

Chapter 1

Okay, This Machine Looks Really, Really Weird

In This Chapter

- ▶ Identifying the important parts of your iMac
 - ▶ Locating the right home for your computer
 - ▶ Plugging stuff in and getting hooked up
 - ▶ Playing with your bundled software
 - ▶ Buying additional stuff that you might need
-



ou bought a brand new iMac, and there it sits, in the box. Waiting. Waiting for you.

If you're a little nervous about unpacking that shiny white rectangle, I completely understand. Face it: The latest iMac follows in the footsteps of many revolutionary iMac designs that have come before it. (In other words, it doesn't *look* like a computer at all, and that can be a bit disconcerting.) And if you're switching from a Windows PC to the Apple universe, you might find yourself floating weightlessly in your office or your living room without a familiar bulky beige box to anchor yourself. Hence the reluctance you might be feeling.

However, dear reader, let me assure you that you've indeed made The Right Choice. I commend you! Your Intel-based iMac is the fastest, leanest, and easiest-to-use self-contained all-in-one computer ever built. Practically everything's in one shining panel (except for your keyboard and mouse). You've got one of the best liquid crystal display (LCD) screens on the planet, a super-fast processor, room for a ton of RAM (memory), and a regular laundry list of the latest technology. Best of all, you don't have to be a techno-nerd to use all that power!

In this chapter, I introduce you to your new dream machine, giving you an overview of the more important locations within iMac City. I show you how to unpack your new computer, what wires go where, and where your iMac should set up housekeeping. I preview the awesome software that's waiting within that powerful panel. Finally, I list the accessories that help keep both you *and* your new iMac computing smoothly.

An Introduction to the Beast

The iMac might look like a sculpture straight out of your local museum of modern art, but it still sports everything that it needs to function as a computer. In this section, I identify the important stuff that you need to live your life — you know, write a term paper in Pages, hear the music you downloaded, or manage the affairs of those lazy Sims.

Major parts of your major appliance

Every computer requires some of the same gizmos. Figure 1-1 helps you track them down. Of course, as you'd expect, a computer has a “body” of sorts in which all the innards and brains are stored (the screen, in this case), a display screen, a keyboard, a mouse/pointing device, and ports for powering and exchanging data with peripherals.

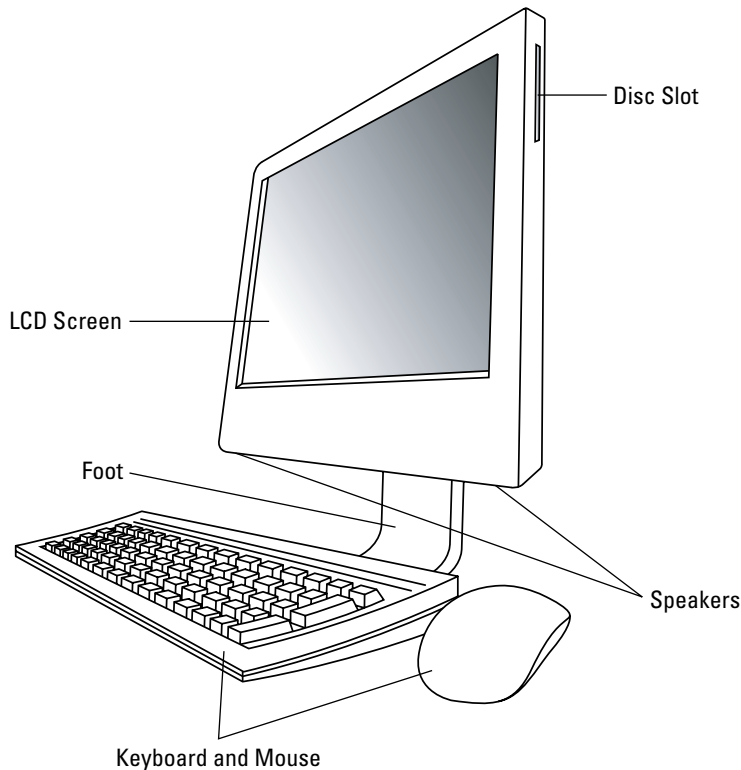


Figure 1-1:
The
charismatic
form of your
Intel-based
iMac.

