

---

# System Preferences (2)

By Graham K. Rogers

---

This is the second part of the overview of System Preferences in OS X, 10.5, Leopard most of which were first printed in the [Bangkok Post](#), Database section. In view of the somewhat larger scope of the project than I had first anticipated, I am now releasing these in PDF format.



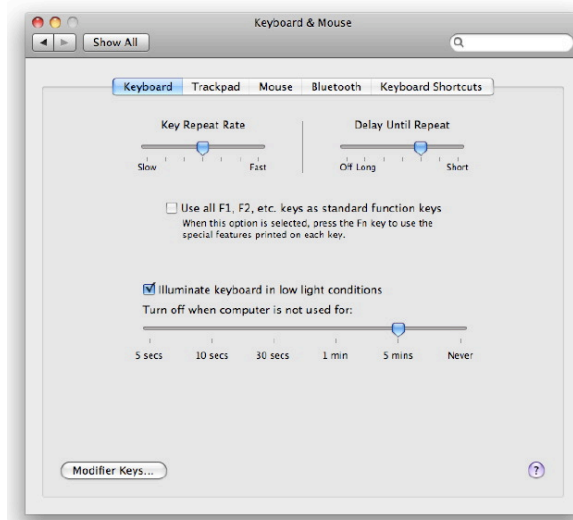
This guide is certainly not definitive. What I have ended up with is a brief and somewhat personalised overview of the preferences as a way to help new users (particularly) overcome any problems they might have and to understand what is available in OS X: this is aimed therefore, in part, at those moving (or trying to move) from Windows where things are somewhat different. As I have prepared this for its PDF format I have gone through each part again and updated the information where necessary (for example in Sharing and the change from .Mac to Mobile Me); added parts that were missing (Keyboard & Mouse, QuickTime); revised the links, so this can be used as a way to access online pages; and corrected any spelling errors I have found (I expect I have missed a few though).

Before trying anything new, such as changing settings or turning features on or off, users are urged to back up all data. I take no responsibility for any havoc you might wreak on your own computer.

Copyright: Graham K. Rogers, Bangkok, 2008

---

The **Keyboard & Mouse preferences** [updated with 10.5.6], will change depending on which computer this is on and on which devices are attached. On a MacBookPro, as updated, there are now three sections, accessed via buttons: Keyboard, Bluetooth and Keyboard Shortcuts. When a mouse is connected, another section (Mouse) appears. On the most recent MacBookPro, which has extra gestures and information concerning this type of input, there is a separate Trackpad preference pane.

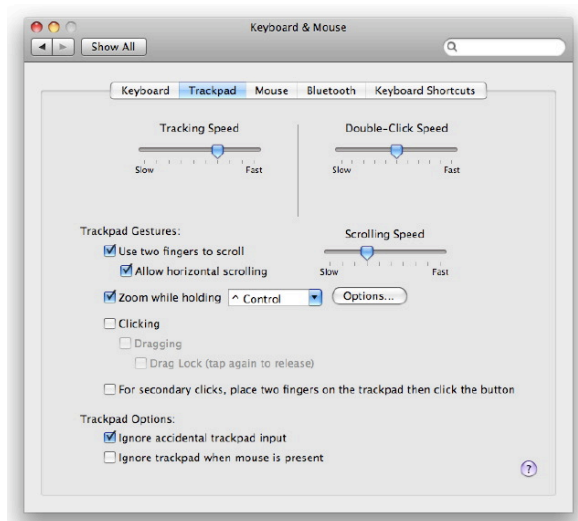


**Keyboard and Mouse Preferences: Keyboard Panel**

This additional (Trackpad) preference has now been added to System Preference as found on all notebook installations with OS X with the 10.5.6 update. I have kept the original text and images here as some may not update immediately.

