iCloud
STARTER GUIDE

Master Apple's Free Sync Service

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Foreword

I'll let you in on a little secret, readers: I've been wanting to do a *Macworld* book on iCloud since Apple debuted the service at its Worldwide Developers Conference in 2011. Apple's sync services have gotten a lot of guff over the years—and in some cases rightfully so—but as someone who started with iTools, I've long been hopeful that the company's online programs would succeed. While iCloud isn't perfect, it's a major leap forward for both Apple and its users.

iCloud does a lot of amazing things that we may quickly come to take for granted because they work so intuitively. It keeps your mail, contacts, calendars, reminders, and notes in sync. It instantly (almost magically) copies that photo you took of your cousin on your iPhone to your Mac, iPad mini, and laptop. It lets you work with your Macs from afar. It helps you find stranded and wayward devices, and lets you know when your friends are nearby. And it does it all for free.

The service celebrated its first birthday in September 2012, and as it ages, it's improving. Apple has put the same emphasis on iCloud that it formerly reserved for just its hardware and operating systems—and that's a pleasant change from sync services past.

We put this book together for two reasons: One, iCloud encompasses so very many different features and fun bits that it's surprising to realize just how much you can do with a free account. Apple has put a lot of work into the service, and we want to help you get the most out of it. And two—a lesson we've learned from much experience—even the nicest sync services can be a little confusing. We'd like to straighten all that out for you.

And so I'm proud to present our iCloud Starter Guide. It collects all the material we've written in the last year on Apple's sync service, and we hope it will help you get to know iCloud and learn how best to use it in your life. We've updated the material to focus on OS X 10.8 (Mountain Lion), Windows 8, iOS 6, and iTunes 11—but we still have some helpful hints for those users with older operating systems.

We hope that you enjoy our Starter Guide, but, even more important, that you enjoy iCloud and find ways to incorporate it into your daily routine. (And if you have any feedback on ways to improve or enhance the service, don't be afraid to let Apple know.)

—Serenity Caldwell
Associate Editor, *Macworld*
Boston, January 2012

Contributors

Senior Editor **Christopher Breen** (@BodyofBreen) is the author of Lynda.com's Up and Running With iCloud.

Associate Editor **Serenity Caldwell** (@settern) helps run the Superguide program when she's not fiddling with iCloud; she occasionally writes news, features, and how-tos for Macworld.com.

Senior Editor **Dan Frakes** (@danfrakes) covers the iPhone, iPad, iPod, and Mac—and everything that connects to, works with, or installs on them—for *Macworld.*

Senior Writer **Lex Friedman** (@lexfri) exists only in the cloud. Were he corporeal, he would likely write humor and tech books alike, and then link to them from lexfriedman.com. But he's not corporeal. He's only in the cloud.

Senior Editor **Dan Moren** (@dmoren) has been a subscriber of iCloud, MobileMe, .Mac, and iTools. Some days, he still misses eWorld.

Senior Editor **Roman Loyola** (@pinatubo2000) covers Mac hardware and software for *Macworld.*

Get Started

SYNCED AND LOADED iCloud keeps your data in sync across your iPhone, Mac, and any other iOS devices.

Over the past few years, users have become obsessed with the notion of having their documents and data instantly available wherever they are, on whichever device they happen to be using at the time. With iCloud, Apple has charged headfirst into the digital syncing sphere. A free iCloud account lets you sync your documents, data, accounts, photos, mobile backups, purchases, and so much more.

What Is iCloud?

iCloud is a catchall phrase that covers Apple's suite of sync and backup services, which aim to keep your devices—iOS devices running iOS 5 or later and desktop computers running OS X Lion or later, or Windows Vista or later—on the same page, no matter which one you're using at any given moment. You can create an iCloud account for free on any device the service is compatible with.

These services cover four general areas: document and data sync, mobile backup, location awareness, and purchase management.

A free iCloud account provides 5GB of storage for data sync and mobile backup; you can purchase additional space for a yearly fee. Many things that your iCloud account syncs—your purchased content and your Photo Stream images, for example—do not count toward this limit. (For more information, see "Storage in the Cloud" later in this chapter.)

Unlike some third-party services, iCloud doesn't focus on preserving individual files or providing a central folder where you can upload documents to access across platforms. With iCloud, Apple wants you to stop worrying about where you've saved specific files, and instead focus on the information itself.

