

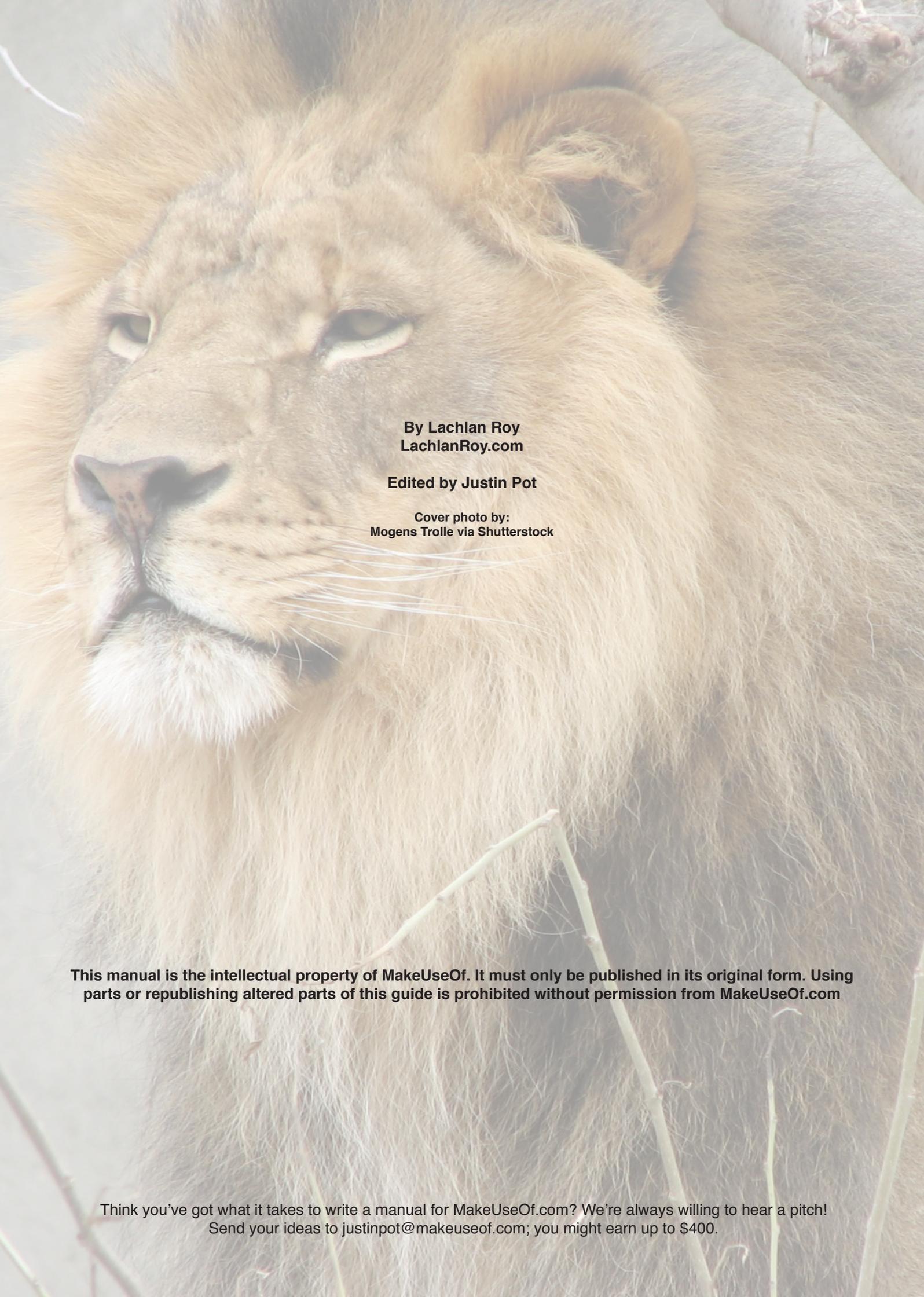
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# Lion, King of the OS jungle: Your Ultimate Guide.

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## Introduction

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Lion. The king of the big cats.

Every new version of Mac OS X has had its own name. Cheetah, Puma, Jaguar, Panther, Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard, and now Lion

.Deliberate or not, calling this version of OS X the king of the big cats brings along some big connotations. This is it. This is the pinnacle of OS X. What could possibly come after Lion?

So, what does this ultimate version bring to the table? What makes it worth using? What makes this operating system the king of the cats?

Read on to find out.

## 1: Getting Started With OS X Lion

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### Installing Lion

There are two main ways to get Lion onto your Mac; you can choose either to upgrade straight from Snow Leopard, or you can install Lion from scratch by performing a clean installation. For most people the upgrade is probably the best solution, but there are some people (like me) that prefer to do a clean installation whenever moving to a new version of the Operating System. Time Machine is a real boon to those people, as you can back up all of your files and then restore any or all of them where they were on a clean installation.

I'll quickly run through both options, but before we start it's important to note that regardless of which path you choose you will at some point need access to a Mac running Snow Leopard. This is because Lion is only available through the Mac App Store introduced in the latest versions of Snow Leopard. That's right; this is the first version of OS X that isn't being majorly distributed via DVD. While you *can* buy a USB thumb drive with OS X on it, this costs more than twice what Lion does on the App Store, so it's not worth doing unless your Internet connection really isn't up to downloading Lion (which weighs in at about 4GB).

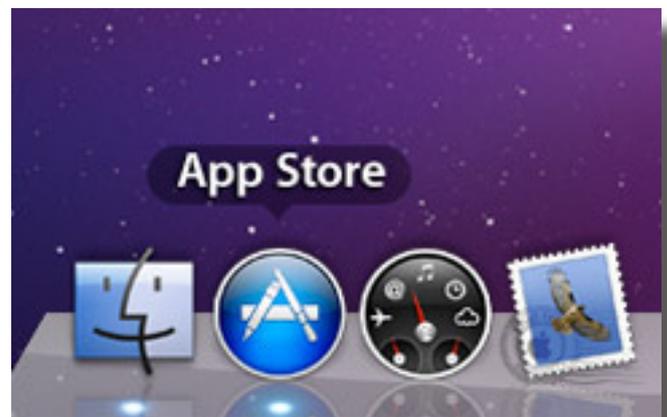
### Upgrading to Lion

This will talk you through the process of upgrading to Lion from Snow Leopard; it is not possible to upgrade from previous versions of OS X (that is, Leopard or Tiger) in the same way. Apple suggests that you buy Snow Leopard first, upgrade to that and then upgrade from Snow Leopard to Lion. If you don't want to do that, you'll need to perform a clean installation.