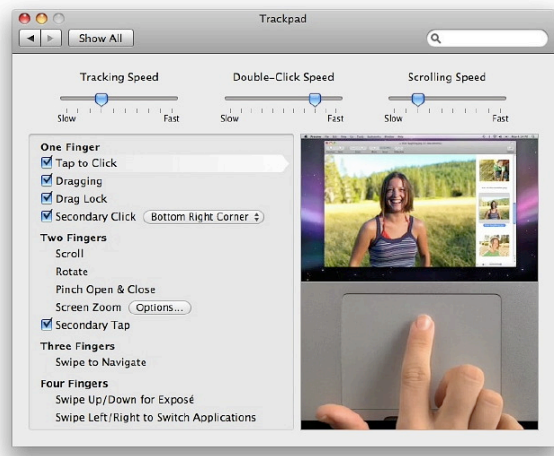
At the top of the Keyboard panel are two sliding scales: Key Repeat Rate, which adjusts the length of time between a character being repeated as a key is held down; and Delay Until Repeat, which adjusts the time before the first repeat begins. The delay may be adjusted between short and long, or off: the character is not repeated when the key is pressed.

On the notebook computers, which have a limited-width keyboard, below the sliders is a check-box to turn on or off the use of function keys as standard function keys. When active the Fn key must be used to use the key for its additional function (e.g. Brightness or Volume). This then allows the F-key to have an additional use, which can be allocated in the Keyboard Shortcuts section. A check box below this turns on and off the keyboard illumination in poor light, with a slider bar below that for selecting a time that this lighting feature operates when the computer is not being used. A Modifier button at the bottom left allows a user to re-allocate the uses of certain keys: Caps Lock, Control, Option and Command. For example, the Caps lock key can be changed to operate as the Option key.



**Trackpad Panel (now a separate preference)**

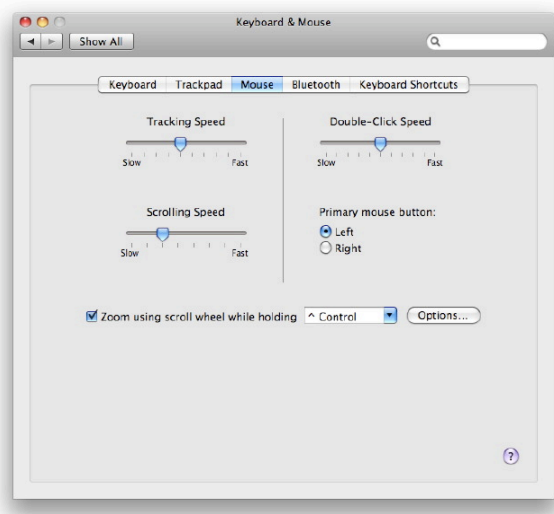
Like Keyboard, the Trackpad preference has two slider bars that adjust speed of Tracking (how fast the cursor moves across the screen) and the double click. Below are two check boxes that control the limited gestures available (also see Trackpad for later changes): use 2 fingers to scroll and allow horizontal scrolling. A slider to the right allows adjustment of scrolling speeds. Another check box below turns on the feature that zooms the screen when holding a key: the key selector panel is adjacent. Options refer to the way the screen image and cursor behave in relation to the zooming action.



### Later Trackpad Panel (increased Gestures)

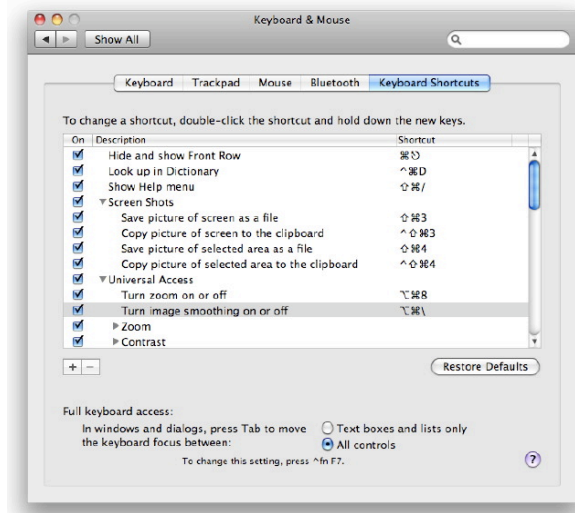
A check box for using the trackpad to click on turns this feature on or off. When active, two more check boxes are available: dragging and drag lock. These control the way a panel may be moved across the screen with a one-finger action. There are finally two trackpad options: to ignore accidental trackpad input and to ignore trackpad when a mouse is used.

