

# Chapter 1

## Setting Up Shop

---

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Installing Quicken
  - ▶ Touring Quicken
  - ▶ Setting up your bank (or other) accounts if you're a first-time user
  - ▶ Retrieving existing Quicken data files
- 

**I**f you've never used Quicken, begin here. This chapter tells you how to install Quicken (if you haven't already) and how to start the program for the first time. You also find out how you go about setting up Quicken accounts to track banking activities — specifically, the money that goes into and out of a checking or savings account.

If you've already begun to use Quicken, don't waste any time reading this chapter unless you want the review. You already know the stuff it covers.

By the way, if you have Windows, I assume that you know a little bit about it. Now, you don't have to be some sort of expert. Shoot, you don't even have to be all that proficient. You do need to know how to start Windows applications (such as Quicken). It also helps immensely if you know how to choose commands from menus and how to enter stuff into windows and dialog boxes. If you don't know how to do these kinds of things, flip to Appendix A. It provides a quick overview of how you work in Windows. Read the stuff in the appendix, or at least skim it, and then come back to this chapter.



When I say Windows, I mean a recent version of Windows — something Microsoft is either currently selling or has sold in the last few years. Quicken 2007 won't run on Windows 3.1, so if you want to run the latest version, I'm afraid it's time to upgrade.

## Installing and Starting Quicken

You install Quicken the same way that you install any program in Windows. If you already know how to install programs, you don't need any help from me. Stop reading here, do the installation thing, start your newly installed Quicken program, and then start reading the next section, "Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before."

If you need help installing Quicken, here are the step-by-step instructions. Installing Quicken from a CD-ROM is as easy as one, two, three, four:

### 1. Insert the CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive.

In a short amount of time, Quicken should display the Quicken 2007 installation window. I'm not going to show this window in a figure. There's really nothing on the window to talk about. The window just reads Welcome.

**Note:** If nothing happens when you put the CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive, don't panic! First, try removing the CD and then putting it in again. If Windows still doesn't recognize the CD, you need to *tell* Windows that it should install your Quicken program. In many versions of Windows (but not necessarily with your version), you do this with the Windows Control Panel by using a tool called Add/Remove Programs. To do this, refer to your Windows user guide or a good book about your version of Windows (such as *Windows XP For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, written by Andy Rathbone and published by Wiley).

### 2. Click Next.

Quicken then displays a window that asks you a few questions:

- The first question is whether you accept the Quicken license agreement.
- The next question asks where you want to install Quicken. You should accept the installation's program suggestion. (The installation program suggests a Quicken subfolder in your Program Files folder.)
- The next question — an implicit question really — asks whether it's okay to uninstall the previous version of Quicken if there is a previous version of Quicken installed on your computer. You may also be asked if it's okay with you if it gets any program updates.

### 3. Answer these questions by clicking the appropriate buttons. Click Next to move to the next question. Then click the Install Now button when you answer the last question.

Quicken installs itself. This process takes a few minutes. Along the way, you see several other screenfuls of messages, including marketing information about the features new to Quicken and some progress reports on the installation itself.



When in doubt about some installation option, just accept the default suggestion by pressing Enter.

After the installation is complete, Quicken displays an installation complete message.

#### 4. Click Done.

Congratulations. You're done.

After you install Quicken, you need to start it to finish the setup process. If you told the installation program to launch Quicken 2007, you should see the Quicken program window on your screen. If you didn't tell the installation program to launch Quicken, you need to start Quicken.



The easiest way to start Quicken is to double-click the Quicken shortcut icon that (post-installation) appears on your Windows desktop. The Quicken program window appears, almost like magic.



Quicken might ask if it can download program updates over the Internet. You can just say yes if it asks you this question.

## Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before

If you've used a previous version of Quicken, the Quicken program might show option buttons to indicate what you want to do next: Open the found data file. (Alternatively, you can indicate that you want to open some other data file.) You're done. You're ready to begin Quicken-ing.



