

Get the Best of Apple Mountain Lion Now— On Macs and PCs



There's more than one way to get your computer in "the cloud."

CREDIT: Sean Captain

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Like Microsoft with Windows 8, Apple recently announced its next operating system, called Mountain Lion. Though not a major upgrade, it includes a number of handy new features. The software comes out later this summer, but you can get similar — often better — tools on your Mac (or PC) now by installing a few excellent apps. Each has a paid offering with extra features, but they also have free versions that may provide all you need.

Mac Feature: Reminders

Alternative: Remember the Milk

Reminders is a “To Do” feature, already on the iPad and iPhone, that is coming to [Mountain Lion](#). You can organize tasks into separate lists, view them by List or by Date and mark them as completed.

[Remember the Milk](#) (RTM) is another easy-to-use task manager, accessed through its website, Web browser plugins, a Gmail widget, email, Twitter and mobile apps for phones and tablets. It has an impressive selection of advanced features not found in Apple’s Reminders app. Smart Add, for example, saves you from filling in multiple fields: You just type one line such as “Pick up dry cleaning on Tuesday at 6 p.m.” Smart Lists can organize tasks based on criteria, such as all items that you can complete on your computer.

Mac Feature: Notes

Alternative: Evernote

Notes is another app that originated on the iPhone and iPad and is now finding its way to the Mac. It provides a virtual legal pad you can jot items on. A list of all the notes you’ve created allows you to select which you’d like to view or edit.

[Evernote](#) is a note-taker that has evolved to do much more. It’s accessible through a website and apps for Mac or Windows computers, Android phones and tablets, and the iPhone and iPad. In addition to simple notes, Evernote entries can also contain Web pages, pictures, audio, and, with a paid subscription, files of any type, such as Microsoft Word or a video from your smartphone. Everything you enter syncs to Evernote’s website so it is available on your other devices. Notes can be organized into Notebooks, which you can share with friends and family, or even make public.

Mac Feature: iCloud

Alternative: Dropbox

iCloud makes it easy to sync information between your Apple devices. With the new Mountain Lion update, it now also behaves like an online or “cloud” hard drive, where you can store files and then retrieve them from other devices.

[Dropbox](#) is a popular service that uses an app to synchronize files between a folder on your computer and one in the cloud, which can then be synchronized to tablets, phones or other computers. Dropbox is also a backup system that allows you to restore previous versions of files, as well as a service to share files publicly or with friends and family. The free version provides 2 gigabytes of storage. You can gain more with a subscription or by inviting your friends to join.

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