



Which Broadband?

Different types of internet connection

We use the phrases “broadband” and “internet” liberally these days without necessarily being clear about what we mean. Broadband, as opposed to narrowband, basically means the ability to transmit data simultaneously, rather than one bit after another. The Internet is the physical wiring and computers which are linked together across the globe. On top of the internet run software services such as email and the world wide web. The broadband connection that we use to connect to the internet now has three distinct technologies:

ADSL/VDSL: two varieties of Digital Subscriber Line, Asynchronous and Very-high-bit-rate. In short, V is faster than A, but upload speeds are always slower than download speeds. These services run over copper wire, i.e.: the old telephone network. The use of a DSL filter enables both the broadband connection and the telephone line to be used at the same time. Download speeds are in the region of 14-30Mbps.

Fibre: uses a fibre-optic cable to connect your home network to the internet. It requires a box to be installed inside your property for the termination of the fibre, and possibly a new router. You may retain your copper wire connection for your telephone and this may be a requirement if you have an alarm or security system. Alternatively you could use the fibre connection for phone calls with a VoIP instrument. Download speeds are in the region of 30-100Mbps and some packages have similar upload speeds.

Wireless: this uses the cellular phone network to connect your home network to the internet. A new router is required and conventionally this is also used for the telephone connection and the copper line becomes redundant. Speeds are in the region of 15-40Mbps but depend on your location. Upload speeds can be similar.

Spark and Vodafone (and possibly other providers) are currently making a big sales push to move connections away from ADSL/VDSL to fibre and wireless. In other words they are moving away from the old copper wiring. Part of the motivation is to save them money because they rent copper line capacity from Chorus. It should also give us, the customer, a better service in the end.

Multiple Contacts Accounts

It is not uncommon these days to have Contacts and Calendars synchronising with multiple servers; iCloud, Google, Xtra etc. This is because newer email servers are able to offer these facilities alongside email. However, this raises the question of where do new Contacts go when you create them? They will only be synchronised by one of the servers, not all of them. The easiest way to control this is to set a default account.

On your Mac: In Contacts from the Contacts menu choose Preferences and then click on the General icon. If you have multiple accounts there will be a pop-up menu at the bottom of this section where you can choose the default account.

On your iPhone or iPad: In Settings scroll down to Contacts and if you can sync with more than one account there will be an option to set the default account.

Away from the desk...

Holiday snap...Lake Benmore.



Getting to Grips with...The Dock

The Dock, the row of icons conventionally across the bottom of the screen of your Mac, has hidden talents. Its primary function is to provide quick and easy access to the applications that you use frequently. Just click on an icon in the Dock and the application launches. If it is already open, this action will bring the application (and its documents) to the front of the screen. You can see which applications are open (running) because they have a little dot underneath them (this can be switched off in the Dock preferences). The Finder icon will always have a dot as it is always running.

The icons in the Dock are actually links to the applications, folders and files that appear there, they are not the actual applications etc. So, if an item disappears from the Dock, that is all that has happened - it has not been deleted from your Mac.

You may notice that when you open an application which isn't already in the Dock (by double-clicking a document for example) an icon for it will appear in the Dock (at the right hand end of the applications section) and then it will disappear again when you Quit the application. If you want to keep the application in the Dock, just drag its icon to in-between other application icons.

Adding and Moving Items

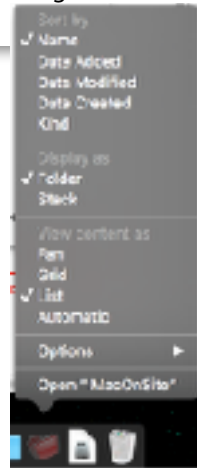
Using the Finder, locate the item that you want to add to the Dock and then drag its icon onto the Dock. The existing items will "make space" for the new item so that you can locate it wherever you want. You can change the position of items in the Dock just by dragging them along the Dock.



Applications go on the left of the line.

Folders, files & drives go on the right of the line

Control the behaviour of folders in the Dock by Control-clicking on them and using this menu.



Dock Preferences

Choose System Preferences from the Apple menu and then click on the Dock icon to access the preferences:

Size: drag the slider to change the size of the dock. This can also be achieved by dragging the resize line in the Dock.

Magnification: this sets how large the icons will magnify to when moving the cursor over them. To have no magnification remove the tick from the check box.

Position on screen: choose where on your screen you want the Dock to be located.



Removing Items

Drag the item out of the Dock and keep the mouse button held down until your get a Remove label appear on the icon - then let go.

Double-click a window's title bar: zoom will expand the window to show as much data as possible; minimise will do the same as clicking on the yellow button in the top left corner of the window.

Minimise windows using: changes the visual effect when clicking on the yellow button in the top left hand corner of a window. The window will be placed in the Dock on the right of the resize line, unless Minimise window into application icon is switched on.

Animate opening applications: turn this off if you don't like the application bouncing up and down while it opens.

Automatically hide and show the Dock: if you turn this on the Dock will disappear and only reappear when you move the cursor into the area of the screen where the Dock is located.

Show indicators for open applications: switch this off to remove the dots from underneath open applications.

Next issue... Time Machine