Sync and Share

iCloud's behind-the-scenes sync features focus on keeping your data up-to-date, syncing documents and information between devices, and streaming your recently taken photos across devices. (For more on syncing, see "Documents & Data" in the "Work With iCloud" chapter.)

EMAIL iCloud offers users a free email account (in this case, using the format *name@icloud.com*) for sending and receiving email. This account uses the IMAP protocol, so it works with any standard email client (such as OS X's Mail), as well as the iOS Mail app and the iCloud Web app.

DATA SYNC iCloud lets you access, update, and sync your contacts, calendars, reminders, Safari bookmarks and tabs, notes, photos, and more across all of your devices and the Web.

iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch devices running iOS 5 or later can sync calendar, reminder, contacts, notes, Web browser data, and (for iPhone users running iOS 6) any Passbook tickets or coupons you may have picked up.

Macs running OS X 10.8 Mountain Lion can sync calendar, reminder, contact, and notes data using the Calendar, Reminders, Contacts, and Notes apps, respectively (iCal, Address Book, and Mail in OS X 10.7); Windows users can use Outlook 2007 or later. You can also choose to sync your Web browser's bookmarks.

All data syncing information counts toward your free 5GB storage limit.

DOCUMENTS SYNC Several of Apple's built-in OS X and iOS apps—along with many third-party apps available on the App Store—can store their documents to your iCloud account, allowing you to access those files from multiple devices. Like synced data, this information counts toward your free 5GB storage limit.

PHOTO STREAM iCloud's photo service allows you to snap a picture from any iOS device (or upload an image to a Photo Stream–compatible program or folder on your Mac or PC) and seamlessly share it to all your other devices and computers. Photo Stream stores the last 30 days' worth of images online; if you have a Mac or PC connected to Photo Stream, images automatically download to your computer, so they're instantly stored offline. Your iOS devices, in contrast, can only access the last 1000 Photo Stream items, and you have to download images manually.

iCloud also lets you create Shared Photo Streams so you can share images with family and friends. (For more on Photo Stream, see "Photo Stream" in the "Work With iCloud" chapter.)

Back Up Files

In addition to syncing your files, purchases, and data to iCloud, you can back up your iOS devices to it. This counts toward your free 5GB storage limit. To back up your iPhone, iPod, or iPad, open its Settings app and navigate to *iCloud > Storage & Backup.*

CLOUD BACKUP **You can back up to iCloud, which lets you restore from the cloud.**
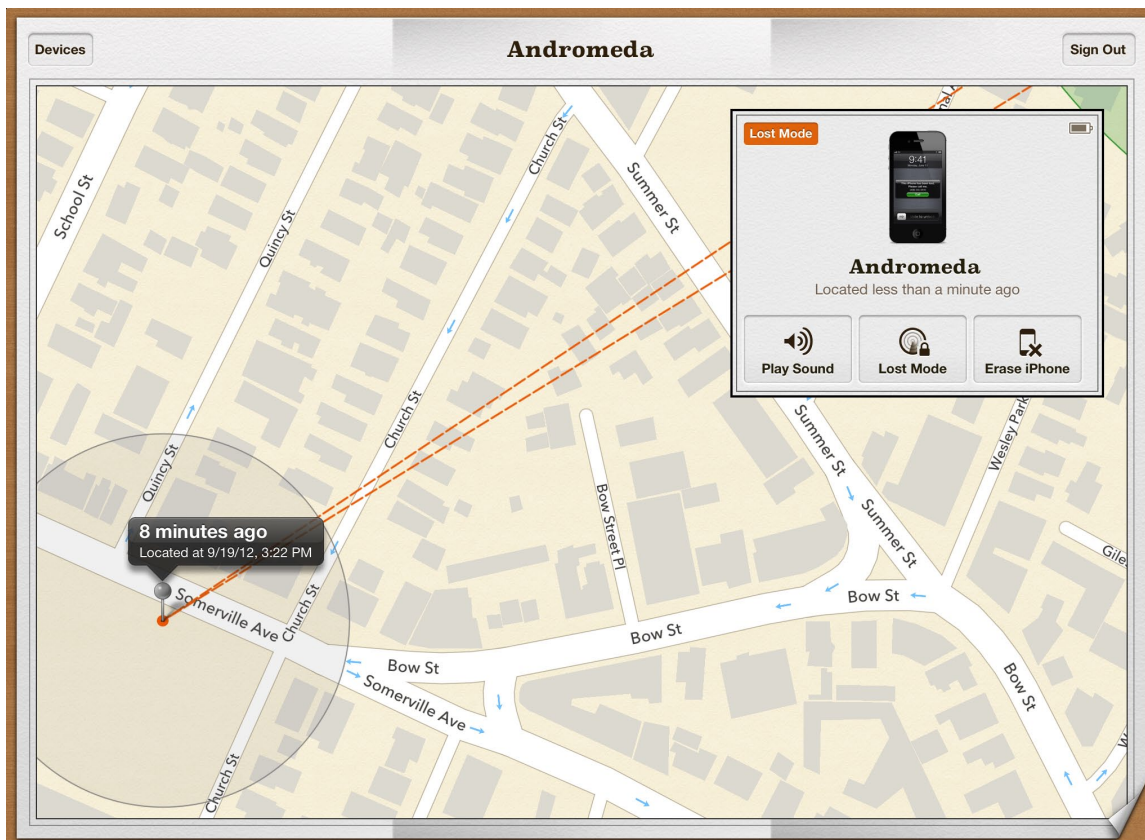
Enable the *iCloud Backup* option, and your device automatically backs up accounts, documents, settings, and the Camera Roll album to iCloud whenever the device is plugged into a power source, connected to Wi-Fi, and asleep (locked). You can also force an iCloud backup at any time by going to *Settings > iCloud > Storage & Backup* and tapping the *Back Up Now* button (which turns into Cancel Backup while a backup is occurring).

