

Still on MobileMe? READ THIS!

Lion and iCloud

John Hammerstrom

There is no way to sugar coat it – the mandatory upgrade from MobileMe to iCloud by June 30 can be a challenge if you are still using a computer with an operating system earlier than Lion. While I admire Apple for continuously “advancing” the state of computing, I am not happy that MobileMe is being abandoned so soon after its 2008 launch, which necessitates a lot of work and possibly expense to keep pace. In an effort to make your transition easier, I’m offering some comments on my recent experience and some suggestions. I am not alone in these feelings. (App Store ratings for Lion show polarized reviews. Out of 173 ratings for Lion version 10.7.4, fifty-one were one or two stars.)

You must upgrade to Lion (OS 10.7.4) in order to upgrade to iCloud, however, you should consider the alternatives to soon-to-be-lost applications or support for applications before you upgrade to Lion. (See below for a list of applications not supported by Lion.) You may also find, like a friend of mine, that since your computer cannot operate Snow Leopard - OSX 10.6.6 (you must be using Snow Leopard to upgrade to Lion) you will need a new computer so you can use iCloud. You have no choice if you count on MobileMe for synching calendars, contacts or any other functions.

If you use some of the features of MobileMe that will be lost, you should replace those features first. In my case, I lost the use of iDisk (where I had placed an offsite backup of important files) and MobileMe as a hosting site for my two iWeb-created websites, which required replacement services. I have not switched to another offsite backup service yet (like Carbonite), but I did go through the laborious process of switching my Domain Name System (DNS) service from Network Solutions to GoDaddy. (DNS service migration was not an essential part of the iCloud upgrade, but I was motivated by high fees at Network Solutions and the pending annual renewal of my web address protection). I now use my new account with GoDaddy for hosting my websites.

I suggest you start very soon. The clock is ticking. As soon as the tens of thousands of procrastinators--or those who resisted the change like myself--wake up, attempt to upgrade and have problems, there's possibly going to be a rush to the door, causing the Genius Bar appointment calendars to fill up and Apple Support phone lines to have long cues.

First things first. As we've all been told a million times, before you begin any upgrade, back up your computer. Once you've backed up your computer, you can begin your upgrade to Lion.

Do not look for Lion at the Apple website like I did. Updates are there, but the place to go is the App Store. This is not the iTunes App Store, it's the App Store application, which is part of Snow Leopard operating system. It's not a website. The icon – a blue ball with a pencil, paintbrush and what might be a ruler arranged in a triangle – appears on your Dock with the Snow Leopard OSX. If it is not on your dock, go to Finder and search for the words “App Store” to locate it. Double-click the App Store icon. I purchased the Lion upgrade (\$29.95) on the App Store using my PayPal account (as one would for other Apps, music, etc.).

If you have a burning desire to keep one foot in both pre-Lion and post-Lion worlds or a justifiable concern about this upgrade, I read about a clever way to create a “parallel universe” computer on an external hard drive by first backing up your pre-Lion computer to another external hard drive using CarbonCopyCloner (which creates a bootable backup). You can then have a full-up system operating off an external hard drive while you venture into the Lion (and soon to be Mountain Lion) world. For me, it conjured up a rookie ice skater with feet going in two different directions.

You can read elsewhere about the legacy applications that will not work with Lion. OSX 10.7 (Lion) does not support PowerPC applications. They were supported in Snow Leopard (10.6) using a translating system called Rosetta, but no more. [Click here for details about applications you may lose by upgrading to Lion: http://www.cultofmac.com/103458/os-x-lion-kills-rosetta-powerpc-support-heres-what-to-do-about-it/](http://www.cultofmac.com/103458/os-x-lion-kills-rosetta-powerpc-support-heres-what-to-do-about-it/)

A short list of lost applications from my computer includes AppleWorks, FileMaker Pro, Amadeus II, Stuffit 10.0, Powersnipe, Windows Media Player, HourWorld, and the most significant of all—Quicken 2007. Intuit has a \$14.99 upgrade that works with Lion. I upgraded Quicken to the Lion version of Quicken 2007 about a month ago, and I have not experienced any problems with that.

