

by Matt Flamm

“You need .Mac” said my daughter, Rachel (who works at the Apple Store when she is not away at college). Frankly, I was skeptical. I had tried iTools when Apple had offered it as a free service, and I hadn’t found it useful enough to pay for. Giving her the benefit of the doubt, however, I bought a one-year subscription. Now, I don’t know how I ever lived without it.

If you have one Mac, .Mac is a useful service and a good value. If you have more than one Mac, it’s indispensable.

Your .Mac subscription gives you an email address (for example, s). You can send and receive email from any computer, without going through an ISP. This is useful if you travel or if you have a cellphone or PDA that can access the web. You can buy up to 10 additional email addresses for \$10 per address per year.

You also get 250 MB storage space on Apple’s shared server. Before OS 10.3 (Panther), you could connect to the iDisk like any other shared server. Under Panther, however, the iDisk is integrated into the Finder. Once you enter your .Mac screen name and password (select System Preferences from the Apple menu, then click on “.mac”), your iDisk will appear in the Finder automatically every time you boot up your computer. You can save and retrieve documents on the iDisk just as you would with your internal hard disk. (Your 250 MB storage space includes the iDisk and space used for storage of email. You can expand your storage space to 1,024 MB for \$49.95 per year.)

If you have two or more Macs, the iDisk is really useful. I use a G5 iMac at work, a G4 iMac at home and a Powerbook. When I boot any of the three computers, I have immediate access to the iDisk. A document I saved to the iDisk at work is available to me at home; I can open it, make changes

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and save it, and it will be waiting for me when I return to the office.

If you have a Powerbook or iBook, .Mac will make a copy of your iDisk on the laptop. You can edit documents or save new documents to the iDisk while you are disconnected from the internet. The next time you are on the internet, .Mac will automatically synchronize the local copy with the iDisk.

This is an example of the way .Mac is especially useful if you work on two or

publish his or her calendar, and everyone can keep track of what everyone else is doing.

.Mac also works with iPhoto to allow you to quickly publish photos to the internet. Just select the photos you want to publish, then click the “HomePage” button on the bottom of the iPhoto window. Follow the simple directions and, within a few minutes, you will have created a page of photos with its own URL so that your family and friends can view your photos from any computer with Internet access.

Apple offers .Mac subscribers lots of free goodies; such as personal backup software you can use to back up your data to your iDisk or elsewhere.

To me, the most invaluable aspect of .Mac is the ability to synchronize different computers. Whether I am at work, at home or on the road, I know I’ll have access to

my current calendar, address book and Safari bookmarks. If I change them, I know they’ll be changed on all of my computers. If I plan to work on a document in two places, all I have to do is save it to the iDisk.

Apple’s implementation of .Mac represents a quantum improvement in the ability of one user to use

multiple computers. If you use more than one Mac, then “you need .Mac.” Even if you only have one Mac, the features it offers are worth the \$99.00 annual subscription fee.

For more information, go to www.apple.com. You can get a 60-day free trial. (Or go to System Preferences, click on “.mac”, then click the Sign Up button.) If you’re like me, you’ll be hooked by the end of the trial period. 🍏



Internet Essentials for your Mac

Join over half a million Apple customers who use .Mac to turn the Internet into the ultimate Mac experience. This powerful collection of software and services includes email, web publishing, backup software—everything you need to share, access and protect your data.

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more Macs. Similarly, .Mac (working with iSync) will synchronize your bookmarks in Safari, your appointments in iCal and entries in your Address Book among your different computers, as well as your iPod, Palm or cell phone. This eliminates the annoyance of entering a contact’s email address at the office, only to find you don’t have it on your Mac at home or on the road.

.Mac allows you to “publish” your iCal calendars. Other people can then view your calendars on the web. For example, everyone in your family or workgroup could