The Mouse section has a different appearance depending on the type of mouse used: a one button mouse; a two-button mouse and the Apple, "Mighty Mouse". Tracking speed and double click speed are the same as in the trackpad section (above), as is scrolling speed. With a two button mouse it is also able to re-allocate left and right mouse buttons. With the Mighty Mouse, each input of the mouse can be re-allocated. This panel has a repeat of the Trackpad section feature that allows a user to zoom with the scroll wheel when a key is pressed.



### Keyboard and Mouse Preferences: Mouse Panel

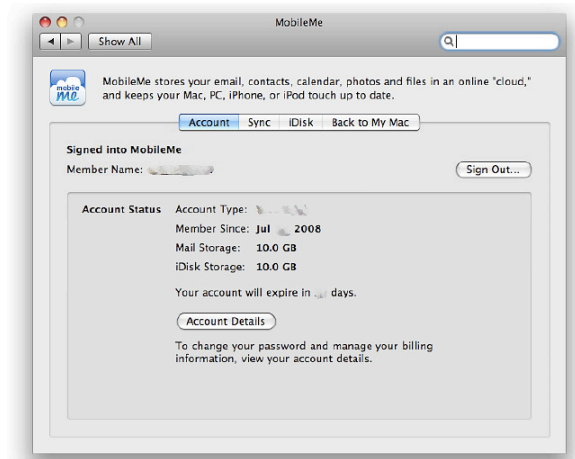
The Bluetooth section is for identifying Bluetooth keyboard and mouse. The simple pane has panels for naming each device and below each is a battery level indicator. There are two check boxes at the bottom of the pane: the first turns on the menu-bar icon for Bluetooth which works in tandem with the same check box in the Bluetooth preferences pane; and the other check box allows a Bluetooth device to wake the computer.



## Keyboard and Mouse Preferences: Shortcuts Panel

The final section is for Keyboard shortcuts. A list of the shortcuts is displayed in a central panel. To the left of each is a check box to turn the shortcut on or off. The description is in the centre and the shortcut keys are shown to the right. Double clicking on the shortcut allows it different keys to be selected. At the bottom left are + and - icons for adding or deleting shortcuts; while to the right a button restores default settings when pressed. Finally, controls at the bottom refer to the focus of the keyboard: by pressing the Tab key a different part of a panel or window may be used.

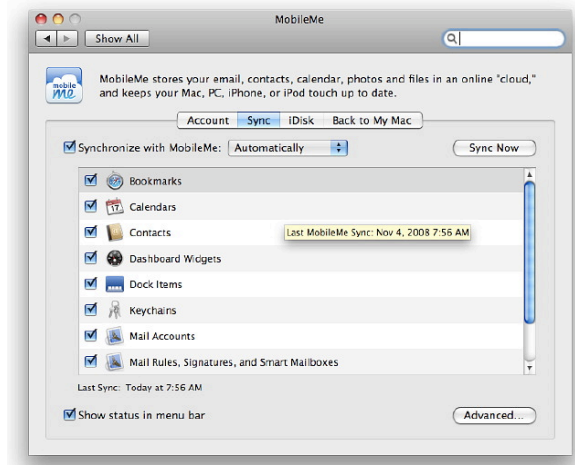
**Mobile Me is a service** that evolved from iTools and .Mac. It is intended to synchronise data between several computers and devices: Macs, iPhones, the iPod touch and PCs. The annual [Mobile Me](#) subscription fee is \$99. The preference panel is split into four parts: Account, Sync, iDisk and Back to My Mac. The first section is used for logging in to the Mobile Me service and there is a single button for this. When pressed, a dialogue box appears in which account name and password are entered. When a user is logged in, the main panel then displays details of the account.