Upgrading is really easy, but there are a few things you'll need to do first to make sure that your Mac is ready to install Lion. First up, you'll need to know if your Mac is compatible. You can do this by clicking on the Apple menu, then "About This Mac". If you see "Intel" followed by "Core 2 Duo", "Core i3", "Core i5", "Core i7" or "Xeon", then congratulations - your Mac is able to run Lion.

The other thing you'll need to do is make sure that you're running the latest version of Snow Leopard by clicking the Apple icon and running "Software Update". Once all of those updates are installed, you're ready to install Lion.

If you're on the latest version of Snow Leopard you'll see the Mac App Store icon in your dock. If you've removed it, you can find it in the main Applications folder. Click on the icon to get started.



Although Lion has been out for a while now, it is still easy to find it in the App Store. It may no longer be the major banner at the top of the window, but you should be able to see it as one of the smaller banners further down the page or under the “Top Paid” apps. If you still can’t find it there, you can always enter “OS X Lion” into the search bar. Clicking on any of these will take you to the Lion product page.

Buying Lion is as easy as clicking on the price and then clicking on the resulting green “Buy App” button. At this point you’ll be asked to enter your Apple ID and password to authorise the transaction (I’ll assume that you already have an Apple ID set up). Then it’s time to go get yourself a cup of coffee or two, because this is going to take a long time to download.

When Lion has finished downloading, the Lion installer should automatically start up (if it doesn’t, you can find it in the Applications folder). The installation process is really simple; just follow the on-screen instructions and the installer will do the rest! Your Mac will restart half way through, it’ll install Lion and then before you know it you’ll be in Lion, ready to use your shiny new operating system! Hooray!

Skip to the next chapter to find out more about using Lion.

## Performing a Clean Installation

If upgrading isn’t for you and you want to start afresh (or you want to go straight from Leopard or Tiger), a clean installation is the way to go. This means erasing your hard drive and replacing the data with a fresh installation of Lion. Of course, this means that everything on your hard drive has to go, so backing up your data is essential. Time Machine is great for this. You’ll then need to restore the Lion installation file to a USB drive (or similar) to install from. While you don’t need Snow Leopard to create the installer, you *do* still need Snow Leopard to download the Lion Installer from the App Store in the first place. If you can find somebody else with a Mac running Snow Leopard who is willing to download the 4GB installer for you, though, you’ll be set.

The App Store will download **Install Mac OS X Lion.app** to the Applications folder. We’re only interested in part of this file, which is a DMG file containing all of the files necessary to install Lion (a DMG file is an image file which acts just like a hard drive or CD). We can find this by right-clicking on the Installer app and selecting “Show Package Contents”.

The file we’re looking for is called **InstallESD.dmg**, found in the **Shared Support** directory. Double clicking on it will mount it. The next step is to open the Disk Utility (you can either search for it with Spotlight or find it in **Applications > Utilities**).

There it’s just a matter of formatting your installation media and restoring the installer (called **Mac OS X Install ESD** and found in the sidebar) to the installation media. The installation media can be a USB drive, an external hard drive, or a DVD. For more information on formatting and restoring disk images, have a look over at the [main MakeUseOf website](http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/extensive-guide-upgrading-osx-lion-making-installation-disks-mac/). (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/extensive-guide-upgrading-osx-lion-making-installation-disks-mac/>)

Make sure that you’ve backed up your data, though. Seriously. Once it’s gone, it’s gone.

You’ll want to restart your computer, with the installer media (either a USB stick, external drive or a DVD) plugged in. When you hear the Mac start-up sound, hold down the option key. This will bring up a list of all the bootable media that your Mac can see - your OS X installation, the Boot Camp partition if you have one, and the installation media which you just prepared. You can either click on the installer or use the arrow



keys to highlight it and press Enter to select it.

This will bring up the Lion installer. If you've upgraded OS X before this will be quite familiar, but if you haven't, don't worry!

First you'll see a welcome screen, where you can choose the language that you want to carry out the



installation in. Then you'll be given a few options: you can use the installer to restore to a Time Machine backup (in case something goes horribly wrong), set up Mac OS X (which we'll get to in a minute), use Safari to troubleshoot problems or use the Disk Utility to repair or erase disks.

First we'll want to go to the Disk Utility to prepare the hard drive for the Lion installation. Again, make sure that you have your data backed up, because the next step is to erase the hard drive. On the left hand side you'll see all the drives which are connected to the Mac. By default, your system drive will just have one partition called **Macintosh HD**, although it might also have a second partition called **BOOT CAMP** if you've used the Boot Camp utility to dual-boot Windows.

If you've used Boot Camp, you'll just want to choose the **Macintosh HD** partition; if you have only one partition you'll be better off selecting the entire drive. Then click on the "Erase" tab towards the top of the Disk Utility window, give the new partition a name (you might just want to call it **Macintosh HD** again), make sure that the format chosen is "Mac OS Extended (Journaled)" and click "Erase". You'll need to confirm that you actually want to erase the disk (giving you one last chance to quadruple check that you've backed up your data!)

Seriously: back up your data before you do any of this. It will disappear.

Once you've done that, close the Disk Utility window. This will bring us back to the option screen. Now that we've got the disk ready to install Lion, it's time to select the option "Reinstall Mac OS X". At this point it's just like the upgrade process above; follow the on screen instructions and you'll be fine. When it asks you to choose which disk you want to install OS X on, select the partition which you just erased.

Lion will install itself to the hard drive, and then reboot the computer. Once that's done, it's just a matter of setting up a new user account, registering and connecting to networks.

