

# About iCloud

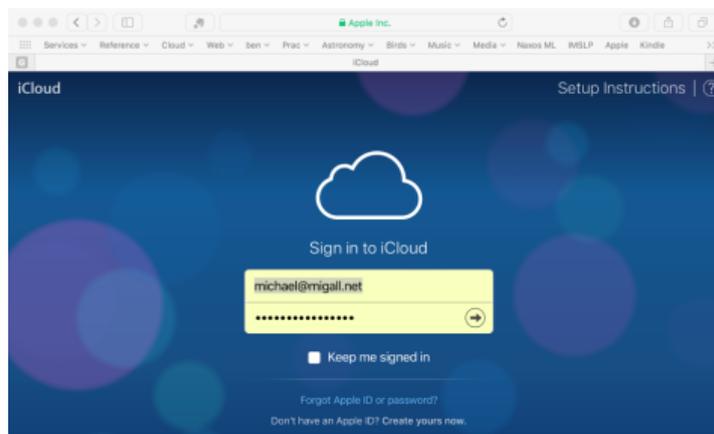
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For the U3A Bendigo Apple Users Group

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iCloud is a set of cloud storage services established by Apple to support its Mac PC, iPad, iPhone, iPod and Apple TV devices. It is a developing set of services—each recent update to Apple’s various device operating systems have made new iCloud features available. For example, OS X 12 Sierra allows Finder’s Desktop and Documents folders to be stored on iCloud Drive (a feature discussed below).

To discover what iCloud offers, use a web browser to go to: <https://icloud.com> and sign in to your iCloud account via your Apple ID.



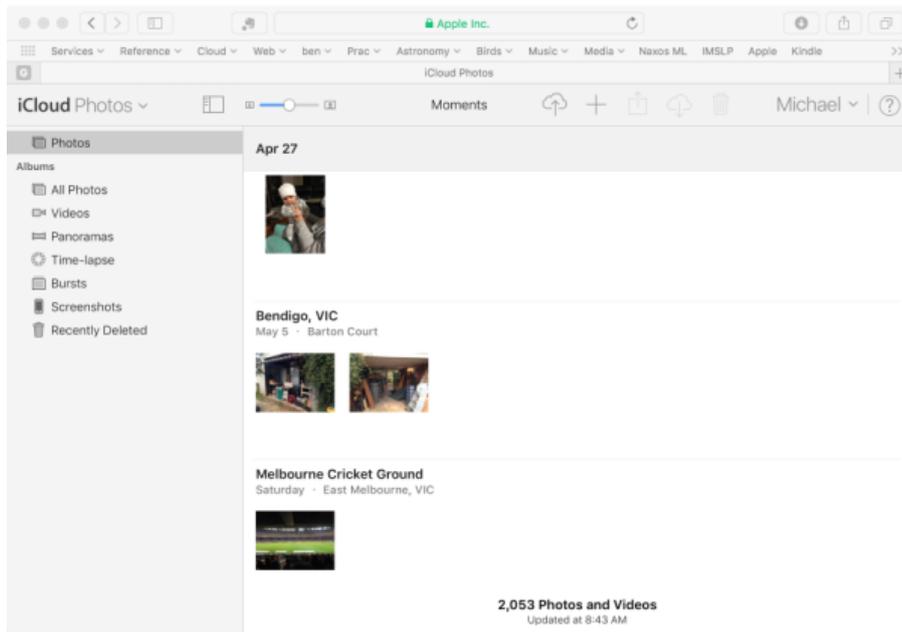
My sign in screen is shown above and my iCloud home page is shown below.



Each icon on the home page represents a storage space on iCloud that holds data associated with an application, app or service. For example, the Calendar app on my Macs, iPhone and iPad all show the same information because they are synced via my iCloud account’s Calendar storage space. Similarly, emails go to my Macs, iPad and iPhone.