Umm . . . my iMac isn't two inches thick

Believe me, I feel your pain. It seems like only yesterday that Apple introduced its generation of flat-panel iMac G4 models. (You know, the ones that look like a milky-white, half-basketball at the base.) Then came the first generation of "picture frame" iMacs, sporting the G5 processor. The crew at Cupertino tends to update their product line pretty often, so if you have an older flat-panel iMac, you might be feeling like an Edsel owner on his way to catch *Vertigo* at the drive-in.

Ah, but friend, there's good news on your horizon: *Those first-generation flat-panel iMacs and iMac G5 models are still powerful personal platforms for productivity programs and peripherals!* Don't give up on your iMac yet (unless you just plain want to upgrade). You still have a great LCD screen of the same quality, a reasonably fast processor, virtually all the same ports and options, and that spiffy chrome-plated gooseneck to boot.

That magnificent screen

Talk about efficiency: With the iMac, the 2"-thick border surrounding the display is actually your computer's case! And what a view you've got because an Intel iMac is graced with either a 17", 20", or 24" LCD display.



Once upon a time, LCD screens were strictly limited to notebook and laptop computers, whilst desktop computer owners were saddled with huge, heavy cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors. Luckily, the LCD panel has migrated to virtually all the Apple computer product line, so notebook owners can no longer be snobbish (at least about their screens, anyway).



LCD screens use far less electricity than their antique CRT ancestors, and they emit practically no radiation.

All three sizes of iMac screens offer a *widescreen* aspect ratio (the screen is considerably wider than it is tall), which augurs well for those who enjoy watching DVD movies. (A favorite editor of mine loves it when I use the antique word *augur*, meaning *to predict or foretell*.) The larger 24" screen boasts a whopper 1920 x 1200 resolution.



That reminds me: Throw away your printed dictionary! You won't need it because Mac OS X Tiger includes the fantastic Sherlock application that uses the Internet to retrieve definitions from Dictionary.com. More on Sherlock in Chapter 7 . . . and yes, it does contain *augur*.

The keyboard and mouse

Hey, here's something novel for the Intel iMac — something *external* (outside the computer's case). Gotta have a keyboard and mouse, right? And you gotta love the options with iMac: You can fly a little cheaper and remain entangled in a corded world, or you can go nomadic . . . um, that is, wireless and free.

Getting wired

The iMac comes standard with a wired Apple keyboard and multiple-button Mighty Mouse optical mouse. The keyboard is a particular favorite of mine because from here

- ✔ You can either control the sound volume or mute all that noise completely.
- ✔ A handy-dandy Media Eject key lets you eject a CD or DVD.

Read about connecting your keyboard and mouse in the upcoming section, “Absolutely essential connections.”

Going wireless

If you're really fancy, you can opt for a truly 21st century computer and order the Apple wireless keyboard and mouse (\$60) combo! This dynamic duo lets you sit back and relax with your keyboard in your lap, without being tied down by a cord. (Say it with me: “Death to cords, death to cords.”) Just stay within about 30 feet of your iMac screen, and sweet freedom is yours. You can also feel safe using these wireless peripherals because they offer secure 128-bit, over-the-air encryption, which helps keep sensitive information safe while you type and click away.



The wireless mouse needs a flat surface, but that's what TV trays are for, right?

The disc slot

You'll notice a long groove at the right-upper corner of your iMac. No, it's not for your credit card. (If you order online often enough, you'll memorize your card number.) This slot accepts CDs and DVDs into your optical drive. If the drive is empty, loading a disc is as simple as sliding it in an inch or so; the drive sucks in the disc automatically. (And we don't need no stinkin' floppy drive. Macs haven't had floppy drives for years now, and the PC types are just beginning to follow.)



“Luke, the printed label side of the disc should always be *facing you* when you load a disc. Always.”

