

Mac 101: File Sharing

Last Modified: December 22, 2011

Article: HT1549

Old Article: 106461



Summary

Learn about File Sharing, which allows your Mac to share files and folders with other Macs and PCs on your network.

Products Affected

Mac OS X 10.6, Mac OS X 10.5, OS X Lion

Notes

- Your file sharing settings may be overridden by your network router's firewall, the firewalls on other computers, or the firewall in Mac OS X v10.5 or later. Please see [this](#) article for details. Refer to your vendor's documentation about firewalls for third-party computers or routers.
- Before you begin, you might want to create all the user and group accounts you will need in Users & Groups preferences (in OS X Lion) or Accounts preferences (in Mac OS X v10.5 or Mac OS X v10.6). See [this](#) article for details. You can set up your Mac to allow specific user and group accounts access to certain folders with appropriate access privileges.

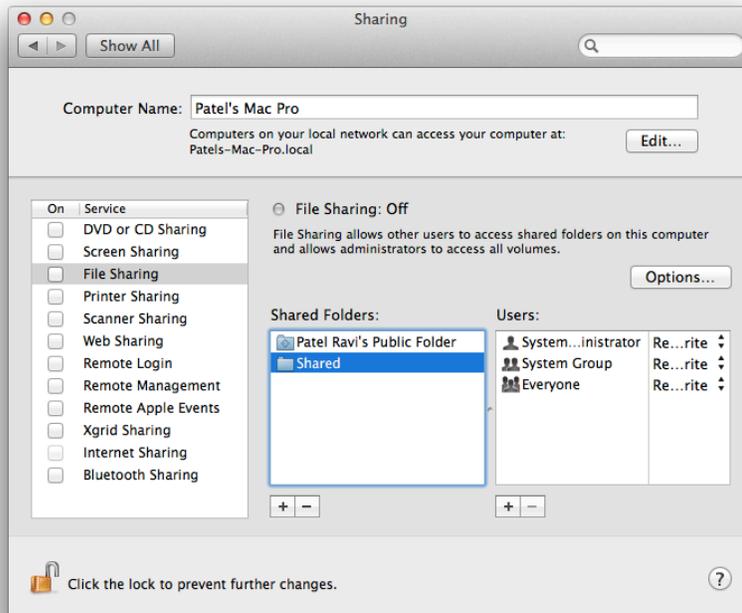
Open Sharing preferences

- Log in with an administrator user account. To enable and configure file sharing you need to know the name and password of an administrator account on your Mac.
- From the **Apple** menu, choose **System Preferences**.
- From the **View** menu, choose **Sharing**.
- From the Service list, select **File Sharing**.

Select folders to share

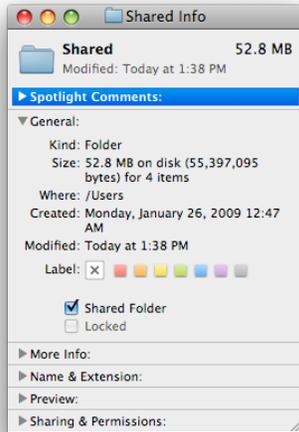
Below the Shared Folders list, click the Add (+) button. Find the folder you want to share. To select multiple folders, press and hold the Shift key while selecting folders with the mouse.

In the example below, the folders named "Patel Ravi's Public Folder" and "Shared" (/Users/Shared) have been selected for sharing.

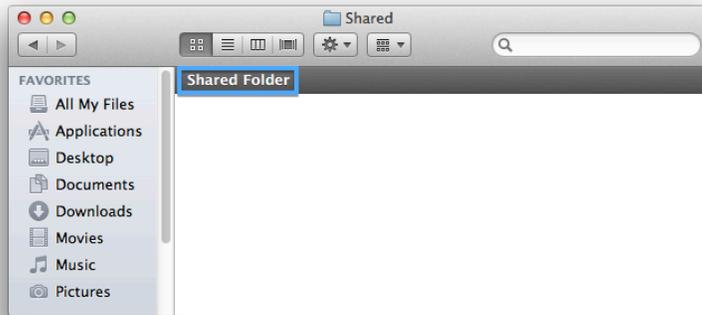


Repeat this process for all folders you wish to share.

Note: You can also directly select a folder in the Finder to share. Select the folder, choose **Get Info** from the **File** menu, and enable "Shared Folder" to share it (or deselect "Shared Folder" to stop sharing the folder).



Tip: When you open a shared folder, a "Shared Folder" banner appears in its Finder window, as well as any subfolder windows.



To learn about some more advanced aspects of File Sharing, open a section below.

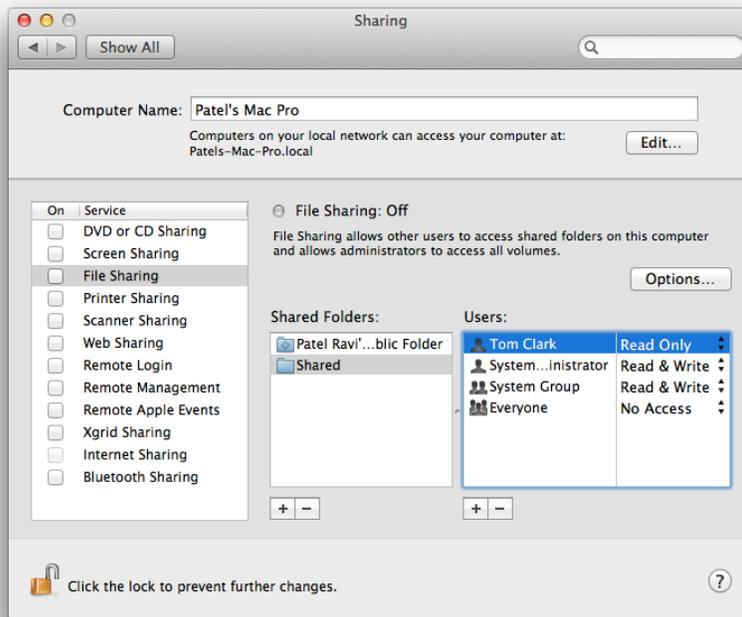
[Collapse All Sections](#) | [Expand All Sections](#)

