

Information Security: Protect Mac OS X Devices

This guide covers some of the basic steps you can take to begin to secure your personal Mac. It assumes you are running Mac OS X 26.5 and above.

Note: Not all features are available in earlier versions, and some menu options may differ slightly.

Have a backup

You should always have an up-to-date backup of important files, as data can be lost through hardware failure, theft of your Mac or file corruption. A backup means that your files are stored in two separate places. For example on your Mac and on an external USB drive.

Your University H: drive

Every student and staff member has access to their own H: drive storage space – it is fast, reliable, secure, and backed up nightly. Backups are retained for 30 days, but we may be able to restore previous versions of files that you accidentally modified or deleted, or that were otherwise damaged going back two months. Information about your H: drive is available in [Toolkit](#) – just search for H drive.

Time Machine

You can use [Time Machine](#)¹ to back up your Mac to an external USB drive. Normally, this is offered when you first plug in an external hard drive. Select **use as backup disk** on the external drive you want to use.

If you are not prompted to enable TimeMachine click **Apple menu (top left) > System Settings > Time Machine**. Select **Backup Disk** and then select an external hard drive you wish to use as a backup drive.

Once you set up Time Machine, it will take hourly backups automatically for the last 24 hours, daily backups for the past month, and weekly backups for all previous months. It will remove the oldest backup when the drive is full.

Update Mac OS

Apple will release updates to enable new features and address security issues. Try to install these as soon as they are available.

- Click **Apple menu > System Settings > General > Software Update**²
- Click **Update Now** to install the latest updates for the currently installed version
- Click **Upgrade Now** to install a major new version

Enable password prompts

Rather than launching straight into the desktop, you should have a logon password to protect your device in the event it is lost or stolen.

¹ <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201250>

² <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201541>

- To prompt for a password after waking from sleep: **Apple menu > System Settings > Lock Screen > Turn on Require password to wake this computer from sleep or screen saver**

Turn on disk encryption

Apples disk encryption is called FileVault³. You can use FileVault to ensure you data is not readable in the event your Mac is lost or stolen.

Check the status of FileVault

- Go to **Apple menu > System Settings > Privacy & Security > Click FileVault tab > If FileVault is not enabled, click padlock icon, enter administrator name and password, click turn on FileVault**

Turn on the firewall

A firewall will control any incoming connections to your Mac from an external source.

Check the firewall status

- Go to **Apple menu > System Settings > Network > Click Firewall tab > If Firewall is not enabled, click padlock icon, enter administrator name and password and click turn on firewall**

Review privacy permissions

You can give applications permission to access information, for example your location. It is a good idea to review privacy permissions to make sure you are happy with the permissions you have granted.

- **Apple menu > System Settings > Privacy & Security > Click the Privacy Dashboard > Tap Permission Manager to change or turn off app access**

Review sharing settings

There are various ways to share data using your Mac, such as allowing file sharing, screen sharing or remote logins.

You can review Sharing settings under **Apple menu > System Settings > General > Sharing**. Look for services that are ticked **On**. Untick any that you want to switch off.

If you want to switch a sharing service on, select it and review the detailed settings so that you understand the data you are sharing.

Enable 'Find My Mac'

To help in the event your device is lost or stolen you can enable the Find my Mac feature.

- Click **Apple menu > System Settings > Apple ID > iCloud > Log into your iCloud > See All > Find My Mac > You will also need to enable Location Services**
- If your Mac is ever lost or stolen, log into [iCloud Find](#) to attempt to locate it on the map, play a sound on the device, or lock and erase the Mac⁴.

³ <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT204837>

⁴ <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT210515>

Run an Anti-Virus

Although Macs run an anti-malware product called Xprotect and experience fewer malware threats than Windows devices, they are not immune to viruses.

You can install a freeware Anti-Virus package to scan your Mac and any USB drives. Two example products free for Mac personal users are [Sophos](#) and [BitDefender](#)

Make sure you update your anti-virus product and run scans regularly.

Use complex and unique passwords

It is a good idea to use complex passwords and have a unique password per website. You can use a personal password manager to help you.

iCloud keychain

Apple's [iCloud keychain](#)⁵ syncs your passwords across all of your Apple devices. You can choose to store your passwords on each device, or on the cloud.

Other password managers

Other password managers are available, such as KeePass, LastPass and 1Password. Some are free and some may have a small annual charge.

Selling your Mac

If you decide to sell your Mac, then you will need to remove the link to your iTunes/iCloud account as well as erasing and reinstalling OS X.

To sign out from iTunes

- Open **iTunes** > click the top **menu bar** > **Account** > **Authorisations** > **Deauthorize this computer**

Sign out of iCloud

- **Apple Menu** > **System Settings** > **Apple ID** > **iCloud** > deselect the **Find My Mac** checkbox
- **Apple Menu** > **System Settings** > **Apple ID** > **iCloud** > **Sign out**

Erase and reinstall OS X

- See [Apple's fact sheet](#)⁶

Further information and help

The [IT Service Desk](#) are happy to help you connect your device to the University's wireless network. Sorry, but the Service Desk does not provide hardware support, including repairs of any kind.

⁵ <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT204085>

⁶ <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT204904>