easy OS X® Mountain Lion

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Kate Binder

FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

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easy OS X® Mountain Lion

Kate Binder

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800 East 96th Street
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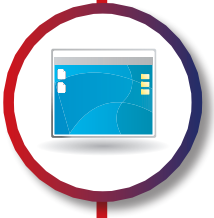

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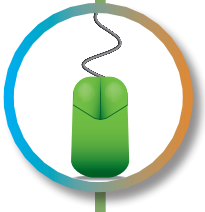

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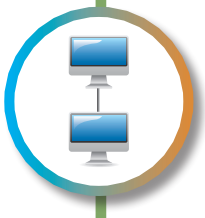

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EASY OS X® MOUNTAIN LION

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DEDICATION

This book is for my amazing husband Don Fluckinger, who is forced to put up with authorial crankiness while I'm trying to meet deadlines, and who still makes me popcorn at night despite it all.

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Profuse thanks are due to Laura Norman for shepherding me through yet another one. Thanks, too, to the awesome editorial, design, and production people at Que—and especially my favorite tech editor, Paul Sihvonen-Binder—for making it happen once again.

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IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3

Each part of this book is made up of a series of short, instructional lessons, designed to help you understand basic information.

1. Each step is fully illustrated to show you how it looks onscreen
2. Each task includes a series of quick, easy steps designed to guide you through the procedure.
3. Items that you select or click in menus, dialog boxes, tabs, and windows are shown in **bold**.

Tips, notes, and cautions give you a heads-up for any extra information you may need while working through the task.

How to Drag: Point to the starting place or object. Hold down the mouse button (right or left per instructions), move the mouse to the new location, and then release the button.

Click: Click the left mouse button once.

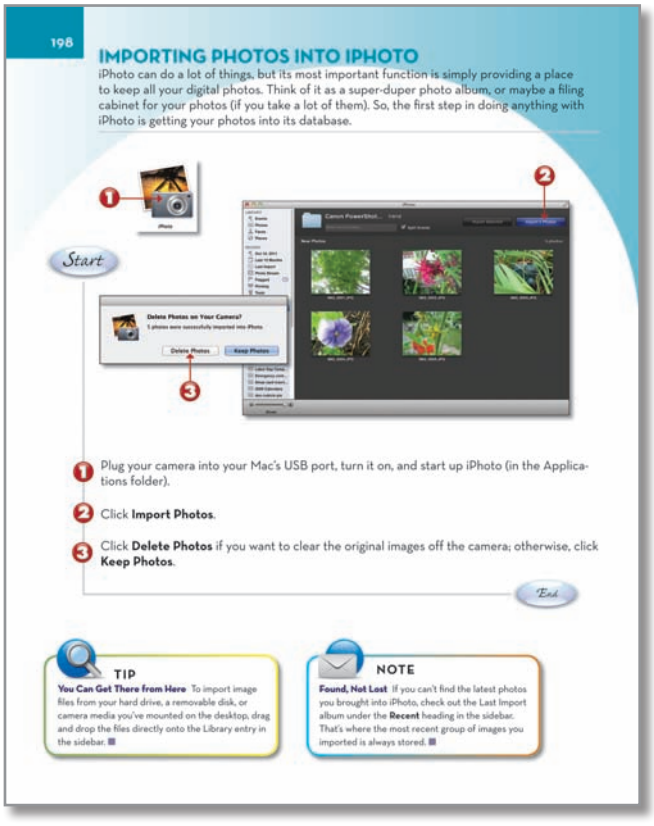
Click & Type: Click once where indicated and begin typing to enter your text or data.

Selection: Highlights the area onscreen discussed in the step or task.

Double-click: Click the left mouse button twice in rapid succession.

Right-click: Click the right mouse button once.

Pointer arrow: Highlights an item on the screen you need to point to or focus on in the step or task.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IMPORTING PHOTOS INTO IPHOTO

iPhoto can do a lot of things, but its most important function is simply providing a place to keep all your digital photos. Think of it as a super-duper photo album, or maybe a filing cabinet for your photos (if you take a lot of them). So, the first step in doing anything with iPhoto is getting your photos into its database.

Start

1 Plug your camera into your Mac's USB port, turn it on, and start up iPhoto (in the Applications folder).

2 Click **Import Photos**.

3 Click **Delete Photos** if you want to clear the original images off the camera; otherwise, click **Keep Photos**.

End

TIP

You Can Get There from Here To import image files from your hard drive, a removable disk, or camera media you've mounted on the desktop, drag and drop the files directly onto the Library entry in the sidebar.

NOTE

Found, Not Lost If you can't find the latest photos you brought into iPhoto, check out the Last Import album under the **Recent** heading in the sidebar. That's where the most recent group of images you imported is always stored.

INTRODUCTION TO *EASY OS X® MOUNTAIN LION*

OS X is like no other: It's incredibly stable and powerful, and it looks amazingly sleek. But underneath the glitz and sparkle, it has the same old friendly nature that Mac users have enjoyed since 1984. And it's all about enabling you to do whatever you want to do with your Mac.

With *Easy OS X Mountain Lion*, you'll learn how to take advantage of powerful and useful OS X features such as the built-in instant messaging program Messages, controlling other Macs over a network, and the ability to run Windows right on your Mac (if you really feel you must). Along the way, you'll get used to being able to run a dozen programs at one time on a stable system that doesn't crash. This book's step-by-step approach tells you just what you need to know to accomplish the task at hand, quickly and efficiently. All the skills you need to get the most out of OS X, both online and on the desktop, are covered here.

If you want, you can work through the tasks in *Easy OS X Mountain Lion* in order, building your skills steadily. Or, if you prefer, use this book as a reference to look up just what you need to know *right now*. Either way, *Easy OS X Mountain Lion* lets you see it done, and then do it yourself.