Yes, your computer has a foot . . . just one

You and I — normal human beings — would say that the iMac is supported by a sturdy aluminum stand, but Apple calls it a *foot*. The foot lets you tilt the iMac LCD panel up and down for the best viewing angle. Most important, though, the foot minimizes the computer's desk space requirements (or its *footprint*). (Engineers . . . sheesh.)

If you decide to get really snazzy and mount your iMac to the wall, you can remove the foot and install the VESA mounting adapter (available separately for about \$30). You can use any VESA standard mounting bracket on your wall, too.

Hey, Hewlett-Packard or Dell, can you mount one of those monolithic PCs to the wall? *I think not.*

Food for your ears

A machine this nice had better have great sound, and the iMac doesn't disappoint. You have a couple of options for iMac audio:

- ✓ **The iMac sports built-in stereo speakers (and a microphone to boot).**
- ✓ **Use built-in ports to connect your iMac audio to either**
 - More powerful (and more expensive) external speaker systems
 - A home stereo system

The power cable

Sorry, can't get a wireless power system . . . yet. (Apple's working hard on that one.) If you opt for the wireless keyboard and mouse setup (see the earlier section, "Going wireless"), the power cable is actually the only required cable that you need to run your computer! Now that's *sassy*.

The power button

Yep, you've got one of these, too. It's on the back of the case.

The iSight Camera

Have you noticed that tiny lens at the top of your computer? Every iMac comes complete with its own iSight digital video camera, ready to add video to your iChat conferences, produce digital snapshots at your whim, or even capture digital video clips for your iMovie HD projects. (Of course, the iSight camera is stationary, so you won't be doing any on-location shooting.

Those holes are called ports

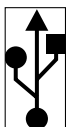
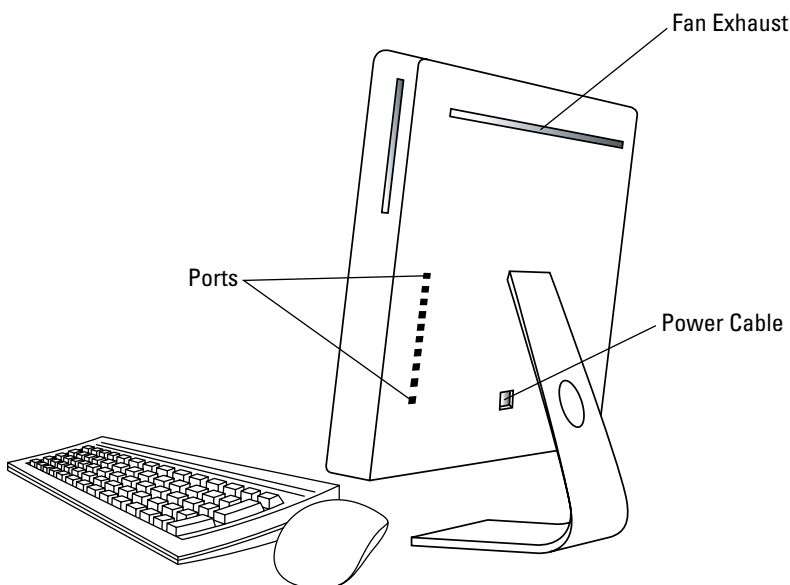
Our next stop on your tour of Planet iMac is Port Central — that row of holes on the back of your computer (see Figure 1-2). Each port connects a different type of cable or device, allowing you to easily add all sorts of extra functionality to your computer.

Each of these stellar holes is identified by an icon to help you identify it. Here's a list of what you'll find as well as a quick rundown on what these ports do.



- ✓ **FireWire:** These ports are the standard in the Apple universe for connecting external hard drives and DVD recorders, but they do double duty as the connector of choice for peripherals like your iPod and your digital video (DV) camcorder. (A *peripheral* is another silly techno-nerd term, meaning a separate device that you connect to your computer.) Note that the iMac offers two FireWire ports — depending on the model you choose, you'll have at least one of the older FireWire 400 specification, and you may have one of the much faster FireWire 800 ports.

Figure 1-2:
Only slightly
less sexy —
it's the back
end of an
iMac.



