

Photo Sharing on the Network

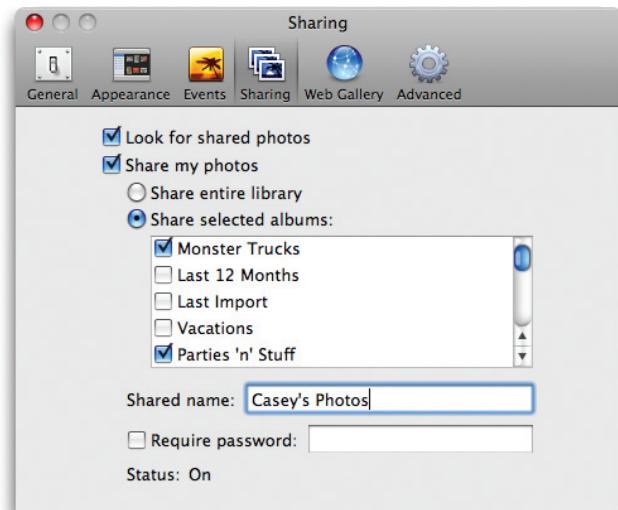
One of the coolest features of iTunes is the way you can “publish” certain playlists on your home or office network, so that other people in the same building can listen to your tunes. Why shouldn’t iPhoto be able to do the same thing with pictures?

Figure 1:

If you turn on “Share entire library,” you make all of your pictures available to others on the network—and doom your fans to a lifetime of waiting while gray empty boxes fill their iPhoto screens.

Alternatively, click “Share selected albums” and turn on the individual albums that you want to make public.

Either way, turning on Sharing makes only photos available on the network—not movie clips.



In fact, it can. Here’s how it works.

For this example, suppose that you’re the master shutterbug who has all the cool shots. On your Mac, choose iPhoto→Preferences and click Sharing. Turn on “Share my photos” (Figure 1).

You might be tempted to turn on “Share entire library,” so that no crumb of your artistry will go unappreciated—but don’t. Even the fastest Macs on the fastest networks will grind to a halt if you try to share even a medium-sized photo library. You are, after all, attempting to cram gigabytes of data through your network to the other Macs.

It’s far more practical to turn on the checkboxes for the individual albums you want to share, as shown in Figure 1.

Unless you also turn on “Require password” (and make up a password), everyone on the network with iPhoto 4 or higher can see your shared pictures.