The Quicken setup process can usually tell if you've used Quicken before. The setup process knows where the Quicken installation program usually puts the Quicken program and data files, and the installation program will look there. If you have used Quicken before but Quicken can't see this, two possibilities exist: The first possibility is that you put the Quicken data file someplace weird. (If that's the case, hopefully, you remember the weird place you hid the Quicken data file. If you can't remember, choose File→Find Quicken Data File, select the disk you want to search from the Look In box, and click Find. Quicken displays a list of the Quicken data files on the selected disk. For more help with this, you can refer to the section, "The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files," at the end of this chapter.) The second possibility is that you didn't do anything with the Quicken data file but that the data file has somehow gone missing. (If that's the case, hopefully, you backed up the Quicken data file to a CD or to some other disk from which you can restore the data file.)

## Finishing Setup If You Haven't Used Quicken Before

If Quicken can't figure out whether you've used the Quicken program before, it displays the welcome message shown in Figure 1-1.



**Figure 1-1:**  
The Getting Started With Quicken 2007 window.

If you have used Quicken before, select the I Am Already A Quicken User option button. Quicken then displays another Getting Started With Quicken 2007 window that asks whether you want to open a Quicken file located on this computer, restore a Quicken data file you've backed up to CD or disk, or start over and create a new data file, as shown in Figure 1-2.



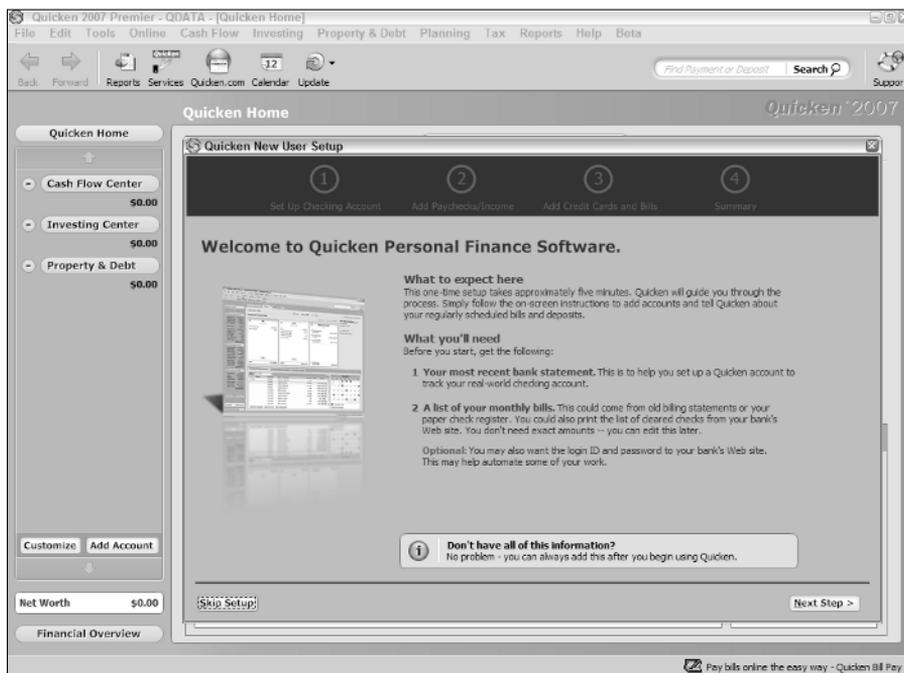
**Figure 1-2:**  
Another Getting Started With Quicken 2007 window.

If you indicate that you want to open another Quicken data file located on the computer, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. If you indicate that you want to grab a backup copy of the Quicken file, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. Presumably, if either of these situations is your case, you'll know where the data file or backup copy of the data file is.



At the very end of this chapter in the section, “The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files,” I describe how you can locate and open a Quicken data file.

If you haven't used Quicken before, Quicken asks if it's okay to use the default location for the data file (you should agree to this) and then it automatically sets up a data file for you (you don't need to worry about it). After the data file is set up, Quicken starts the Quicken New User Setup (see Figure 1-3). This setup process walks you through the steps for setting up Quicken. (You can find out much more on this process in the next section.)



