you'll have a better grasp of how your connection works.



If you've got multiple accounts set up on your computer, you can easily switch between them

The Setup Assistant can set you up automatically with one of a number of selected ISPs, but we're going to show you on this page how to enter the details manually for the ISP of your choice.

Jargon buster

Control Panel

You can configure the way your iMac operates using a whole series of Control Panels. They're usually accessed via the Apple Menu. Remote Access, TCP/IP and Internet are the three Control Panels that handle your Internet connections.

PPP

Stands for point to point protocol. This is the standard method for connecting computers to the Internet via dial-up (modem) connections with ISPs.

TCP/IP

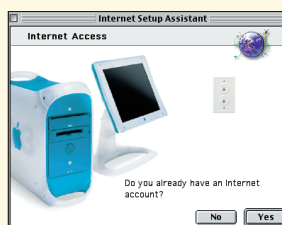
Stands for transmission control protocol/Internet protocol, a combined standard that works alongside PPP while your iMac is connected to the Internet.

Setting up your connection

Configuring your iMac for an ISP is a fairly straightforward process. Follow our step-by-step guide and you'll soon be connected to the Web and surfing your way around the world

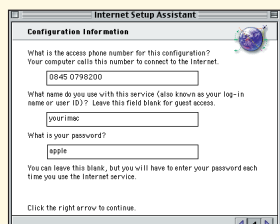
Internet Setup Assistant

You can find an alias for the Internet Setup Assistant in the Assistants folder on your hard disk. Double click it to start it.



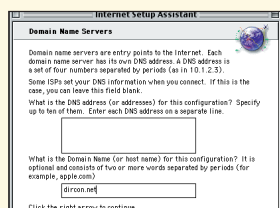
The questions start simple but then again they always do!

- 1 Would you like to set up your computer for Internet access? Yes we would. On this, the next screen, we're asked if we already have an account. We do – we just haven't entered the details yet.
- 2 The next screen gives you a list of all the information you'll need from your ISP before you set up your account. You'll have this information if you've signed up online using another computer or you already have an account set up on another computer.



Type in ID and password from when you set up the account

- 3 The next screen asks you to choose a name for your account, the next checks that you're using the iMac's internal modem, and this one prompts you for your username, your password and the number you dial to connect to your ISP.
- 4 You can ignore the next two screens, leaving them at their default settings unless your ISP suggests otherwise. On this screen, though, you may need to enter your ISP's domain (their 'address' on the Internet) – not all do.



Your ISP will have told you your DNS numbers when you joined

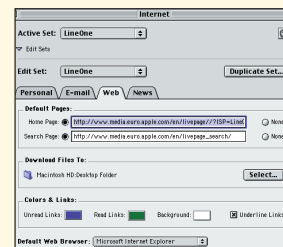
suggests otherwise. On this screen, though, you may need to enter your ISP's domain (their 'address' on the Internet) – not all do.

- 5 On the next screen you'll need to enter the addresses of your ISP's two mail servers. One is for incoming mail (the POP server), the other is for outgoing mail (the SMTP server). This information is used by your email program.
- 6 Next, enter the name of your ISP's news server, accept the defaults on the subsequent screen and, on the final screen, click Go Ahead. The Assistant will now configure your iMac with those details. See the do-it-yourself walkthrough...

Do it yourself

To see what the Internet Setup Assistant does, there are three control panels that you need to examine:

- 7 The Internet control panel contains your email address, username, password details and other account information. You can change



Personalise your browser so it goes to a preferred homepage

- the 'active' set (the one used by your iMac by default) and edit any of the sets too.
- 8 Two other control panels take care of the business end of the connection, though. The Remote Access control panel contains the phone number, username and password needed to make the connection in the first place.

The TCP panel is where your iMac stores the type of connection required (PPP, in case you want to know) and the domain (if required) of your ISP's servers. Both this and the Remote Access control panels store sets of data to reflect each account (via Configurations on File menu).



Jargon buster

Cache

Your browser temporarily stores the Web pages you visit in its 'cache' on your hard disk. This is so that you can quickly retrace your steps without having to download the pages again. By increasing the size of the cache in the program preferences you can save more pages.

Download folder

You may want to download applications, movies and other files that you find on the Internet. When you click on a link to download an object, your browser automatically saves it in your nominated 'download' folder for you to pick up later.

Helper applications

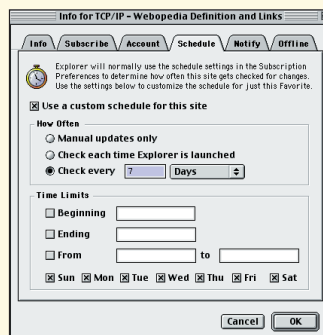
Many Web pages contain items that can't be opened directly by your browser, like QuickTime movies or compressed 'archives'. You can choose 'helper applications' for items like these, which will open or run them automatically.

Cookies

Some Websites like to store information about you and your browsing habits when you visit their pages. This information is stored in special files called cookies which live on your hard disk. You can configure both Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator not to accept cookies, via their program preferences.

Offline browsing

Internet Explorer has a special offline browsing feature which lets you download selected Web pages to your hard disk so that



you can read them later without running up your phone bill. You do this by subscribing to a page and choosing how and when Internet Explorer updates the saved page.

Make accessing your favourite Web pages cheaper and faster by 'subscribing' to them and synchronising them at regular intervals

Changing defaults

Customising your browser is a breeze if you know a few simple tricks

Web browsers are smart, but they're not smart enough to figure out the way you like to work. However, you can change the way your browser looks and behaves.