Chapter 5

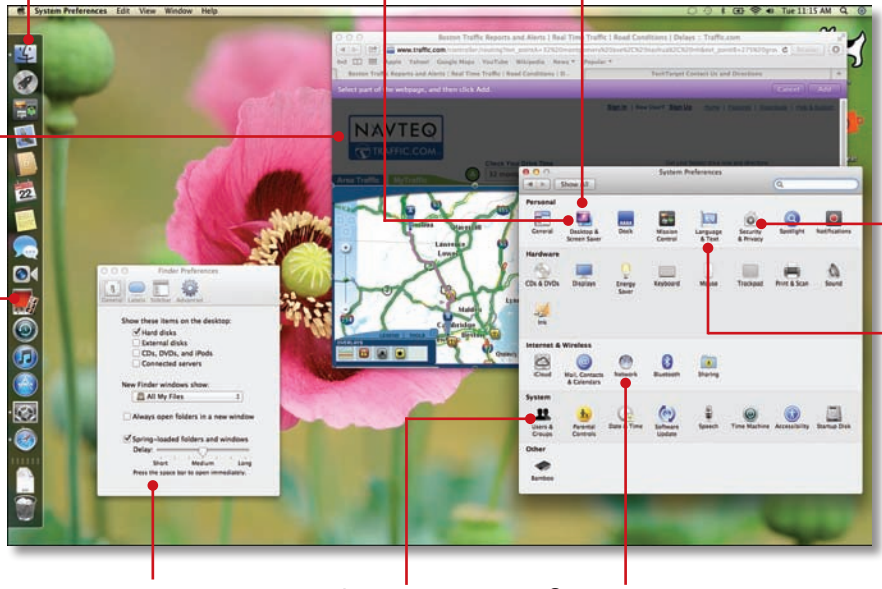
CUSTOMIZING YOUR MAC

It's your Mac—why not have some fun with it? There are myriad ways to make your Mac your own, from changing its desktop picture, its screen saver, and even your own login icon to changing the way the Finder works and responds to you. You can even change the Finder's language to any of a couple dozen alternatives, including Asian languages, or you can set up your Mac to talk to you—and listen for your responses.

Your custom settings are associated with your login name, so they're automatically put into effect each time you log in. When other users log in, their own settings are activated. That means a single Mac can offer each user a custom experience. Your custom settings can include useful preferences such as network locations and more fun preferences such as your desktop wallpaper.

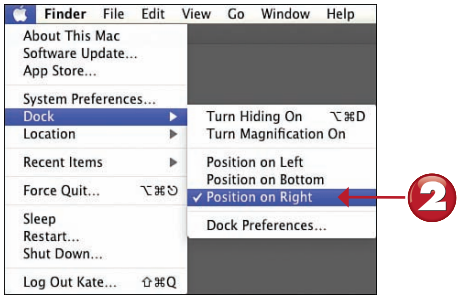
In this chapter, you'll learn how to customize the Finder, the Dock, the desktop, your screen saver, and your security preferences. You'll also learn how to make your own Dashboard widgets—tiny custom programs that you can build from pieces of your favorite websites. If you move your computer around or switch networks a lot, you'll benefit from the "Creating Custom Network Locations" task, which shows how to create custom location settings that change all your network preferences with a single click.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CUSTOM SETTINGS



MOVING THE DOCK AROUND

Although the Dock normally lives at the bottom of your screen, it doesn't have to stay there. If you prefer, you can put it on the left or right side of the screen instead. No matter which edge of the screen it's on, the Dock works the same way and you can set its preferences to suit your tastes.



Start

1. Choose **Apple menu**, **Dock**, **Position on Left** to move the Dock to the left edge of the screen.
2. Choose **Apple menu**, **Dock**, **Position on Right** to move the Dock to the right edge of the screen.

End

TIP

Hide and Go Dock To hide the Dock, choose **Apple menu**, **Dock**, **Turn Hiding On**; now the Dock sinks off the edge of the screen whenever you're not using it. Move your mouse back to that edge, and the Dock pops back out. ■

NOTE

Dock Substitutes The Dock can get pretty crowded. Some users use the Dock strictly as an application switcher, with inactive programs and documents stored in a third-party Dock substitute such as DragThing (www.dragthing.com). ■

CHANGING THE DOCK'S SIZE

The more stuff you stash in the Dock, the more room it takes up on your screen. If it gets too full, you can shrink it to give you more room onscreen—or, if you prefer, you can make it larger so it's easier to see what it contains.

1. Click the line between the two halves of the Dock and drag upward to enlarge the Dock.
2. Drag downward to reduce the Dock's size.