If you ever need to restore your device, you can do so over the air, with the iCloud backup working in tandem with your iTunes and App Store purchases so you can get your device back to where it was. A note: You may not be able to restore certain purchases—for example, some movies and TV shows—internationally due to licensing restrictions; check your country's terms and conditions to be sure. (For more on iCloud backup, see "Mobile Backup" in the "Work With iCloud" chapter.)

Find Your People, Places, and Things

Missing your iPhone or can't find your friends? Your iCloud account lets you track any iOS device that you've linked to it, with some assistance from the Find My iPhone app on iOS and on the Web. In addition, your account lets you use Apple's Find My Friends service to connect and meet up with your pals and family members. If you've linked your iCloud account with your Mac, you can also use its Back to My Mac service to remotely connect to your computer from afar. (For more information on these services, see "Location Awareness" in the "Work With iCloud" chapter.)
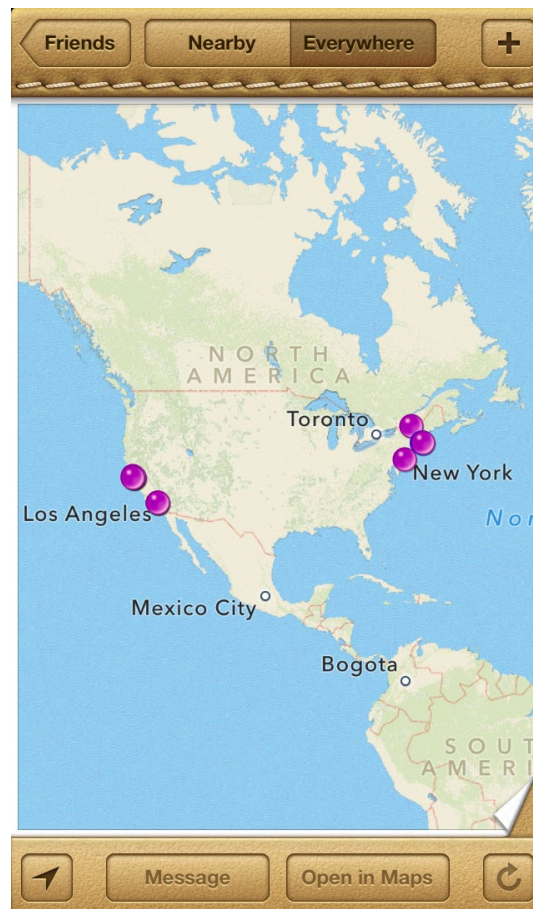
iPHONE TRACKER Lost your device? If you added your iCloud account to it, you can locate it easily using Find My iPhone. This app lets you track down any iOS device—or Mac—that has Apple's Find My *device* service enabled.

