Exploring System Preferences

Many of the configuration and administration options for OS X are located in System Preferences (Figure 18–1). System Preferences is an application that presents a collection of individual items called preference panes. Each preference pane presents configurable options for one specific facet of the OS.

Figure 18–1. Lion’s default system preferences

This chapter will give an overview of each of these preferences and explain what they all do. We will discuss them according to how they are categorized in System Preferences:
Personal preferences
- Hardware preferences
- Internet & Wireless preferences
- System preferences

**NOTE:** Many third-party applications, utilities, and hardware devices install their own PrefPane, which will be added to your System Preferences, so you may find additional preference panes toward the bottom of your System Preferences. In general, we will only be covering Apple’s default system preferences.

**Personal Preferences**

The first row of preferences in System Preferences contains the Personal preferences (Figure 18–2). These preferences together largely affect your personal environment and can be set differently for each user on your system.

![Figure 18–2. The Personal preferences in System Preferences](image)

**General**

The General preference pane (Figure 18–3) contains a number of options that control how certain aspects of your environment will not only look but also behave.