## 2. A Few New Controls

### Natural Scrolling

One of the most immediately noticeable changes to OS X Lion is the introduction of *natural scrolling*, Apple's attempt to bring scrolling from the iPhone and iPad to the desktop and laptop. How does this work? To sum it up, scrolling is now reversed compared to what you're used to: swiping two fingers down scrolls up, swiping up scrolls down, swiping left scrolls right and vice versa.

Before you immediately discard the idea as being utterly preposterous, I'd say it's definitely worth giving natural scrolling a try. Without a doubt you'll need some time to adapt; after all, scrolling has remained otherwise unchanged since the introduction of the scroll wheel mouse. When you're working with a giant glass touchpad, however, it starts to make a lot more sense.

If you use an iPad or iPhone (or any smartphone or tablet, for that matter), this will be much easier. Just think about pushing the content, not the scroll bar. It'll take a little while for sure, but suddenly it'll click and you'll wonder why it wasn't like this sooner.

You might be thinking that natural scrolling will mess with your head when it comes to working on a different computer that doesn't have natural scrolling. I've personally found this not to be the case; the scrolling action when using a mouse is different enough that it's not affected in your mind by the new scrolling style.

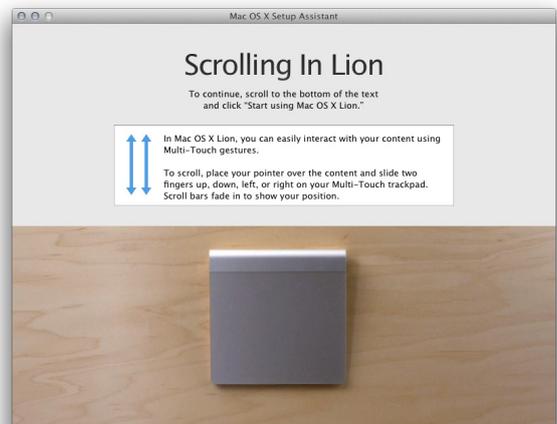
Similarly, because many other laptops have their own style of scrolling (such as a strip down the side of the trackpad dedicated to scrolling), this doesn't change in your head either.

Having said that, there is one situation where you're likely to run into trouble; if you have a MacBook (or use a Magic Trackpad) but also want to use a mouse, you'll be stuck. When you turn natural scrolling on, it's turned on for *all* devices, and right now there's no way to turn it on only for trackpads without installing a third party application such as [PilotMoon's Scroll Reverser](http://pilotmoon.com/scrollreverser/). (<http://pilotmoon.com/scrollreverser/>)

### Gestures

Gestures themselves are nothing new – using two fingers for scrolling horizontally or vertically has been around since OS X Panther (10.3) with the introduction of the 2005 Aluminium PowerBook G4. Since then, new gestures have been added with each new version of Mac OS X. Lion is no exception, adding a whole bunch of new functionality through the glass trackpads found in the latest MacBooks and the Magic Trackpad.

To learn more about the new gestures, the best place to go is the "Trackpad" preference pane in System Preferences. There you can see a video of each gesture in action, as well as tweak the gestures to suit you better.



## 3. Working with Applications

### Launchpad



When Apple introduced OS X Lion for the first time at the World Wide Developer Conference this year (WWDC 2011), they made it clear that OS X would be influenced by iOS (the operating system which runs on iPhones, iPod Touches and iPads). Launchpad is the first and most obvious example of these influences.

Launchpad can be started in two ways: by clicking on the “Launchpad” icon on the dock, or by using a pinching gesture with the thumb and three fingers on a multitouch trackpad. When it is started, Launchpad shows all the applications installed on the computer in the same style that apps are shown on the home screen in iOS. Applications show up in Launchpad no matter where they are stored on the hard drive (they don’t need to be in the Applications folder!), and can be reordered and stored in folders in the same way as on an iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad.



Apps can be reorganised by clicking and dragging an app to where you want it – the other icons will rearrange themselves to accommodate it. You can create folders by dragging one app on top of another. The folder will automatically be given a name based on the apps used to create it, but you can simply click on the name of the folder while it is open to rename it.

Any apps which are bought in the Mac App Store (which we’ll get to soon) are automatically added to Launchpad and can be removed by clicking and holding on the application, then clicking on the cross which appears when the icons begin wobbling. You can also make the apps wobble temporarily by holding down the option key. Apps which you install by yourself cannot be removed this way. For these, you might want to consider a [third party app remover](http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-free-uninstallers-to-prevent-obsolete-files-from-piling-up-mac/). (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-free-uninstallers-to-prevent-obsolete-files-from-piling-up-mac/>)

## Mission Control



Exposé was first introduced in OS X Panther (10.3) as a way of managing the windows which are open on a system. It had three main functions: to show all the windows on a system, to show all the windows belonging to the application being used, and to show the desktop by flinging all the windows off to the sides of the screen.

In OS X Leopard (10.5), Apple introduced Spaces, providing the ability to create multiple virtual screens and switch between them to further manage windows on the system. It was then possible to click on the Spaces icon to view all the spaces at once and shift windows between them.



Mission Control replaces Exposé and the Spaces view by bringing all of these elements onto one screen. You can activate it by clicking on the Mission Control icon in the Dock, by clicking on the Exposé key on the keyboard (F3 on most newer Macs, or F8 on older ones), or swiping up with four fingers on a multi-touch trackpad.

When in Mission Control, you can see all the windows in your current Space grouped into the application they belong to. At the top of the screen you can also see your different Spaces and any apps running in full screen mode (more on that below).

You can select any of the windows that you can see in the main area, which will cause focus to shift to that particular application and window. You can also click on any of the Spaces or full screen apps to change to that “screen”, or create a new space by moving the pointer to the top right hand corner of the screen and clicking on the translucent screen with a + sign that appears.

The other Exposé functions are also still available, although they have been relegated to different multi-touch gestures. Viewing all the windows for the current application is done by swiping down with four fingers, and viewing the desktop is done by spreading outwards with the thumb and three fingers (like spreading the windows out to the sides of the screen).