TRACKING DEVICE Lost your iPhone, iPad, iPod, or Mac? If you have it linked with iCloud, you can track it by logging in to the iCloud website.

If you've lost your device, you can log in to the iCloud website or the Find My iPhone app on a different iOS device to find it. From there, you can make the device emit a sound (even if it's in silent mode), enable Lost mode to track its location, and remotely lock (and optionally wipe) it. You can even choose to receive an email notification if your device is initially off but later returns online.
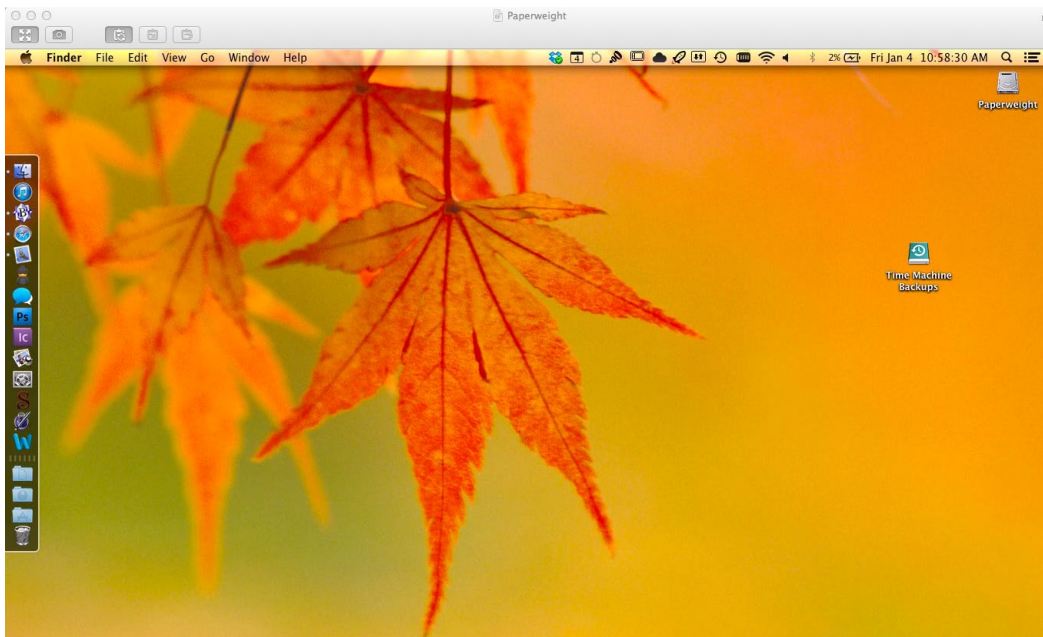
FIND MY FRIENDS This app allows you to broadcast your location temporarily or permanently to a select group of people, as well as locate those friends and family who have given you permission to locate them.

FRIEND FINDER The Find My Friends app lets you track down those friends who've given you permission to locate them.

You can turn your location on or off, create a Favorites list from your Find My Friends contacts, create a temporary event so that people not on your contacts list can find you during a specific outing, and restrict sharing with specialized controls. If you want to notify your friends when you enter or leave a specific place (or if you want to be notified about their movements), you can also set that up within the app. This app only works for iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch users.

BACK TO MY MAC You're on vacation and suddenly remember that you need to work on a project you left at home. What to do? If you have iCloud's Back to My Mac service enabled and a nearby Mac to use, you can remotely connect to your homebound computer even if it's miles away.

SCREENS AWAY With Back to My Mac, you can view your computer's screen from a distant location.

Back to My Mac lets you connect via file sharing or screen sharing, giving you the freedom to access your computer in multiple ways.

iTunes in the Cloud

iCloud's purchase management focuses on three areas—past purchases, purchases in the cloud, and iTunes Match (a $25 yearly add-on)—that collectively make up iTunes in the Cloud. (For more information, see "Purchase Management" in the "Work With iCloud" chapter.)

PAST PURCHASES The Purchased screen in the App Store, iTunes Store, and iBookstore on a Mac, PC, or iOS device allows you to view your purchase history for apps, music, videos, and books, and redownload any of them for free.

CLASSY CATALOG Redownload your previously purchased songs from the iTunes app at
any time.

In addition, your Mac, PC, and iOS devices can automatically download any new purchases you make using your iCloud account. (A few caveats: Redownloading certain items, such as music and television shows, may be restricted by country. And if an item you've purchased is no longer available on the iTunes Store, you may not be able to redownload it.)