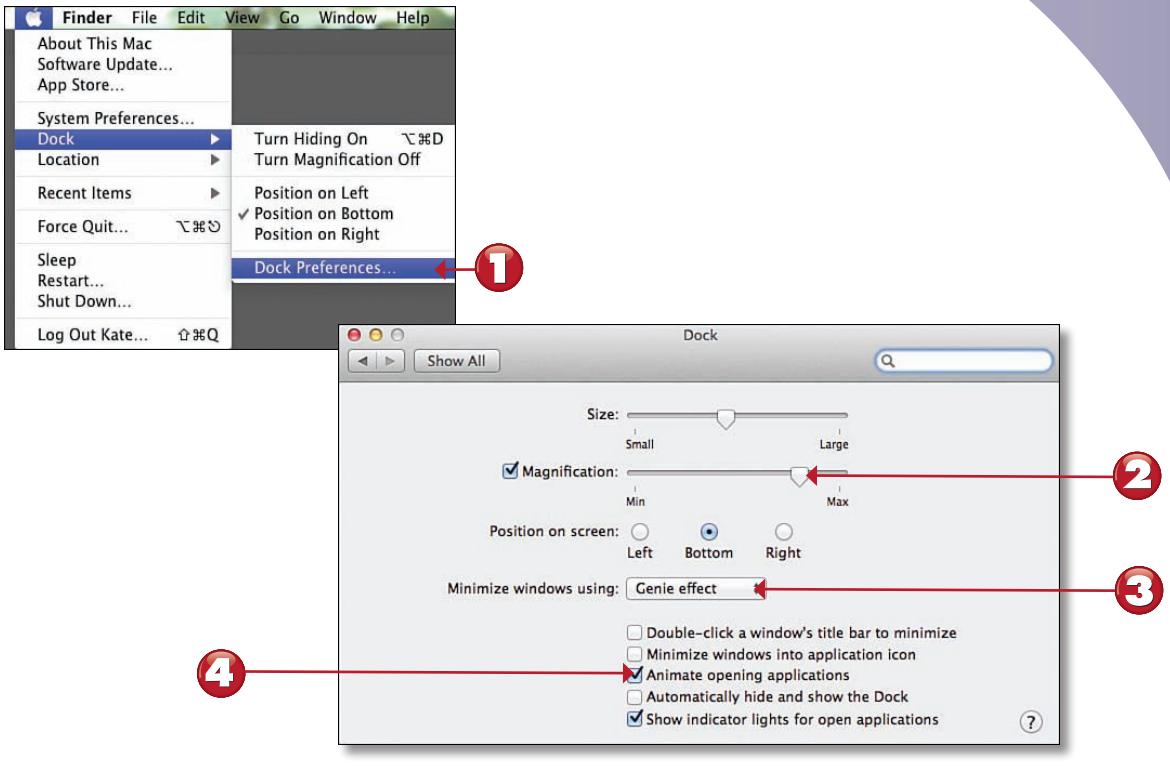
End

TIP

There's Always Another Way You can also use the Dock Size slider in the Dock preferences (choose **Apple menu**, **Dock**, **Dock Preferences**) if you happen to be going there to change other preferences as well. ■

CUSTOMIZING THE DOCK'S BEHAVIOR

As if moving the Dock around and changing its size weren't enough, there's yet more you can do to make the Dock work just the way you want it to. The Dock preferences enable you to control the way the Dock moves—or, more precisely, the way its icons move and change size and the way windows enter the Dock.



Start

1. Choose **Apple menu**, **Dock**, **Dock Preferences**.
2. Click and drag the **Magnification** slider toward Max if you want Dock icons to be enlarged as you pass the mouse cursor over them.
3. Choose an option from the **Minimize windows using** pop-up menu.
4. Click the **Animate opening applications** check box to make Dock icons bounce as their programs start up.

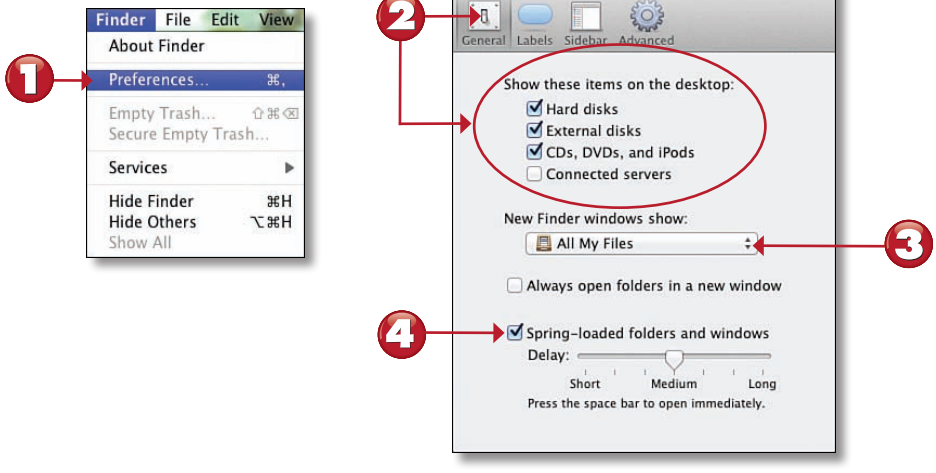
End

TIP

Dock Behavior in Another Context You can control Dock Preferences by **Control-clicking** the dividing line between the halves of the Dock. The contextual menu has controls for magnification, hiding, position, and the minimization effect, as well as a Dock Preferences command. ■

CHANGING THE WAY THE FINDER WORKS

The Finder—the program that generates the desktop and enables you to explore your hard drive and network drives visually via windows—is where you'll spend a lot of time while using your Mac. You have several choices about the way it operates; here's how to set up the Finder to suit your tastes.



Start

1. In the Finder, choose **Finder**, **Preferences**.
2. Click the **General** button to see basic Finder preferences, and then click check boxes to set the kinds of disks to appear on the desktop.
3. Choose an option from the **New Finder windows show** pop-up menu to determine which folder or disk location appears in new Finder windows.
4. Click the check box to set whether each folder generates a new window.

End

TIP

Finding Files with the Finder The Finder got its name for its capability to find files. To find files in the Finder, choose **File**, **Find** or press ⌘**-F** and type in the information for which you want to search. ■

CHANGING YOUR DESKTOP PICTURE

Every time you sit down in front of your Mac, you're looking at your desktop—or, more specifically, at the picture displayed on it. Why not have some fun with it? You can change the desktop picture any time you like, using any photo, cartoon, or other graphic that catches your fancy.

1. Choose **Apple menu**, **System Preferences**.
2. Click the **Desktop & Screen Saver** button to see your choices.
3. Click the **Desktop** button.
4. Click a folder and an image from within the folder to apply that image to the desktop.