Both Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer have a default 'Home' page. This is the page that loads on start up.

To change the default home page in Navigator, open its

Preferences window via the Edit menu. On the left of the window is a list of preference pages arranged into headings. Click on a page title, and it

opens in the area to the right. The one we want is Navigator, and here we can type in the address of the Web home page we want.

To change the home page in Internet Explorer, you open its own Preferences window, via the Edit menu again. As with Navigator, the sections are listed down the left-hand side.

Click Home/Search to type in a new home page address.

You can also change the fonts and their size that your browser uses. Change the fonts used by Internet Explorer by switching to Language/Fonts screen. The 'proportional' font is the one used for ordinary Web page text, while the 'fixed width' font is used for certain kinds of technical information. In Netscape Navigator you

need the Fonts screen, under Appearance. You can also specify the size this text should appear at and even increase font sizes while you're actually

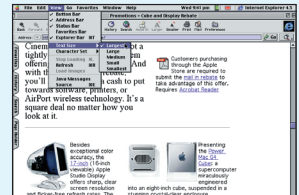
browsing pages via the View menu, which has commands to increase and decrease font size.

In Internet Explorer, you change the size of the fonts on your page using the Text size submenu on the View menu.

Displaying graphics

For most of us, the Internet wouldn't be the Internet if none of the pages had graphics on them. But for those looking for speedy text-based information, who don't have time to wait, there is an alternative.

Open Internet Explorer's Preferences window, click the Web Content tab, and you'll find you can configure it to



Can't quite read the text? You can increase the size via the View menu until it's the size you want

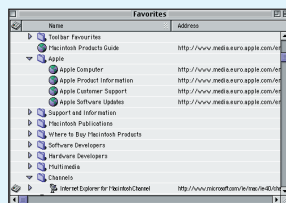
show or not show a wide range of Web page content – including graphics. This will make Web pages download faster, but many of the more slickly-designed Web pages won't make any sense if you disable half of their contents.

You can do the same thing in Navigator much more simply by clicking the Images button on the toolbar on and off.

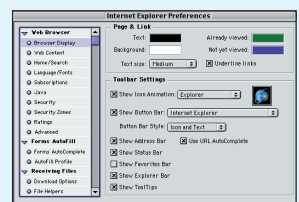
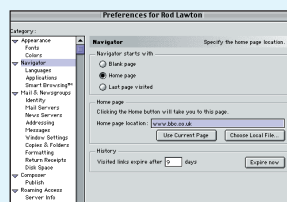
Bookmarks & favourites

Both browsers let you save your favourite pages for revisiting later on. Internet Explorer does it via its Favorites menu, Netscape Navigator via Bookmarks. Before long, though, you just end up with a great long list of Web pages. You can organise this list in Internet Explorer by choosing Open Favorites from the Favorites menu. You now get a window where you can organise your Favorites into folders.

In Netscape Navigator, use the Edit Bookmarks command on the Bookmarks menu to do exactly the same thing. You can get to your bookmarks via the menus because each folder will open out into an expanding submenu when you move the mouse pointer over it.



Organising your list of favourite Websites is easy with a browser



Whichever browser you use, you can personalise the way it looks and behaves via the Preferences dialog, accessed from the Edit menu



Web addresses

They may look mysterious, but Web addresses are surprisingly straightforward to use... and pretty easy to guess!

Web page addresses, or 'URLs', may look like a meaningless jumble of hieroglyphics, but they're actually straightforward.

But you can go an awful long time without having to manually enter a Web address. You can get by quite well by just 'bookmarking' pages or saving them as 'Favorites', depending on which browser you're using.

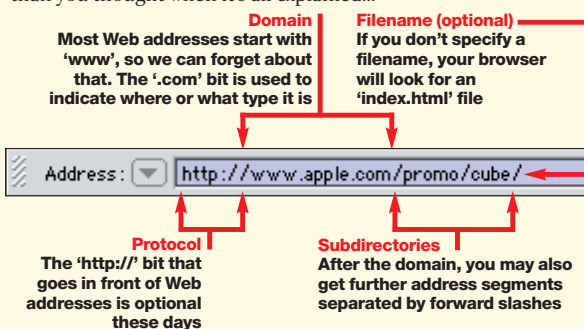
We've already looked at how you can organise bookmarks into a logical filing system, but there's one more tip we want to pass on to you here.

Each Web page is given a title by its author. This isn't the title displayed on the page itself, but what appears in the title bar of the browser window. This is the title given to the Web page when you save it as a Bookmark/Favorite.

Now the programmer may have given the page a perfectly logical and descriptive title or they may have chosen a title that makes sense to them but to nobody else. The point is that when you save a Bookmark or Favorite, you can type over the existing title with a name of your own.

Anatomy of a URL

Even a simple URL like this one can look complicated to the uninitiated, but you'll find Web navigation a whole lot simpler than you thought when it's all explained...



Sooner or later, though, you'll have to type in a URL from scratch. You do this in your browser's Address Bar.

There are a couple of things to note about URLs that will save you wasting time and making mistakes. Firstly, URLs are not case-sensitive. Although they may be published with capital letters for proper nouns and so forth, it doesn't make any difference to the address – it's just for show.

Secondly, there are certain characters which can't be used – in particular, the 'space'

character. This is why many URLs use phrases or company names where the words have been joined together. Another way round this is to use dashes or underscore characters. The same also applies to email addresses, incidentally.