PURCHASES IN THE CLOUD As mentioned above, you can set your Mac, PC, iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad to automatically download any new music, apps, and books you buy from other devices, and you can also redownload any previously purchased content from the three stores.

The iBooks app takes this one step further: Any content you've previously purchased on the store shows up in your iBooks library with a little download icon in the top right corner. This allows you to quickly see your library, though the books themselves may not be on your device; to download one, just tap the book in question.

CLOUDY PAGES All your purchased books automatically show up in your iBooks library, though you can't read any of them until you tap one to download it.

This only applies to content you've purchased—iCloud won't sync books you've manually loaded onto your device from other places.
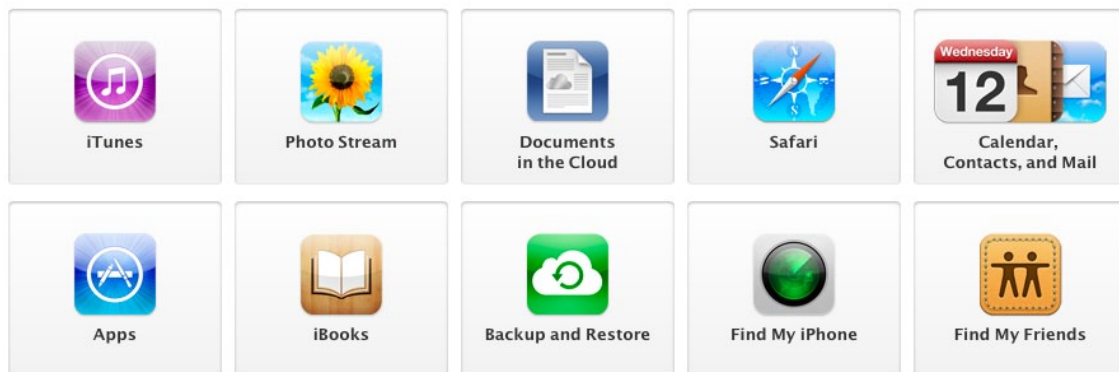
iTUNES MATCH Though you can redownload individual music tracks to your device using the Purchased feature, for an additional $25 a year you can unlock iTunes Match, which lets you upload your Mac's or PC's iTunes library and access it from any device you're logged into.

FOR A SONG iTunes Match lets you stream or download any song you've
uploaded from your Mac's or PC's library, whether you purchased it from the
iTunes Store or elsewhere.

Once enabled, iTunes Match scans the songs in your music library and links them to the correct song in the iTunes catalog for easy downloading and streaming to your devices. If you didn't originally purchase your songs from iTunes but they're available in the catalog, you can download DRM-free 256-kbps AAC versions for free; iTunes uploads your unmatched songs to iCloud so that you can access them from multiple devices.

Work With iCloud

GET TO WORK iCloud offers a bevy of delightful features to help you sync, share, back
up, and groove to great tunes.

iCloud is chock-full of features for syncing, sharing photos, listening to music, reading, backing up your devices, hanging out with friends, and more. We offered a brief overview of the service's various bells and whistles in the first chapter; in this one, we get down to business. Learn how to master iCloud's syncing components; perform a perfect iOS backup; discover the ins and outs of Find My iPhone, Find My Friends, and Back to My Mac; and listen to iTunes in the Cloud.

Troubleshoot iCloud

THE TROUBLE WITH THE CLOUD Even the best services run into trouble now and again.

It's a fact of life: Technology breaks—even technology as physically intangible as iCloud. If you've run into errors with your iCloud account, syncing, Photo Stream, backups, or iTunes Match, we hope this chapter helps you fix your problem.

WHEN TO GO TO THE EXPERTS

While this guide attempts to answer basic questions and provide troubleshooting help for most simple problems, don't be afraid to seek out the professionals for a tougher problem. Syncing issues can sometimes get nasty, and simple solutions may not always work. If this happens, the folks at your Apple Store are always happy to try and help; you can also try going through Apple's online support system.

Thanks for Reading!

We hope that our iCloud Starter Guide has helped you get to know Apple's newest sync service, and that you're on your way to enjoying what it has to offer. For even more information on iCloud, as well as the latest tips, tricks, how-tos, and news about the iPhone, iOS, and all of Apple's other products, check out Macworld.com and the rest of our Superguide program.