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# MacBook<sup>®</sup> Pro

P O R T A B L E   G E N I U S

Second  
Edition





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# MacBook Pro<sup>®</sup>

PORTABLE GENIUS  
2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION



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# MacBook Pro<sup>®</sup>

PORTABLE GENIUS  
2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION

by Brad Miser



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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## About the Author

**Brad Miser** has written more than 35 books helping people get more out of their technology faster and easier. In addition to *MacBook Pro Portable Genius*, Brad has written *Teach Yourself Visually MacBook*, *iPhoto '09 Portable Genius*, *MacBook Portable Genius*, *MobileMe for Small Business Portable Genius*, *My iPhone*, *Teach Yourself Visually MacBook Air*, *My iPod touch*, and *Special Edition Using Mac OS X Leopard*. He has also been co-author, development editor, or technical editor on more than 50 other titles.

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Brad would love to hear about your experiences with this book (the good, the bad, and the ugly). You can write to him at [bradmiser@me.com](mailto:bradmiser@me.com).

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On my personal team, I'd like to thank my wife Amy for her tolerance of the author lifestyle, which is both odd and challenging. My delightful daughters Jill, Emily, and Grace are always a source of joy and inspiration for all that I do, and for which I'm ever grateful.

The probability that we may fall in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just; it shall not deter me.

—Abraham Lincoln

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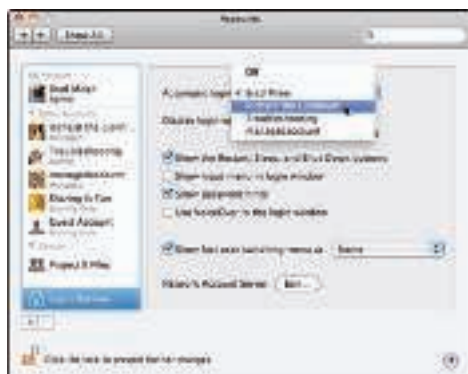
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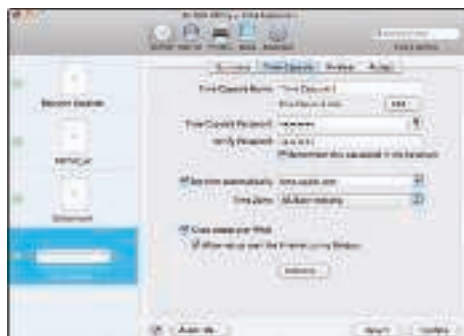
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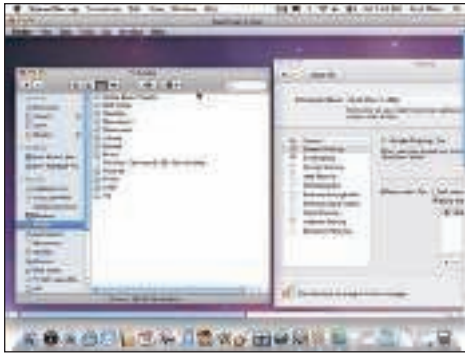


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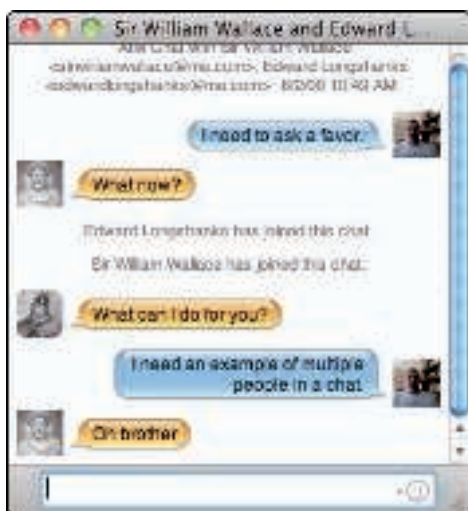


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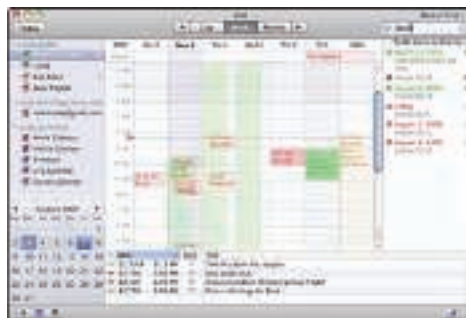