Because I (and perhaps you) have “enrolled” in different Mac sites over the years - iTunes, MobileMe, your basic Apple ID, etc., there were unique Usernames and Passwords for access to each. In any case, when I tried to log on to the Apple website to purchase Lion for the upgrade, I was told “either your username or password were unrecognized”.

Wonderful.

After multiple re-attempts to log in, I grew concerned that I’d get locked out. So I contacted AppleCare (we purchased the extended coverage for my iMac, and therefore had access. I’m sorry that I do not know to what degree AppleCare will support the upgrade to Lion and iCloud if you are not a current subscriber.)

AppleCare could not find my iMac serial number in their system initially (what’s with that?), but after some search on their part, “found” it. Bottom line was that I had to reset my password. Of course they have upgraded their security since I created my password, and my old password was inadequate. I now needed to create a memorable (without writing it down - HA!) password with at least 8 characters, at least one upper case letter, one lower case and one number.

Fine.

I created a new password so that I could purchase Lion, so that I could “upgrade” to fewer services offered by iCloud than I had with MobileMe and lose use of several “Rosetta” applications. (I’ve used Macs since the first one came out in 1984, so I’m a big fan, but this transition seems brutal.)

Having made sure I had a complete and current backup on Time Machine, I downloaded Lion and made the shift on my iMac. The download to my computer took over two hours (using a high speed DSL connection), and the installation another 30-45 minutes. Merging Mail into the Lion world took another 45 minutes. Of course you should not try to use the computer in the process. The “upgrade” to Lion and iCloud took 3 1/2 hours of computing time alone, not counting the other time-consuming aspects.

From my perspective, one annoying feature (make that another annoying feature) of my Lion “upgrade” was that the scroll function on my mouse worked backward to what I was used to. When I scrolled down, the page scrolled up. After a long search, I located a new box associated with the “Mouse” (or Trackpad) icon within System Preferences, entitled, “When using gestures to scroll or navigate, move content in the direction of finger movement” that was checked. Unchecking this box returned the scroll function to what I was used to. It may be that the iPhone

and iPad use the reverse, and perhaps I'm comfortable with that reversed function on different platforms. Anyway, you now know how to reverse it.

After the shift to Lion, I had to get used to the new interface. Most notably (to my eyes) Apple Mail was very different. In the process of installing Lion, you will see a page that reads, "Welcome to Mail." Next you will see a window that reads, "To use new features your existing Mail messages need to be upgraded the first time you use Mail." You will have two choices: "Quit to upgrade later" or "Continue to upgrade."

I took the plunge.

Lion Mail on my Mac is very similar to the interface on my iPhone (and probably iPads), but different enough from Snow Leopard that I found it frustrating. Most troubling, I could not locate a specific email that I knew I had received. The "Search" function in Lion Mail is different and not intuitive to me yet. Despite everything I tried, I could not locate that email and had to contact AppleCare again to see what could be done. My greatest concern was that if one email was lost, it was the possible that many others were lost. Lion upgrade discussion forums indicate that others have lost emails as well. Since the only solution AppleCare could come up with to restore the full file might create duplicate emails, I was forced to use Time Machine to find any "lost" emails, or go to the webmail server for my account.

I'm not fond of the new Finder windows, particularly the hierarchy on the left side. I have had difficulty locating files.

My computer was humming along nicely for about an hour until Time Machine notified me that there was not enough room to create a backup. That puzzled me, since Time Machine was supposed to dump old backups when needed and proceed when confronted with a full external hard drive. Last time I had checked the iMac, Time Machine had backup files for approximately six months. I found that I no longer had a long history of backups, but rather had only two very recent ones, both of which were huge relative to the external hard drive I'd been using. I found on my computer what appeared to be a large "Archive" folder that I guess had files from the Snow Leopard morph that were brought over to the Lion side, and the backup requirements were now too large for the external hard drive. My assessment of this may be flawed, but it's my best reconstruction of the symptoms.