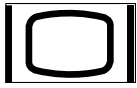
- ✓ **USB:** Short for *Universal Serial Bus*, the familiar USB port is the jack-of-all-trades in today's world of computer add-ons. Most external devices (such as portable hard drives, scanners, or digital cameras) that you want to connect to your iMac use a USB port. The iMac sports three USB 2.0 ports on its back, and you'll find an additional two USB 1.1 ports lurking at the back of your keyboard. USB 2.0 connections are much faster than the old USB 1.1 standard, so if you buy a new USB 2.0 device, be prepared to connect it to the back of your iMac.

For the specs on connecting your keyboard and mouse, see the upcoming section, "Absolutely essential connections."

For more on FireWire and USB ports, get the lowdown in Chapter 20.



- ✓ **Ethernet:** The iMac includes a standard 10/100 Ethernet port, so it's ready to join your existing wired Ethernet network. (Alternatively, you can go wireless for your network connection; more on that in the next section and in Chapter 20.)



- ✓ **VGA/S-Video/Composite Video:** In case that splendid screen isn't quite good enough, you can add an adapter to this port and send the video signal from your iMac to another monitor (VGA) or to an S-Video or composite video device. (Think flatscreen TV or a VCR.)
- ✓ **Headphone/Optical Output:** You can send the high-quality audio from your rectangular beast to a set of standard headphones or an optical digital audio device like a high-end home theater system.
- ✓ **Line In:** Last (but certainly not least) is the audio Line In jack, which allows you to pipe the signal from another audio device into your iMac. This one comes in particularly handy when you record MP3 files from your old vinyl albums or when you want to record loops within GarageBand.

Important Hidden Stuff

When you bought your new digital pride and joy, you probably noticed a number of subtle differences between the low-end Intel iMac and the über-expensive top-end model. I call these differences the *Important Hidden Stuff* (or IHS, if you're addicted to acronyms already), and they're just as important as the parts and ports that you can see.



- ✓ **Hard drive:** The Intel iMac uses the latest in hard drive technology: *serial ATA* hard drives, which are significantly faster than the EIDE hard drives used in previous iMac models. (You don't need to worry about what ATA and EIDE mean here. Really.)

As I type these words, the iMac product line offers drives in sizes from 160GB all the way up to the humongous 750GB hard drive option. The bigger, the better.

- ✓ **Optical drive:** Okay, I'm cheating a little here. I mention the optical drive in an earlier section, but all you can see is the slot, so it qualifies as an IHS item. Depending on your iMac model, your computer includes either
 - *Best:* A DVD-R SuperDrive (which can play and record both CDs and DVDs)
 - *Not bad:* A DVD/CD-RW combo drive (which can record CDs but only read DVDs)



If your iMac can't burn DVDs with the internal drive, don't give up hope of recording your own DVD movies. Thanks to those handy FireWire ports, it's child's play to add an external DVD recorder.

Time for a plug: If you're interested in recording your own audio and data CDs, or you've got an itch to burn DVD movies, I can highly recommend the bestselling *CD & DVD Recording For Dummies*, 2nd Edition (Wiley). (And written by yours truly; hence the solid recommendation.) Anyway, you'll find everything you need to know to use Roxio's Toast recording software. Within a few minutes, you'll be burning your own shiny digital treasures.

- ✓ **Wireless Ethernet:** "Look, Ma, no wires!" As I mention earlier, you can connect your iMac to an existing wireless Ethernet network using your Intel iMac's built-in AirPort Extreme card. With wireless connectivity, you can share documents with another computer in another room, share a single high-speed Internet connection betwixt several computers, or enjoy wireless printing. Truly *sassy*!



Although Apple would want you to build your wireless wonderland with an Apple AirPort Extreme Base Station — go figure — you can actually use your iMac with any standard 802.11g wireless network. And yes, PCs and Macs can intermingle on the same wireless network without a hitch. (Scandalous, ain't it?)