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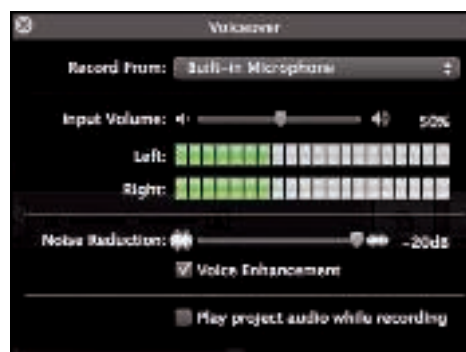
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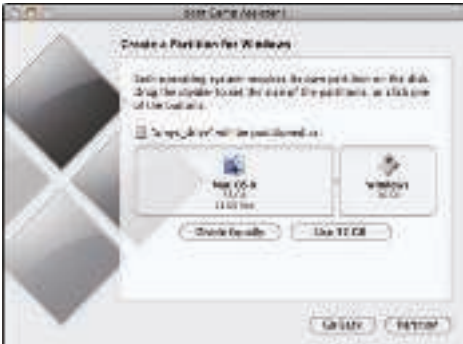


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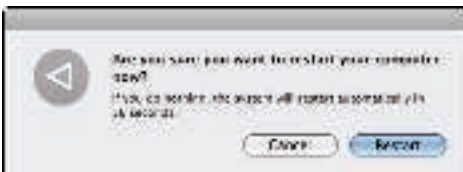
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# Introduction

From its distinctive metallic finish to its backlit keyboard, dazzling display, and inviting design, the MacBook Pro is amazing technology that looks as great as it works. Running Mac OS X Snow Leopard and including lots of amazing software, MacBook Pros let you do more out of the box more easily than any other computer. In fact, MacBook Pros do so much, it is easy to overlook some of the great things they can do. That's where this book comes in.

While you probably already know how to turn your MacBook Pro on, you might not know how to use Spaces to create virtual working spaces on the desktop so that you can keep many applications and windows open at the same time and move among them easily. While you likely know how to use the trackpad to point to objects on the screen to select them, you might not know how to create your own keyboard shortcuts for just about any command in any application that you use. While you have probably thought that you need to back up your important data, you might not have actually done it. And, while you've surfed the Web, you might not have taken advantage of all that being connected does for you, from file sharing locally to communicating with people around the world easily and inexpensively.

The purpose of this book is to provide a resource for you when you are wondering how to do something better, how to do it more easily, or even how to do it at all. You'll find that each chapter is organized around a question. Within each chapter are answers to its question; these answers are task-focused so you learn by doing rather than by just reading. The steps you'll find are very specific and, hopefully, quite complete; if you start at Step 1 and work through each step in sequence,

you'll end up someplace you want to go. Thus, the book's title of *Portable Genius*; it is intended to be your companion to guide you on your in-depth exploration of your MacBook Pro. Once you've been through a topic's steps, you'll be prepared to go even further by extending what you've learned to other tasks.

The book is designed to provide a broad range of topics in which most MacBook Pro users will be interested. There's no particular order to the topics in this book so you can jump to any chapter without having read the preceding ones. To get started, I recommend that you take a look at the table of contents and decide which question you want answered first. Turn the appropriate page and off you go!



Your MacBook Pro desktop is the area that is displayed on its screen. Although the size of the screen is fixed, you can maximize the size of your desktop on that screen. Like a physical desktop, you place things (in this case, windows) “on top” to focus your attention on them and use their content. As you work, your desktop naturally becomes cluttered with windows for applications, documents, and system tools. Keeping control of all these windows can help you make the most of your MacBook Pro’s desktop space. The good news is that it’s a lot easier to keep your MacBook Pro desktop neat and tidy than it is a real desktop, and you don’t even need a dust rag.

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## Maximizing Desktop Space

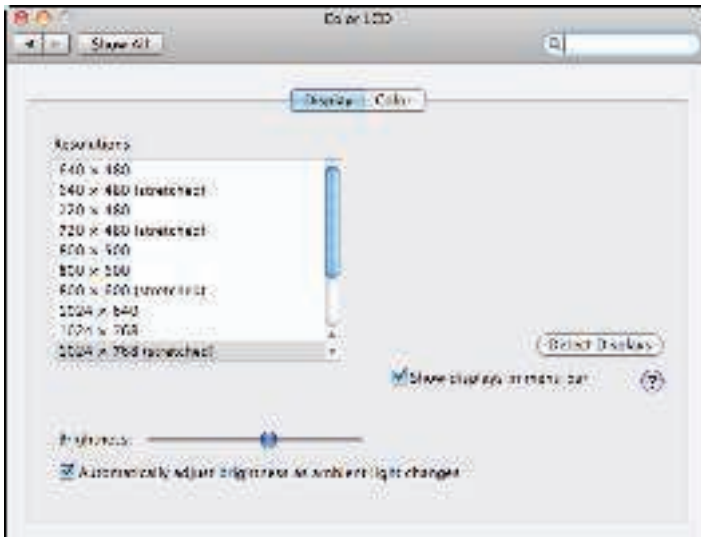
MacBook Pros have 13-, 15- or 17-inch displays. No matter which display size your MacBook Pro has, more display space is always better. Fortunately, you can maximize the amount of information you see on your MacBook Pro screen by configuring its display. For even more working room, you can attach and use an external display. For the ultimate in desktop space, you can connect your MacBook Pro to a projector. When you are using an external display or projector, you can have the same image displayed on the MacBook Pro display and the external device, or you can expand your desktop over both displays.