You'll also notice that many URLs have full stops in them. These aren't just part of the name in the same way that dashes or underscores might be. Instead, they're used to separate parts of the 'domain', the Internet location of the computer holding the pages.

Guessing URLs

It's these domains that hold the key to navigating swiftly around the Web. Big companies and organisations will register their own domain names on the Internet, and this means they're easy to track down – you can practically guess the URL of large companies every time.

For example, you'll find the BBC Website at www.bbc.co.uk and you can look at your next car at www.ford.co.uk (or www.skoda.co.uk if you're as skint as us). Give it a try. Guess a domain name.

Jargon buster

Domain registration

You can't just make up a URL for personal use or your business. It's like choosing a name for your company – first you've got to make sure no one else is using it. Then you must pay an ongoing charge if you want to reserve it for your exclusive use. The good news is that you can register a .co.uk domain name for £10. That price covers registration fees for two years. If you want a domain name then use your search engine to find a suitable site or go to www.easily.co.uk.

Click Here for Site News & Status

Domain Names from Easily.co.uk
no extra fees – guaranteed!

.net just £9.99 per year (£9.50 + vat)

.co.uk & .org.uk just £9.99 for 2 years (£9.50 + vat)
(note FREE .co.uk with every .com taken on name invoice)

.com & .org just £35.00 for 2 years (£29.75 + vat)

- FREE parking
- FREE transfer out
- FREE web forwarding
- FREE email forwarding (for 20 aliases)
- FREE Control Panel facility (you're in control)
- registry fees included – NO hidden extras
- email & phone support (national charges)
- names registered to YOU

All domain names are fully registered in your name for the period stated.

Domain name server

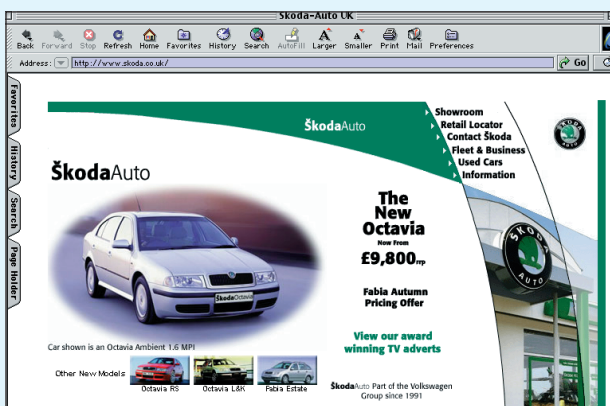
Web browsers don't understand words, they only deal in numbers. When you type in a URL, your browser has to go and match up the words to a number using something called a 'domain name server'. Sometimes there's a temporary problem with the domain name server and you can't get through, which means your browser can't locate the page you want to open.

Dot.com

A new bit of media jargon. When you've got a 'dot.com' it means you have an Internet presence, or Website. Analysts also talk about the 'dot.com' industry, and 'dot.com' investments. 'Dot.com' is simply the characteristic ending of most Internet Web domains used for business purposes.

FTP

Stands for file transfer protocol. Sometimes, when you're downloading files, you may be directed to an FTP site rather than a Website. In the old days, you would have needed a separate FTP program to access an FTP site, but now your browser can look after everything.



What's the address for the Skoda site? Don't know? Then guess. It couldn't be... let's see... www.skoda.co.uk, could it? Yes, it could!



Jargon buster

Wildcard

Usually denoted by an asterisk (*), a wildcard represents any character or combination of characters in a search string. For example, searching for car* would return 'carpet', 'carphone', 'Carmen' or even 'carcass'.

Page 'parts'

Search engines don't just confine their searching to page contents. Many let you restrict your search to just the page titles or the URLs instead.

Search syntax

You can set up more advanced searches by choosing pop-up menu options or clicking radio buttons to indicate your choice. But some search engines let you combine all these choices into a single string typed into the search field. One for programmers only, we think.

Search string

This is what you type into the search field. For straightforward searches, this will be just a word or a phrase.

Web directories

Many search engine sites also double as Web directories. As well as letting you search for Web pages, they publish a catalogue of pages, organised into categories and sub-categories. Yahoo is one of the oldest and best-known examples.

How to search the Web

Dig deep into the Internet by using one of the many search engines to find just what you're looking for

Search engines are special Websites which scour the Internet so that when you type in a word or phrase, they can match it up with thousands of different Web pages.

And that's the trouble. With so many matching pages, or 'hits', there's no way you could look at them all. That's why you need to be a bit of a detective to narrow down their searches so you find the few pages that you want and not the thousands that you don't.

So what do you do?

Most search engines are designed to be used on any level. At the very simplest level, you just type a word or a phrase into the search field.

This is easy, but it can be next to useless. If you just type a single word, the search engine will probably find ten thousand pages that contain it. If you type in a phrase, the average search engine is smart enough



Searching tips

Finding text

Programmers can build 'meta data' into their pages which describe the page contents. The result is that 'matching' pages may not contain any mention of the text you just searched for. If a page contains too much text to read through, use your browser's Find option to search through it.

Save your search results

Your browser can save Web pages to your hard disk. Do this with

search results which you'll want to come back to later, because these pages are generated on-the-fly by search engine sites.