End

TIP

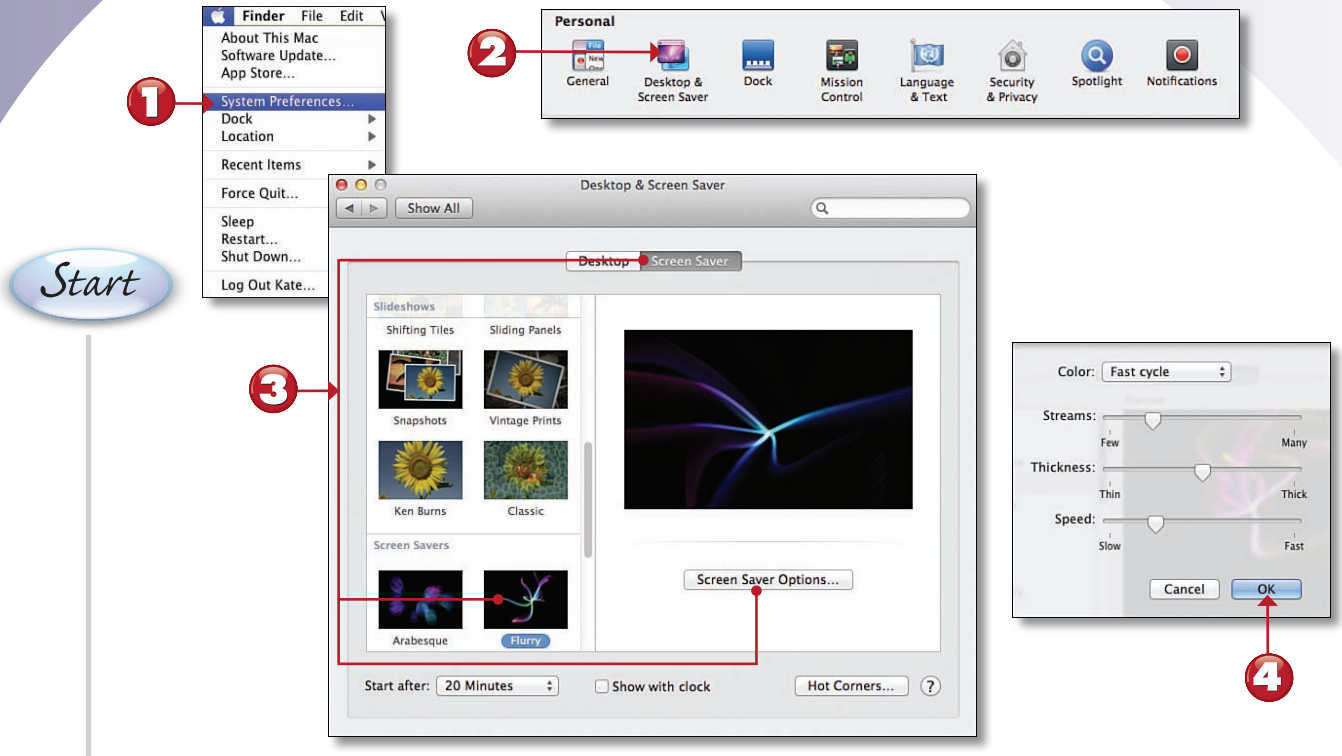
Surprise Me If you want your desktop picture to change automatically, click the + button in the Desktop tab and pick a folder full of your favorite images. Then check **Change picture** at the bottom of the Desktop tab and choose a time interval. ■

NOTE

The Mother Lode Looking for more desktop pictures to relieve your boredom? You can download hundreds of high-quality desktop images at MacDesktops (www.macdesktops.com). ■

CHANGING YOUR SCREEN SAVER

Originally invented to stop the kind of screen burn-in that you see on automatic teller machines, screen savers are actually little more than pretty entertainment these days. But that shouldn't prevent you from using them; screen savers provide some privacy, shielding your screen from casual observers, as well as being fun to look at.



1. Choose **Apple menu**, **System Preferences**.
2. Click the **Desktop & Screen Saver** button to see your choices.
3. Click the **Screen Saver** button, and then click a screen saver in the list to select it. Click the **Screen Saver Options** button.
4. Use the settings in this dialog box to change settings specific to each screen saver. Click **OK** when finished.

End

TIP

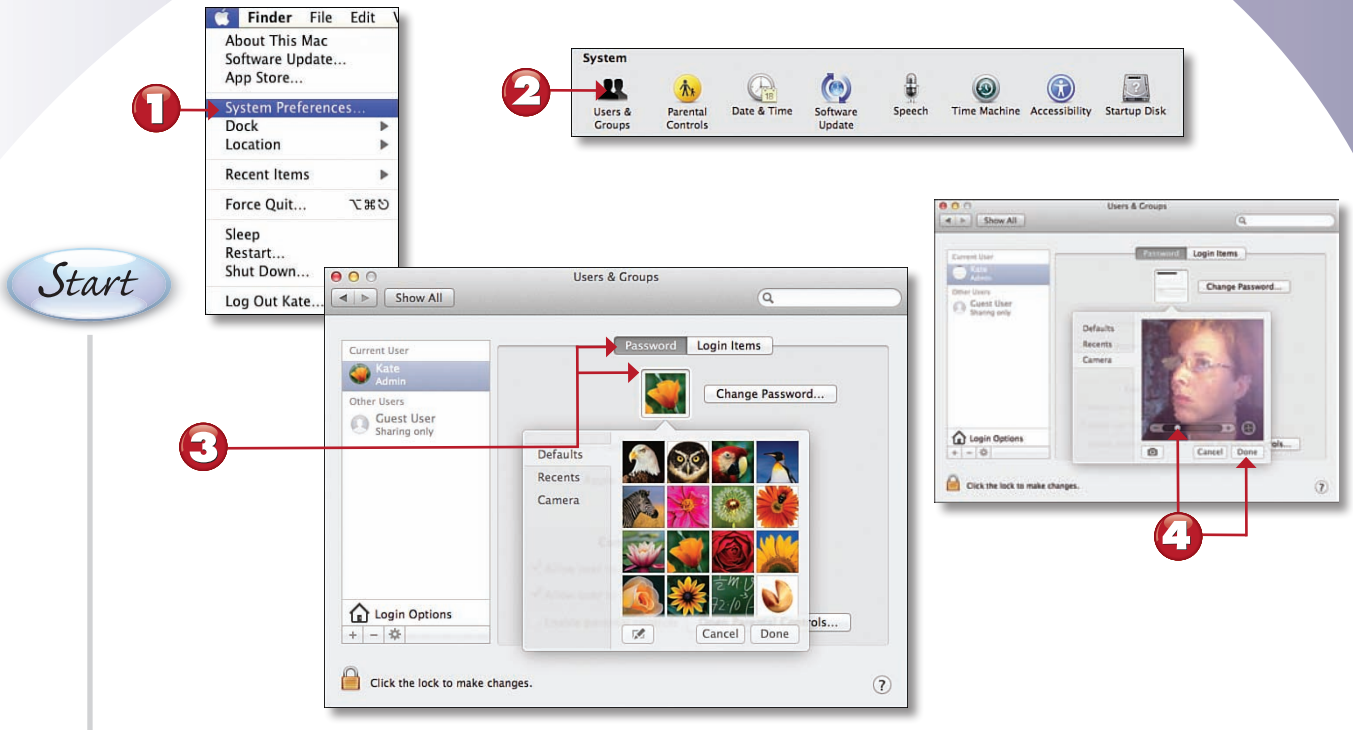
Got Savers? If you're not satisfied with the built-in selection of screen savers—or if you've run through them all and are desperately in need of new ones—check out www.macscreensavers.com. ■

TIP

A Screen Saver All Your Own For a custom screen saver, put your favorite photos in a folder and click a slideshow style; then choose the folder from the **Source** pop-up menu. Or choose **Photo Library** to pick an iPhoto album to display. ■

CHANGING YOUR LOGIN ICON

Your login icon represents your face within the world of your Mac. It's used as your buddy icon for online messaging in iChat, it appears next to your personal information in the Address Book, and you see it every time you log in. You can use one of the built-in pictures, or you can add any picture you like—your photo or anything else.