- ✓ **Bluetooth:** Let's get the old "digital pirate" joke out of the way: "Arrgg, matey, I needs me a wireless parrot." (Engineers again . . . sheesh.) Although strangely named, Bluetooth is actually another form of wireless connectivity. This time, however, the standard was designed for accessories like your keyboard and mouse, and devices like your personal digital assistant (PDA) and cellphone. These days, of course, that old pirate Bluetooth is built in to your iMac.
- ✓ **Apple Remote:** It looks like an old iPod Shuffle, but that's not an MP3 player. Today's Intel iMacs come with a remote control that you can use with Front Row, the multimedia front-end that's built into Mac OS X Tiger. Using your Apple Remote, you can easily listen to your iTunes music collection, watch your iMovie projects and home videos, play a DVD movie, or view your album of digital snapshots in iPhoto. (What? Your old PC didn't have a remote? 'Nuff said.)
- ✓ **Video card:** If your applications rely heavily on high-speed 3-D graphics, you'll be pleased as punch to find that the iMac can be equipped with an NVIDIA GeForce GT video card. This card is well suited to 3-D modeling, video editing, and well, honestly, blasting the enemy into small smoking pieces with aplomb.

Choosing a Home for Your New Pet

If you pick the wrong spot to park your new iMac, I can guarantee that you'll regret it later. Some domiciles and office cubicles obviously don't offer a

choice — you’ve got one desk at work, for example, and nobody’s going to hand over another one — but if you can select a home for your iMac, consider the important placement points in this section.

Picking the right location

You know the mantra: Location, location, location.



- ✓ **There’s always the wall.** Your iMac can disguise itself as a particularly interesting digital picture frame. With the right mounting adapter, you can hang your computer right on the wall and snub your desk altogether.

This wall-mounted solution has two big problems:

- Your VESA mounting plate must be installed safely and correctly (for example, using the studs within your walls).

The Intel iMac is slim and trim, but it’s no lightweight, and it doesn’t bounce well. You don’t want it to take a high dive!

- External peripherals aren’t happy campers — that includes any FireWire and USB cables.



- ✓ Your iMac must be mounted at the proper height on the wall. It’s not good ergonomic practice to sit more than two feet away from your iMac’s screen, and the screen should be placed at (or slightly below) eye level.

I see two major requirements for a wall-mounted iMac:

- Don’t plan on using any external devices.
- Buy the wireless keyboard and mouse option when you buy your computer!



- ✓ **Keep things cool.** Your new Intel iMac is nearly silent, but that super-fast G5 processor generates quite a bit of heat. Fans inside the case draw the heat away. (Nothing like an overheated processor to spoil an evening of Doom III.)

Follow these three rules to keep your cool. Make sure that

- The location you choose is far from heating vents.
- The location you choose is shielded from direct sunlight.
- There is plenty of room below the machine (where the air enters the case) and above the machine (where heated air escapes from the slot at the top of the case).

Hot air from a wall-mounted iMac can discolor the wall.



Considering the convenience factor

Technology is nothing if you can't make it convenient:



- ✓ **Outlets, outlets, outlets!** Your computer needs a minimum of at least one nearby outlet, and perhaps as many as three:
 - A standard AC outlet
 - A telephone jack (if you use the iMac's built-in modem for connecting to the Internet or sending and receiving faxes)
 - A nearby Ethernet jack (if you use the iMac's built-in Ethernet port for connecting to a wired Ethernet network)

If you prefer to send your data over the airwaves, consider wireless networking for your iMac. I discuss everything you need to know in Chapter 17.
- ✓ **Don't forget the lighting.** Let me act as your Mom. (I know that's a stretch, but bear with me.) She'd say, "You can't possibly expect to work without decent lighting! You'll go blind!" She's right, you know. You need a desk or floor lamp at a minimum.
- ✓ **Plan to expand.** If your iMac hangs out on a desk, allow an additional foot of space on each side. That way, you have space for external peripherals, more powerful speakers, and that wired keyboard and mouse.

Unpacking and Connecting

You are going to love this section — it's short and sweet because the installation of an Intel-based iMac on your desktop is a piece of cake. (Sorry about the cliché overload, but this really *is* easy.)