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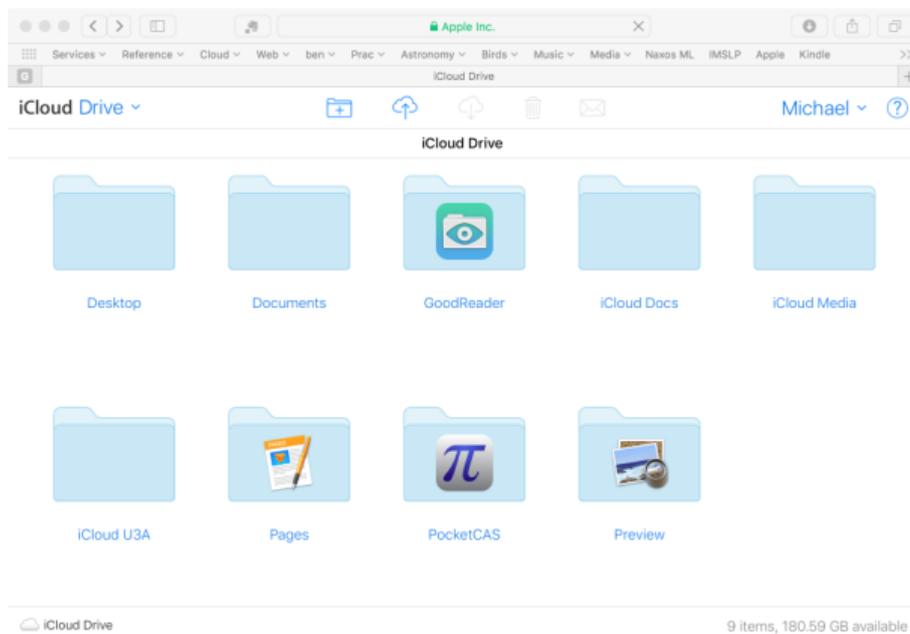
The Photos apps on my Macs, iPhone and iPad all display the same images because they are synced via the iCloud Photos storage space.



## iCloud Drive

iCloud Drive is a service that provides cloud storage space for Apple devices and iTunes software. Various iCloud compatible apps and applications can be set to save documents to iCloud Drive. Users can also create their own folders in iCloud Drive.

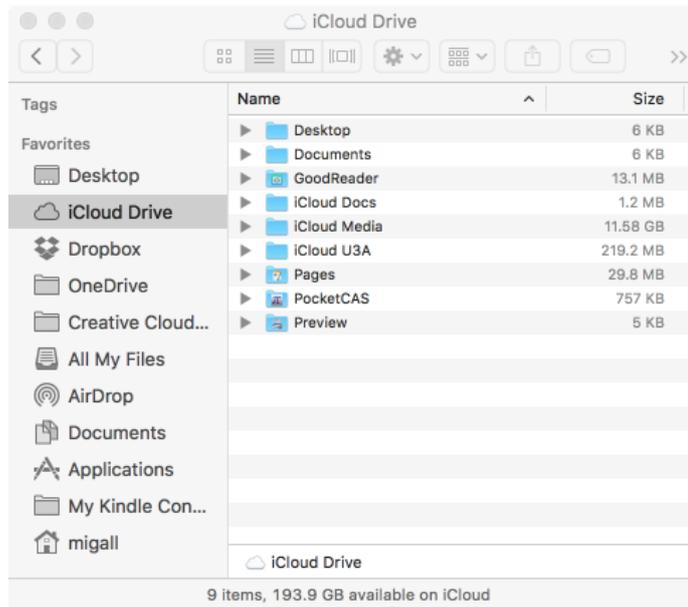
Mac Finder can be set to use iCloud Desktop and Documents storage—a very useful feature if you have two Macs: one say at home and another at work, and you want to be able to access the same set of files and folders on the Desktop and in the Documents folder from either machine. Although I have several Macs, I keep this feature turned off, for I use each machine for different purposes and keep different sets of documents stored in their Desktop and Documents folders.



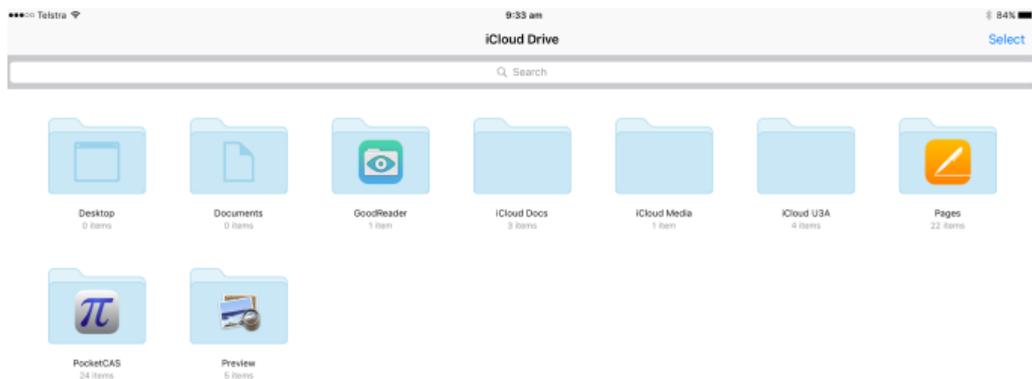
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I have created iCloud Drive folders for documents and media files. Each of my devices that connects to iCloud Drive can access the files in those folders.