Along with the deletion of older files to make room for the new information on my computer went the Time Machine backup of emails that I was counting on as a backup for those lost during

the upgrade. So be it. I had no choice now that Time Machine had eliminated the old files. I could still access emails through webmail if needed. But my computer was bloated and in need of purging.

Omni Disk Sweeper to the rescue. It's a free (or cheap—I've forgotten) program that simply identifies all of your files by size and makes it (dangerously) easy to delete them. As Elmer Fudd would say, be Vewwy Vewwy Caweful. I did identify many files that I was comfortable deleting, erased my Time Machine external hard drive, and initiated a brand-new backup file history. The iMac with Lion and Time Machine were now playing well together.

From here on, the "upgrade" to iCloud was benign, and after the upgrade to Lion, one is lead through the process.

While I also had my laptop to convert to Lion and iCloud, I was inclined to keep one foot in the "known" world of Snow Leopard and postpone the upgrade as long as possible. However, I also had my wife's laptop to upgrade, and since I'm the family Systems Administrator and she wanted to be more assured that Lion and iCloud upgrades were not a threat, I reluctantly embarked on upgrading my laptop.

This time, I turned "Off" the laptop's Time Machine to protect that backup in case there were any new issues, or if I wanted to retain the older backup files like were lost with the iMac Time Machine backup. I went directly to the App Store and tried to purchase Lion for the MacBook upgrade. I was told that I had already purchased Lion and was asked if I wanted to download it again or purchase another copy. Since my mother did not raise any idiots, I downloaded my once-purchased Lion again to install on the MacBook.

Again – the download took over two hours. It's 4 GB. After enabling the upgrade, a computer "Restart" is required. It also took approximately 40 minutes to install the new OSX on this second computer.

The same "Welcome to Mail" notice was delivered, and because of my earlier problems, I gave serious consideration to choosing "Quit to upgrade later." Since I still had the webmail versions as a limited archive, I took the plunge again. I don't know how lumpy it would be if one opted for the "Quit and upgrade later," but it may be worth it to "upgrade later" in hopes that they work out the bugs that caused me to lose the email (and perhaps others yet to be discovered).

Migrating the mail to Lion format took about 45 minutes on both computers. I had a lot of emails, but probably fewer than some folks. With the laptop, I did not experience any additional problems, and have not noticed any more missing emails.

After installing Lion, it is best to check for the latest updates, using “Software Update.” For my laptop, I had updates available for OSX, Safari, a new Flashback Malware Removal Tool and a new iTunes. I updated all of them, with no apparent issues.

I then wanted to be sure that my laptop was integrated into iCloud, but using the icon in System Preferences, could not tell if anything additional was required, or if it was already integrated. I still don’t know, but I suspect that the laptop is synching with the desktop and my iPhone.

With trepidation, I turned on the 250 GB Time Machine backup and was pleasantly surprised that the backups proceeded as one would expect. I retained backups for the 150 GB MacBook, going back six months.

In summary, I recommend the following:

1. Get moving soon. I would not be surprised to see a jam of people at the end of June with Lion and iCloud problems.
2. Learn what you can from Apple’s scant Lion information. I’ve only found a list of “features” accompanying the App Store description of Lion, but there ought to be a tutorial.
3. Determine if you want or need to provide substitute or updated services for iWeb, iDisk, Quicken or any of the “Rosetta” applications that you will not be able to use with Lion, and solve those issues.
4. Make sure you have a good backup of your files. You may need a larger Time Machine hard drive (if your experience was similar to my surprise oversized Time Machine backup issue).
5. Plan a lot of time to execute all of the tasks required to move to iCloud.
6. Did I say get started now?