Unpacking your iMac For Dummies

Follow these guidelines when unpacking your system:



- ✓ **Check for damage.** I've never had a box arrive from Apple with shipping damage, but I've heard horror stories from others (who claim that King Kong must have been working for That Shipping Company). Check all sides of your box before you open it.

Take a photograph of any significant damage (just in case).
- ✓ **Search for all the parts.** When you're removing those chunks o' Styrofoam, make certain that you've checked all sides of each foam block for parts that are snuggled therein or taped for shipment. Make sure you keep track of your diminutive Apple Remote!



- ✓ **Keep all those packing materials.** Do *not* head for the trash can with that box and those packing materials. Keep your box intact and also keep all packing materials for at least a year until your standard Apple warranty runs out. If you have to ship it to an Apple service center, the box and the original packing is the only way for your iMac to fly.

And now, a dramatic Mark's Maxim about cardboard containers:

Smart computer owners keep their boxes far longer than a year.TM

For example, if you sell your iMac or move across the country, you'll want that box. *Trust me on this one.*



- ✓ **Store the invoice for safekeeping.** Your invoice is a valuable piece of paper, indeed.

Save your original invoice in a plastic bag, along with your computer's manuals and original software, manuals, and other assorted hoo-hah. Keep the bag on your shelf or stored safely in your desk, and enjoy a little peace of mind.

- ✓ **Read the iMac's manual.** "Hey, wait a minute, Mark — why do I have to read the manual from Apple along with this tome?" Good question, and here's the answer: There might be new and updated instructions in the documentation from Apple that override what I tell you in this book. (For example, "*Never* cut the red wire. Cut the blue wire instead." Or something to that effect.)

Besides, Apple manuals are rarely thicker than a restaurant menu.

Connecting cables like a true nerd

The iMac makes all its connections really simple, but your computer depends on you to get the outside wires and thingamabobs where they go.

Absolutely essential connections

After your new iMac is resting comfortably in its assigned spot (I assume that's a desktop), you need to make a couple of connections:

- ✓ **The power cable**

Plug the cable into the corresponding socket on the iMac first; then plug 'er in to that handy AC outlet.

- ✓ **The (wired) keyboard and mouse**

- Plug the USB cable from your keyboard into one of the USB 2.0 ports on the back of the iMac.
- Plug the Mighty Mouse into one of the USB 1.1 ports on the back of the keyboard.



This saves a USB 2.0 port for better uses. (See the earlier section, “Those holes are called ports,” to see what these ports look like.)

If you bought your iMac equipped with the wireless keyboard and mouse options, your batteries might need to be installed. After the batteries are in, you’re set to go.

Adding the Internet to the mix

If you have Internet access or a local computer network, you need to make at least one of the following connections.



If you don’t already have *any* Internet service, start with local dialup Internet access. You can check high-speed options later — typically, your local cable and telephone companies can provide you with more information on your long-term choice for Internet service.

Dialup Internet access

If you get on the Internet by dialing a standard phone number you’ll need an external USB modem, either from Apple or another manufacturer. Once you’ve installed the modem to a handy USB port, just make two connections.

- 1. Plug one of the telephone cable’s connectors into your modem port.**
- 2. Plug the other telephone cable connector into your telephone line’s wall jack.**

After you get your account information from your ISP, Chapters 6 and 17 have the details on configuring your modem and Internet settings for dialup access.

Networks and high-speed Internet access

If you have high-speed Internet service or if you’re in an office or school with a local computer network, you can probably connect through the iMac’s built-in Ethernet port. You make two connections:

- 1. Plug one end of the Ethernet cable into the Ethernet port on the iMac.**
- 2. Plug the other end of the Ethernet cable into the Ethernet port from your network. It’s probably one of the following:**
 - An Ethernet wall jack
 - An Ethernet hub or switch
 - A cable or DSL Internet router (or sharing device)



Will you be joining a wireless network? If so, you find the information you need on installing an AirPort Extreme wireless card in Chapter 20, and all the details you need to configure Tiger for wireless networking in Chapter 17.