**Figure 1-3:**  
The Quicken  
New User  
Setup  
window.

## Running the Quicken New User Setup

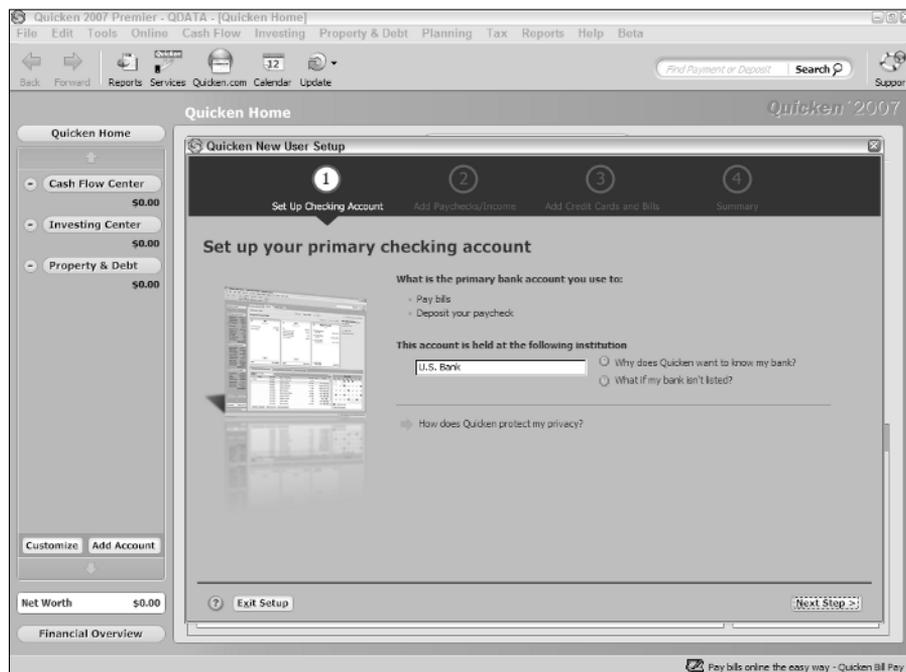
Okay. Here's the deal. The Quicken New User Setup walks you through a three-step process that asks about your banking, about your income, and about your regular bills. (You walk through the steps by clicking the Next button in the lower-right corner of the window.)

### Describing your banking

The “describe your banking” step asks you to provide information about your bank account and its current balance. Figure 1-4 shows the window that collects the first part of this information, but just so you don't get confused, here are the precise steps you take:

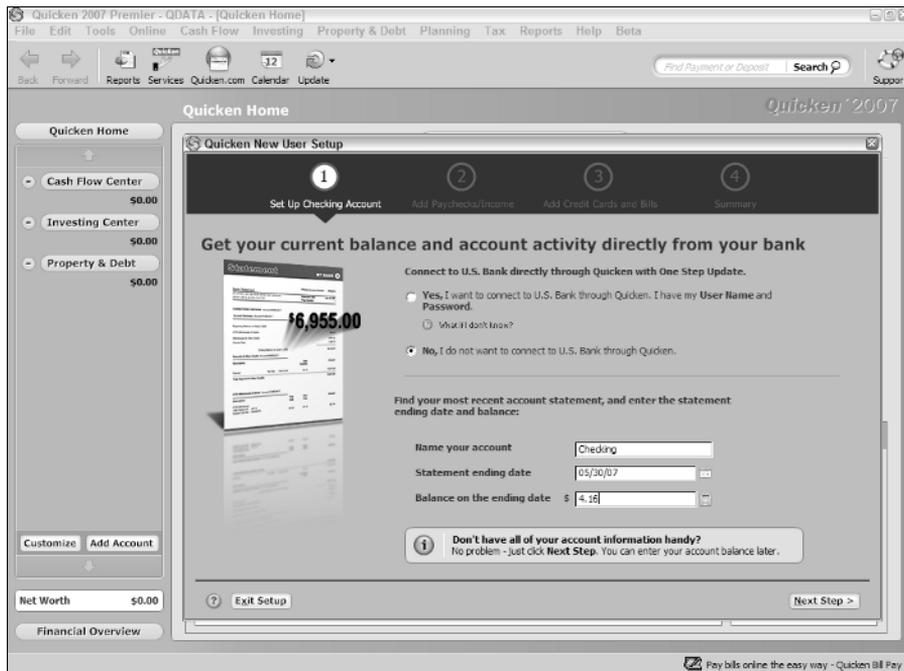
1. **Identify the financial institution — usually a bank — by typing your institution's name into the text box provided.**

As you type, Quicken displays a list of financial institutions that match what you've typed so far. The more you type, the shorter the list of possible matching institutions. If you see your bank or whatever listed, select it. When you click Next, Quicken displays the next Quicken New User Setup window, as shown in Figure 1-5.