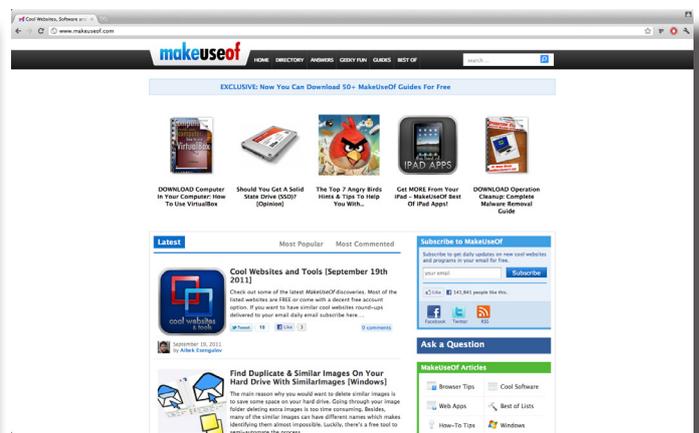
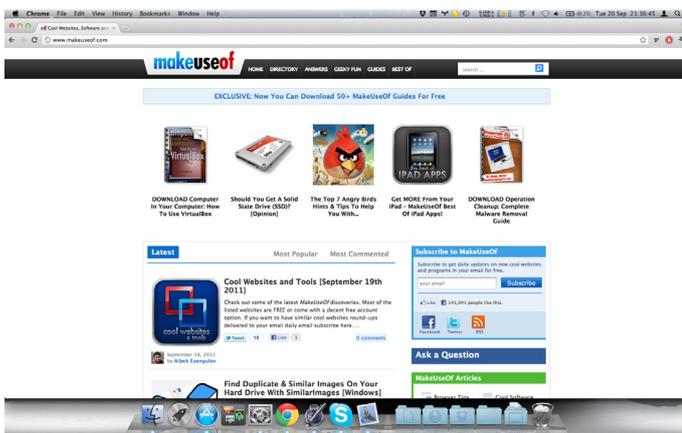
## Spaces

Spaces haven't really changed much at all since Leopard. However, some flexibility is sacrificed to make spaces easier to manage.

Spaces used to be a grid of virtual screens, where you could specify the number of rows and columns of Spaces and tie applications to a specific Space right from the Spaces preference pane. Now, Spaces are added from within Mission Control by moving the cursor to the top right hand corner of the screen and clicking on the button which appears.

Spaces cannot be rearranged, but there is an option in the Mission Control preference pane to automatically reorder them by the spaces which are most commonly used. When there is more than one Space, a running application can be specifically assigned to the current Space by right-clicking on its icon in the dock, selecting "Options" and then clicking "This Desktop" under "Assign To". Selecting "All Desktops" shows the window all the time, regardless of which Space is selected. Selecting "None" means that the window can be moved to any Space using Mission Control.

## Full-Screen Apps



Another new feature introduced in Lion is system-wide support for full-screen apps. While full-screen apps have been around for years (most web browsers, for example, as well as apps such as iPhoto and, more recently, Pages or Microsoft Word), it's always been a tacked on feature that has never worked well with the rest of the operating system. Going full-screen in a browser, for example, usually blocks access to the rest of the system. Going full-screen in Pages works great until you need to swap to another application; Pages then leaves full-screen mode until you re-enable it.

In Lion, full-screen functionality is an integral part of the system. Any application which can be made full-screen will have the same symbol in the same location – two diagonal arrows pointing away from each other in the top right hand corner of the window.

When you click on this button, the app enters into full-screen mode. At this point, it creates its own Space, which you can see at the top of the screen in Mission Control. You can also swipe between full-screen apps and the main desktop (as well as other Spaces) by swiping left and right with three or four fingers (depending on your settings in the Trackpad preference pane.)

The idea of full-screen apps is to give you that little bit of extra screen real-estate. This has two major effects: First, even that little bit of extra room for the app makes a big difference when it comes to the feel of the app. Second, when an app is in full-screen mode, all you see is the app, making it much easier to focus on the task at hand (while still making it easy to get to other apps when you need to).

When in full-screen mode, the menu bar and the dock are hidden. However, you can reveal the menu bar by moving the cursor to the top of the screen. To reveal the dock you need to move the cursor to the bottom of the screen and then move the cursor downwards again.

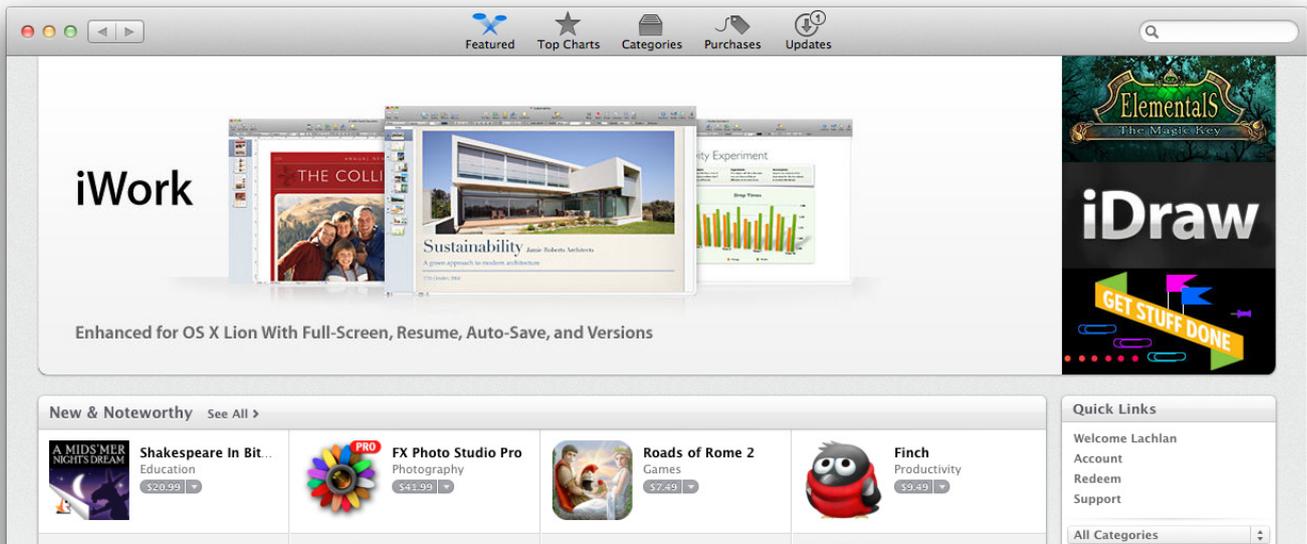
Lion comes with quite a few apps that can go full-screen; iCal, iTunes, Mail, Terminal, Safari, Photo Booth, Preview, DVD Player, QuickTime Player, iPhoto, iMovie and GarageBand can all go full screen. Although iWork is not included with Lion itself, all the iWork apps are full-screen compatible, too.