Open pages in new windows

When you've got a list of pages, don't just click on the link to open them because you may end up losing your way back to the search results page. Press Control and click on a link and open it in a new window – that way, your search results page always stays open.

to find pages that contain that exact phrase and put them at the top of the list, but indiscriminate enough to include the thousands of other pages that contain one word, or the other word, or both words.

Give up, then?

If you don't take the trouble to explore a search engines' more advanced options, you could easily decide the whole thing's

a pointless exercise. But it's not, because search engines usually have an Advanced button that reveals And/Or options for narrowing down your search.

Easy options

You don't necessarily have to plough through pages of pop-up menus to configure your search. One tip is to surround phrases you want exact matches for with double-quotes.

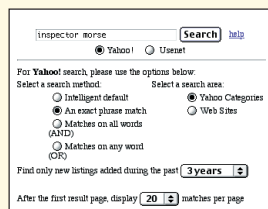
Other search engines follow a different route by inviting you to type in a 'natural query' in the same way you'd say it. They then use 'intelligent' software to work out what you mean and come up with matching pages. It works a lot better than you might expect, but not as well as you might hope.

As easy as you want to make it...

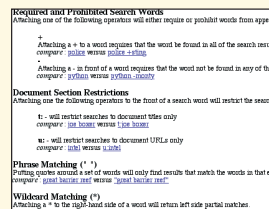
Search engines can be as easy or as complicated as you want them to be. You'll soon learn how to construct a successful search and start scoring 'direct hits'



You can use the Yahoo Website (www.yahoo.com) to search for words or phrases simply by typing them in on the main page and hitting the Search button



You'll get a better (and smaller) set of matches if you use the Advanced Search option, especially if you're trying to find matches for names or phrases



Advanced searches use special syntax, and if you're looking for the ultimate in customised searches, Yahoo will explain how to construct a search string



If you're looking for a good search engine, you can't go far wrong with Hotbot



Search engines

If you're searching for a decent search engine, then start here and read how we rate each of the contenders

How do you choose the right search engine? Do you want one that's easy to use, or does that mean you'll get too many irrelevant hits? Do you want one with highly complex search options that will take a week to learn?

Do you want to forget about all this Boolean search nonsense and use a search engine that understands plain English?

Search engines can work in many different ways, and it may be possible to predict, from how they're designed, whether they're going to produce good

results for the sort of information that you're after.

Or it may not. Instead, why not just try out the following search engines for yourselves? You may find, like we do much of the time, that some search engines are just a lot better than others.

Gentlemen, start your engines

Take a spin round our hand-picked selection of Internet search engines



Yahoo

www.uk.yahoo.com

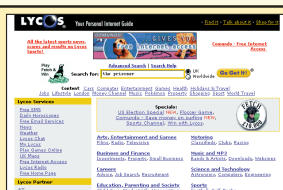
Yahoo is one of the best-known search engines. It doubles as a Web directory. All the sites it mentions have been visited by Yahoo.



Excite

www.excite.co.uk

Excite isn't just a search engine, it's a Web portal and a personal home page. It gives you news, directories, reminders and other services.



Lycos

www.lycos.co.uk

The main page of Lycos is a mine of topical info. We're not so sure about the way it ranks search results though.



Hotbot

hotbot.lycos.com

Hotbot is a subdivision of the Lycos brand, but for our money it does a better job as a search engine. The search options are easy to access.



Ask Jeeves

www.askjeeves.com

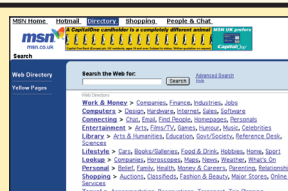
Ask Jeeves gets you to type your questions in ordinary English. It's pretty clever at understanding the results, too.



Google

www.google.com

Google is like a breath of fresh air. The engine itself is fast, smart and effective and there's a 'feeling lucky' button... if you feel lucky.



MSN

search.msn.co.uk

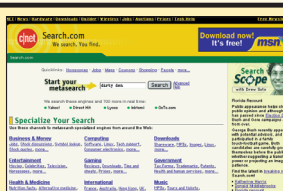
MSN is Microsoft's online presence. When you use Internet Explorer's 'go' function, it's the MSN search engine that returns your matches.



Alta Vista

uk.altavista.com

Alta Vista's UK-orientated search engine is smart, but indiscriminate too. It used to be one of the best-known engines in the early days.



Search.com

www.search.com

It had to happen – a search engine that searches other search engines (more than 700 of them!). However, isn't everything.

Jargon buster

Category

Many search engine sites also offer Web directories – Yahoo, for example. This means that when you carry out a search, they will list not just matching Web pages, but also matching categories from their own lists. You can then go on to explore the sites in these categories. The Yahoo search engine actually visits each site in its database.

Hits

Often used to describe the number of matching sites returned by a search engine. The more indiscriminate search engines may return millions (yes, millions) of hits, so be prepared to narrow down your search criteria a bit by using carefully selected keywords.

Portal

There's no such thing as an 'ordinary' search engine any more (Google being a notable exception). Many, like Yahoo, Excite and Lycos set out to be 'portals', or gateways to the Internet as a whole with a combination of directories, guides, selected links to 'partners' and a whole host of other services and features.

Ranking/Relevance

Your searches will frequently produce thousands of results, so search engines use a system of 'relevance' and 'ranking' to sort them out. The relevance may be worked out simply according to the number of times your word appears on a page. Pages are then 'ranked' so the most relevant are first on the list. It's not intelligent but it does work a lot of the time. Google, below, makes a good job of returning relevant results.