## Mobile Me Preferences: Accounts Panel

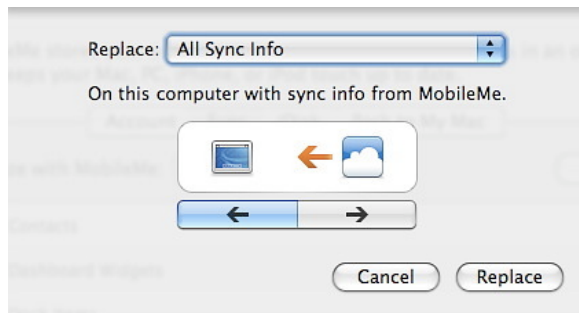
Sync, the second pane, is used to select the specific services that are to be synchronised between the various computers and devices. Examples of these are contact addresses (AdressBook) Calendars (iCal), as well as bookmarks and keychains. In all 10 services are listed and each is activated using a check box. Above the list the method of synchronisation may be selected: manual or automatic. Choosing the latter also requires a time period to be entered (every hour, day or week) or Manually. To the right of the period selector, is a button marked Sync Now, which may be useful for a first time connection, or to

update when data has been changed.



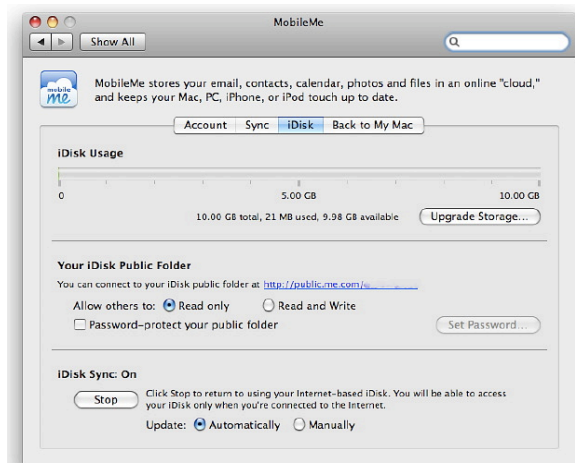
### Mobile Me Preferences: Sync Panel

At the bottom of the Sync panel is a check box to allow the addition of a menu bar icon which itself may be used to activate a sync or to open the preferences panel. An Advanced button to the right, reveals a panel that displays computers that are registered for the user. A button allows a highlighted entry to be unregistered. Below the panel are two further buttons. The first is to reset the data being synced and the user is prompted to select a computer to act as master (master/slave) by using a direction button. This is activated by a Replace button. Cancel is also available.



### Mobile Me Preferences: Sync Panel

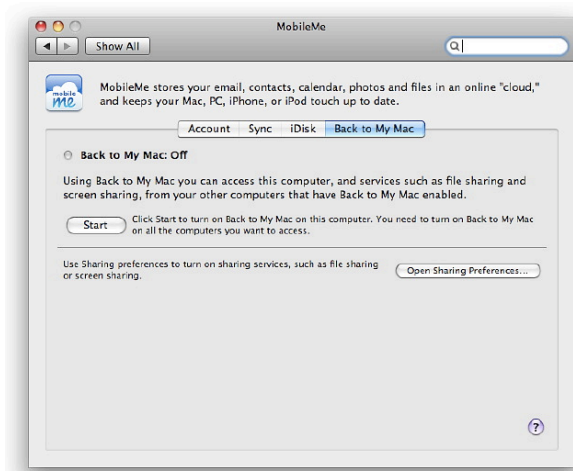
iDisk is a virtual hard disk that synchronises data between computers. A file placed in the iDisk on one computer will appear on any other computer with the same feature active (and allocated by the user). A progress bar indicates the amount of space used and free. The default space is 10GB but this may be increased by selecting the Upgrade Storage button beneath the bar.