The great thing about full-screen apps, though, is that because it's built directly into Lion it's really easy for developers to add the functionality into their own apps. Already more and more applications are showing up on the Mac App Store with full-screen support.

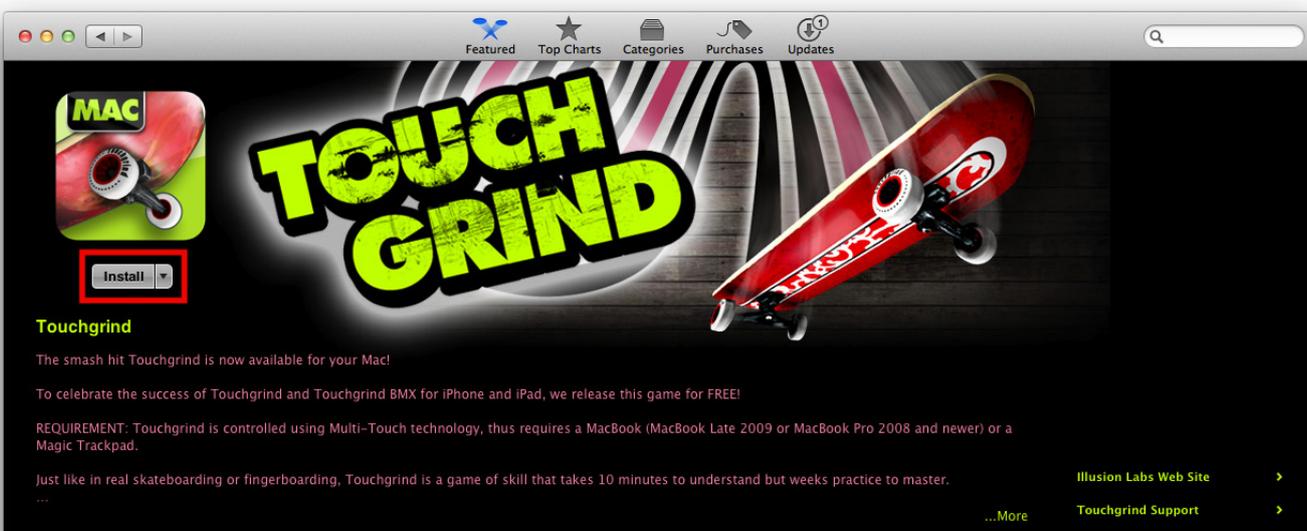
The one big downside to full-screen apps is that right now there is next to no support for multiple displays when in full-screen mode – the other screen is just greyed out and cannot be used by windows from other applications.

## 4. Changes to Default Applications

### The App Store



Anybody who has used an iOS device knows about the App Store. It's a great place to find an app to do what you need to do, or to discover the latest and greatest that developers have to offer. The App Store has now come to the Mac as well. While a preview of the Mac App Store was introduced in Mac OS X Snow Leopard (10.6) – you needed it to download Lion, after all! – it is tightly integrated in Lion to make the process of installing new apps seamless.



Downloading a new app is easy. Simply find the app you want to install and go to its page – in this example I'll be installing *Touchgrind*. If it's a free app you'll just see an "Install" button. If it's a paid app, you'll need to click on the price, and then click again when it changes to a green "Buy App" button. You'll then be asked to enter in your Apple ID and

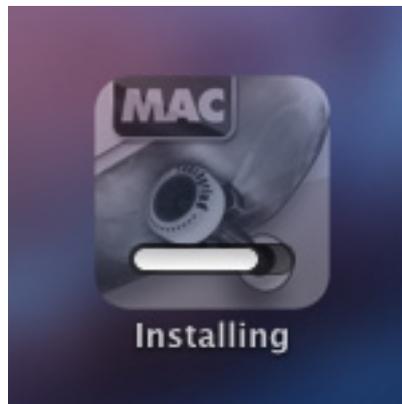
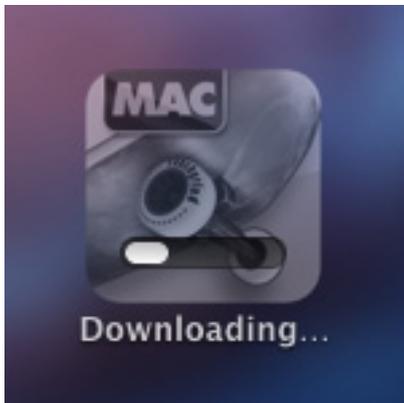
password to authorise the purchase (whether the app is free or not). Once authorised, a few things will happen all at once. Launchpad comes up, showing you where the app's icon is. The icon is greyed out with a progress bar for the download and installation. Likewise, if you have the Launchpad icon on your Dock, it too will show a progress bar for all downloads (for if you have multiple apps queued for installation). This means that you can leave the Launchpad and continue to work while keeping an eye on the installation process.



When the installation is finished, the Launchpad icon will bounce to signal that the app is ready to use (just in case you forgot about it). Now if you go back to the App Store and go to the app's page again, you'll notice that the button has greyed out and says "Installed". All done!



The other great part about the Mac App Store is that, like its iOS counterpart, it will keep your apps updated. Whenever there is an update available for an app installed through the App Store, a badge will be displayed on the App Store icon. Just like iOS, you can then view which apps need updating, the changes that each update makes, and gives you the option to update individual apps or update all apps at once. Again, you'll have to enter your Apple ID and password to authorise any updates.