On Mac PCs, if iCloud Drive is enabled, the storage space can be accessed from the Favourites section of a Finder window's side bar, as shown at right.



On an iPad or an iPhone, if the iCloud Drive app is installed, iCloud Drive storage spaces can be accessed via the app. Shown below is my iCloud Drive storage space as seen from the iCloud Drive app on an iPad.



When files are accessed from iCloud Drive on an iPad or iPhone, they download into the device's memory, but are not stored on the device unless one chooses to send them to an app storage space while they are in memory.

### iCloud Storage Space

Apple provides 5 GB of free iCloud storage space to new account holders. I have boosted storage space to 200 GB (@\$4.49 a month). Other options, up to 2 TB of space, are available.

All types of files can be stored in an iCloud storage space. The operating systems of Mac PCs, iPads and iPhones are equipped to open some file types without the need to install software—for example: JPG, PDF, Word and various media files. Other file types can only be opened if a compatible app is installed on the accessing device.

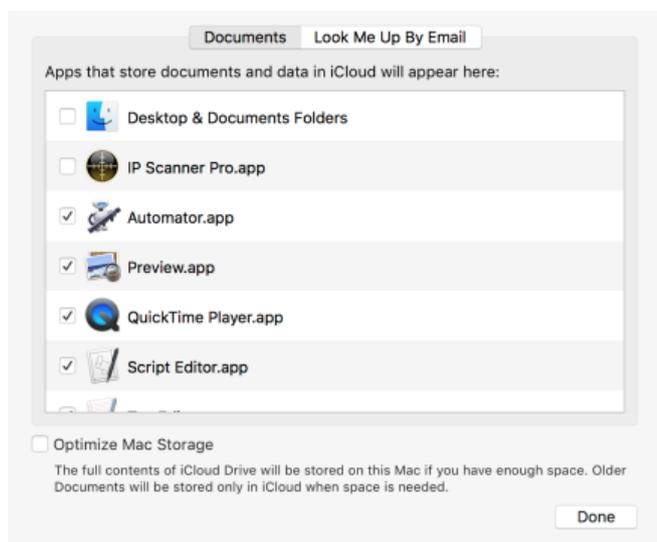
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Some applications run only on Mac PCs (OS X applications). Some apps run only on iPads, iPhones and iPods (iOS apps). Some apps run on both the OS X and the iOS operating systems.

Various OS X compatible iCloud storage spaces can be activated from the iCloud Preferences Panel of System Preferences on Mac PCs, illustrated below. The user can select which iCloud services to activate on each device. The ticks below represent activated iCloud services.



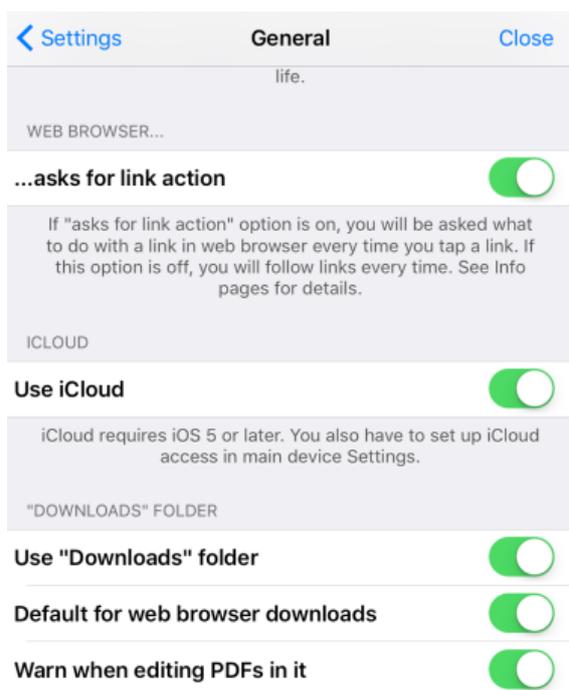
Some OS X compatible iCloud services have an options page. For example, iCloud Drive options allow the user to select whether to allocate storage spaces on iCloud Drive for various compatible apps and services. Note at right: the option to use the iCloud Drive *Desktop and Documents Folders* is not activated. Also notice the *Optimize Mac Storage* option which is discussed below on page 7.



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iCloud compatible iOS only apps (apps that run only on iPads or iPhones) have an option for activating iCloud storage in a settings page.

