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iLife '06
STRATEGIES

Apple's iApps let you share your images, movies, and sounds with the world. We show you how to dodge the obstacles and oddities that get in your way.

We've been taking a close look at iLife '06 since it came out in January—editing movies, building Web pages, importing hundreds of thousands (no, seriously) of photos. You'll find our considered verdicts on the following pages, along with tips and tricks that'll take you beyond the obvious while revealing some of the inner workings of the new iLife apps. We like them, and we'll show you how to get the most out of them.

By Shelly Brisbin, Niko Coucouvanis, Logan Kugler, Brad Miser, Rik Myslewski, and Andrew Tokuda

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CAMPBELL LAIRD

iPhoto 6

Got photos? Lots and lots and lots of them? No problem! iPhoto's ready for you, and we're ready to impart some of its secret powers.
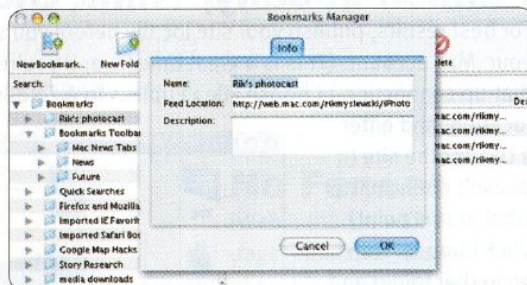—*Logan Kugler*

Unauthorized

So you're using iPhoto 6 for the first time, and you get a message telling you iPhoto's unable to upgrade your Library because you're not authorized. But how can that be? You're the only one who uses your Mac! First, check your iPhoto Library's permissions: Go to */user name*/Pictures/iPhoto Library, and choose File > Get Info (or press Command-I). Click the disclosure triangle to reveal Ownership & Permissions, and change it so you can Read & Write. Restart iPhoto. If that doesn't fix the problem, there may be a locked photo in your Library somewhere. Pore through your image folders in the Finder and look for an icon with a gray padlock in the bottom left-hand corner. (You may have to increase your icon size to make it out.) Select the offending file, choose File > Get Info (or press Command-I), and uncheck the Locked box. Now restart iPhoto.

Faster, Faster!

While iPhoto 6 is definitely faster than previous versions, there may come a time when you want to speed it up even further—especially if you're using an older Mac. Try disabling aesthetic features such as Outline and Drop shadow (located in the Appearance section of Preferences) and changing to a black background to get a fair performance gain.

Photocast to Firefox

Your friends can subscribe to your photocasts even if they don't have iPhoto 6. In Safari 2.x (which includes RSS support), the URL in the photocast announcement message will work fine just as it is—in some other RSS-supporting browsers, however (such as Firefox), it'll take you to an error page. Here's how Firefox users (including those on Windows) can subscribe to a photocast: In Firefox, go to Bookmarks > Manage Bookmarks, and then choose File > New Live Bookmark. Copy and paste the photocast URL into the Feed Location field, and then change the part that reads *photocast.mac.com* to *web.mac.com*. The titles of the Photocast images will then appear in a submenu (either on your toolbar or in your Bookmarks menu). Select the images by title to see them in the browser, and Operation Photocast is complete.
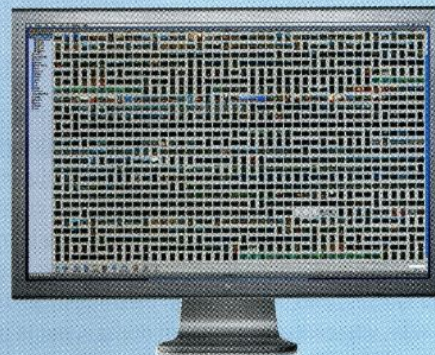
Edit the Photocast-announcement URL to make a Photocast feed work in RSS-capable Firefox.

A QUARTER MILLION?!

Apple says that iPhoto 6 can handle 250,000 photos; we thought we'd put that claim to the test. We put our iPhoto Library on a fast SATA II five-drive RAID 0 array, hooked it up to a dual 2.7GHz Power Mac G5, and stuffed it with a quarter million JPEGs that averaged about 750KB each—an upload that took four full 24-hour days. We were pleasantly surprised to find that even with 250,000 files in its belly, iPhoto scrolled along at hyperspeed.

We were far less pleasantly surprised, however, to discover that when we scrolled with 10 or more images in a horizontal row, the thumbnails rarely matched up with the images they went with. Even worse, in two days of testing, iPhoto thrice requested that we rebuild its Thumbnail Caches—a four-hour process each time. We're waiting for iPhoto 6.0.1 before we try the 250,000-image test again.—*Rik Myslewski*
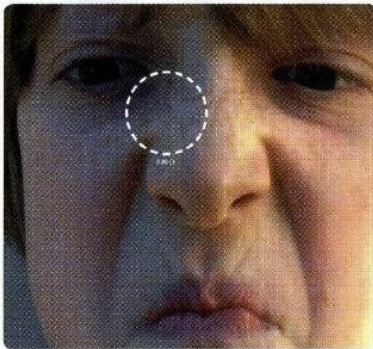
Compare More Than Eight at Once

In full-screen editing mode, iPhoto lets you compare only up to eight pictures at a time—but if you need to work with more, it's as simple as performing a right-click (a 30-inch display might come in handy, too). Just select up to four images to compare, Control-click, and then select Edit In Separate Window from the Contextual Menu. A resizable window that contains all of the basic editing tools will open for each photo. Repeat, opening up to four windows at a time, for all the images you want to compare. It's not quite as elegant as iPhoto 6's built-in full-screen editing, but it certainly gets the job done.

Resize Retouch

You can now modify how the Retouch and Redeye tools work. In Edit mode, select one of the tools. Press Caps Lock, Control-9, and then Tab to see your options. On the Retouch tool's cursor, you'll see a dotted circle with "0.50 { }" beneath it. Press the

open-bracket ([) or closed-bracket (]) key to reduce or enlarge the circle, which changes the size of the area the tool affects. Press Shift-[or Shift-] to lower or raise the opacity of the tool. For the Redeye tool, press Caps Lock, Control-9, and then Tab to reveal a target you can resize with the [and] keys.

Get rid of lots of freckles at once by increasing the size of the Retouch tool.

Backup, Backup, Backup

It's easier than ever to back up your original images in iPhoto 6. In previous versions, iPhoto sorted your imported images into a date-based folder scheme; when you modified an image, the app archived the original version into an Originals folder. That meant your original images could wind up scattered among several unrelated folders. In iPhoto 6, all imported photos immediately go to the Originals folder. Backing them up is as simple as putting that one folder on a DVD.

THE BOTTOM LINE

CAPABLE PHOTO MANAGER AND EDITOR

Among the returning iLife '06 apps, iPhoto 6 is arguably the **most improved**—although it still has some of its old foibles (plus a few new ones).

● UP AND RUNNING When you first launch iPhoto 6, it'll update your iPhoto Library—and, yes, it still manages RAW files by making JPEG working copies and stashing away the RAW originals. But you no longer need to keep all your photos in the iPhoto Library; you can now leave them anywhere you want.

● FULL-SCREEN EDITING The most visible improvement in iPhoto 6 is full-screen, image-on-black editing, complete with a Thumbnail bar (top) and Toolbar (bottom) that can be configured to pop in and out of view à la Dock Hiding. You can also compare (and edit) up to eight images simultaneously in full-screen mode. Be careful, however: If you Command-Tab to switch apps or choose iPhoto Help while working in full-screen mode, you'll bounce back to Library view and lose all of your editing changes. A new Effects dialog adds a handful of new one-click effects such as Sepia and Vignette. The effects can be combined, and the amount they change the image can be increased by multiple clicks, but Command-Z removes the entire effect, not just the last click's worth. Multiple effects can be added, but they can only be removed in reverse order.

● SHARING Photocasting—the ability to share photo albums with other iPhoto 6 users or with Mac or PC users using RSS clients (such as Safari)—is iPhoto 6's other marquee feature. You must be a .Mac subscriber to photocast, but it's brain-dead easy and worked flawlessly in all of our testing. Other sharing features include new calendar- and card-printing options, an improved selection of books, and integration with iWeb (see review, p20)—which works as advertised, if slowly.

● THE BOTTOM LINE Very nice. Most things iPhoto does feel snappier. It also looks snappier, with an iTunes 6–style interface. It may have a couple of interface gotchas and some high-end craziness (see "A Quarter Million?!", p22), but all in all, iPhoto 6 is a big step up from version 5.—RM

MacAddict RATED
●●●●○
GREAT

▶▶ **PROS:** Fast and easy photo management, editing, and sharing.

▶▶ **CONS:** Some interface idiosyncrasies. Slow iWeb integration.