Jargon buster

Traffic

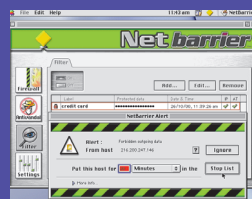
The connections linking Web servers to the Internet may be able to handle large amounts of data, but they have their limits. Lots of users trying to access the server at the same time generates lots of data 'traffic', and this can slow data transfer down to a crawl and make connections unreliable.

Redirection

When larger companies and organisations have to move their Websites from one server to another, they need to make sure existing users can still find them. They do this by leaving one page behind, containing the new URL (to remind people to update their bookmarks and links) and an automatic redirection script which takes users to the new page after a fixed interval of a few seconds or so.

Firewall

Many corporate Web pages contain sensitive or confidential information that must be protected from the public at large. Data like this is put behind something called a 'firewall'. These are like virtual barbed-wire fences designed to keep the riff-raff out. Hackers spend much of their time trying to penetrate these firewalls.



Libel

You can't say what you like on a Web page, any more than you can say what you like in print. Different countries have different libel laws, and with so many Web pages springing up all the time it's difficult for the authorities to monitor them all. But if you libel someone on a web page, they can sue you and potentially bankrupt you with a large claim for damages. Only say things you know to be true and don't make any wild claims that you can't back up with facts.

Troubleshooting

Despite being easy to use, there are still plenty of potential pitfalls for the Net novice. Here are our top tips for avoiding them

You've got your iMac connected to the Internet, you understand how your browser works, you know how to enter URLs and store bookmarks – what could possibly go wrong? Well, quite a few things, actually. Here are 10 things that can trip you up.

Broken links

The world wide Web is indeed a 'Web' of interconnected pages. One page has links to many others. But if a page is moved to another server or deleted altogether, what happens to those links leading into it? You get a 'page not found' message. That's it, alas. Larger organisations may set up a 'redirect' link, and you can always try using a search engine, but the page may be gone.

Broken graphics

All the graphics on Web pages are effectively connected by links. If a graphic is moved, modified, deleted or renamed, its link with the Web page will be broken and you'll just see an empty frame with a cross in it. Sometimes you can get graphics to display by hitting the Refresh/Reload button, otherwise you have to accept that the graphic's gone.

Access forbidden

Sometimes you'll follow a link and be presented with an 'access forbidden' message. This is because that document is in a protected area of the server. Web page designers can sometimes set up a link to a 'forbidden' page inadvertently, or a page's status may change after the link has been set up. It's also possible to mis-type a

URL or 'guess' at a URL which exists but is in a secured area.

Dropped connections

It's not uncommon for your Internet connection to be broken while you're surfing the Web. Your iMac will display a message telling you as much, and you've got no alternative but to re-connect. Hit the Refresh/Reload button to restart the connection.

Wrong connection

If you've got more than one Internet account set up on your

This means it's easy to end up reading 'information' that's next to useless. Always look out for timestamps on Web pages, or other signs of their age.

Remember to disconnect

You can set up your Internet connections to 'time out' after fixed periods of inactivity, but you can still run up nasty phone bills by waiting for this to happen. Instead, get into the habit of disconnecting manually each time you quit your browser or finish downloading your emails.

Lost downloads

When you're downloading software or other files, make sure you know where you're downloading them to! You can choose a location (the Desktop, for example) via your browser preferences. If you do lose a file you've just downloaded, use Sherlock to find it again.

Amateur rants

The Internet's a place where everyone can have their say. Unfortunately, it's often very difficult to tell the difference between informed, educated opinion and the rantings of amateurs. You can usually rely on the information provided by big companies, but with sites created by individuals or smaller concerns enthusiasm, and ignorance can take over.

Busy servers

Slow connections can be caused by a variety of things. Sometimes it's because a page is full of large graphics, sometimes it's because the server it's stored on is exceptionally busy. Try again at another time of day to see if there's any improvement.



iMac, ensure you use the right one for checking email. It doesn't matter which connection you use for surfing the Web, but usually your email server won't let you download your mail unless you dial in via that ISP's account.

Old pages

Web pages don't wear out! They can look as fresh as a daisy even years after they've been created – the trouble is that the contents may be as mouldy as old cheese. And ISPs don't routinely trawl through the pages on their servers to check which might be out of date.



Types of email

There's Web mail, POP mail and even snail mail. Here's our guide through the maze of different types of email on the Internet

Email is email, right? Wrong. There are actually two ways of staying in touch using the Internet, and both have their pros and cons. There's the traditional email program, like Outlook Express and Netscape Messenger, and then there's a new breed of 'Web-based' email

Conventional email

Conventional email delivers your messages to your computer as files to be stored and read on your hard disk. The Internet is just the transport mechanism that sends and receives the message.

Email programs are designed to store and organise these messages, and to provide tools for creating messages, together with an 'address book' of recipients.

The advantage of the conventional approach is that your messages are stored on your computer, and you can look at them and compose new ones offline. You only have to connect to the Internet when you want to send them in batches or check for new ones.

There are pros and cons to this approach. On the one hand, the number of messages you can store is limited by the size of your hard disk and your organisational powers.

On the other hand, your emails are very much tied to that specific machine. However, if you're out of the office or away from home, how do you access your emails?

Ordinary email

Conventional email accounts are good for storing and organising lots of messages and file attachments, but they do tie you to a single computer.

Web-based email

Web-based email takes an entirely different approach by storing your emails on a server somewhere on the Internet, where you can pop in at any time to read them?

