Mac OS X Server 10.6 introduces the ability for users to store their address books on a central server using the Address Book service. Additionally, the Address Book service enables you to integrate a bridge to the LDAP contacts available in Mac OS X Server 10.6, meaning that you can perform a lookup of all the accounts on your server as though they were addresses, and with a little third-party software you can even leverage the Address Book service as a shared address book (which you could also do with the use of a shared account).

The shared Address Book services cobbled together in previous versions of Mac OS X Server were simple LDAP lookups; however, in Mac OS X Server 10.6, Apple has integrated CardDAV, similar to the CalDAV extension leveraged by the iCal services explored further in Chapter 10. One of the biggest benefits of CardDAV is that the contacts are synchronized to the local computer when offline, meaning that contacts are available to users even when they are not on the network (or any network for that matter). Mac OS X Server 10.6 also maintains the LDAP functionality, although in 10.5 you had a tool called Directory that could be used to augment the contacts that is no longer available. Not having Directory means that you will need to look to third-party products if you want to use Mac OS X Server’s Address Book services as a shared contact repository.

In this chapter, we will cover the setup and configuration of Mac OS X Server 10.6’s new Address Book service. We will also show how to configure the Address Book client application to communicate with its server counterpart and how to help users collaborate by sharing address information with other users. We’ll cover some of the basics of administering the server and the ever-important task of backing up the data reliably. We’ll touch on some command-line pointers, as well as cover a few alternatives to Apple’s Address Book service that may be worth considering.
Address Book Services

The Address Book service is new in Mac OS X Server 10.6 and is based on the emerging CardDAV standard, a specification that defines the exchange of vCard information via the WebDAV protocol. Based on the same back end, the Address Book service setup and configuration will be much the same as with iCal: you can use Server Preferences to get the job done easily, you can use Server Admin if you require more options, or you can use the command line for optimal granularity. The Address Book service maintains its own data store but also allows you to search Open Directory for user or contact information.

The data store for the Address Book service stores records in the vCard format (.vcf). CardDAV serves and synchronizes these vCards. When you drag a contact out of the Address Book program, the resultant file is a vCard. The .vcf files that correspond to each contact in a user’s address book are served over extensions to WebDAV that make up CardDAV and are therefore stored nested inside the `/Library/AddressBookServer/Documents/addressbooks/__uuids__` directory. Each user and group has a folder there, and nested further in that directory are the .vcf files, each named with a prefix of the unique identifier of the contact followed by `–ABSPlugin.vcf`. The root of the shared directory can be moved, but the structure following that root will need to remain unaltered.

Mac OS X Server 10.6 represents a fundamental change (from LDAP to CardDAV) in how address books are served in Mac OS X Server. Because it’s a first release version of software, it lacks the maturity that you are likely to see from iCal. However, Snow Leopard Server shows the fundamental aspects that iCal showed in previous versions and at a minimum allows users to store their contacts on a server, cache them offline, and therefore be able to access them from multiple computers. Furthermore, the LDAP integration allows you to bridge the global address list that is so commonly required in environments while also offering a foundation for building a more feature-rich contact aspect of the Mac OS X Server groupware offering in future releases of the product.

Setting Up Address Book Server

To configure the Address Book service, you can use the Server Preferences application or the Server Admin application.

Configuring with Server Preferences

To set up the Address Book service on Mac OS X Server with the Server Preferences application, follow these steps:

1. Open the Server Preferences application from `/Applications/Server`. Here, you will see the Address Book service, with a gray indicator light meaning that it is not yet running, as you will notice in Figure 9-1.