CHAPTER 9

Connecting to the Internet

One of the first things most people want to do today once they get their computer set up is to get it connected to the Internet. Depending on your connection, this could range from ridiculously easy to just fairly easy . . . at least as far as configuring Mac OS X goes. Essentially, there are two common ways to connect to the Internet today, and we’ll cover each of them in this chapter:

- Connecting via dial-up
- Connecting via a broadband, high-speed Internet connection

We’ll also cover how to set up networking profiles for different locations.

Connecting to the Internet Using Dial-Up Networking

Dial-up networking, once the king of Internet connections, seems to be fading away as broadband networks reach out across the world. Still, for some people in some situations, it’s the best or only option available.

■Note It should be obvious that to use dial-up networking, you’ll need a modem. Many slightly older Macs have internal modems, but the currently shipping Macs don’t. Apple, however, offers an external USB modem as an option with all Macs that you just need to plug into a USB port. One other option for dial-up networking is that some mobile phone services offer network services that can be accessed via a Bluetooth connection. If you have a phone (and mobile service) that supports this, you may utilize this connection just about anywhere you get mobile service.
Setting Up Your Dial-Up Connection

Setting up your dial-up connection is usually done in three simple steps:

1. Make sure your hardware is connected and set up. An internal modem should be ready to go as soon as you connect an active phone line to it. An external Apple modem should be ready as soon as you plug it in. If you are using a Bluetooth phone for dial-up, you will need to make sure you have set up your phone as a Bluetooth device.

If you are using one of Apple’s external USB modems, when you plug it in once your computer is already on, a dialog box will pop up (Figure 9-1). This lets you know that the computer has recognized the new modem and prompts you to set up dial-up networking.

**Note** When we talk about modems for dial-up, we are talking about a traditional plain old telephone service (POTS) modem. Cable modems do not require this setup, because most cable modems are simply routers. We will cover cable modems later in this chapter.

**Note** Not all phone lines are POTS lines. Many companies these days have installed Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone systems. Although these systems look like pretty normal telephones and telephone plugs (RJ11), they send a digital signal rather than an analog one. Additionally, some telephone companies have begun to install fiber-optic telephone lines, replacing the copper POTS lines. In either of these cases, a traditional modem will not work and could possibly be damaged if connected.

![A new network interface has been detected.](image)

Figure 9-1. A dialog box pops up letting you know that the system has detected a new network device (in this case, the external modem).

2. Collect the information you need to connect to your dial-up account. Usually you need three items:
   - The phone number for your access provider
   - Your account username
   - Your account password