There have been security scares in the past, but in reality security is hardly likely to be an issue. You can only access your emails by entering the correct username and password, and that's all the protection you get with a conventional email.

The advantage of this is that you can read and send messages via a Web browser rather than a dedicated email program – and you can do this using any computer with an Internet connection. You don't need to configure the software with your account details – you just have to remember that username and your password.

This gives you a lot more freedom. Imagine the convenience of being able to check your emails while you're visiting clients, or taking a holiday abroad! Best of all, most Web-based email services can fetch mail from your normal account if you provide the username and password and the name of the mail server.

Are there any disadvantages to Web-based email? Firstly,

because all your message composition and reading has to be done online and editing tools are pretty slow.

Secondly, most Web-based email providers set a ceiling on the number of messages you can store or the space they can take up. This might be around 2MB, for example, which rules out anything except plain text messages (no big attachments).

You don't have to decide between Web-based email and the ordinary kind, though. Many people keep both and may choose a conventional account for day-to-day use and a Web-based account for travelling.

Jargon buster

Attachment

A file can be 'attached' to an email message so that it's delivered to the recipient via the Internet. When they receive the message, they can detach the file and open/edit/save it like any other.

Email server

A computer that stores email messages sent to your address until you dial in and collect them. Typically, you collect incoming messages from 'POP' servers. If a Web-based email server offers 'POP' email collection, it means you can fetch messages from a conventional email account too.

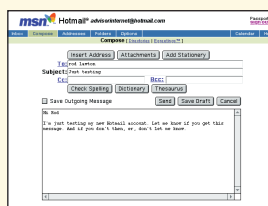
Offline

Browsing and composing emails while you're not connected to the Internet, and only connecting when you're ready to send or receive your emails as a batch.

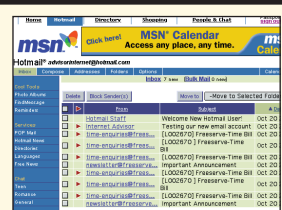
Using a hotmail account



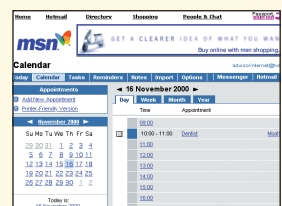
1 To check your Hotmails, type your username and password in on the Hotmail home page



3 You can compose messages using plain text or HTML with different fonts and styles



2 Once you're in, you can read the new messages in your Inbox and organise them in folders



4 Hotmail even comes with a calendar. It's like having a Filofax you can never lose

Web based email services

Web-based email services are springing up as fast as we can type them in, but here are a few well-established sites that you might like try

Hotmail	Yahoo	Excite	Purple Turtle	Visto
www.hotmail.com	uk.yahoo.com	www.excite.co.uk	www.purpleturtle.com	uk.visto.com
The first and best-known of all Web mail.	Not just email, but you get a calendar too.	Offers a full online information service	It's purple, but we don't see a turtle anywhere.	More of a virtual office than an email service.



Jargon buster

Signature

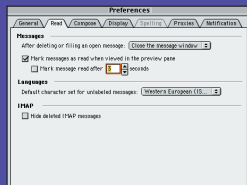
A standard text message inserted automatically in all your outgoing messages. Your name, for example, your contact details or your company's slogan. Some people even like to put a favourite quote or saying – it's a way of expressing your personality as well as contact details. Just try not to make it too cheesy, though.

Preview

Your email program displays all the messages in your Inbox as a list of message titles. You double click on a message to open it in its own window, or use your program's Preview panel to display any selected message.

Schedule

You can set up your email program to send and receive emails at fixed intervals, which is handy if you want to see messages as soon as they arrive but don't want to keep remembering to connect to your ISP manually.



Junk mail/spam

The electronic equivalent of the circulars that drop through your letterbox every day. In Net-speak it's called Spam. Some spam can be harmless but some can be downright offensive.

Once you're on a mailing list, it's hard to get off. The problem's made worse by a global black market in random email address collections distributed on CDs to anyone with a few bucks to spend. Try to be selective about who you give your email address to. If you let your address be known in Chat Rooms or on newsgroups you can expect to be spammed. If you do use your address on a newsgroup, add the words no spam on the end of your email address. That will stop auto email browsers picking it up.

How does email work?

Have you ever wanted to know what makes email tick? Here's our guide how it all works

So why is email such a good thing? What's wrong with using the phone? Don't people speak to each other any more?

The fact is that email doesn't exactly replace the telephone, but it does do lots of things you can't do on the phone and it makes day-to-day communication a whole lot easier and quicker.

One of email's less obvious (but still very important) advantages is that it lets you compose your words carefully, whereas when you're on the phone things don't always come out the way you really intend them too.

This applies especially in business, where using the right words is often essential for getting your point across, for conveying essential facts and avoiding ambiguity. And email messages provide valuable documentary evidence of who said what to who, and when.

There's no-one home

Email has another advantage over the phone: it doesn't matter if there's no one there to receive your message. It's got a lot in common with faxing in that respect, except that there's no clanking and whirring in the middle of the night when your long-lost cousin in Australia decides to get in touch.

And email is cheap. A first class stamp costs 27p, but an ordinary email message costs less than 1p to send. It arrives at its destination in seconds, too, rather than in a couple of days. Email has changed the way businesses communicate with their clients and each other, and for home users it's the ideal way to stay in touch with friends and relatives, especially if they're half way across the world. Timezones don't matter, and it's as cheap to send a message to New Zealand as it is to email your mate in the next street.