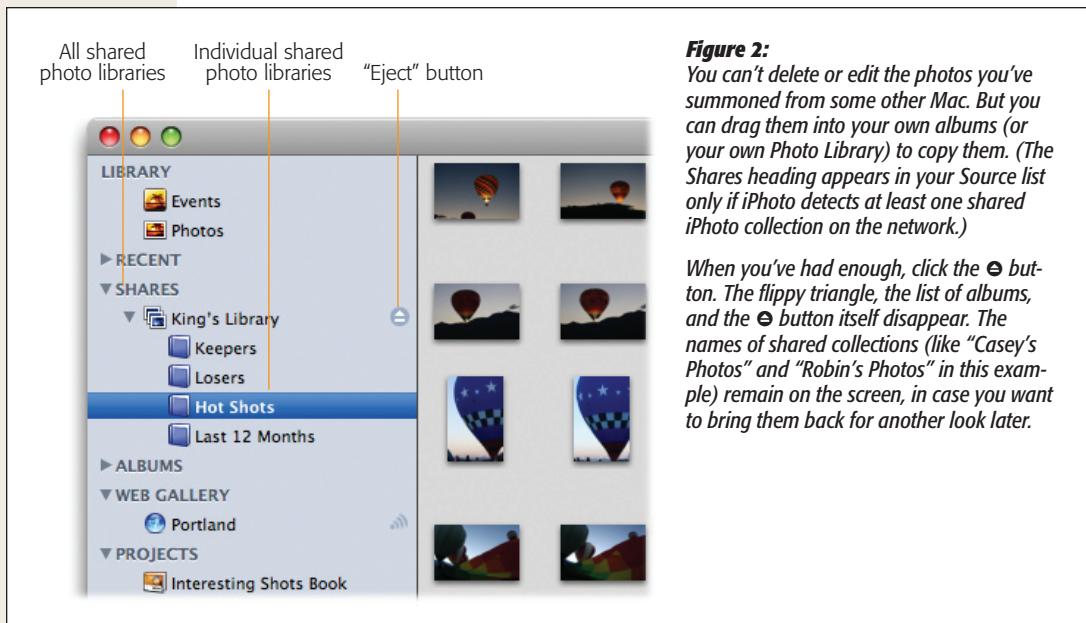


Figure 2: You can’t delete or edit the photos you’ve summoned from some other Mac. But you can drag them into your own albums (or your own Photo Library) to copy them. (The Shares heading appears in your Source list only if iPhoto detects at least one shared iPhoto collection on the network.)

When you’ve had enough, click the  button. The flippy triangle, the list of albums, and the  button itself disappear. The names of shared collections (like “Casey’s Photos” and “Robin’s Photos” in this example) remain on the screen, in case you want to bring them back for another look later.

Finally, close the Sharing window.

At this point, other people on your network will see *your* albums show up in *their* Source lists, above the list of their own albums; see Figure 2. (Or at least they will if they have “Look for shared photos” turned on in their iPhoto Preferences.)

As you may know, when you share iTunes music over a network, other people can only *listen* to your songs—they can’t actually *have* them. (The large, well-built lawyers of American record companies have made sure of that.)

But iPhoto is another story. Nobody’s going to issue you a summons for freely distributing your own photos. So once you’ve jacked into somebody else’s iPhoto pictures via the network, feel free to drag them into your own iPhoto albums, thereby copying them onto your own Mac. Now you can edit them, print them, and otherwise treat them like your own photos.

Photo Sharing Across Accounts

Mac OS X is designed from the ground up to be a *multiple-user* operating system. You can set up Mac OS X with individual *user accounts* so that everyone must log in. When the Mac starts up, in other words, you have to click your account name and type a password before you can start using it.

Upon doing so, you discover the Macintosh universe just as you left it, including *your* icons on the desktop, Dock configuration, desktop picture, screen saver, Web browser bookmarks, email account, fonts, startup programs, and so on. This accounts feature adds both convenience and security. As you can imagine, this feature is a big deal in schools, businesses, and families.

This feature also means that each account holder has a separate iPhoto Library folder. (Remember, it lives inside *your* own Home folder.) The photos *you* import into iPhoto are accessible only to you, not to anyone else who might log in. If you and your spouse each log into Mac OS X with a different account, you each get your own Photo Library—and neither of you has access to the other's pictures in iPhoto.

But what if the two of you *want* to share the same photos? Ordinarily, you'd be stuck, since iPhoto can't make its library available to more than a single user. You could transfer the photos by CD or by setting up a MobileMe photo gallery, of course, but here are two easier solutions to this common conundrum.

Easy Way: Share Your Library

iPhoto's sharing feature isn't just useful for sharing photos across the network. It's equally good at sharing photos between *accounts* on the same Mac.

To make this work, iPhoto has to be running in the account that will be sharing the pictures. And you have to turn on Fast User Switching. (To find this checkbox, open the Accounts panel of System Preferences. Click the Login Options button.)

Now you're ready. Log in as, say, Dad. Share some albums.

Now Mom chooses her name from the little Fast User Switching menu at the upper-right corner of the screen, thereby switching to her own account (and shoving Dad's to the background). She'll find that Dad's albums show up in her copy of iPhoto, exactly as shown in Figure 18. She can copy whichever pictures she likes into her own albums.

Geeky Way: Move the Library

The problem with the Share Your Library method is that you wind up with *copies* of the pictures. In some situations, you may want to work on exactly the same set of pictures. You want, in other words, to share the *same iPhoto Library*.

What will trip up any normal person's attempt to share an iPhoto Library is a little thing called *permissions*. That term refers to the insanely complex web of invisible Unix codes that keep your files and folders out of the hands of other account holders, and vice versa.