Discovering All the Cool Things You Can Do

This section answers the most common of all novice computer questions: “What the heck will I *do* with this thing?” You find additional details and exciting factoids about the software that you get for free, software you’ll want to buy, and stuff you can do on the Internet.

What software do I get?

Currently, all iMac computers ship with these major software applications installed and ready to use:

- ✓ **The iLife suite:** You know you want these applications! They turn your iMac into a digital hub for practically every kind of high-tech device on the planet, including DV camcorders, digital cameras, portable music players, PDAs, and even cellphones.

Chapters 11–15 of this book focus on the five applications that make up iLife: iMovie HD, iDVD, iTunes, iPhoto, and GarageBand.

- ✓ **A trial version of iWork:** A try-before-you-buy version of Apple’s powerful office productivity suite is included with your iMac. You can create documents, spreadsheets, databases, and presentations within Pages and Keynote. It’s much like that other Office Suite (the one that costs a bundle) from those guys in Redmond.

Figure 1-3 illustrates an AppleWorks drawing document.

AppleWorks is such a humongous application that it takes an entire Dummies book to cover it all. To wit, you’ll find *AppleWorks 6 For Dummies* (written by Bob LeVitus and Dennis Cohen, and published by Wiley) nestled on the shelves of your local bookstore.

- ✓ **Quicken:** Track your expenses, build a budget (and watch it evaporate), and plan for your financial future. Your checkbook suddenly becomes manageable and tax time becomes easier when you organize your financial world with Quicken.





The installed software on your iMac might change as new programs become available.

Looking forward to fun on the Internet

What is a modern computer without the Internet? Apple gives you great tools to take full advantage of every road sign and off-ramp on the Information Superhighway right out of the box:

- ✓ **Web surfing:** I use Tiger's Apple Safari Web browser every single day. It's faster and better designed than Internet Explorer, with unique features like tabbed browsing and built-in RSS feeds.

If *tabbed browsing* and *RSS feeds* sound like ancient Aztec to you, don't worry. Chapter 8 is devoted entirely to Safari.
- ✓ **Web searches:** Sherlock can search the entire Internet for stocks, movie listings, airline schedules, dictionaries, and foreign language translations. I explain this Internet sleuth in Chapter 7.



- ✓ **Chat:** *iChat* lets you use your iMac to chat with others around the world for free via the Internet — by keyboard, voice, or (using your built-in iSight Web camera) full-color video. This is awesome stuff straight out of *Dick Tracy* and *Buck Rogers*. If you've never seen a video chat, you'll be surprised by just how good your friends and family look!

Always wear a shirt when videoconferencing.

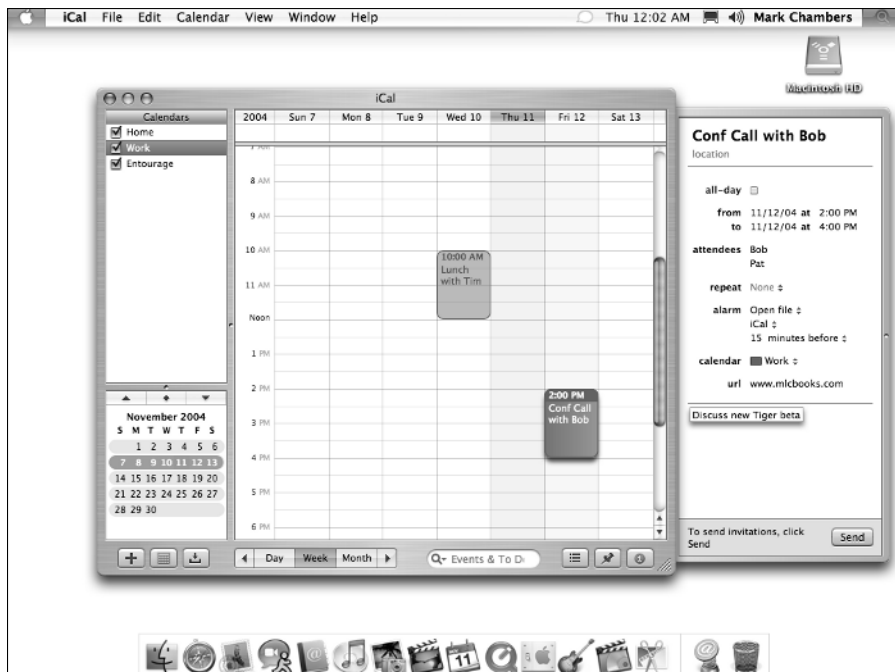
- ✓ **E-mail:** Soldier, Apple's got you covered. The Mail application is a full-featured e-mail system, complete with defenses against the torrent of junk mail awaiting you. (Imagine a hungry digital saber-tooth tiger with an appetite for spam.) Send pictures and attached files to everyone else on the planet, and look doggone good doing it.