## iCal

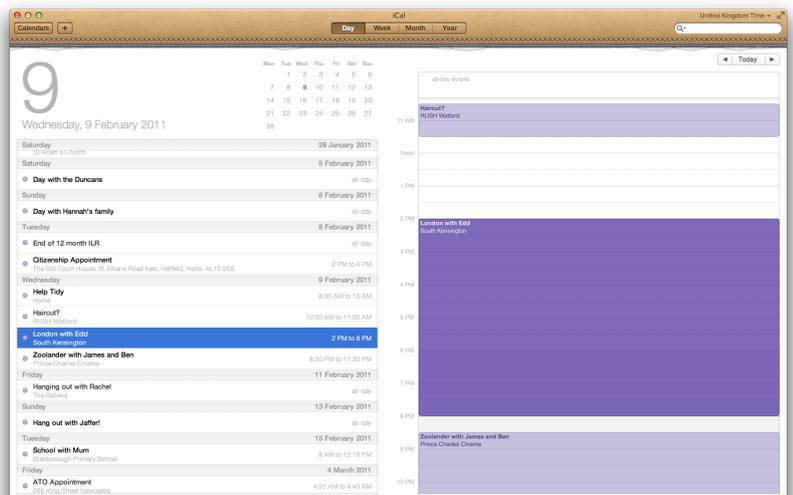
iCal has gone through a major transformation in Lion. Like the iPad calendar app, iCal now takes on the appearance of a leather-bound desktop calendar. However, the changes to iCal aren't only skin deep: the new version includes new functionality too.

Lion has turned iCal into a full screen app, so you can focus on your calendar and the events on it without being distracted. It also gives you extra space to see even the most complex schedules without much hassle.

Another new feature is the year view which, as you might expect, lets you take a glance at your calendar 12 months at a time. Also part of the year view is the "Heat map", which colours days from yellow to orange to red depending on how busy that day is.

The day view has also changed to show both a list of all the upcoming events on the left hand side and a detailed view of the day's timetable on the right hand side.

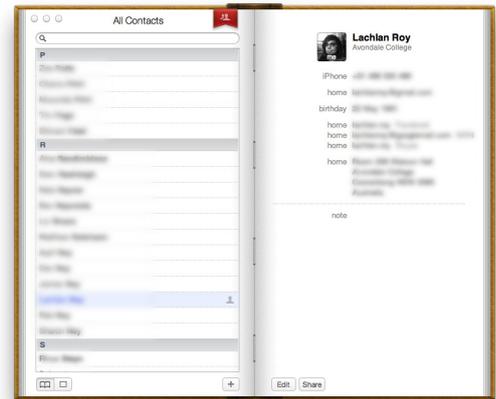
Finally, the new version of iCal makes it easy to add new events to your calendar. It's just a matter of clicking "+" in



the top left hand corner of the window and entering a description of the event using natural English, such as “Mary’s Birthday at 8 p.m.”.

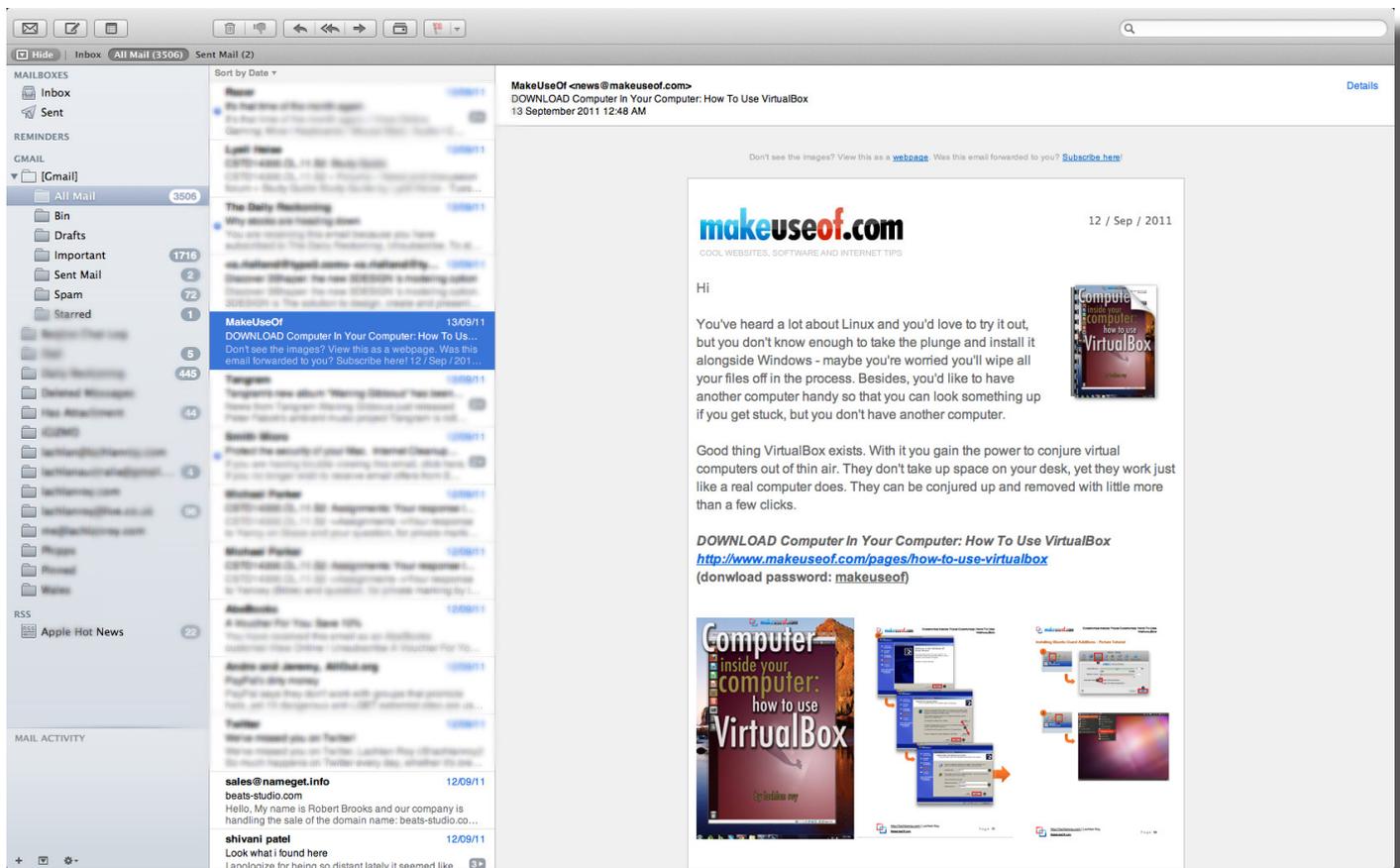
## Address Book

Similar to iCal, the Address Book’s makeover makes it more like the Contacts app on the iPad. The new Address Book looks like a leather-bound booklet, which means you’ll either love it or hate it. There’s not a whole lot else which the new version brings to the table, apart from small things like being able to choose a contact picture from iPhoto’s Faces, or being able to start a FaceTime call by clicking on an email address.