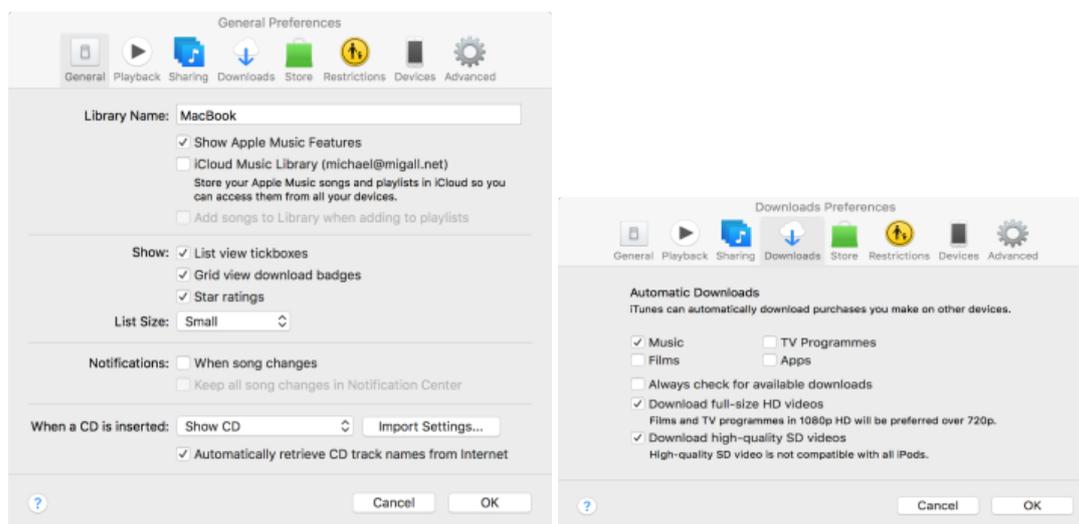
The settings page for the iOS only document organizer: *GoodReader*, an app installed on my iPad and iPhone, is shown at right.



## iTunes and iCloud

iTunes, Apple's Media Organizer and iOS Device Manager Application, runs on Macintosh and Windows PCs. It facilitates access to several iCloud services. The screen on the left below shows the option in iTunes Preferences to store one's music library in iCloud.

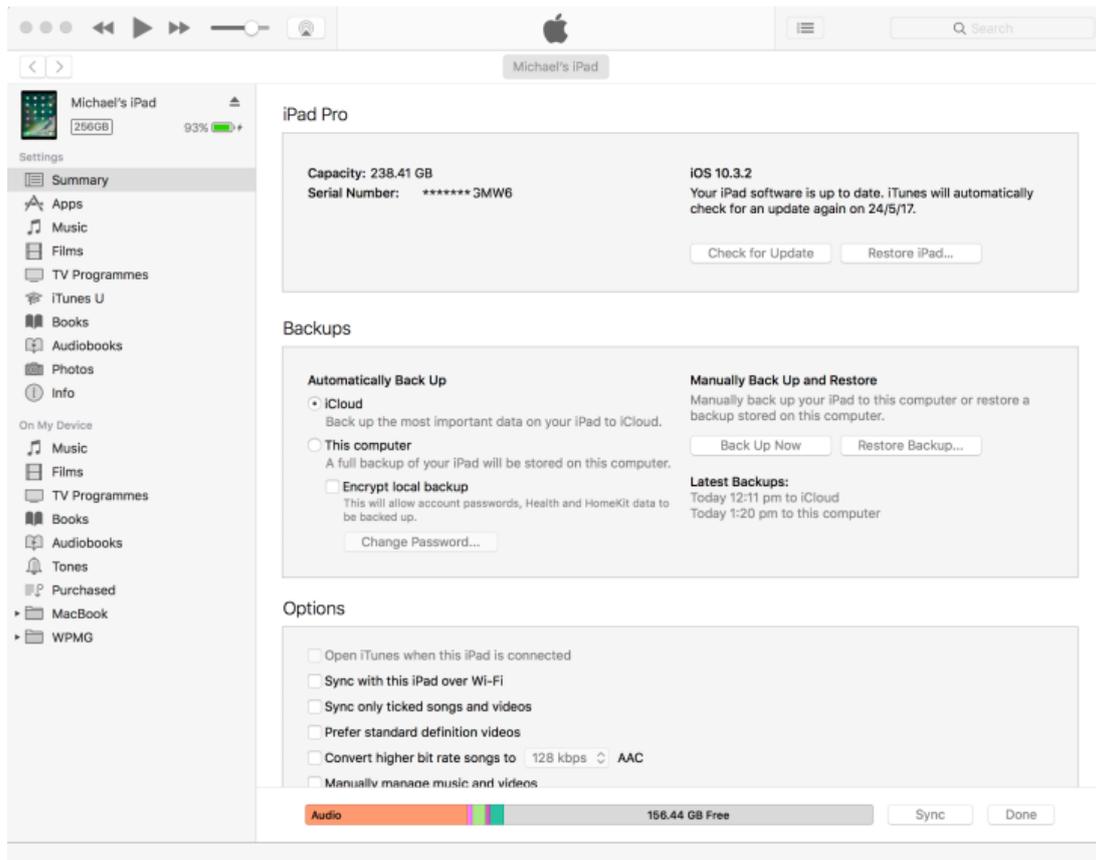
I have elected not to store my iTunes music library in iCloud. My library, which consists mostly of tracks from my CD collection, is stored in folders set up on my PC. I prefer to manage the music folders myself rather than allow iTunes to place files in its automatically-arranged folder structure.