### Mobile Me Preferences: iDisk Panel

There is also a Public folder so that a file dropped in the disk, may be accessed by others. The URL of the public folder is shown in the panel and this is a live link. Radio buttons below this allow a user to make the online space read only or Read and Write. A check box turns on password protection. When this is on, a button to the right allows a user to create the password. The lowest section of this panel is for turning the iDisk feature On or Off. There are finally two radio buttons for updating to be either manual or automatic.

The final panel in the Mobile Me preferences is Back to My Mac. This allows remote access to a computer, although in practise this may depend on the network connection method. Either NAT port mapping protocol (NAT-PMP) or Universal Plug and Play (UPnP) need to be supported by a router for this to operate effectively. Not all networks/routers will support this. It may be necessary to have the advice of a skilled technician before attempting to change any settings.

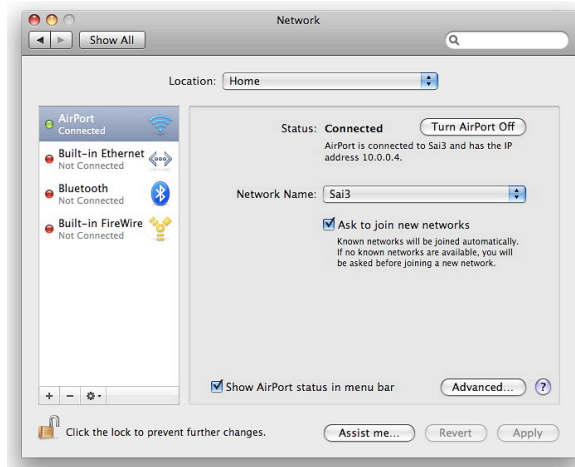


### Mobile Me Preferences: Back to My Mac

This panel has only two main controls and a light icon to show if the service is on. When off, this icon shows a grey colour. When on, green. If the service is on but not properly connected the icon will show amber. A large amount of the panel displays a text explanation of the feature above a Start button (this changes to Stop once the service is activated). Any problem brings up an additional text explanation. Below the main panel is a button that links to the Sharing Preferences panel.

---

**Network Preferences** is used to set or change parameters for linking a computer to a network and to the Internet. This section for making connections to the outside world was completely rewritten OS X, 10.5. While some things appear similar, there are significant changes: most "under the hood". The preference pane itself has a new look, which is not unusual when Apple updates, but it needs a careful look just the same. At the top is the Location button. With the Mac, the default location is "Automatic", but those who use a computer in a number of places -- home, office, hotels -- may want specific settings for each.



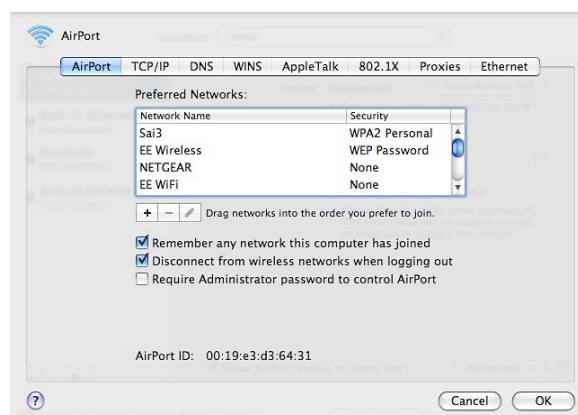
## Network Preferences: Range of Connections with Airport Active

Once set up, the new settings are activated either in System preferences or, more easily, by an item in the apple menu (top left of the menu bar). Once these are added, the menu shows the locations, plus "Untitled" and "Edit Locations". It is also a simple click to add or duplicate a location set.

Below the location, are two major parts to the panel. The left side displays the installed connections and the right, details of the highlighted (current) connection. The connection types are as before although they have some new icons to make them clearer. Each connection type has a coloured "light" alongside: either red (off), green (connected) or yellow (on but not connected). We see the yellow when WiFi is turned on but not linked to a system, for example; or when the Ethernet cable is plugged in but the router has not allocated an IP number.