Configure user and group accounts with appropriate access privileges

1. In Sharing preferences, select the folder that's being shared.
2. To add to the default user accounts and groups that were selected when you shared the folder, click the Add (+) button below the Users list.
3. Select an existing user account or group. User accounts can be created in Users & Group preferences (in OS X Lion) or Accounts preferences (in Mac OS X 10.5 or later), in System Preferences. **Tip:** You can click "New Person" to create a new Sharing Only user account or a user in your Address Book (also a "Sharing Only" user account).
4. The default privilege for a user account or group you add is "Read Only". If you want to change this, click the pop-up menu next to the user or group and choose one of the following privilege options:
 - Read & Write – The user can read, copy, edit, and delete the contents of the folder.
 - Read Only – The user can only read and copy (to another location) the contents of the folder.
 - Write Only (Drop Box) – The user can only copy content into the folder. The user can not see the contents of the drop box folder.

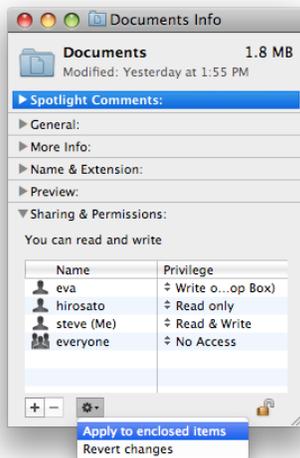
Note: A "Write Only" user can overwrite items in the drop box folder, if what they drop into it has the same name as an item already in the drop box folder.

- No Access (groups only) – User accounts in this group will have no access to the folder. However, if a user account is added, the privileges assigned to the user account override the group restrictions.
5. Repeat this process for other folders being shared for which you want these users to have access.



You can also manage the user or group access of a shared folder via the Finder; select the folder and choose **Get Info** from the **File** menu.

Tip: If you need to assign the shared folder user or group account privileges to items contained in the shared folder, select "Apply to enclosed items" from the action pop-up menu. A confirmation sheet appears, click OK to complete the process.



Choose the appropriate network protocol to communicate with the type of computer that's accessing your shared files

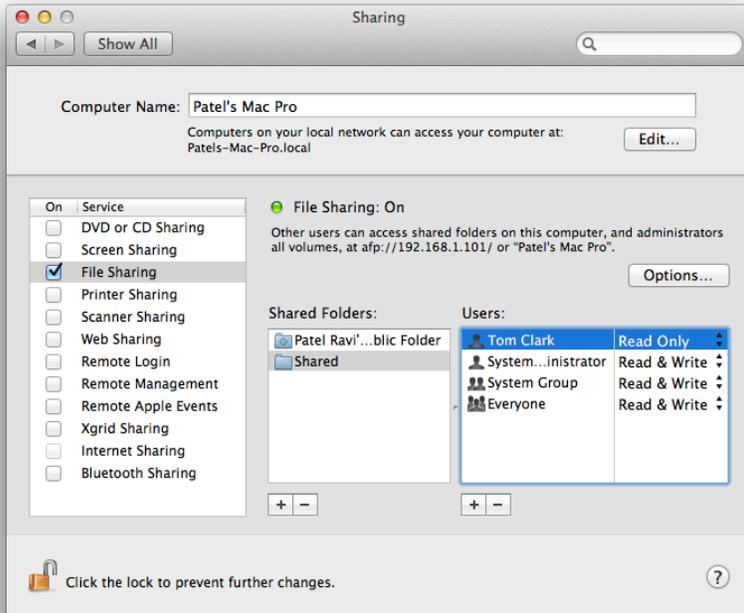
You can share files using Apple Filing Protocol (AFP), Server Message Block (SMB) protocol, or File Transfer Protocol (FTP). **Note:** FTP is only available in Mac OS X v10.5 or Mac OS X v10.6.

Follow these steps to select the appropriate protocols for the type of computer that will log onto your Mac:

1. In Sharing preferences, click Options.
2. Select "Share files and folders using AFP" to enable the Apple Filing Protocol. Use this protocol to file share with other Macs.
3. Select "Share files and folders using FTP" to enable the File Transfer Protocol. Use this protocol to file share with UNIX and LINUX systems. (This option is only available in Mac OS X v10.5 and Mac OS X v10.6)
4. Select "Share files and folders using SMB" to enable the Server Message Block protocol and check the user accounts to enable for SMB. Use this protocol to file share with Microsoft Windows-based PCs and Linux computers.

Note: You will have to enter the user's password for a user account that you enable for SMB.

5. Once you have selected the desired networking protocols, click Done.



Important: Mention of third-party websites and products is for informational purposes only and constitutes neither an endorsement nor a recommendation. Apple assumes no responsibility with regard to the selection, performance or use of information or products found at third-party websites. Apple provides this only as a convenience to our users. Apple has not tested the information found on these sites and makes no representations regarding its accuracy or reliability. There are risks inherent in the use of any information or products found on the Internet, and Apple assumes no responsibility in this regard. Please understand that a third-party site is independent from Apple and that Apple has no control over the content on that website. Please [contact the vendor](#) for additional information.