1. Choose **Apple menu**, **System Preferences**.
2. Click the **Users & Groups** button to see your choices.
3. Click the **Password** button; then click your picture and choose **Edit Picture** in the pop-up menu.
4. Drag or paste an image file into the Images window, drag the image and the scaling slider until the square shows the area you want for the icon, and then click **Done** to make it your login picture.

End

TIP

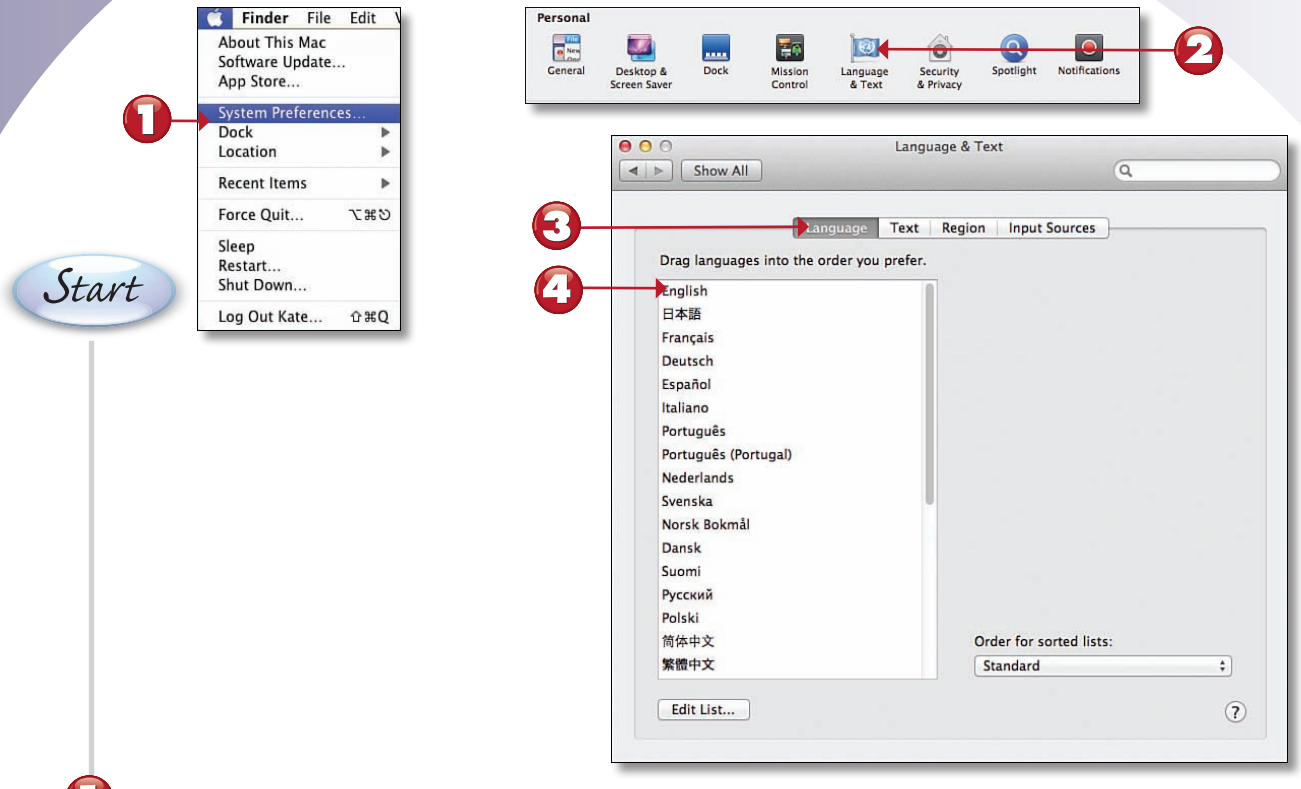
Using Your Own Picture If you're concerned about privacy, it might not be wise to use your own photo as a login icon. If people you don't know will see the photo—as an iChat icon, for instance—you might want to substitute a personal logo of some type. ■

TIP

I'm Ready for My Close-Up, Mr. Jobs If you have an iSight camera, either standalone or built into your Mac, you can use it to take a picture right from the Edit Picture dialog and turn that photo into an icon on the spot. ■

CHANGING YOUR MAC'S LANGUAGE

You might have thought that you would need to buy a special version of Mac OS X if you want your Mac's interface to use a language other than English. Actually, Mac OS X ships with the capability to display menus, dialog boxes, and other interface elements in a couple dozen languages, including those with non-Roman alphabets.



1. Choose **Apple menu**, **System Preferences**.
2. Click the **Language & Text** button to see your choices.
3. Click the **Language** button.
4. Click and drag your preferred language to the top of the pick list.