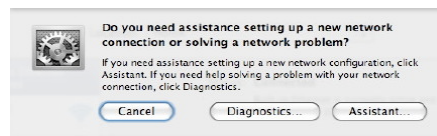
The bottom of the panel has three small icons: + (plus), - (minus) and a gear-wheel for changes to be made. When any changes are made to this or any other setting, the Apply button on the main Network Preferences panel becomes active and must be pressed before the changes take effect.

The right-side panel changes depending on the selected connection. It displays the method of configuration (which can be changed) and basic details of the connection, such as IP numbers. Editing changes are made by pressing the lower button marked, "Advanced", where detailed information concerning TCP/IP, DNS, WINS (Windows Internet Naming Service), AppleTalk, 802.1X (for authentication), Proxies and Ethernet.



## Network Preferences: "Advanced" Panel

The ones most commonly needed are TCP/IP, DNS and (sometimes) Proxies; the rest are usually configured automatically. Once the settings are entered, we return to the main panel and press Apply. Two other buttons are available, Revert, and Assist Me. This provides help in two ways: for those setting up a network, or for diagnostics of a network that is not behaving itself.

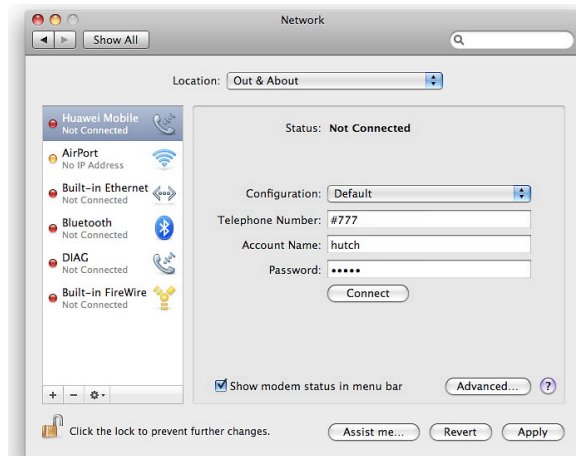


## Diagnostics

On my computer, in addition to the normal Ethernet and Airport (WiFi), the panel shows Bluetooth (using mobile phone); and Firewire, for sharing an Internet connection between two Macs: controls for this are in the Sharing preferences.

Adding a network is easy enough by simply creating a new location, but adding a device needs some care. Apple computers do not come with internal modems these days, but external ones may be used. When you press the lower + button the panel opened reveals Interface and Service Name (what you want to call it). In the Interface button there are several choices, but sometimes not what we want.

When adding a CDMA wireless modem from Huawei that is used by Hutch in Bangkok, it failed to be recognised after the update to Leopard. With the Leopard update, the old modem driver was no longer working and I needed a replacement. The trick here, which I include as the same may well apply to other devices, was first to install the new modem driver and then to connect the device (in this case using USB) and wait. The system will work for two or three minutes. When I then opened the Interface panel the new service for the CDMA modem was recognised. I selected that and the device appeared in the panel of devices. From there I could highlight it and continue to the entry of device settings, selecting the modem type as part of that process.



## Network Preferences: Range of Connections Showing CDMA Modem Attached

This new process for installing a device is not, at first blush, as easy as I would like but that is because I was used to taking charge and some of the processes have been automated. Another change here that is related to the connection process is that in Leopard the application, Internet Connect, is no more. Once a device is installed, a connection can be made either directly from the preference panel (which seems messy to me) or via a neat menu bar icon, but with this there is far less information displayed for the user. As it gets easier, so the user has less interaction with the process itself.

---

**Parental Controls** is an important section that has a number of uses over and above allowing mothers and fathers to apply any protections they see fit. It may also be used in a school or even an office environment to restrict access to applications and to internet use, so may have a commercial value as well.