**Figure 1-4:**  
The Set  
Up Your  
Primary  
Checking  
Account  
window.

**Figure 1-5:**  
The Get Your Current Balance And Account Activity Directly From Your Bank window.



**2. Tell Quicken whether you want to use the online setup for your account or manually set up your account.**

I'm going to suggest, because you're just starting out, that you set up your account manually. You have plenty of time later on to find out how online banking works. (Online banking is really cool, though. See Chapter 6 for more information.) To indicate that you'll manually set up your account, select the No button. Note that Quicken may not get into this online banking stuff if Quicken can tell that your bank doesn't support online banking.

**3. Tell Quicken the name you want to use for the checking account.**

You do so by typing a name in the Name Your Account text box, as shown in Figure 1-5. By the way, you can be as general or as specific as you want. But remember, brevity is a virtue; be as concise as you can. The reason is that Quicken uses your account name to label stuff within the Quicken window and on Quicken reports. If you use a long account name, the name may not always fit on reports and screens.

**4. Enter the ending bank statement date by referring to your bank statement.**

When Quicken asks for the ending statement date, enter the date of your last bank statement. Enter the date in *MM/DD/YYYY* fashion.

“Geez, Steve,” you’re now saying to yourself, “what’s *MM/DD/YYYY* fashion?” Okay. Here’s an example: If your bank statement is dated May 30, 2007, type **05/30/2007**, or you can type **5/30/2007**.

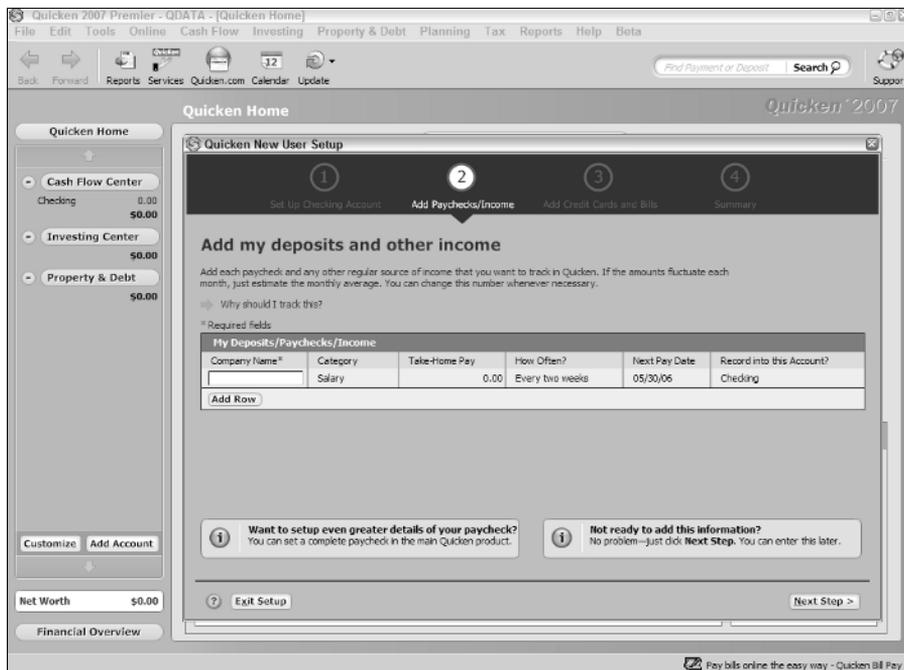
**5. Enter the ending bank statement balance by referring to your bank statement.**

This balance is whatever appears on your bank statement. This balance is also the amount of money in your account on the date you begin your financial record keeping. If you have \$4.16 in your checking account, type **4.16** into the Balance On The Ending Date text box.

**6. After you type the bank statement balance, click the Next Step button to continue moving through the New User Setup.**

### *Describing your income*

The second step in the new user setup? Describing any regular income that you receive (such as a paycheck) and any regular deposits you make into your bank account (see Figure 1-6). To provide this information, you *could* enter the name of the payor into the Company Name box. You *could* describe the type of payment using the Category box and *could even* give the amount of the regular payment using the Take-Home Pay box.