## Mail

Mail, on the other hand, is not covered with a leather skin. There are interface changes, but the changes are more about making Mail more effective on a widescreen display, which is great when coupled with its newfound full-screen support.



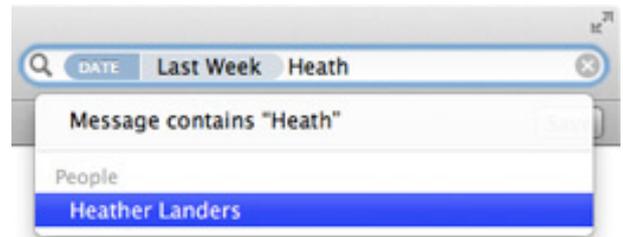
If you’re a Gmail junkie, you’ll be glad to know that Mail now has Conversations, a viewing mode which ties conversations together in threads. However, it does work slightly differently, finding messages with similar content from the same contact and bundling them together, which is great for managing newsletters and promotions as well as long chains of emails sent back and forth about a particular subject.

Speaking of Gmail, the new version of Apple Mail makes it even easier than before to add IMAP accounts. Just click on “File” in the menu bar, then on “Add Account...”. Then it’s just a matter of entering your email address and the password for that email address. If it’s an email address with a common domain name (such as Gmail, Yahoo Mail or Hotmail) Mail will automatically recognise it and add all the correct settings.

Even if you don’t use Gmail, there are many similar features in the new version of Mail that are extremely useful. You can now archive messages, saving them to a folder on your computer so that they don’t clog up your inbox but can

still be easily accessed. You can also create custom, colour-coded labels so that you can easily find mail belonging to a predefined group. Writing messages is better too, as you can now easily edit your text with the new formatting bar.

The other major feature is the revamped search feature, which now makes use of search tokens. This works by allowing you to type in a series of smaller searches which help to narrow down your email to a smaller, more manageable range. There are a few different tokens, such as dates (typing in “October 2010” will allow you to view only email sent and received in October 2010), people (searching for mail to or from a certain contact) and subject.



You can also save a particular string of search tokens as a smart mailbox, so that any mail which meets the criteria of all the tokens will automatically show up in a mailbox that can then be added to your favourites for easy access.

## 5. Working with Files

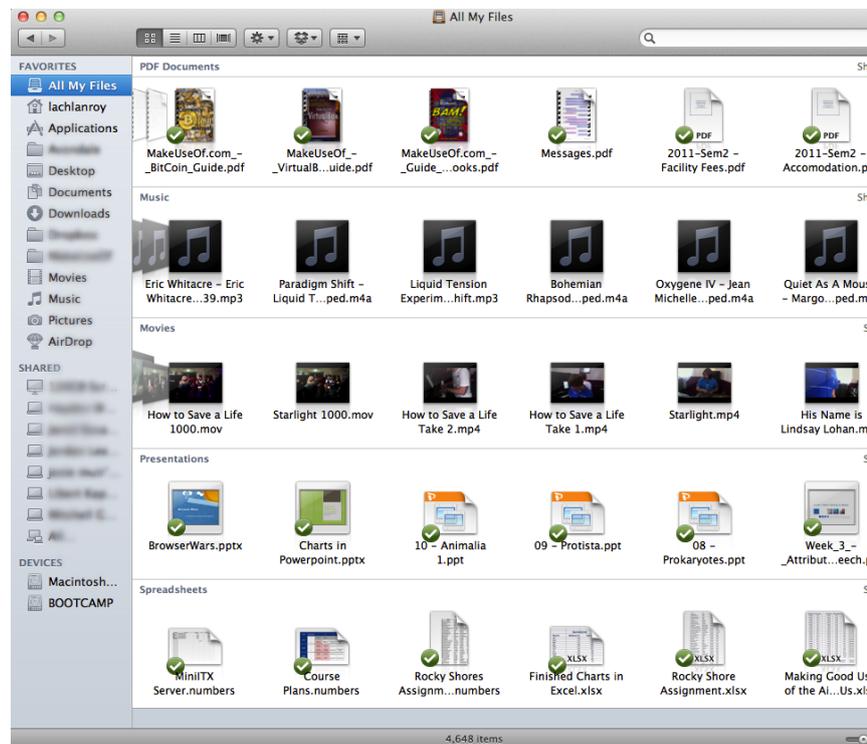
### Finder

The Finder has had a significant revamp in Lion. While its overall appearance may not have changed dramatically the Finder is much faster and tighter, and there are a number of smaller changes and a few new views which definitely make the Finder much more useful than it was in Snow Leopard.

One new view which will be particularly welcome to those new to computers is the new default view called “All My Files”. As the name suggests, this automatically aggregates all the commonly used files from all over the hard drive and splits them up into the different file types, such as images, documents, videos, archives and so on.

This category view can also be used in any folder while browsing, and can be used to sort files in a number of different ways: by kind, date modified, date added, size or by the application used to open the file.

The Finder also allows you to search for files using search tokens in the same way that you can search for specific emails in Mail. Tokens include date modified, file size and file kind.



There are also some other welcome features, such as the ability to merge two folders with the same name, the ability to choose multiple files and group them in a folder (by right clicking on the files and choosing “Group as Folder”), and files flocking together when moving multiple files along with a badge showing the number of files being moved.