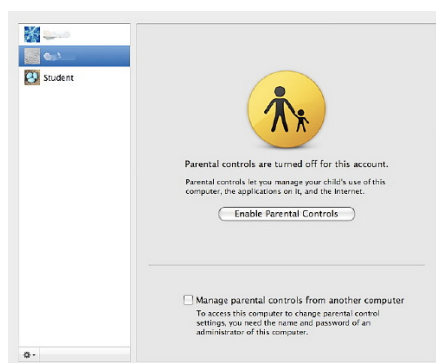


Sadly, these days, while the internet has developed into a fabulous resource of news, research sources and information, it has also become a risk for the same young users who could benefit most from its use. Some parents are rightly concerned about what their offspring are viewing and who they are in contact with. We are reminded of [the Peter Steiner cartoon](#) from New Yorker, "On the Internet nobody knows you're a dog."

While parents should work with the very young in their online discoveries, those who are a little older value their independence and privacy. They can feel inhibited and resentful if they feel they are under observation. Parents have to perform a balancing act between that freedom and the protection of their sons and daughters from the malign influences that may exist online.

Although there was some ability to limit user access in OS X versions 10.2 and 10.3, Parental Controls arrived fully as part of the standard setup for home users' Macs with OS X, 10.4, Tiger. With the preferences, it was possible to restrict access to any applications and also specified URL's: in essence allowing access only to approved sites.

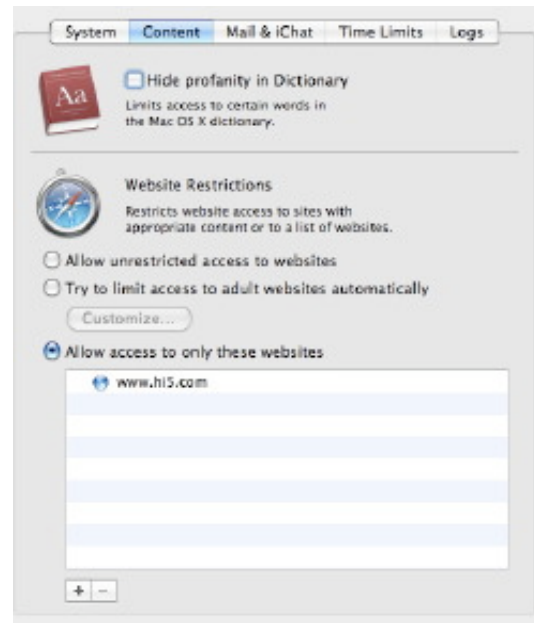
With OS X, 10.5 Leopard, this facility has been considerably revised and strengthened. As well as the ability to prevent use of certain applications, the limits that may be set to URLs include both specifics and types of sites, while email access (sending and receiving) can also be controlled. Logs of such activities may also be monitored. On top of these restrictions, is the ability to limit the number of hours that the child's account is used, including beginning and end times. This will help those families with those addicted to playing games non-stop.