How emails arrive

You compose your email, then you choose the person you from the address book in your email program. This includes their own unique email address.

When you send your messages, they're delivered to your ISP's outgoing mail server.

This server then directs each message, via the Internet, to the computer identified in the recipient's email address, after the '@' symbol. This is their own ISP's email server, and messages wait here until they collect them.

When your recipient connects to their email account, their email software supplies their username to the server so that it can direct the program to their own email directory, where their messages are ready and waiting for them.



Top email tips

When someone sends you a message, you can just hit the 'Reply' button to send one back. Your email program opens a new, blank message window with their name and email address already entered.

Whether you're at home or at work, someone may send you an email message that should have gone to someone else – or maybe someone else ought to see the contents, so just click the Forward button and choose a name from your address book.

You can send the same message to lots of people at the same time by setting up groups of users in your address book. You can then email this group as a single entity and the message goes to every member – ideal for office bulletins.

You can attach any file to an email to send it to a friend or colleague – there's more on attachments in a later section. It's much quicker than sending floppies through the post or hiring motorcycle couriers!

When you send a message, you can send a carbon copy (cc) to another recipient or even a blind carbon copy (bcc). The difference is that with carbon copies, all recipients get to see who got a copy. With blind carbon copies, no-one knows you sent them except the recipient you copied it to.

Email programs store messages in folders, and you can set up as many folders, and folders-within-folders as you like. It's like organising the files on your hard disk – essential if you ever want to find anything again!

The iMac operating system has Sherlock for finding files on your hard disk, and email programs have their own search tools for finding messages. They can even search the message contents.

You don't have to file incoming messages manually into their correct folders. Instead, you can set up message Filters or Rules to intercept and examining incoming messages and file them away automatically.



The two giants

There are two main email programs but the one you choose to use is up to you and purely down to personal taste

There are two main email programs on the market right now – Microsoft's Outlook Express and Netscape Messenger. They both do much the same things in pretty much the same way, too. The big difference is in the way they are presented.

Outlook Express comes with Internet Explorer. Both programs are pre-installed on new iMacs, and both can be run as separate programs.

Netscape Messenger is part of the Communicator suite, which isn't pre-installed –

though you can get it free from various sources, including the Your iMac CD.

The other difference is that Netscape Messenger is more fully integrated with the Netscape browser. While you're browsing, you can access your emails via the 'Communicator' browser or by clicking an icon to the bottom right of the browser window.

Both programs can be set up to work with all ISPs' Internet accounts, both let you store your messages in folders, both let you filter incoming messages and send file

attachments with outgoing email messages.

Both, too, let you format your mail with colours, different fonts and word processor-style text formatting. Only Netscape Messenger, though, lets you insert graphics in your messages.

If they're so similar, which one do you choose? It doesn't much matter, to be perfectly honest. The iMac community as a whole tends to favour Netscape Communicator, though there's nothing wrong with Internet Explorer and Outlook Express.

Jargon buster

HTML-formatted email

Web pages are formatted and designed using so-called HTML formatting commands. These same commands have been applied to email programs to let you add graphics and other visual interest to your messages.

Address book

All email programs come with an address book that stores the names of all your friends and colleagues together with their email addresses. When you create a new message and start typing a name in the To field, the software quickly finds a match in your address book.

Email folder

These are used within email programs to file your messages. They work in much the same way as the folders on your hard disk.

Mail rule/filter

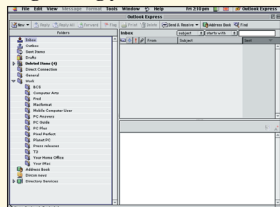
Mail rules or filters can look at incoming messages and react in a variety of ways. As well as filing them in specific folders, they can send automated replies when you're out of the office, or forward your mail to another email address.

Light software

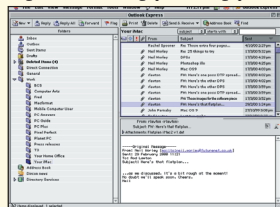
Many software publishers produce free, light versions of their programs to attract new users who might then be tempted to upgrade to the full version.

Outlook Express folders

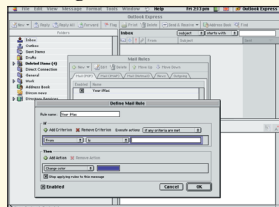
Organising your emails in Outlook Express will help you keep your Inbox manageable



1 Down the left-hand side of the Outlook Express window you'll see a list of folders. Click on the arrows to expand or contract the list. You can add new folders via the File menu



2 When you click on a folder which contains messages, they're displayed as a list in the panel to the top right. If you click on a message, it's previewed in the panel below



3 You can move messages from one folder to another by dragging them from the list at the top right and into any other folder on the left. Or you can set up a 'mail rule' to do it for you

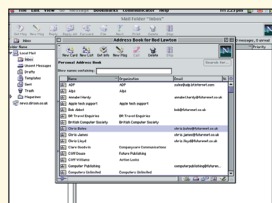
Other email programs

Outlook Express and Netscape Messenger aren't the only programs you can use. There's another called Eudora. Try out a free Light version at www.eudora.com.

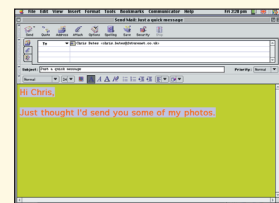
For a different approach, look out for the Entourage application bundled with Microsoft's Office 2001 suite. Entourage combines the personal organiser tools you find in a program like Palm Desktop with Outlook Express's email handling.