**Figure 1-6:**  
The Add My  
Deposits  
And Other  
Income  
window.

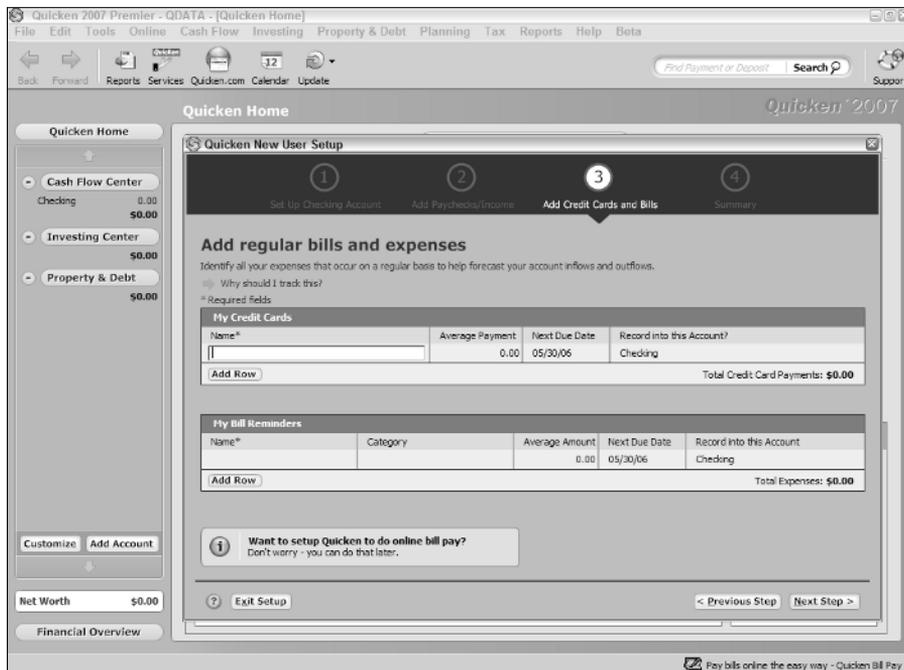
But you know what? You can also just skip this “Add my deposits and other income” step if you’re lazy (like me) or if you don’t actually have a regular source of income (also like me).

In fact, I’m going to recommend you skip this step. Seriously.

### *Describing your outgo*

The third step in the new user setup requires you to describe your regular bills and expenses — things like the rent or your mortgage, cell phone charges, and your ever-increasing cable TV bill (see Figure 1-7). To provide this expense information, you *could* (again, if you’re really anal) enter the name of the company you’re paying into the Name box and the payment amount into the Average Payment box or the Average Amount box. But you know what? Good grief! This setup stuff is getting way too complicated for me. Let’s just skip this step, too. We can deal with it later on. (No reason to make this more complicated than we have to.)

You’ll need to click the Next Step button a couple more times, click Finish, and then — viola! — Quicken displays the Quicken Home window (see Figure 1-8).