The screen on the right shows iTunes Preferences options for enabling automatic download of purchases.

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Shown below is an iPad Management screen that becomes available when an iPad is attached to a computer via its charging/data transfer cable. This screen displays details of the attached device and provides an option to back up the device to iCloud.



### iCloud Drive is not a regular external storage space

iCloud Drive does not behave like an ordinary external drive. External drives such as USB flash drives, USB hard disk drives and local network drives mount locally and provide expanded storage space. The User controls what files go where. If a set of files on the local PC is dragged to an external drive, they are copied to the external space. The original files can then be deleted from the PC's internal drive to free up space. The copies on the external drive remain in place. If the user later drags and drops the copied files back to local storage, a new set of copies is transferred to the PC's internal drive. The copies on the external hard drive remain in place until the user purposefully deletes them.

iCloud Drive is quite different. When iCloud Drive is enabled on a PC, an iCloud Drive storage space is created on the PC. It looks like a regular storage space but behaves quite differently. If a file is moved to the iCloud Drive space on the local PC, a copy is automatically uploaded to the remote iCloud server. Files put in the iCloud storage space are stored in two places: on the local machine and on the iCloud server—iCloud Drive provides synced storage space rather than expanded storage space. The remote external drive automatically maintains a synced copy of the files and folders in the iCloud Drive storage space on the local PC. Moving or saving files to the local iCloud folder automatically puts copies on the remote server. If two PCs are synced to iCloud drive, copies are also moved to the second PC. If files in iCloud Drive are moved or

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deleted, the files are moved from or deleted from the remote iCloud server and all connected PCs. If a user were to treat iCloud Drive like a standard external storage space, unexpected loss of data is likely to occur.

If iCloud Drive storage exceeds local storage, partial expansion of storage space results. If a PC with 250 GB of local storage, for example, is connected to a 500 GB iCloud Drive storage space, available space is doubled, but not in the usual way. The user cannot specify which files are stored locally and which are stored only on iCloud Drive. If *Optimise Mac Storage* is selected (see bottom of page 4, above), as local storage fills, files that have not recently been accessed are moved automatically from local storage and remain stored only in iCloud Drive's additional space. When the user next accesses such a file, it is moved back onto local storage from the remote iCloud server. Hopefully future iterations of iCloud Drive will give users more control over the use of excess iCloud Drive space.

Unlike other cloud storage services such as Dropbox and OneDrive, iCloud Drive does not allow users to establish links that give others access to files stored there. I would like to have given you a link to access to these notes directly from my iCloud Drive. Perhaps that will become possible in future. In the mean-time, I have uploaded them to another server on the internet. Please find them on the U3A Bendigo Apple Users Group web page:

[http://u3abendigo.com/layt/apple\\_users](http://u3abendigo.com/layt/apple_users)

In conclusion, iCloud is a relatively new set of services established by Apple to assist Apple Users to get more from their devices. There are many services to choose from. Users activate only those services they wish to use. But, to utilise iCloud services, users must possess up-to-date devices running up-to-date operating systems.

Users of relatively recent Apple devices may wish to investigate if iCloud could be useful via these links:

- iCloud Home  
<https://www.icloud.com>
- iCloud at Apple Inc.  
<https://www.apple.com/icloud/>
- Learn how to set up iCloud on all your devices  
<https://www.apple.com/au/icloud/setup/>
- iCloud article on Wikipedia  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICloud>