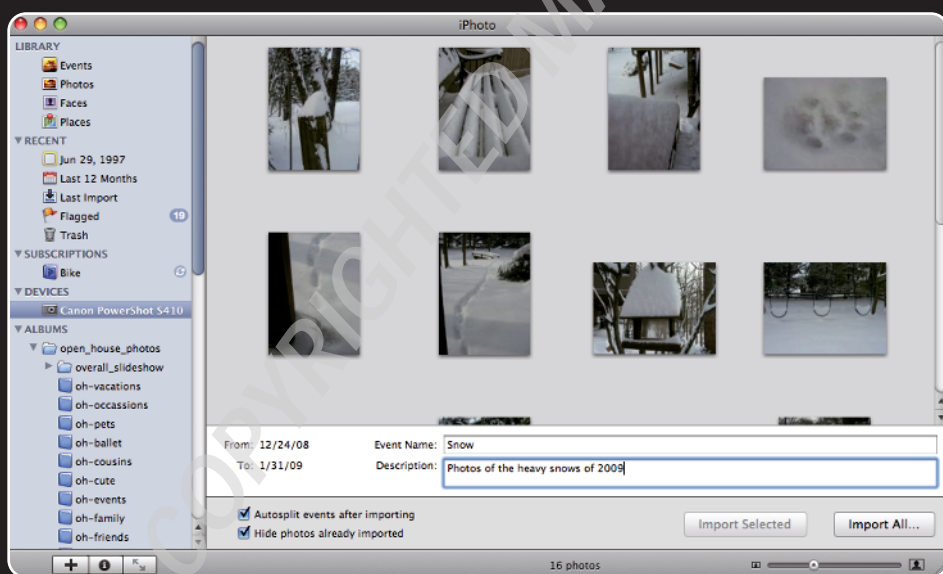# How Do I Get Started with iPhoto?

iPhoto is great because of all the amazing things you can do with the photos and other images you store there. Of course, to do those amazing things, you have to first stock your iPhoto library with your pictures and other images. You can do this a number of ways, with the most obvious one being importing photos from a digital camera. But, you can also import photos from an iPhone, DVD, email, and the desktop. Then you configure fundamental application preferences, which completes your iPhoto prep work.

Adding Photos and Other Images to Your Photo Library

You store all the contents you will manipulate with iPhoto's tools in iPhoto's library. It almost goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that you can import photos from a digital camera into your library, but that source is just one place to get images. You can also import photos and screenshots from an iPhone. If you have images on a DVD, you can import them from that into iPhoto as well. Email is a common way people share photos; when you receive images attached to email messages, you can move those images from email into iPhoto. Last, and probably least known but very useful, is you can import image files from your Mac's desktop into the library.

Importing photos from a camera or an iPhone

Most digital cameras are compatible with iPhoto, meaning that iPhoto recognizes the camera and moves photos you take from it into the iPhoto library. Before you start moving photos from your camera, take a moment to make sure iPhoto is configured appropriately for easy importing.

Apple's iPhone includes a digital camera and an associated application that you can use to snap photos. Of course, iPhones are compatible with iPhoto, so if you are using an iPhone to take photos, you don't need to worry about its compatibility. You import photos from an iPhone into iPhoto just like you import photos from a camera.

Camera Shopping?

If you already have a camera, you can tell if it is compatible with iPhoto by trying to import photos from it. If you are able to import photos, you're good to go. If you are shopping for a new camera, make sure it is compatible with iPhoto. The good news is that any camera that is compatible with the Picture Transfer Protocol (PTP) is, and most modern cameras are PTP compatible.

You can find information about specific camera models on Web sites such as www.apple.com, Amazon.com, or the manufacturer's Web site. In addition to the technical specifications about the cameras, reading reviews by current owners is often enlightening, particularly those from users who report problems using a camera with a Mac and iPhoto. If you can't find information about a specific model you are considering, but do find information about an earlier version of a model of the same line that is compatible with iPhoto, the later version is very likely to be compatible as well.

Be wary when buying an older camera or one that is exceptionally inexpensive because it might use some proprietary or outdated formats that aren't compatible with iPhoto.

Configuring iPhoto to open when you connect a camera

Because iPhoto is the tool you'll use for importing images from your camera, ensure that it is the application your Mac will open and use whenever you connect a camera to it. Choose iPhoto ⇨ Preferences, and click the General tab. On the Connecting camera opens pop-up menu, choose iPhoto. Close the Preferences window.

Each time you connect your camera to your Mac, iPhoto opens and mounts the camera so it is ready for import.

Defining an event

Events are groups of photos captured within a specific time period. When you import photos from a camera, iPhoto can automatically organize the photos you import by grouping them into events. By default, an event is defined as all the photos captured on the same day. You can change this definition to better suit your purposes:

1. **Press ⌘+, (comma).** The iPhoto Preferences dialog box opens.

2. **Click the Events tab.**

3. **On the Autosplit into Events pop-up menu, select the length of time within which photos should be grouped into an event, as shown in figure 1.1.** The options include One event per day (default), One event per week, Two-hour gaps, or Eight-hour gaps.

4. **Close the Preferences dialog box.**

1.1 Use the Autosplit into Events pop-up menu to determine how long an event is.

Importing all or selected photos from a camera or iPhone

To import photos from a camera or an iPhone into your library, perform the following steps:

1. **Connect the camera or iPhone to your Mac (if the device isn't on already, power it up).** iPhoto opens, the camera or iPhone is mounted, and you see it selected on the Source list. In the Viewing pane, you see the photos on the device along with the import tools, as shown in figure 1.2.
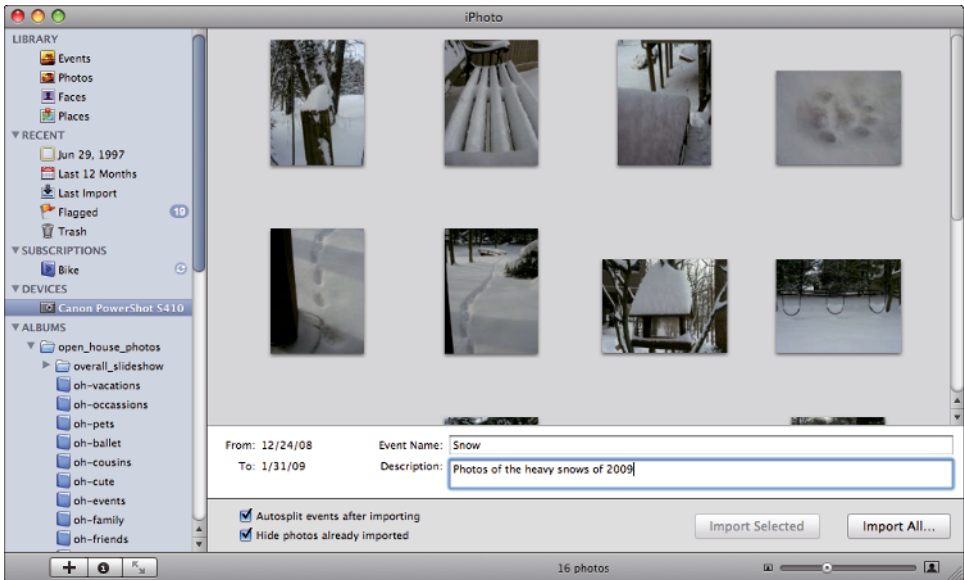
1.2 When you select a camera or iPhone on the Source list, you see the photos it contains along with the import tools.

Genius

If the camera doesn't appear on the Source list, make sure it is in playback mode.

2. **Enter a name for the event for which you are importing photos.** When you name an event, that name is applied only to the most recent event being imported. All other events come in as untitled events, which you can rename at a later time. For example, if you took some photos today and others five days ago, the event name is only applied to the photos you took today; the rest are collected in an untitled event.

Note

iTunes also opens when you connect an iPhone to your Mac.

3. **Enter a description of the photos you are importing.** As with the event name, the description is applied only to the most recent event on the camera. All other events have an empty description field that you can fill in later.

4. **If you don't want events to be created for photos based on when they were captured, deselect the Autosplit events after importing check box.** The most appropriate time to deselect this check box is when the photos you are importing are for an event that occurred over a longer period of time than you have currently defined as an event, and you want to collect these photos into a single group, such as a collection of pictures you've taken during a vacation. When the check box is selected, the imported photos are split into events based on the time you took the photos. In most cases, you should leave this check box selected; you can reorganize the events iPhoto creates at any time, but automatic event creation gives you a good start.

5. **If the device has photos you've already imported that you want to see, deselect the Hide photos already imported check box.** This happens when you don't delete photos from a device after importing them. If those photos are hidden, they are ignored during the import process. If you show those photos, you can select them and import them again, or if you import all photos, you will be prompted to deal with the duplicates. If the device doesn't have any photos that were imported previously, this check box is deselected automatically.

6. **To import images do one of the following:**

   ● To import all the images on the camera or iPhone, click Import All.

   ● To import only specific images, select the images you want to import and click Import Selected. (Hold the ⌘ key down while you click images to select multiple images at once.)

   The images are imported from the camera or iPhone into the library. As they are imported, you see a preview of each image. When the process is complete, you are prompted to keep the photos on the camera or iPhone, or to erase them.

7. **To delete the photos you've imported from the camera or iPhone, click Delete Photos; to leave the photos on the camera or iPhone, click Keep Photos.** If you delete the photos, the photos you imported are deleted from the device's memory. If you elect to keep the photos, they'll be hidden automatically the next time you import photos from the device (or you can show them, in which case, you'll have to deal with duplicates, as I explain in the next section). When you have completed the import process, the Last Import source is selected on the Source list, and you see the photos you imported in the Viewing pane, as shown in figure 1.3. The photos are now included in your iPhoto library and are ready for you to view and use in projects.
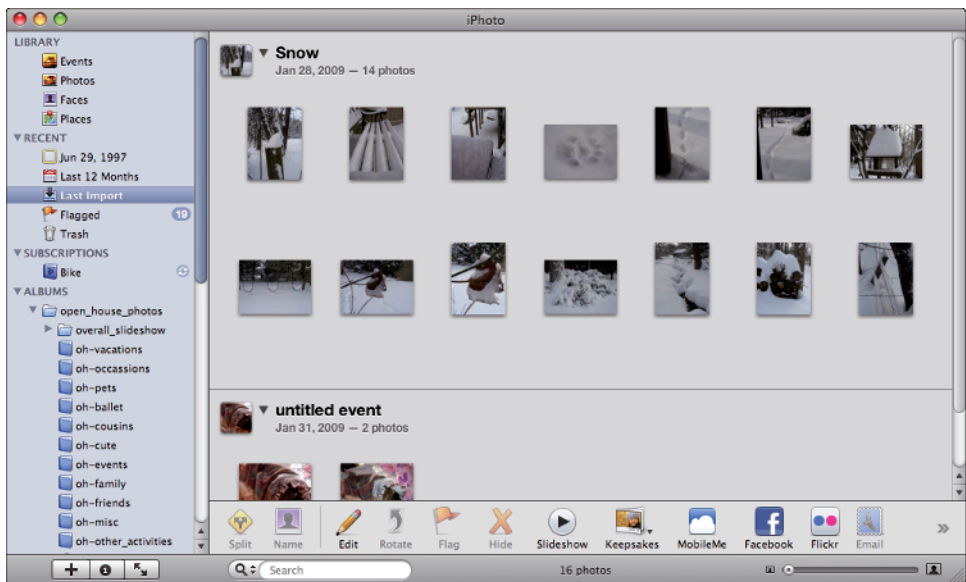
1.3 When the import process is complete, the Last Import source shows you the photos that are now part of your library.

Dealing with duplicates during import

If you try to import photos that are already in your library, iPhoto warns you with a Duplicate Photo dialog box, as shown in figure 1.4. The duplicate photo on the device appears on the left and the photo stored in your iPhoto library appears on the right. If you want to import the photo again, click Import; this creates a duplicate of the photo in your library. To ignore the photo (not import it again), click Don't Import. If you want the same decision applied to all the duplicate photos on the camera or iPhone, select the Apply to all duplicates check box. If you don't select this box, you're prompted to make a decision about each duplicate photo individually.

1.4 When a camera contains photos you've already imported, you see the Duplicate Photo dialog box.

Date, Time, and Location

All digital cameras time and date stamp the photos they capture automatically, which is useful for organizing and finding photos. iPhoto uses this date and time information when you import photos to organize them into events. (The default definition of an event is all the photos taken on the same day.) As you learn in later chapters, you can use events to view, tag, and search for photos you want to work with.

iPhoto also can associate photos with locations, called Places. This is another really useful way to organize photos because it gives you a logical way to group photos for specific purposes. For example, when you take photos while you are traveling, iPhoto can group the photos you take by the places you take them. You can find photos you are interested in using a map.

Some cameras tag the photos you take with their location, similarly to how they tag photos with time and date information. The camera on Apple's iPhone uses its built-in GPS to accomplish this. When you import photos from an iPhone, they are associated with locations automatically. If you shop for a new camera, look for this capability. While you can tag photos with location information manually, it's easier if the camera does it for you automatically.
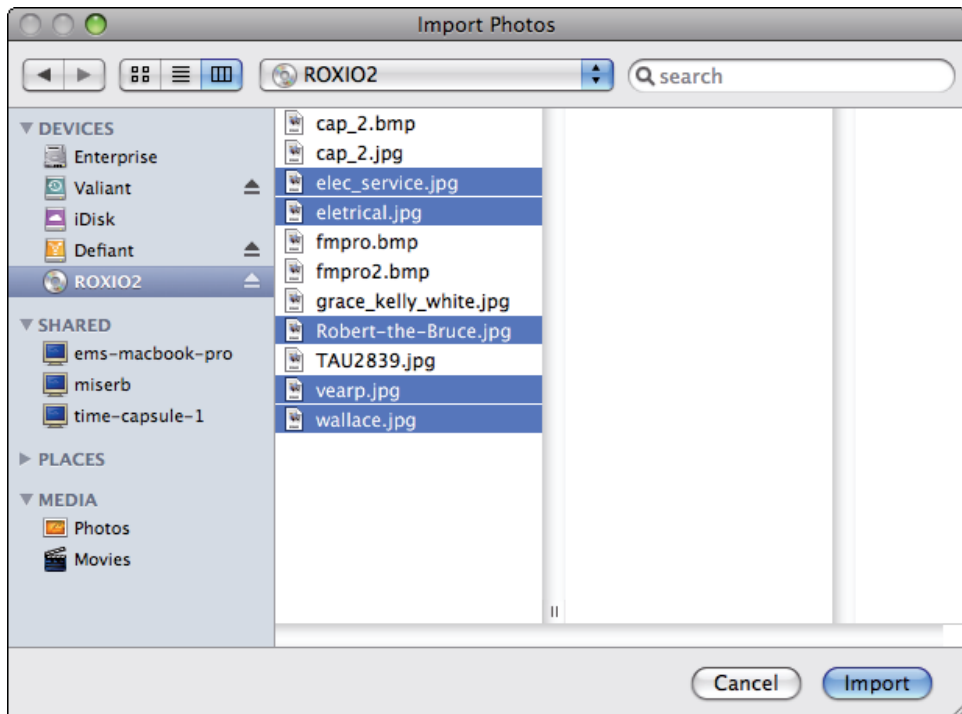
Importing photos from DVD

A DVD is a great way to store photos for viewing and for protecting photos. You can import photos from a DVD to your iPhoto library; how you do this depends on the specific kind of DVD you are working with. In the following sections, you learn how to import photos from a data DVD, a DVD created in iPhoto, and a DVD created with iDVD.

Importing photos from a data DVD

A data DVD is one on which photos are stored as files, just as you would store any file on a DVD using the Finder's Burn command. Depending on how the images were created, they might or might not have information iPhoto stores with photos, such as time and date, location, and so on, but you can import the images on a disc and add that information later. To import photos from a data DVD, do the following:

1. **Insert the DVD into your Mac's drive.**

2. **In iPhoto, choose File ⇨ Import to Library.** The Import Photos dialog box appears.

3. **Select the DVD.**

4. **Select the photos on the DVD that you want to import, as shown in figure 1.5.**

1.5 Use the Import Photos dialog box to move photos from a data DVD into your Photo library.

5. **Click Import.** The photos you selected are imported to your library, the Last Import source is selected, and you see the photos you've added.

Importing photos from an iPhoto DVD

You learn later in this book that you can use iPhoto to burn photos in its library to a DVD. When you do this, the structure and attributes applied by iPhoto in the library are maintained; this means when you import these photos, iPhoto recognizes them and maintains the same attributes. To import photos from a DVD created with iPhoto, perform the following steps:

1. **Insert the DVD into your Mac's drive.** The DVD is recognized as an iPhoto DVD, is mounted in the Shares section on the Source list in iPhoto, and is selected.

2. **Click the disc's expansion triangle.** You see all of the contents on the disc, such as its library sources (Events, Places, Last Import, and so on), photo albums, and folders.

3. **Select the source containing the photos you want to add to the library.** You see the photos in the selected source in the Viewing pane.

4. **Select and drag the photos you want to import from the Viewing pane onto the Photos source in your library, as shown in figure 1.6.** As you drag, the number of photos you are moving appears next to the pointer. When the Photos source is highlighted, release the mouse button. The photos you selected are imported to your library. When the process is complete, the Last Import source is selected and you see the photos you added to the library.
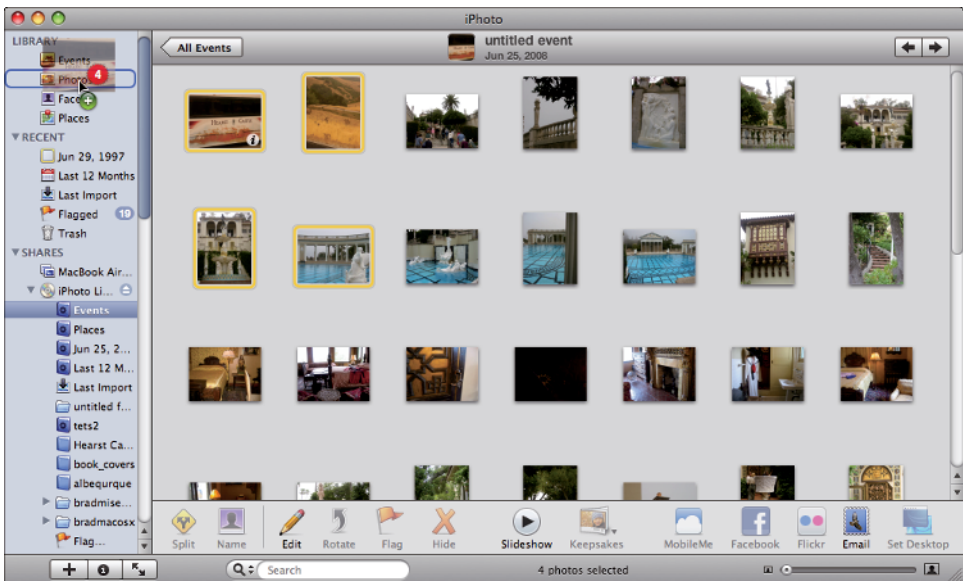

1.6 Drag photos from an iPhoto DVD onto your library to import them.

5. **Click the DVD's Eject button to eject the DVD.**

Importing photos from an iDVD DVD

iDVD enables you to create DVDs with slide shows you can watch similarly to how you view movie DVDs created with this application. When you create an iDVD slide show using photos stored in iPhoto, you can set iDVD to also add the individual image files from the slide show to the disc along with the slide show itself. In such a case, you can then import the image files from the iDVD disc to your iPhoto library. Here's how:

1. **Insert the DVD into your Mac's drive.** The DVD Player application opens and you see the disc's main menu as it starts to play.

2. **Quit DVD Player.**

3. **In iPhoto, choose File ⇨ Import to Library.** The Import Photos dialog box appears.

4. **Select the DVD.**

5. **Open the folder called *discname* DVD DVD-ROM Contents, where *discname* is the name of the iDVD disc.**

6. **Select the Slideshows folder, then select the slide show that contains images you want to import.**

7. **Select the Originals folder within that folder, as shown in figure 1.7.**
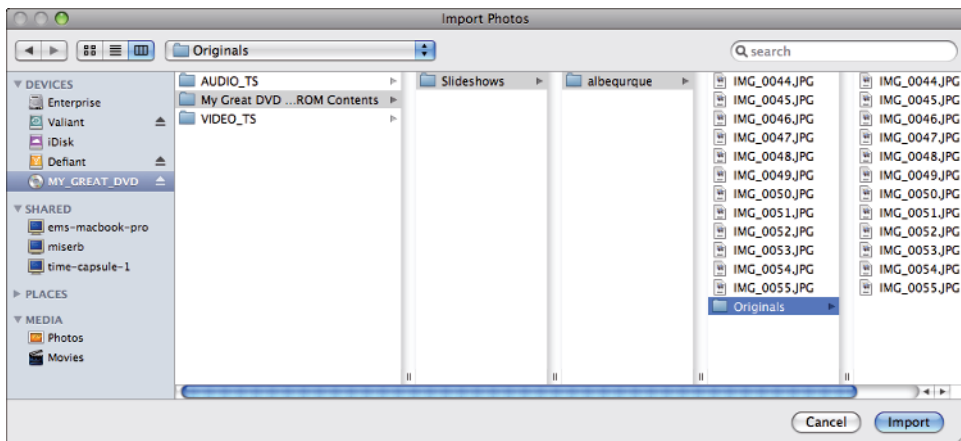
1.7 You have to drill down within an iDVD disc to get the photos you want to import to your library.

8. **Select the images you want to import and click Import.** The photos you selected are imported to your library. When the process is complete, the Last Import source is selected and you see the photos you added to the library.

Importing photos attached to email

Email is a great way to share photos with others (in Chapter 15 you learn how you can email photos from directly within iPhoto). When you receive an email message with photos attached, you can add them to your library. How you do this depends on how the photos are attached.

If the photos are attached as individual files and you use Mac OS X's Mail application, add them to iPhoto as follows:

1. **Open the email message containing the photos.** In the body of the message, you see the photos that are attached to it.

2. **Click the Save button and on the resulting menu, select Add to iPhoto, as shown in figure 1.8.** The photos are imported from the email message and added to your library.
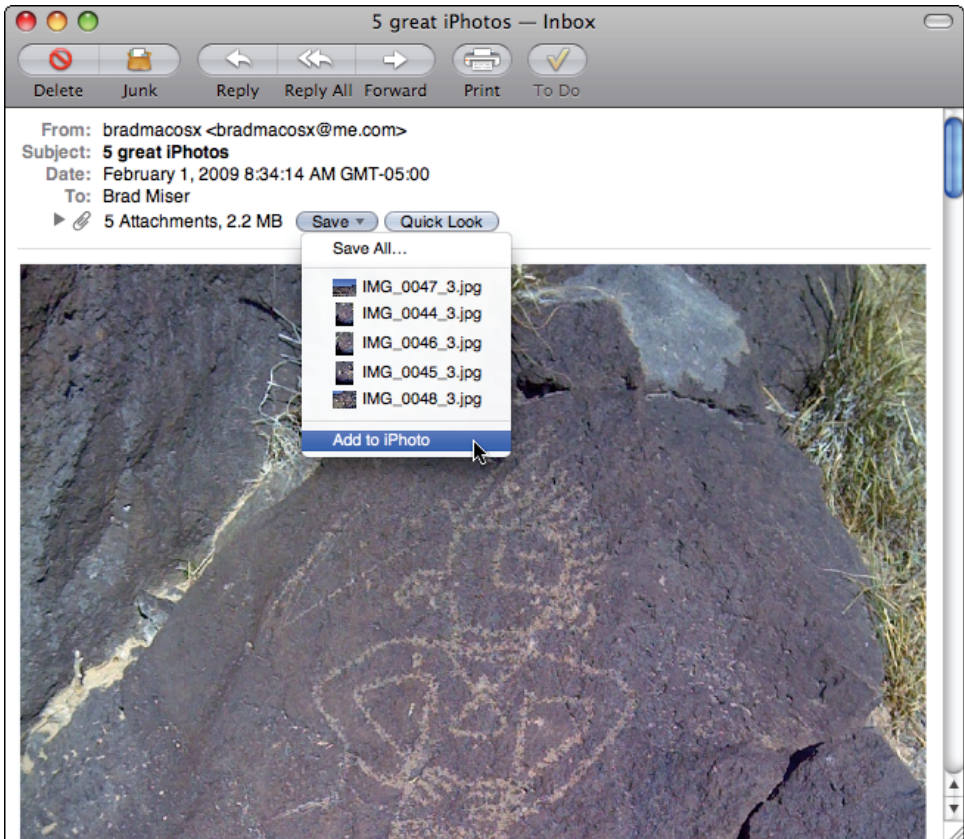
1.8 Importing photos attached to an email is as easy as choosing the Add to iPhoto command.

If the photos are attached as a single, compressed file (such as a ZIP file) and you use the Mail application, use these steps:

1. **Open the email message containing the compressed file.**

2. **Click the Save button.** The compressed file is saved to your Downloads folder.

3. **Move to the compressed file and double-click it.** The file expands and you see a folder containing the photos that were in the compressed file.

4. **Import the files from the desktop to your library (see the steps in the next section for details).**

If you don't use the Mail application, the steps you use to import photos attached to messages are similar to the previous steps, but the details might be slightly different. First, save the attached images to your desktop. Second, import the images from the desktop to your library.

Importing files from the desktop

Because the word *photo* is in its name, you might think iPhoto is designed to work mostly with photographs, which of course, it is. However, you can add many kinds of image files to your library, where you can then use the same tools on those images that you use on your photos. For example, if you take screenshots of your desktop, you might want to crop those images, make improvements to them, or just keep your desktop images organized. You can add these images to your library where you can act on them just like photos you've taken with a camera. Likewise, you can add images you've downloaded from the Web to your library.

iPhoto fully supports these file types:

- **JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group).** Most cameras use the JPEG format to create photo files, and many photos you'll encounter on the Web and in other places are in this format.

- **TIFF (Tagged Interchange File Format).** TIFF files are useful for many kinds of images. For example, screenshots you take of your desktop are often in the TIFF format.

- **RAW.** RAW image files are not compressed as JPEG files are and, therefore, do not require additional processing before they display correctly. The benefit to this file type is that they contain more information than compressed file types. You can work with RAW files in iPhoto. Some high-end cameras capture images in this format.

You can import files of other types, such as GIF (Graphics Interchange Format), but they might or might not work correctly. You don't lose anything if you try to import a specific file of another type. If the file doesn't work correctly, just delete it from your library.

One thing to keep in mind when you work with images of other types that you import from the desktop is the resolution of those images along with their default size. Images you capture with a camera or iPhone are likely to have a relatively high resolution, so they look good and are useable at many sizes in many formats (on-screen, prints, and so on). However, images you import from the desktop can be various resolutions; low-resolution images will be of lower quality and might not be useable for the purpose you have in mind. Many of the images you download from the Web are a lower resolution than those you typically capture with a camera or iPhone.

You can check out the type, resolution, and dimensions of an image on your desktop by performing the following steps:

1. **Open a Finder window in Columns view.**

2. **Move to and select the file.** A preview of the file appears along with information about its type, size, and dimensions, as shown in figure 1.9.
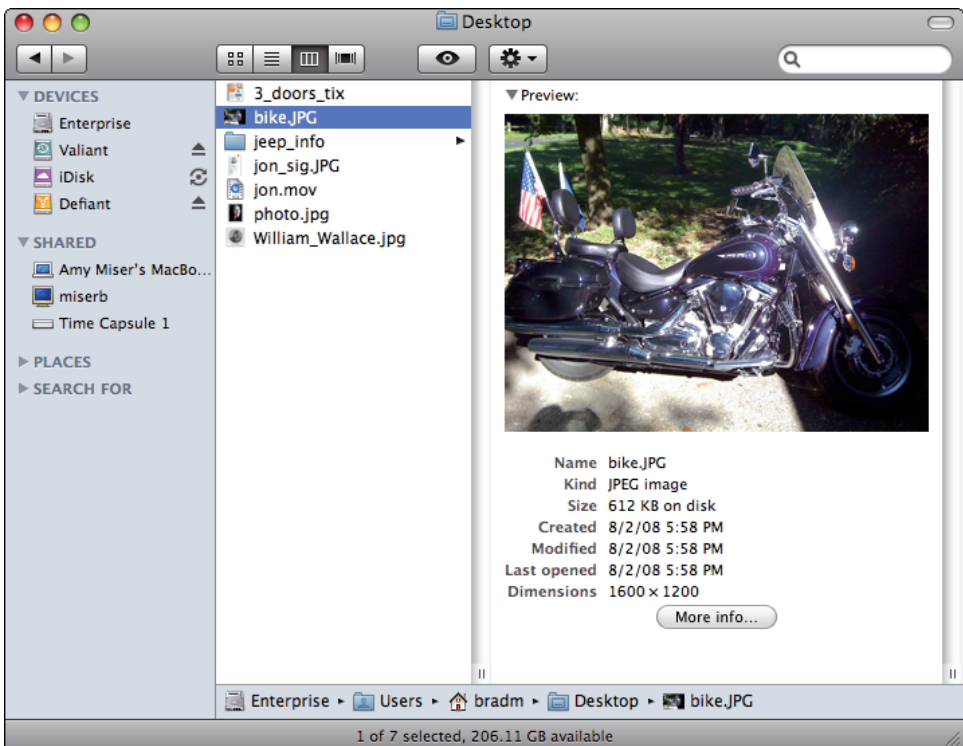
1.9 You can view information about an image file, such as its type and size, using the Preview column of a Finder window.

In many cases, you'll see resolution and size information when you download images from the Web. For example, when you view images in the Google image database, you see size and resolution information for each image, as shown in figure 1.10. Use this information to gauge if an image's resolution and file type will work for you.
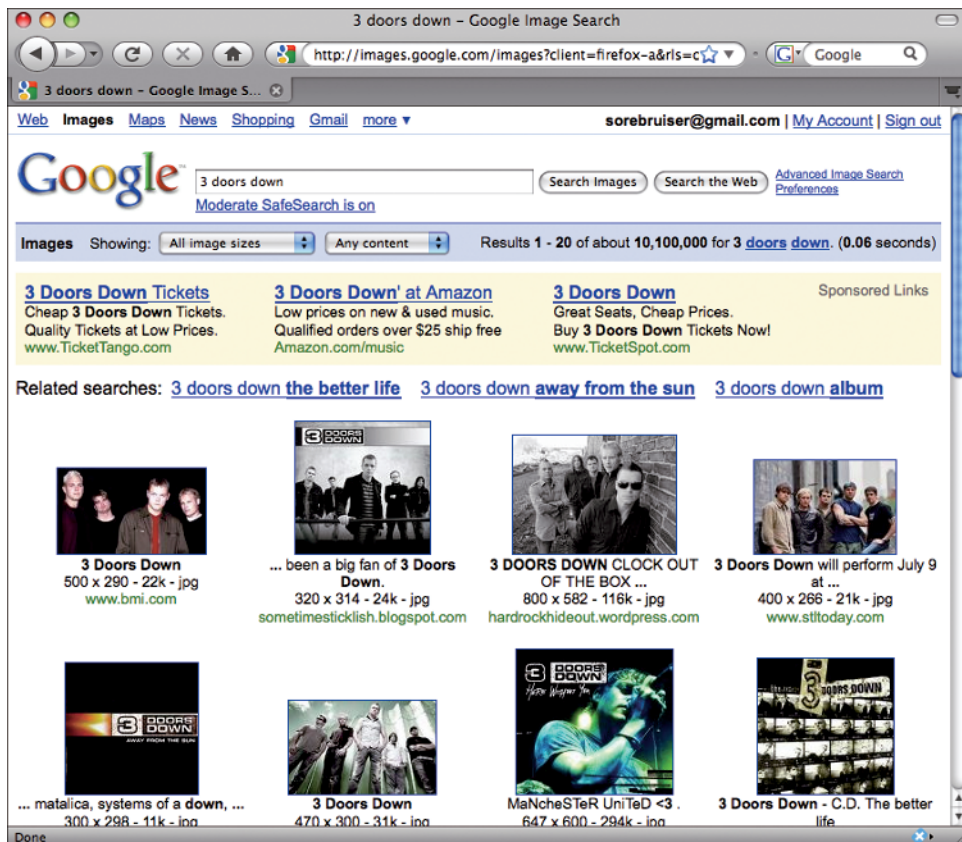

1.10 On Google Images pages, you see file type and size information for the images you can download.

In general, you'll get better results with larger files; image files that are 100KB or less are probably of too low a resolution unless you are going to use them at a small size.

You can move files from your desktop into iPhoto with the following steps:

1. **Locate and prepare the files you want to import on your desktop.** If you are working with a compressed file, expand it and then preview the images it contains to identify those you want to add to your library.

2. **In iPhoto, choose File ⇨ Import to Library.** The Import Photos dialog box appears.

3. **Select the images you want to add and click Import, as shown in figure 1.11.** These photos are imported to your library. When the process is complete, the Last Import source is selected and you see the photos you added to the library.
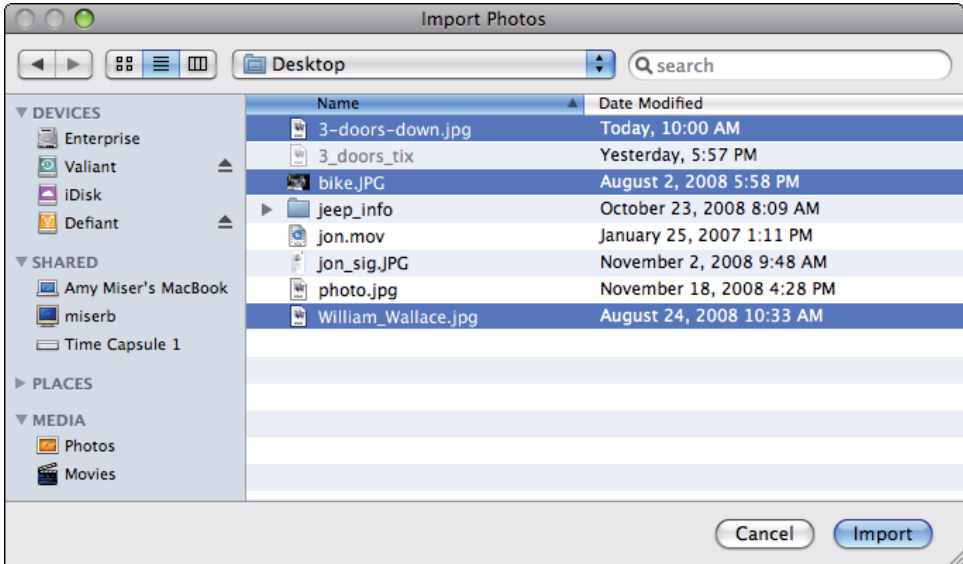
1.11 Use the Import Photos dialog box to import images stored on your desktop.

Understanding image quality

Understanding what makes up the quality of images is important because you need images of a certain quality for specific kinds of projects. For example, you will want relatively high-quality images if you are printing them at a large size in a photo book.

The quality of images depends on their resolution, their file type and amount of compression, and the size at which they'll be used and what they'll be used for.

Resolution is a measure of the amount of information in an image file. Resolutions are typically measured as the number of pixels vertically by number of pixels horizontally, such as 1600 × 1200 or 1024 × 768. (*Pixel* is an abbreviation of picture element and represents one "dot" of the image.) You can get the total number of pixels in an image by multiplying the pixel values together. For example, a 1600 × 1200 image has 1,920,000 pixels or 1.92 megapixels. This image would typically be called a 2 megapixel image, or even more commonly, a 2 meg image. (By the way, this is how the resolution of cameras is defined: A 2-megapixel camera can capture 1600 × 1200 pixel images.) Higher resolutions mean more information in an image, and thus higher quality.

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File type determines how the image's information is stored digitally. Most image file types, such as JPEG, use some level of compression, which means that information is processed so that it can be stored in smaller files. Within these file types, more or less compression can be used. The more compression that is used, the less information the resulting image has, so the lower its quality will be. For example, when you email photos from within iPhoto, you choose a relative compression level for the files that you attach to a message. There is almost always a trade-off between file size and image quality.

And last, but not least, an image's quality is also impacted by where and how that image is used. An image that has a low resolution could be used successfully at a small size for on-screen display but not when printed in an 8 × 10 format.

Remember that an image has a fixed amount of information in it that is determined by the number of pixels it contains and its level of compression. When you resize an image for a project, you are spreading its pixels across the space where you place it. When you make it larger, you are spreading the same number of pixels over more area. If the image doesn't have "enough" pixels, its quality can degrade. This usually results in *pixilation*, where the individual pixels of the image become so large that you can see them and the image appears to be blocky.

Typically, you should store the highest quality image you can in your iPhoto library because that gives you the maximum flexibility of how and where you use that image. Most cameras have settings that determine the quality (resolution) of the images you capture. Higher resolution images are better, but take up more space so you'll be able to store fewer of them on the camera's memory card. Likewise, when you download images from the Web, you want to get the highest resolution version available.

Configuring iPhoto

There are a number of ways to configure iPhoto that impact how the application works, determine how images in the iPhoto window appear, and set the tools available to you on the iPhoto toolbar. It's a good idea to set your preferences when you start working with iPhoto, and to check them as you get more comfortable with iPhoto because they might need to be changed as you become an iPhoto pro.

Configuring General iPhoto preferences

Open the General tab of the iPhoto Preferences dialog box and set the following options, as shown in figure 1.12:

- **Show last.** This check box and number box determines if the last *X* months' item appears on the Source list and if it does appear, how long *X* is. To show this source, select the Show last *X* months album check box and then enter the number of months' worth of photos that should be contained in this source. By default, this source is enabled and shows the last 12 months' worth of photos.

- **Item counts.** When you select this check box, the number of photos those sources contain appears next to some of the sources on the Source list, such as the Photos source and your photo albums.

- **Double-click photo.** These radio buttons determine what happens when you click on a photo's thumbnail. The options are to edit the photo or to magnify it so it displays at the maximum possible size. Of course, you can always accomplish either action regardless of this setting, so set the one that is most convenient for you.

- **Rotate.** These radio buttons determine the default direction that the Rotate tool uses when you click it. You should choose the option that best matches the direction your camera captures portrait-oriented photos in. For example, if these are oriented on the camera so the right side is at the bottom of the camera's preview screen, you want the default rotate direction to be counterclockwise.

1.12 Use the General tab of the iPhoto Preferences dialog box to configure iPhoto to suit your preferences.

> **Note** The other options on the General tab are explained in context of the chapters to which they relate.

Configuring the appearance of the iPhoto window

When you open the Appearance tab of the iPhoto Preferences dialog box, you can set various options that primarily relate to the iPhoto window's appearance, as shown in figure 1.13:

- **Border.** The Outline check box places a thin border around the images shown in the Viewing pane. The Drop shadow check box places a subtle drop shadow around thumbnails. Both are purely aesthetic settings, and their impact on the window's appearance also depends on how large your thumbnails are and what color the background is.