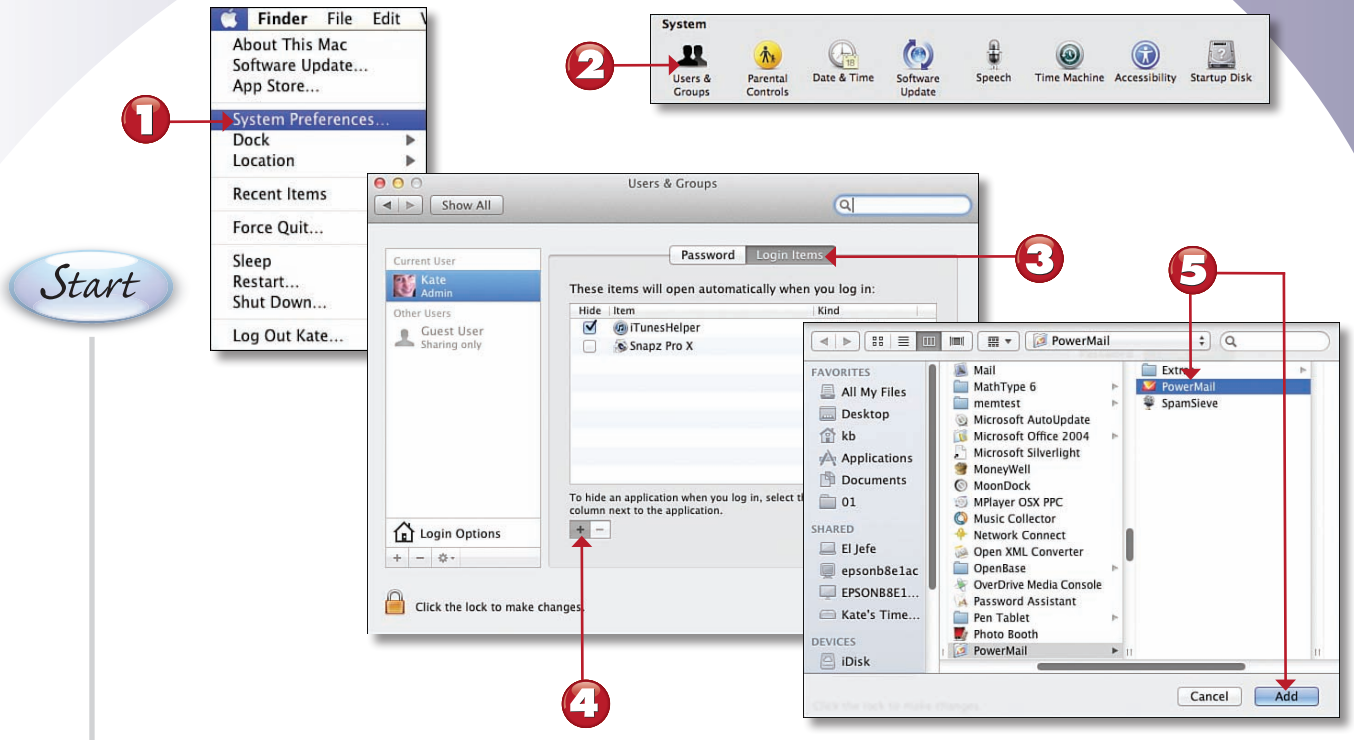
End

TIP

Making a Menu When you switch languages, you should also switch keyboard layouts to activate each language's special characters. In the International preferences' Input Menu tab, you can create a menu of the languages you use, and then click the **Show input menu in menu bar** box so you can switch keyboard layouts quickly. ■

ADDING LOGIN ITEMS

If, like many, you're a creature of habit, you'll love this feature. By designating login items for your user account, you can make any documents and apps you like open up automatically any time you log in to your Mac. You might want to start up your email and calendar programs every time you log in, for example.



1. Choose **Apple menu**, **System Preferences**.
2. Click **Users & Groups** in the System Preferences window.
3. Click **Login Items**.
4. Click **Add**.
5. Navigate to the application or file you want to open automatically; then click **Add**.

End

NOTE

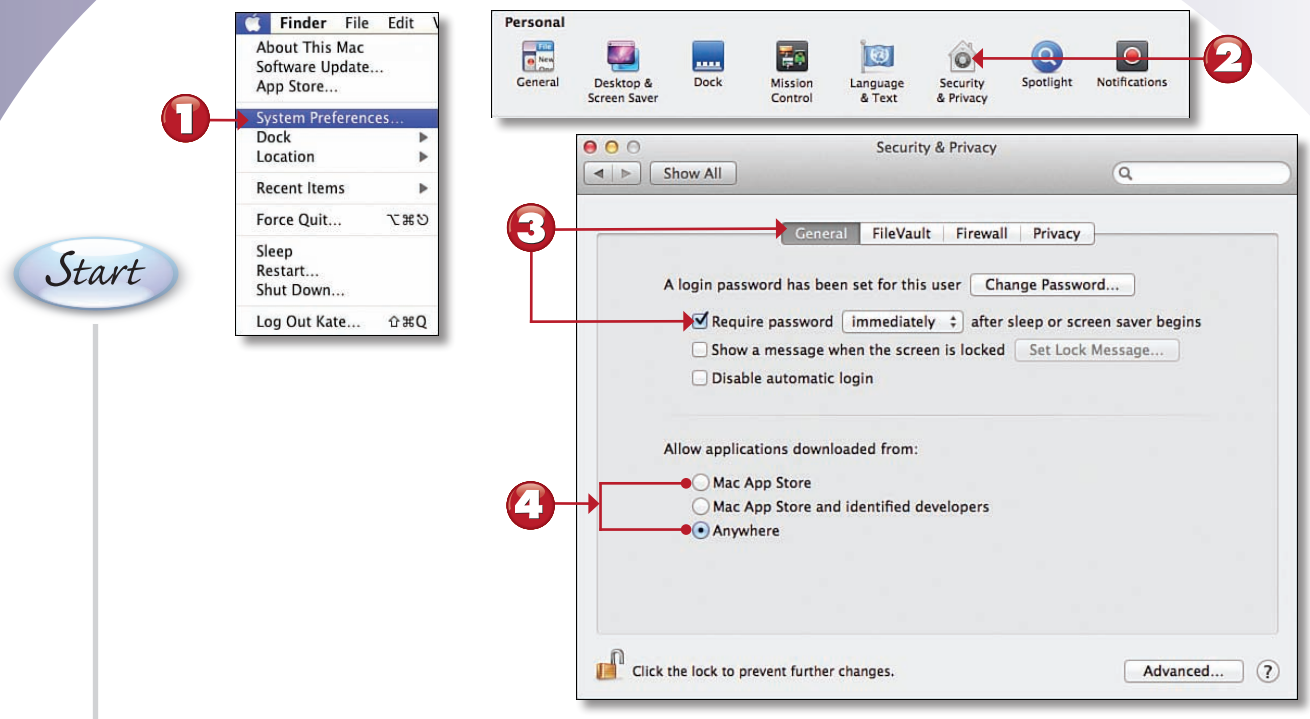
Login Versus Startup Don't get confused: Login items are things that start up automatically when you log in to your account on the Mac; startup items are those that start up automatically when you turn on the Mac. ■

TIP

Quick Login If you're in a hurry and don't need the programs you've specified as login items, you can disable them at login time by pressing Shift from the time you press Enter in the login window until you see your desktop picture appear. ■

INCREASING YOUR MAC'S SECURITY

Whether these settings are important to you depends on how vulnerable your Mac is to snoopy intruders. If your computer is in a dorm room or an open office, or if it's a laptop, you'll probably want to put at least some of these measures in place to ensure that unauthorized people can't use it.



1. Choose **Apple menu**, **System Preferences**.
2. Click the **Security & Privacy** button to see your choices.
3. Click the **General** button, and then click the **Require password** check box to make sure that only you can wake up the computer when it's sleeping.
4. Click the check boxes next to the other options to turn them on or off.

End

NOTE

Learning to Live Together To learn about ways to get along when you share your Mac with other users, turn to Chapter 11, "Sharing Your Mac with Multiple Users." ■

NOTE

The GateKeeper A new group of settings in the Security & Privacy preferences enables you to control where your applications come from. You can choose to allow only programs from the Mac App Store, those from the App Store and from Apple's certified developers, or any program at all. This way you don't have to worry about damage caused by incompatible or malicious programs. ■

ADDING NEW DASHBOARD WIDGETS

The first time you open Dashboard—which you may do by pressing the Dashboard key on your keyboard, by clicking the Dashboard icon in Mission Control, or by switching Spaces until you get to the Dashboard—you'll see a default set of widgets. But the fun starts when you customize Dashboard by adding the widgets that are most useful to *you*.

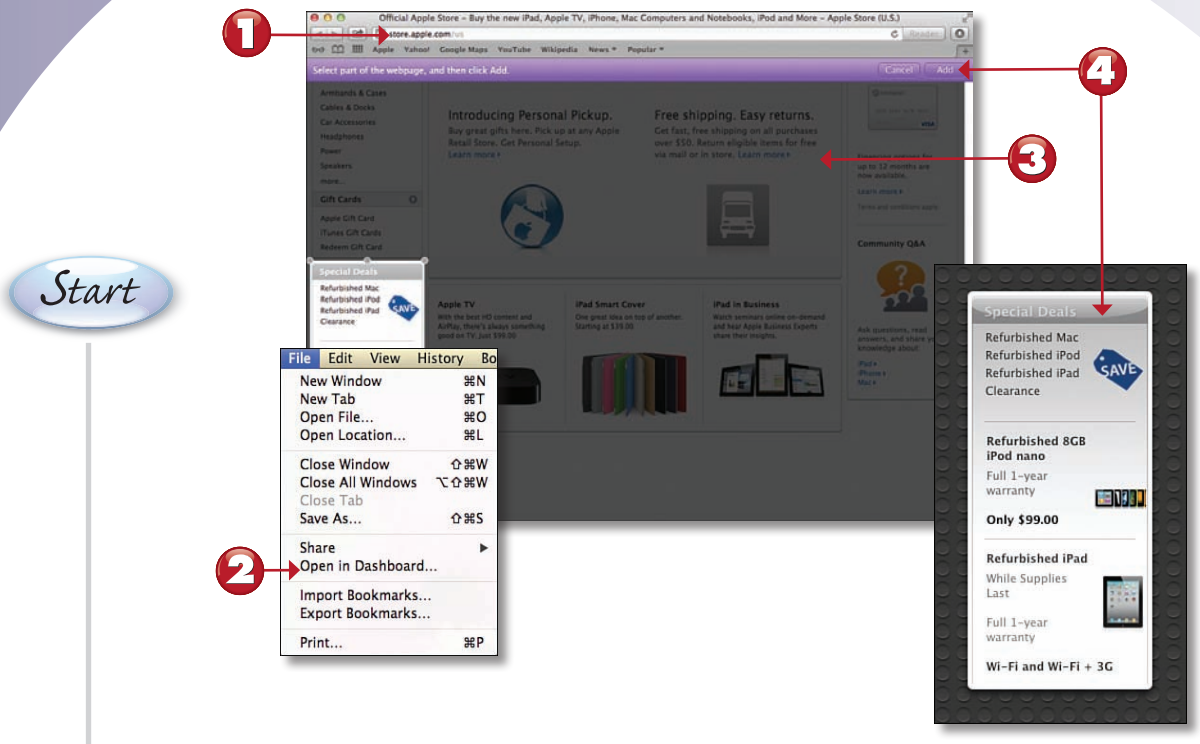
1. In Dashboard, click the + to open the widget organizer.
2. In the organizer, click a widget's icon to add it to your Dashboard.
3. Back in Dashboard, move the widget to the position you want it to occupy.

NOTE

Widget Options Customize your widgets further by holding your mouse cursor over the widget and clicking the **i** button that appears. (If you don't see an **i** button, that widget has no settings.) This enables you to, for example, set your location for weather forecasts and movie times. ■

MAKING YOUR OWN WIDGETS

Dashboard is great—if you haven't tried it, click its Dock icon and take a look at the cool widgets you can add. And you can even make your own widgets; it's very simple to turn your favorite web pages into Dashboard widgets, and you do it right from Safari.



1. In Safari, type the URL of the web page you want to turn into a widget.
2. Choose **File**, **Open in Dashboard**.
3. Select the area on the web page that you want to include in your widget.
4. Click **Add**; the new widget opens in Dashboard.