One easy way to sidestep this problem is to put the iPhoto library on an external hard drive that both Macs can access. (Just don't both of you access the same library at the same time.)

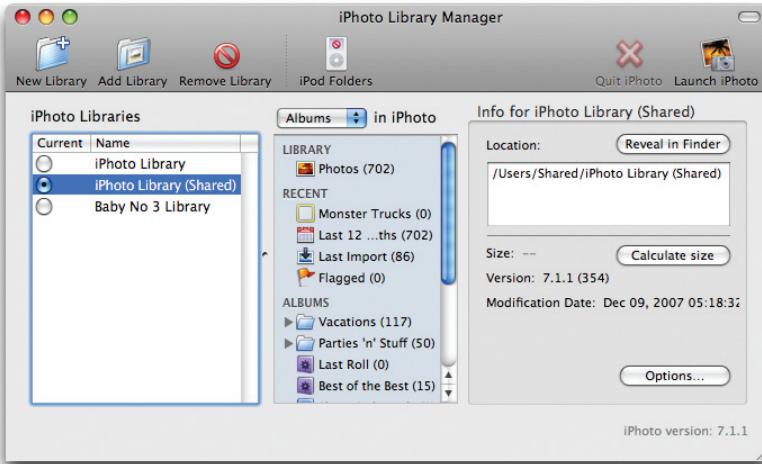
If that's not possible, then here's a more elaborate method, a two-step maneuver that requires the assistance of a piece of free software. First, put your photo library somewhere where every account holder has access to it. Second, change its permissions from "mine" to "everyone's." Here's the drill. (Quit iPhoto first.)

1. In the Finder, drag your iPhoto Library icon into the Shared folder.

Your iPhoto Library contains all of your pictures (and all of the information associated with them, like albums, comments, and so on). It's probably sitting, at this moment, in your Home→Pictures folder. To move it, you'll probably have to



Figure 3:
Top: To share your Photo Library with other user-account holders on your Mac, start by moving its folder into your Mac's Shared folder. For clarity, the iPhoto Library has been named "iPhoto Library (Shared)" here.



Bottom: Now add the shared library to the list of iPhoto libraries in the freeware program iPhoto Library Manager. (That involves clicking Add Library at the top of the window and navigating to that Shared folder.)

Set the iPhoto Library (Shared) folder's three pop-up menus to "Read & write," as shown here. Finally, turn on the shared library's checkmark, and then click Launch iPhoto.

open two Finder windows side-by-side, so you can see your starting and ending points at the same time.

Your destination is the Shared folder, which is in your Macintosh HD→Users folder. Drag the iPhoto Library into the Shared folder.

You've done most of the setup. Now comes a step that each account holder must take individually. Suppose, for example, that you're now your mom.

- 2. Log in to your account. Don't open iPhoto yet. Open iPhoto Library Manager instead.**

The gloriously useful (and gloriously free) iPhoto Library Manager program is available from, for example, this book's "Missing CD" page at www.missingmanuals.com.

- 3. Click the Add Library button. Navigate to the Macintosh HD→Users→Shared folder, click the iPhoto Library, and then click Open.**

Now the shared photo library appears in iPhoto Library Manager's list of libraries, as shown in Figure 3. Make sure it's highlighted.

- 4. Click Options. Set all three pop-up menus to "Read & write," as shown in Figure 18. Also turn on "Automatically apply before launching iPhoto."**

Your mom has just made your iPhoto Library folder her own. And every time she opens iPhoto (from within iPhoto Library Manager, that is), those pesky permission bits will be set automatically to give her ownership for this editing session.

- 5. Select iPhoto Library in the list at left, and then click Launch iPhoto.**

Incredibly, iPhoto opens up that iPhoto library in your account—even if it wasn't yours to begin with. You're free to edit the photos. And you won't have to repeat any of these steps, either; from now on, just opening iPhoto (from within iPhoto Library Manager) takes you straight to the pictures.

Better yet, each family member (account holder) can set things up the same way for themselves, by repeating steps 2 through 5. (Only one person can actually have the library open for editing at a time, though.)