### Parental Controls

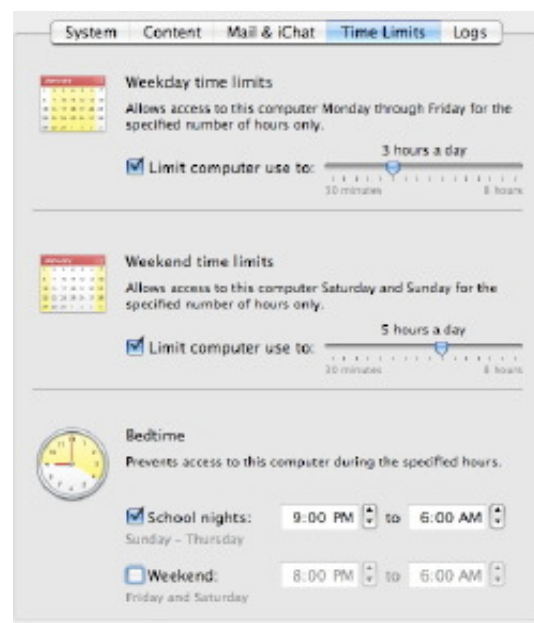
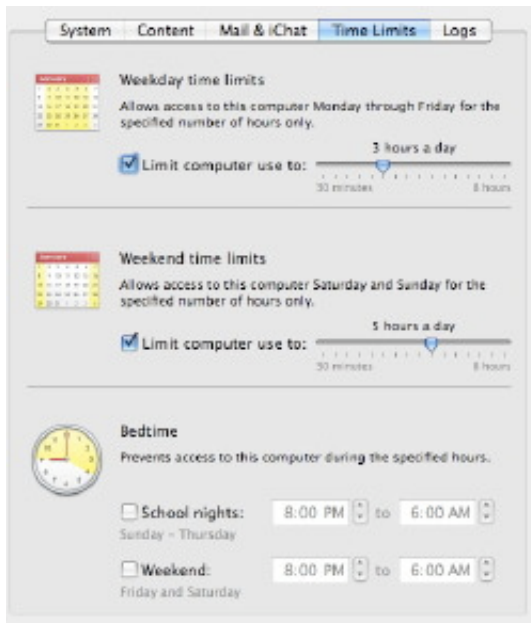
Parental Controls is off by default and does not apply to an Administrator account. When the preference is opened, other accounts are shown in a panel. When one of these is selected the controls can be activated. The panel then displays five buttons: System, Content, Mail and iChat, Time Limits and Logs. Using the "gear" icon that accesses shortcuts for actions, settings for one account can be copied and pasted to another.

The first button (System) controls the Finder and applications. It is in two sections. The upper panel turns on a simple Finder: in the account a basic panel displays icons for permitted applications. When parents work in that account, they can turn on the full Finder with an Admin password. The lower panel controls programs that may be used (with or without the simple Finder). By default, all are allowed. By unchecking boxes any or all may be deselected. At the bottom of this panel are four checkboxes to allow the user to administer printers, burn disks, change the password and modify the Dock, if the parent allows this.



## Parental Controls: System and Content Control Panels

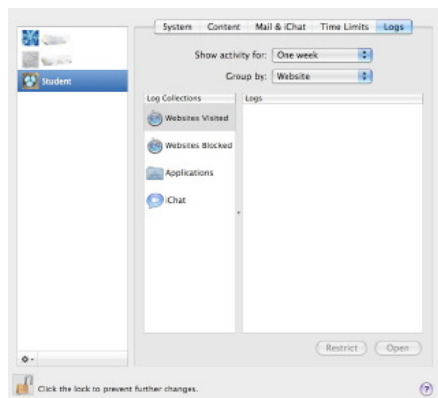
The Content button controls what children may see. The top panel restricts access to any profanity in the installed dictionary: there are terms that some would find offensive. The other part -- perhaps the most important -- is web restrictions which are in three parts: all allowed; limited access, which tries to use recognised content filters, and can be customized to allow certain sites that are erroneously blocked; and, allow access only to specific sites (a "whitelist"). For more information on restricting internet access, there is a useful Knowledge Base Document available online at <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT2900>. As important as these limits to websites, are controls on using e-mail. The parent can specify addresses which a child can send to, or receive emails from. A facility in this panel notifies a parent if the child tries to exchange mails with someone not authorised. Similar restrictions can also be applied to the Apple messenger service, iChat.



## Parental Controls: Time Limits

There are three sections to the Time Limits panel: Weekday and Weekend limits, and Bedtime. The weekday section restricts computer use to a pre-selected number of hours each day. The weekend panel

is identical to Weekday, but recognises that Saturday and Sunday are not school days and the child may have more free time. The decision is the parent's. The Bedtime section prevents access to the computer during certain hours. Cleverly, it is in two sections: Sunday to Thursday, and Friday and Saturday.



### Parental Controls: Logs

The last item, Logs, will record the user's activities for periods which can be selected using a button, from "Today" to one year, and by website listing or date. The log collections, listed to the left, record sites visited, sites blocked, applications and iChat. With this, if a parent suspects that the child has indulged in a risk activity, the logs can be checked and further action could be taken.



### Simple Finder