### Auto Save

Another new feature which Lion brings to the table is auto-saving. “Hold on,” I hear you say “Auto-saving is nothing new. Microsoft Word has been auto-saving for years!”

This is true, but auto-saving works slightly differently in Lion, and has the potential to be far more widespread than just office applications. Instead of simply being scheduled to automatically save a separate, temporary copy of the file every 5 minutes, applications which make use of Auto Save save any changes almost as soon as they’ve been made.

The big implication of this? It doesn't matter if Pages crashes after an hour of writing without saving. No more do you need to worry about whether you should save or not when quitting an application; the application just closes. It doesn't ask you whether you want to save the document *because it's already been saved*. When you restart the application the document will be there, exactly as you left it.

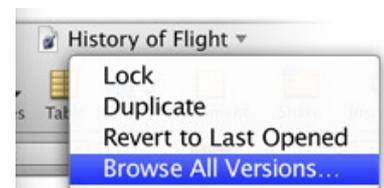
That isn't to say that manually saving the document doesn't still have its uses – the ⌘S shortcut isn't going to be forgotten any time soon! However, when using an app which supports Auto Save, it has a different purpose – saving a *version*.

## Versions



Versions takes Auto Save one step further by allowing you to manage different versions of a document from within the application used to edit it. You can think of it as Time Machine for documents – in fact, the interface for Versions is very similar to the interface for Time Machine.

Versions requires that you actually save the document at least once, assigning it a filename and save location just like saving any other document. Once you've done that, a new version is saved every time you press ⌘S and after long periods of inactivity. You can view the different versions of the document by moving the cursor near the document's title at the top of the window, clicking on the triangle which appears, then clicking on "Browse All Versions..."



Once you're in the Versions interface, you can browse the different versions of the document by clicking on the buttons on the right hand side of the screen. While you can't *edit* old versions of the document, you can select text and images and copy and paste them into the current version.

If you decide that the work you've done since an older version isn't what you want, you can select that older version and then click "Restore" at the bottom of the screen. The result is that the old version is made the current version, but don't worry! The work you did before clicking "Restore" is simply made the second newest version, so you still don't have to worry about losing anything.

That may seem complicated, but it boils down to something very simple; with Auto Save you don't *need* to save,

but pressing  $\text{⌘S}$  allows you to create checkpoints that you can access at any time to give an extra layer of security. Couple this with Time Machine and you've got yourself an (almost) infallible backup system in place which makes losing your work (almost) impossible.

There are a couple of other options that go along with Versions which help you when you're working with documents. Since a version is created every time you open the document (assuming that it's been saved at some point), it is possible to revert to the document as it was when you last opened it (potentially before you saved your last version) by clicking on the triangle next to the document title and clicking on "Revert to Last Opened".

Once you're happy with the document you've created, it's possible to lock the document to make sure that you don't make any accidental changes (by opening the wrong document, for example). You can do this by clicking on the same menu and clicking on "Lock". Conveniently, Lion will automatically lock any documents which haven't been opened in more than two weeks, so if you do have multiple documents which look similar you'll know that you're working on the current one, not one from a while back.

If you do try to open a locked document, Lion asks if you want to unlock it and edit that particular document or if you want to duplicate it and work on a new document which uses the original as a template.

You don't need to lock the document to duplicate it, though. Once you have a document the way you like it, you can select "Duplicate" from the menu to create... well... a duplicate! This makes it really easy to create custom templates which are more complex and more personalised than the default templates.

## Resume

I mentioned that AutoSave allows applications to reopen documents that haven't actually yet been saved. Lion takes this one step further by making it possible to save the states of all open applications when it comes time to shut down or restart the computer.

What does this mean? It means that for the vast majority of applications, you can restart the computer without worrying about losing your place or your content; Lion will do its best to put things back to exactly the way before, down to the size of each window, where each window is on the screen and where your cursor was before.

The days of putting off updates because you don't want to lose your tabs in Chrome are over!

## AirDrop



Before now, transferring files between computers that are not on a fully established, open network has always been a pain. You could go down one of two routes; setting up an ad-hoc network (that is, using one computer to create a network that the other can join to), or using an external drive of some description to ferry the files over.

Neither of these solutions is ideal. Ad Hoc networks can transfer files directly from one computer to the other but often take time to set up and are far from stable. On the other hand, there's very little setup involved when it comes to external drives, but you need to copy the files twice; once to get the files onto the drive from the source computer and again to get the files from the drive to the destination computer.

Enter AirDrop. This new feature takes the transfer speed and directness of ad hoc networking but makes it as simple as copying files to an external drive by creating a temporary, secure, zero-configuration ad hoc network between the two computers. That's a bit of a mouthful, but it basically means that the two computers automatically create a WiFi network between each other to transfer the files without you having to worry about any settings.

You can start AirDrop by selecting it in sidebar in Finder, or by choosing Airdrop from the "Go" menu while in the Finder if it has been removed from the sidebar. Once you've started AirDrop, you can see the computers of anybody else who is also in AirDrop and ready to receive files.

Sending files is as easy as selecting them, then dragging and dropping them onto the icon of the computer that you want to send them to. You can send either a single file, multiple files, folder(s) or any combination of these. Both you and the receiver will then have to authorise the file transfer. The files will start transferring, with progress shown by a progress bar wrapped around the icon of the receiving computer. Any files that are received end up in the receiver's Downloads folder.

Unfortunately, not all Macs which can run Lion are able to support AirDrop. If you bought your Mac in the last year or so you'll be fine, but if you're using an older one you might want to check over at [Apple Support](http://support.apple.com/kb/HT4783) (http://support.apple.com/kb/HT4783) to see if your Mac supports AirDrop.

## Conclusion

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So you've got Lion.

Full-screen apps. Mission Control. Launchpad. The App Store. AirDrop. AutoSave. Resume.

Never having to consciously save again. The ability to close applications without having to worry about losing data. Being able to focus on your work without distractions.

One place to find apps to do what you need, and to discover new ones. One screen to manage every app, every window. One place to launch any application, regardless of where it is on your computer. One place to see every file you need to see.

It doesn't get much better than that. Sounds like Lion really does live up to its name.



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