**Figure 1-7:**  
The Add  
Regular  
Bills And  
Expenses  
window.



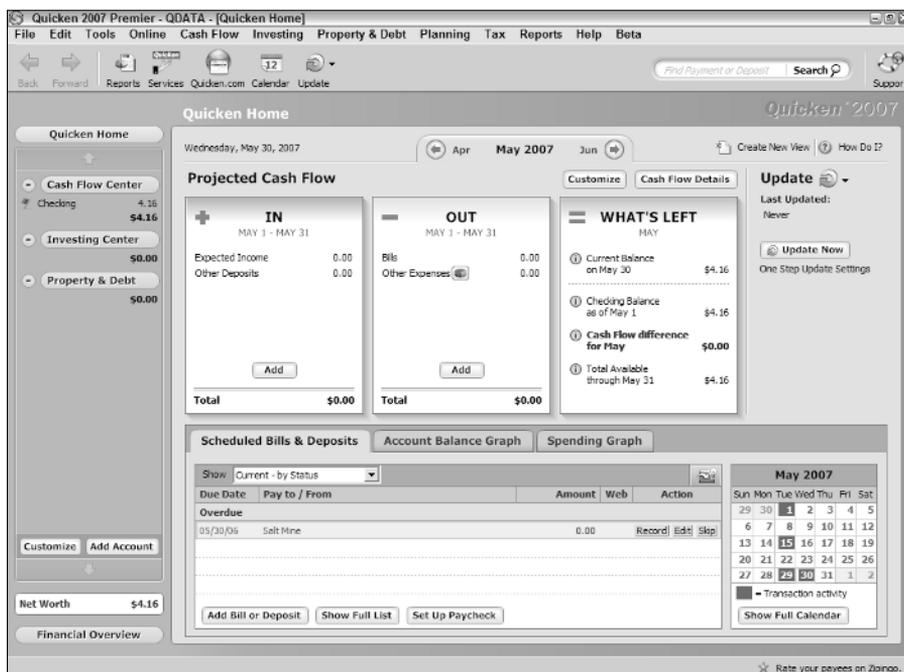
## The best way to get started

Quicken wants you to use your last bank statement to set up the bank account you track. This way, your financial records synchronize with the bank's records when you start using Quicken.

But I want to suggest something slightly different to you. Go back further than just to the beginning of the previous month (which is what you do when you use your last bank statement). Go back to the beginning of the year and use the last bank statement of the previous year — even if it's now several months after the beginning of the year. Now, I'm not trying to waste your time. But let me point out two big advantages to having a complete year's data in

Quicken: Tracking and tallying your tax deductions will be a snap, and planning your finances will be easier. When you enter the activity, be sure to enter any outstanding checks or deposits from the prior period with their correct dates also. That way, they are there to check off when you do your first reconciliation.

Going back to the beginning of the year isn't as hard as you may think. Quicken provides a bunch of tools to help you enter several months' worth of data in a very short time, as you can see in this chapter and in the two or three that follow.



**Figure 1-8:**  
The Quicken Home window.



Now I need to explain something here. The Quicken New User Setup assumes that you're going to set up almost everything you need or will ever need in Quicken all at once and in the beginning. You can do that if you want, but that's not my suggestion (er, obviously). I say, heck, keep it simple. You can easily add stuff later, when you want it. Sound okay? (I do explain how to set up this other stuff in other chapters.)

My reasoning for this suggestion is that I'd like you to have some experience working with Quicken before you go hog-wild. Focus first on those personal accounting tasks that you absolutely will want to perform. This approach gets you started working with Quicken — happily, productively, and successfully — from day one. If you want to do more in a week or a month or a year, great. You can easily do more tasks, and by then, you'll know so much more about Quicken that adding these other tasks will be a snap.

## *Steve's Overview*

You don't need to know much about the mechanics of the Quicken *interface* — the way its windows work — to begin working with Quicken, especially in any chapters in which I cover the basics. I provide plenty of detailed instructions, but I have a couple of quick comments now.

### *Starting Quicken for the second time*

The second time you start Quicken — and every subsequent time — things work pretty much the same way as the first time. Double-click the Quicken icon on your desktop. Or, if you like doing things the hard way, click Start and then choose All Programs⇨Quicken 2007⇨Quicken 2007.

### *Using Quicken document windows*

Quicken doesn't use document windows the way that some other Windows applications do. Quicken basically turns document windows into pages that you leaf through by clicking the window buttons that appear along the left edge of the program window. In Figure 1-8, for example, you see buttons for Cash Flow Center, Investing Center, and Property & Debt. Go ahead and turn back to that page. I'll just wait here for you until you get back.

## *Navigating with financial activity centers' QuickTabs*

Quicken arranges all of its features — whistles, bells, or whatever else you want to call them — into *financial activity centers*. For example, the Cash Flow Center, the Investing Center, and the Property & Debt Center are all financial activity centers. You get the picture. Each of these centers gets its own button. For example, refer to Figure 1-8 for a moment. See the button that's labeled Cash Flow Center?

Quicken lists the features within a financial activity center underneath the financial activity center button. You can collapse and expand this list by clicking the small button that's just to the left of the big financial activity center button. (The small button shows a minus symbol or plus symbol.) You can also jump to a listed feature by clicking the feature — which Quicken calls a QuickTab. For example, see the Cash Flow Center button in Figure 1-8? See the word Checking beneath that button? Checking is a QuickTab, which you can click to quickly jump to the Checking account.

