

How to get Macs and PCs to talk to each other

computer notes from the road

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Sharing Macs and PCs is not for the faint of heart or for those with little understanding of how networking is set up. But for those that are determined to do it, here is a quick tutorial.

Sharing between the two platforms works best when PCs are sending files to Macs. The reverse is much harder due to firewalls in various protection software.

Let's start with TCP/IP. This is a network protocol that allows computers to talk to each other; routers and servers use it to create an internal network in your office with unique addresses. What this means is that the router or server gives each computer a new address on the network that looks like this: "192.168.5.9." But remember, you receive a new address each time you turn your computer on if the router is set to DHCP automatic.

Now back to sharing files. To share between the PC and Mac, you need to know how to find the TCP/IP address on both platforms.

The following steps show how to find this address on systems running OSX10.4 and Windows XP. It also works with Vista, Leopard or Panther, although the windows look a little different.

Step 1: On the Mac, click on the blue apple in the upper lefthand corner and pull down to system preferences. When the

network button. This should show you the TCP/IP address. Write it down.

Step 2: Next, click the "show all" button at the top of the system preferences and then click the sharing button. Now check the "Windows Sharing" box. You'll notice that

an account button becomes active. Select that button and then select the user account you want to share with. Write down the user account name and password. You may have to unlock the whole window by clicking the lock icon at the bottom of the dialog box and entering your user name and password.

Step 3: Now you need your Mac's short

name, which is found by going to system preferences> accounts> and then choosing your user account. Write that name down.

Step 4: Open the hard drive and look in the OSX applications folder> utilities> for the Directory Access icon. Double click on this icon.

Look for the lock button at the bottom lefthand side and click on it. Enter your name and password to authenticate the change. Now check the SMB/CIFS box, which enables the Configure button. Clicking on configure takes you to the Workgroup window. (See below to locate the workgroup on the PC.)

Now you need the PC's name and workgroup. Go to the My Computer icon in the start menu, or on your desktop. Right click on the icon and pull down to properties. In the next window click the Computer Name icon. You should see the workgroup name in that window. Most of the time it's WORKGROUP or MSHOME. I recommend changing this name and then writing it down, but you have to restart the PC for it to take effect. This workgroup name is what you put into the workgroup dialog box. (See graphic above on the Mac.)

Step 5: Congrats, you're almost done. Now on the PC, go to Control Panel and then Network Connections. Select the Local Area Connection by clicking one time, then go to file menu> status> support tab. Write down the IP address of the PC computer. Your list should now have computer names, workgroups and the IP addresses of each machine.

It's important to note that the TCP/IP addresses change each time you restart your computer. This means you must recheck it each time unless you set a static IP address on all the computers. You can also set one computer up as a file server, give it a static high IP address and let everyone share to it.

Step 6: Now let's flip the script so your Windows machine can get to Mac's public folders.

Go to network places and to the network tasks area. Here you will add a network place to bring up the Wizard. Click on "next," choose another network location and then click "next" again. Type the TCP/IP address of the Mac

computer from your notes in this format: "\\172.16.1.151\usershortname\public". This allows you into the Mac computer's drop box in the public area of your user area.

To get to your public folder on the Mac, go to users> your short name> public folder> drop box. You can rename the drop box folder to username drop box if you prefer, but make a shortcut to that folder on your desktop.

It's not hard for Macs to get to Windows machines, if there aren't any firewalls. However, most PCs have firewalls so you're going to have to figure out how to get through to the shared folders. If that's the case, try the next set of steps to help you get started.

Step 7: To set up Windows to share files go into the shared documents folder, which is most often the first folder to open in the my computer icon. If not, look in :Documents and Settings\All Users\Documents.

In the shared documents window, create a new folder by choosing File> New> Folder. Name it something like "myshare". Now select the folder by clicking it one time, then go to file and choose sharing and security. In the Network Sharing, check the first box that says share this folder on the network and note this share name in your notes.

Step 8: Now let's share! On the Mac click one time on your desktop to be sure you are in the finder. In the "Go" menu, pull down to "connect to server." Type the IP address of the PC you set up in this format: "smb://xxx.xx.x.xxx/myshare". Use the TCP/IP numbers of the PC computer you're sharing for the "x's." The "myshare" should be the name of the folder you created in the PC's share folder.

Now enter your Mac user short name and the password of your machine. This is basically asking if you really want to talk to the PC.

When you see the little network globe you should be able to see the shared folder of the PC and its contents.

If it doesn't work, look at the firewalls. However, don't forget to turn them back on when you finish sharing or hackers will come knocking at your ports.

plugged IN

Place, don't paste



I have received many calls from people having trouble placing text files that come from Internet e-mails.

The problem is nearly always caused by copying and pasting those files.

It's time for you to learn a new trick. You won't have those problems if you learn to save the text to a file on your desktop or hard drive and then place it in the program you're working in.

Quark users will be more familiar with the term "import" or "get text."

To save files from the Internet or your e-mail client, you can usually select the type and then go to file and save as. However, text isn't the same in all programs. You may have to select all and right click, or control click the text and then save as text from the contextual menu.

Many programs, like InDesign, have a check box (in the place dialog box> show import options for InDesign) that allows you to see the import options, which give you control over how the text file comes into your document. It will often clean up formatting so quote marks come in looking correct. It also can take out text and table formatting, or even remove headers and footers.

A good use for Stickies

Apple's Stickies are post-it notes for the computer. I moved all my notes to this medium a few years ago. It's a wonderful tool, but if you want to keep a note forever you must save it out of Stickies as a plain text document.

A good trick is to open all .rtf (raw text format) files that come to you as an attachment in Apple's Stickies. Then export the text as "plain" text. This gives you a file that imports into most layout programs on the Mac. It works great, even if you do have to copy and paste into Stickies and then export the text.

This dumbing down of the files seems to work well in many ways.