Messenger messages

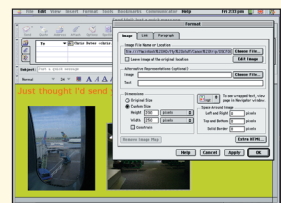
Here are three top tips for anyone using Netscape Messenger to send and receive emails



1 Like Outlook Express, Netscape Communicator stores an address book – you can find it on the Communicator menu. Your contacts are stored as a list. To send a message, click on a contact and hit New Msg



2 Netscape Messenger can apply the same formatting to emails as you can apply to Web pages. We've chosen a coloured background and changed the font size. Check your recipients can view HTML-formatted email



3 In Messenger, insert graphics via the pop-up menu to the right of the formatting toolbar. You may need to resize your images to fit the message window. You can double click on any image to change its size and properties



Jargon buster

Compression software

Most files actually contain a great deal of empty and wasted space. Compression software essentially sucks out that unused space to produce a much smaller size of file. However, you do have to 'expand' the file before you can open and use it.

Archive

An archive is the compressed file produced by programs like Aladdin StuffIt. It may actually contain a number of different files, and these will all be restored when you expand the archive.

StuffIt

The leading compression format on the iMac. When you download Mac files or software from the Internet, they'll most likely be in StuffIt format. As well as using StuffIt to decompress those files, you can use its sister program, DropStuff, to compress files for attaching to emails – you'll find it on any *Your iMac* cover CD. You can also buy a deluxe version that unstuffs even more file formats.

Zip

The compression format used on PCs. PC owners may send you a Zip archive, but StuffIt Expander will be able to open it. PC users can't open StuffIt files, though, but you can download DropZip from the Aladdin website and use it to create Zip archives instead.

Attachments

You can send files via the Internet... and it's as easy as sending an email. Here's how...

Email attachments are one of the most fun things you can use email for. You can attach any file to a message. It takes just a couple of minutes to send, and not much longer than that to arrive. You can send anything you like, as long as the file isn't too large.

File sizes and speed

This is the principal concern. Depending on the Internet traffic at the time, you may only be able to send data at around 3-4K per second. So a 1MB file attachment will take around five or six minutes to send, and almost as long as that for the other person to receive.

As if that wasn't bad enough, some email servers set a maximum limit on the size of file attachments which they will accept. This may be around 2-3MB in some cases.

Archiving/compression

So what's the solution? Firstly, you need to use some kind of compression software, and the most popular is Aladdin

Systems' StuffIt. It's already installed on new iMacs, because it's needed to decompress files that you download from Net.

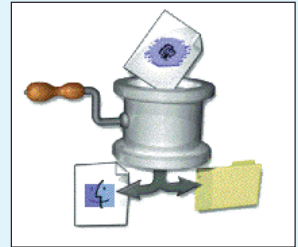
But to send files, you'll need to compress them too, and not just expand them. Inside the Utilities folder in your iMac's Internet folder, you should find an Aladdin folder and, within that, DropStuff. You can create an Alias to DropStuff on your desktop, and when you drag any file or files on to this alias they're saved as a single compressed archive.

An archive takes up much less space than ordinary files, so it'll take less time to send and receive.

Archives have another advantage, in that a whole bunch of files can be combined into one, which reduces the chance of any becoming separated or lost.

Sending to PC owners

If you're sending files to iMac owners, use StuffIt to compress them. If you're sending files to PC owners, it's not quite that easy because PCs use a



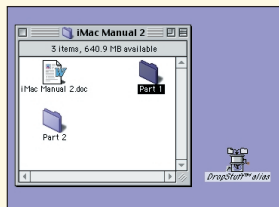
different type of compression software called Zip. You can Zip files by using Aladdin Systems' DropZip. This works in just the same way as StuffIt, but produces Zip archives for PCs. If you're sending text files, don't bother compressing them at all. The chances are you won't save much space anyway.

If you're sending image files, choose a compressed image format. JPEG images are compressed and designed specifically for transfer via email and the Internet, and don't need any further compression, the same applies to MP3 files.

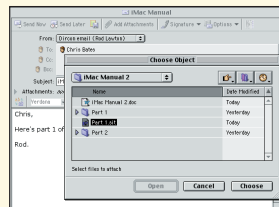
Make sure that your recipient has the right software to be able to read your files in the first place. AppleWorks documents are a no-no for PC owners. Save your documents as basic text files instead, or try to agree on a common file format beforehand which you can both use.

Emailing an attachment

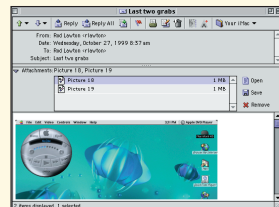
How to attach and detach files from your email



1 The first thing you'll need is a DropStuff alias on your Desktop. Now drag your file on to this alias and it'll be compressed as a single archive



2 Once written and addressed, click Attach, then use the dialog to find and select the stuffed archive that you want to send



3 You can drag an attachment from the message window on to your desktop and double click it. JPEG images are often displayed embedded in the message, too



3 Aladdin's compression utilities are pre-installed on your iMac, but you can check out the latest versions from the website at www.aladdinsys.com

NEXT MONTH

Next month we'll show you word processing, databases, spreadsheets and other programs you can run on your iMac