If you're still confused, click the buttons and bits of text in the area of the Quicken window that I'm talking about. You'll clearly see how things work.

## *Solving Tricky Setup Problems*

I want to quickly go over a handful of annoying setup problems new Quicken users may encounter. If you have Quicken set up and are ready to roll, skip this stuff.

### *Did somebody say Macintosh?*

You can use the existing old Quicken files you're working with a new version of Quicken. In fact, if the Quicken installation program can find a version of old Quicken files on your computer, it gives you the option of just skipping all the Quicken New User Setup stuff. In this case, you just begin using your existing files. (I mention this point earlier in this chapter, in fact.)

If you've been using Quicken for Macintosh, however, you have to export your data from the Macintosh before you can read it in the Windows version. And I can think of about a million things more fun to do than exporting Quicken data from a Mac to Windows. See the section in Chapter 17 on importing data from an old accounting system for a brief discussion on the procedure and some suggestions for better ways to spend your time.

## *The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files*

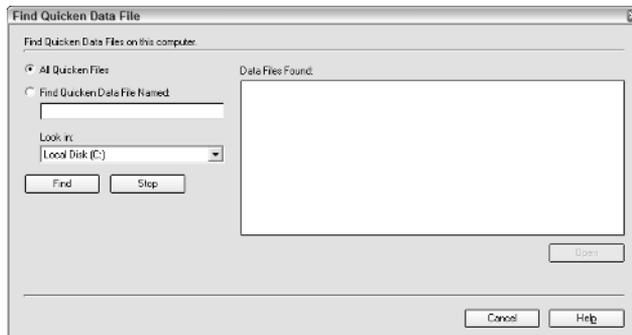
If Quicken doesn't find the old files, you need to open the specific files. But if you have this problem, you should be able to solve it yourself. What has happened, if you find yourself in this boat, is that you've moved or messed around with the Quicken files using some other program, such as Windows Explorer. If you did that, presumably, you had a reason. And more to the point, you should know where you put the files.

### *Using the File⇨Find Quicken Files command*

You can use File⇨Find Quicken Data Files to select and open your existing Quicken files. Here's how:

- 1. Choose File⇨Find Quicken Files from the menu bar by using your mouse.**

Figure 1-9 shows the Find Quicken Data File dialog box that appears after you choose the command. Quicken uses this dialog box to collect the information it will need to find your lost Quicken data.



**Figure 1-9:**  
The Find  
Quicken  
Data File  
dialog box.

- 2. Tell Quicken on which disk the data file is probably stored.**

Select the disk you want Quicken to search from the Look In list box. Note that you can click the down arrow to the right of the Look In box to display a list of your computer's disks.

From the list of drives and folders that appears, click the one that stores your Quicken files. Quicken closes the drop-down list box and displays your selection in the list box beneath the Look In box.

- 3. Click Find to search the search.**

Quicken searches the specified disk for Quicken data files. As Quicken finds data files, it adds them to the Data Files Found list box.

**4. Select the correct file from the list box.**

After Quicken finds the data files stored on the specified disk, select the Quicken data file you know you want.

**5. Click OK after you select the file.**

Quicken opens the file and displays the active account in the register window. (Quicken also displays its Reminders window to show any unprinted checks or scheduled transactions.)

**Note:** If the file you're opening was created in a previous version of Quicken, Quicken converts the data to the Quicken 2007 format.

**Note:** If Quicken displays the Quicken Home page rather than the account register, click the bank account name hyperlink beneath the Cash Flow Center button.

## *Migrating from Microsoft Money*

Suppose that you're moving from Microsoft Money to Quicken. The question of the hour is this: Can you reuse your old or existing Money files in Quicken? The answer is, "Yes, sort of."

You can download a program called Data Converter from the Quicken support Web site. Data Converter converts Microsoft Money data files from Microsoft Money 2003 and later versions to the Quicken 2007 for Windows format.

Practically, however, moving financial information from Quicken to Money or vice versa doesn't seem to work all that well. Transactions seem to get lost. Account balances get messed up. People ruin their lives. Well, maybe that last comment is a slight exaggeration. But, no kidding: Migrating is problematic. If you do want to move from one program to another, I suggest making sure that you have a really good reason for doing so and that you allow yourself enough time to track down and correct any errors.