One of the key ways to market your game these days is to integrate your application with one or more social media services. The idea is that users will promote your game as they play and share their experience with their friends. To get users to play your game more often, it is also very common to provide a mechanism for users to compare their scores with other players. Providing a way for users to track their scores against others and to post their progress is so common in game development that Apple provides libraries to support these requirements.

The primary service provided by Apple is called Game Center, which is implemented in the library called GameKit. Game Center is a service that allows users to compare their scores with other players on what is called a leaderboard. Game Center also allows users to reach what are called achievements. Achievements are defined by each game and are intended as incentives to keep people playing. For example, if you have an achievement that is hard to achieve, people will want to earn it to set them apart from their friends playing the same game. Game Center also provides a mechanism for multiplayer games, but we will focus more on the social aspects of its services in this chapter.

To broadcast a player’s progress in a game, it is common to use an existing social media site such as Twitter or Facebook, so the user’s friends will be notified. A new feature in iOS 5 is the inclusion of a built-in Twitter account. In this chapter, we will look at how to use the classes that expose a Twitter account to send a tweet on behalf of the user. Although Facebook is not built into iOS 5, there is an excellent library provided by Facebook to facilitate an experience almost as integrated as that of Twitter. We will look at how to use Facebook on iOS to facilitate user authenticating as well as posting on his wall.

The examples in this chapter are taken from the project Belt Commander. We will continue using what you learn over the following pages as examples for the final two chapters, as we explore a complete game.
Game Center

Game Center, as the user sees it, is an application on an iOS device where information about a user’s games is aggregated. This information includes a place to log in and manage your account, a list of friends, and a list of games. For each listed game, there are a number of leaderboards for displaying scores, as well as a list of the achievements available in the game. Figure 9–1 shows a typical Game Center screen.

![Figure 9–1. Game Center showing games](image)

In Figure 9–1, we see nine installed games that support Game Center. Select a game to view its leaderboards and any achievements the user has earned.

From a developer’s perspective, Game Center is a set of classes used to interact with Game Center to define the leaderboards and achievements. Collectively, these classes are called GameKit, which is available as part of your standard iOS SDK installation. Once GameKit is integrated with your game, will be able to sign the user in and perform GameKit operations on her behalf. Figure 9–2 shows the user being signed into GameKit.