- **Background.** Use this slider to set the color of the background of the Viewing pane. I find that a white background makes photos the easiest to work with because of the contrast between the photos and background, but it is a matter of personal preference. Note that this setting doesn't control the background in all cases; for example, when you view Events, the background is always dark.

- **Organize View.** Select the Align photos to grid check box to always have photos line up neatly in the window based on its invisible grid. Select the Show scrolling information check box if you want date and event information to appear on the screen while you drag the Scroll bar when viewing the Photos source; this gives you an idea of where and when photos in your library were taken as you scroll through. Select the Use smooth scrolling check box to make the scrolling action smoother when you are moving up or down the window; the impact of this setting is hard to judge because it depends on a number of variables, so I recommend trying it both enabled and disabled to see which you prefer.

- **Source Text.** This pop-up menu determines the relative size of text identifying items on the Source list. The options are Small or Large.
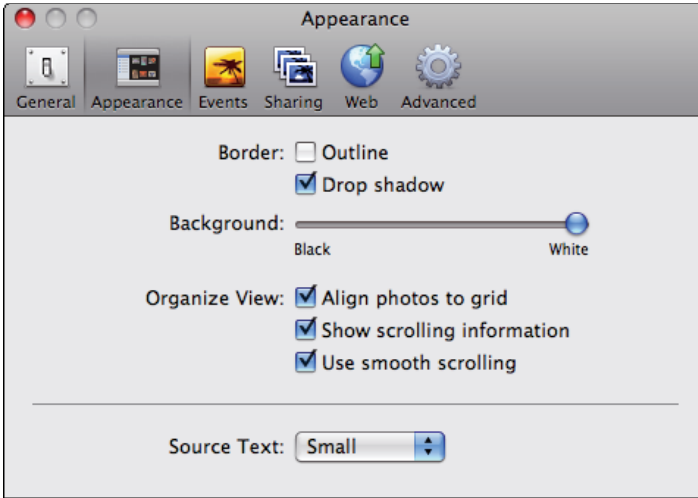
1.13 The settings on the Appearance tab are aptly named for the ways they affect the iPhoto window.

Configuring the iPhoto toolbar

Along the bottom of the iPhoto window, you see the iPhoto toolbar that contains various buttons you can use to perform specific actions, such as the MobileMe button that sends photos to your MobileMe Web site or the Email button that enables you to email photos from within iPhoto. You can configure the buttons on the toolbar so that it contains the ones you use most frequently (you can access tools not displayed here via menu commands).

To configure your iPhoto toolbar, choose View ➪ Show in Toolbar. On the resulting submenu, enable or disable each option until you've configured the toolbar just the way you want it. Tools marked with a check mark are enabled and appear on the toolbar, as shown in figure 1.14. If you add more buttons than can be displayed on the window because of its size, you see a set of double arrows on the right end of the toolbar; click this to see the additional buttons. Also, when there are more buttons than can be displayed, the Book, Calendar, and Card buttons are gathered under the Keepsakes button. When you click the Keepsakes button, a menu appears and you can select one of the tools it contains.

Note

Buttons on the toolbar become enabled or disabled depending on what you have selected on the Source list and in the Viewing pane. The buttons are only enabled when you select something relating to the button; for example, the Email button only becomes active when you have selected photos.
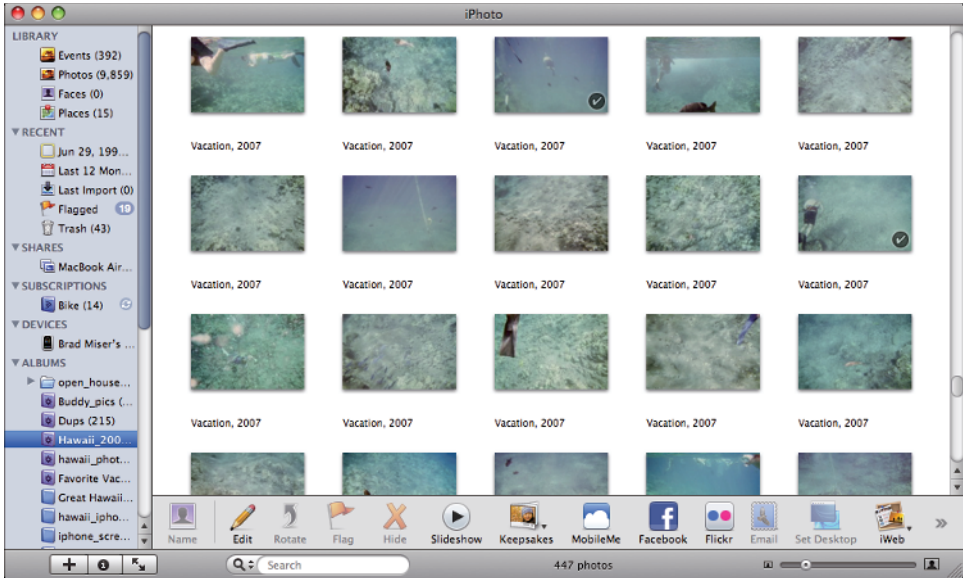
1.14 Place buttons for the tools you use most often on the toolbar at the bottom of the iPhoto window for quick access.

Updating iPhoto

Apple periodically releases updates to iPhoto to fix bugs, make features work better, and add new features. You can update iPhoto manually, or configure Mac OS X to keep the application updated automatically.

To update iPhoto manually, choose iPhoto ⇨ Check for Updates. If an update is available, you are prompted to download and install it. If you are using the current version, a dialog box informs you.

To set iPhoto to check for updates automatically, open the General tab of the iPhoto Preferences dialog box and click the Check for iPhoto updates automatically button. Whenever iPhoto finds an update, you're prompted to download and install it.

Note Updates to iPhoto are included when you use the Mac OS X's Software Update tool to check for updates (manually or automatically).