### Configuring the MacBook Pro's display

While the physical size of the MacBook Pro's screen is fixed, the amount of information that can be displayed on it (its resolution) is not. Setting the appropriate resolution, which determines the amount of information that is displayed on the screen, is a matter of choosing the largest resolution that you can view comfortably with no eyestrain.

There are standard resolutions to use, but those that are available to you depend on the specific MacBook Pro you are using. For example, the 15-inch model has a different set of resolutions than does the 17-inch model. Here's how to find your maximum resolution:

- 1. Open the System Preferences application.**
- 2. Click the Displays icon.** The Displays pane appears (see figure 1.1).
- 3. Click the Display tab if it's not selected already.** In the Resolutions pane, you see all the resolutions that are supported by your MacBook Pro's display. Resolutions are shown as the number of horizontal pixels by the number of vertical pixels, as in 1024 × 768. Larger values have a higher resolution. Some resolutions are stretched so that they fill the screen (the MacBook Pro has a widescreen format display).
- 4. Click a resolution.** The screen updates to use the resolution you selected.
- 5. Drag the Brightness slider to the right to make the screen brighter, or to the left to make it dimmer.**
- 6. To have your MacBook Pro automatically adjust the brightness based on the ambient light, select the Automatically adjust brightness as ambient light changes check box.**
- 7. Add the Displays menu to the menu bar by selecting the Show displays in menu bar check box.**
- 8. Hide the System Preferences application by pressing ⌘+H.**
- 9. Open several windows on the desktop.**



**1.1** Use the Displays pane to maximize the amount of room you have on your desktop that is comfortable for you to view.

- 10. If you can see the information on the screen comfortably, move back into the System Preferences application and select a higher resolution.**
- 11. Look at the open windows again.** If you can still see the information comfortably, repeat Steps 10 and 11 until the information gets too small to read comfortably or you reach the maximum resolution.
- 12. If the information in the windows is too small to read comfortably, move back to a lower resolution.**



### Genius

You can quickly change resolution by opening the Displays menu and selecting the resolution you want to use. On this menu, you see a number of recent resolution settings you've used. You can change the number of recent resolutions displayed on the menu by selecting Number of Recent Items and then choosing a number between 0 and 10. You can also open the Displays Preferences pane by selecting Displays Preferences.

## Adding an external display

One truth of working with computers is that you can never have too much screen space to work with. In addition to making your document and windows larger so you can see more of their contents, more screen space helps you work more efficiently because you can have more windows open at the same time.

As you learned in the previous section, one way to gain more display space is to make the resolution as large as you can comfortably view it to maximize the number of pixels on the screen and, thus, the amount of information displayed there. At some point you'll reach a maximum amount of information on the screen due to the maximum resolution of the MacBook Pro (such as 1440 × 900 for the 15-inch model) or because the information at a higher resolution becomes too small for you to view comfortably.

To add more screen space to your MacBook Pro (which can support many different displays and resolutions), you can connect an external display. You can use this display in two ways: It can become an extension of your desktop so that you can open additional windows on it just as if it was part of your MacBook Pro's built-in display; or you can use video mirroring, which means the same information appears on both displays.

When choosing an external display, the two most important considerations are size and cost. Larger displays are better because they give you more working space. Larger displays also tend to be more expensive, although that depends on the specific brand you choose. In most cases, if you choose the largest display you can afford from a reputable manufacturer, such as Apple, ViewSonic, or Samsung, you'll be in good shape.

To add an external display, you connect it to the MacBook Pro's Mini DisplayPort. To do this, you need a Mini DisplayPort to DVI Adapter that converts the Mini DisplayPort connection to a standard DVI connector used on most modern displays.

Attaching an external display to a MacBook Pro is easy:

- 1. Connect one end of the display's video cable to the Mini DisplayPort to DVI and the other end to the DVI port on the display.**
- 2. Plug the Mini DisplayPort to DVI Adapter into the Mini DisplayPort.**
- 3. Connect the display to a power source.**
- 4. Power up the display.**



**Note**

Apple makes a display that is designed to work with your MacBook Pro. In addition to having a Mini DisplayPort connector, it also has additional USB ports, a power adapter, speakers, and an iSight camera. This display converts your MacBook Pro into a desktop workstation.



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