Applications that rock

Dozens of small applications are built into Mac OS X. I mention them in later chapters, but here are three good examples to whet your appetite:

- ✓ **iCal:** Keep track of your schedule and upcoming events, and even share your calendar online with others in your company or your circle of friends. See how to keep your life in order in Figure 1-3.

Figure 1-3:
Hey, isn't
that iCal
running on
your iMac?
You are
iTogether!





- ✓ **DVD Player:** Put all that widescreen beauty to work and watch your favorite DVD movies with DVD Player! You have all the features of today's most expensive standalone DVD players, too, including a spiffy onscreen control that looks like a remote.
 - ✓ **Photo Booth:** You can use your iMac's built-in iSight camera to take digital snapshots right from your computer, just like the carnival photo booths of old!
 - ✓ **Address Book:** Throw away that well-thumbed collection of fading addresses. Tiger's Address Book can store, search, and recall just about any piece of information on your friends, family, and acquaintances.
- You can use the data you store in your Address Book in other Apple applications that are included with Tiger, like Apple Mail and iChat.

Would you like to play a game?

"All productivity and no play. . . ." Hey, Steve Jobs likes a good video game as much as the next guy, so you can look forward to playing games on your iMac right out of the box:

- ✓ **Board Games:** A selection of the favorite Mac board games — no cleanup afterwords, either.
- ✓ **Chess:** Ah, but this isn't the chessboard your Dad used! Play the game of kings against a tough (and configurable) opponent — your iMac — on a beautiful 3-D board. Heck, your Mac even narrates the game by speaking the moves!

Stuff You Oughta Buy Right Now

No man is an island, and no computer is either. I always recommend the same set of stuff for new PC and Mac owners. These extras help keep your new computer clean and healthy (and some make sure you're happy as well):

- ✓ **Surge suppressor or UPS (uninterruptible power supply):** Even an all-in-one computer like your iMac can fall prey to a power surge. I recommend one of these:

- A *basic surge suppressor* with a fuse can help protect your iMac from an overload.
- A *UPS* costs a little more, but it does a better job of filtering your AC line voltage to prevent brownouts or line interference from reaching your computer.

A UPS provides a few minutes of battery power during a blackout so you can save your documents and safely shut down your iMac.





- ✓ **Screen wipes:** Invest in a box of premoistened screen wipes. Your iMac's screen can pick up dirt, fingerprints, and other unmentionables faster than you think.

Make sure your wipes are especially meant for LCD or laptop computer screens.

- ✓ **Blank CDs and DVDs:** Depending on the type of optical drive that's installed in your computer — and the type of media you're recording, like computer data CDs, DVD movies, or audio CDs — you'll want blank discs for

- CD-R (record once)
- CD-RW (record multiple times)
- DVD-R (record once)

- ✓ **Cables:** Depending on the external devices and wired network connectivity you'll be using, these are

- A standard Ethernet cable (for wired networks or high-speed Internet)
- FireWire or USB cables for devices you already have

Most hardware manufacturers are nice enough to include a cable with their products, but there are exceptions, especially USB printers. *Shame on those cheapskates!*



- ✓ **A wrist rest for both your keyboard and mouse:** You might have many reasons to buy a new iMac, but I know that a bad case of carpal tunnel syndrome is not one of them. Take care of your wrists by adding a keyboard and mouse rest (even for a wireless keyboard/mouse combo, even on a TV tray).