End

TIP

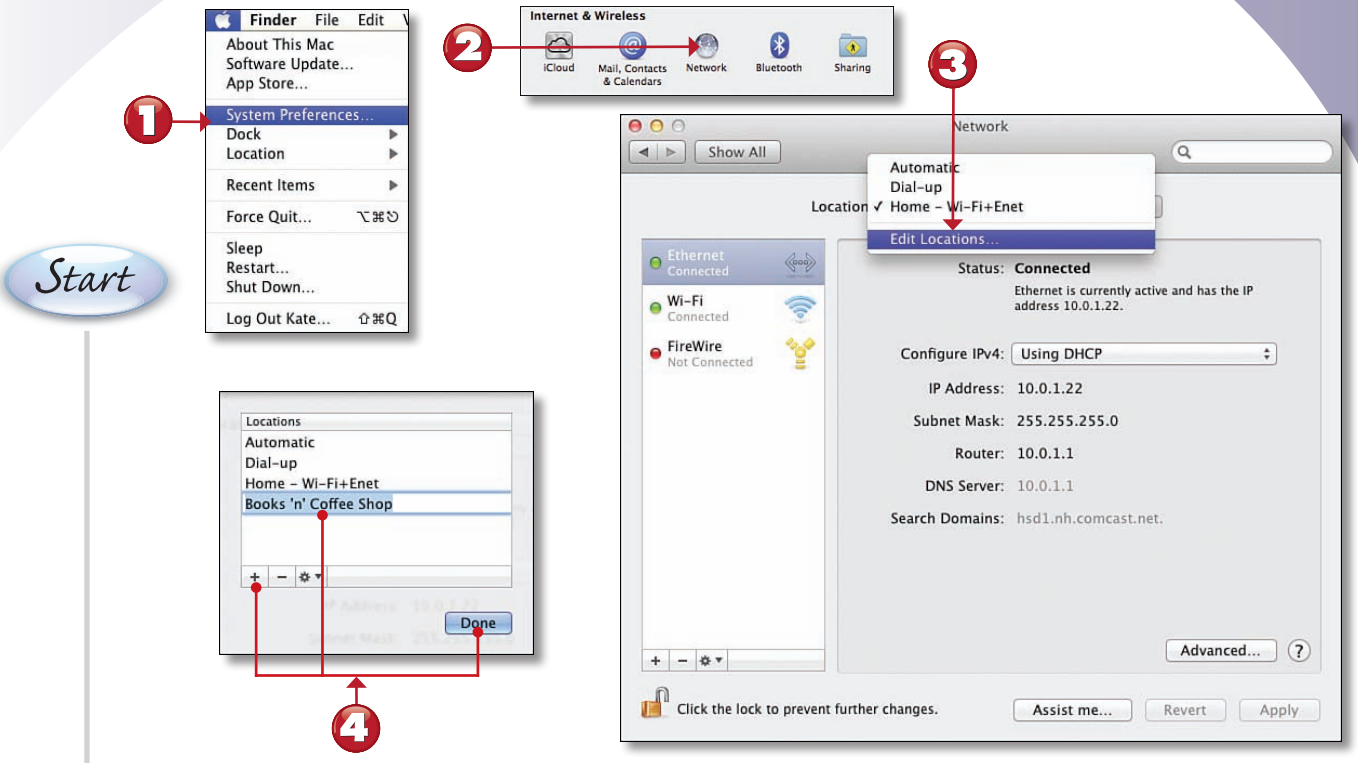
Make It Your Very Own To customize the appearance of your widget, click the **i** button in its lower-right corner. The widget flips neatly over and presents you with a choice of visual themes. Click the one you want to use. ■

TIP

The Widget Underground Want to be just a little bit subversive? Use this feature to avoid ads on web pages by turning the pages into widgets—and cropping out all the area occupied by ads. ■

CREATING CUSTOM NETWORK LOCATIONS

Network locations are groups of network settings, each saved with a descriptive name so you can switch all your settings with a single click and get online or on the local network instantly no matter where you happen to be. After you've created a location, to use it, all you have to do is choose it from a pop-up menu.



1. Choose **Apple menu**, **System Preferences**.
2. Click the **Network** button to see your choices.
3. Choose **Edit Locations** from the **Location** pop-up menu.
4. Click the **Add Location** button, give the location a descriptive name, and click **Done**.

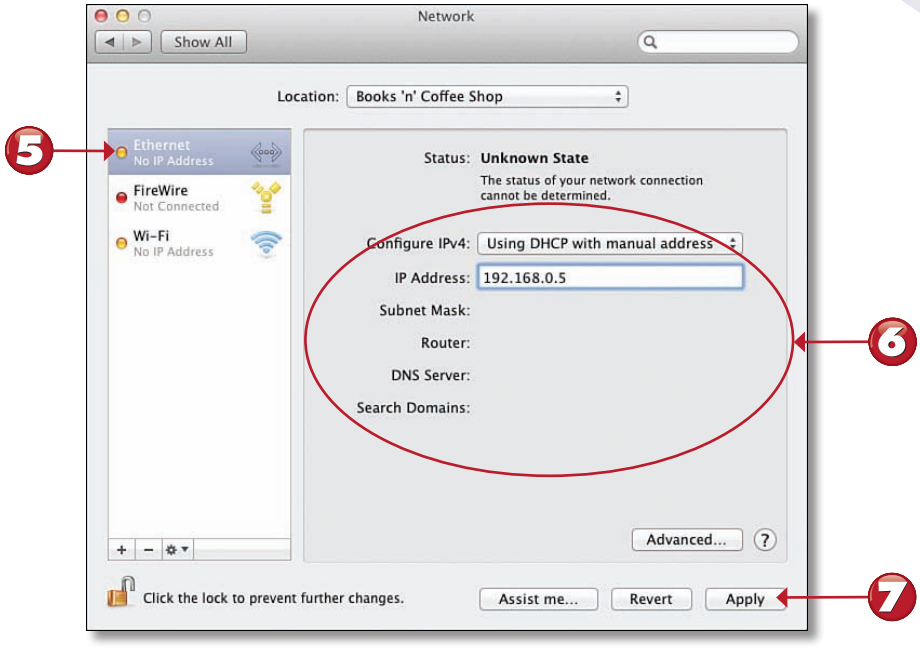
Continued

NOTE

Naming Names Just to be sure we're all on the same page here, a descriptive name (see step 4) is something like "Joe's office Ethernet," rather than "New Location 4." It tells you where and under what circumstances the location setting is applicable. ■

TIP

What's in a Name? To change the names of your locations, choose Edit Locations from the pop-up menu again. ■

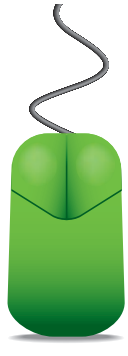


5. Choose the network interface you want to set up from the list at the left.

6. Make the appropriate settings for that network interface (as supplied by your Internet provider or network administrator).

7. Click **Apply** to switch to the new location.

End



NOTE

A Time and a Place You can use locations to save settings for different situations as well as different places. For example, if you have both a cable modem and a dial-up account, create a location for each so you can switch to dial-up if the cable connection goes down.

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