

How to take along documents that you may need in an emergency as well as other useful information, and how to keep this information accessible even if your laptop or iPhone/iPod is lost or stolen.

(At the end of this document I will also discuss my observations on trying to use an iPod Touch in place of a laptop and some iPhone/iPod Touch apps that I found useful on a recent trip.)

What to take:

Emergency information

- Passport copies
- Driver's License copies
- Health Insurance card copies
- Health Conditions and Current Medications
- Emergency Contacts
- Credit/Debit/ATM Card Loss Notification: Phone Numbers & Card Numbers *(To prevent someone from using this information to USE your card, do NOT include the expiration date, PIN or CVC number. You do not need these to report a card lost or stolen)*

Trip-Specific Information

- Hotel Reservations
- Airline Flight Confirmation
- Rental car
- Cruise/Tour Confirmation
- Trip Cancellation Insurance Docs
- Itineraries
- Destination Info (Guides, Attractions)

Other Useful Information

- User Manuals (Cameras and other gadgets)
- Contacts
- Calendar (iCal, Google, etc.)
- Website logins and passwords

How to Take It:

.pdf or encrypted .pdf

I recommend .pdf format files. They are an almost universal format that can be read on almost any computer, Mac or Windows. *Some of the information is confidential, and should be kept in encrypted, password-protected .pdf format.*

Where to Put It:

On your laptop

If you are really concerned about the security of the information, you can put it into an encrypted, password-protected disk image. Download *Disk Image Data Security.pdf* from the Handouts section of the AshMUG website. <http://www.ashmug.com/Page.asp?NavID=9>

On your iPhone/iPod

There are several apps in the App Store that allow you to download your pdf files to your iPhone/iPod Touch and read them. Not all of them can handle password-protected pdfs, though. The one I like is *Air Sharing Pro*. It can store and read most other document types as well as pdf, and can also connect to iDisk if you have a MobileMe account, or to other web-based storage.

On web-based storage

The advantage of web-based storage of the data is that it is available on just about any computer anywhere in the world that can connect to the internet. This allows you access to the data even if your laptop or iPhone/iPod is lost or stolen. Reading pdfs or encrypted pdfs created on a Mac is not a problem on Windows computers. *Of course you have to make sure to use a password you can remember.*

I use MobileMe's iDisk, primarily because MobileMe is integrated with the Mac and provides access to my Contacts and Calendars from either my MacBook or iPod Touch as well. There are other web-based storage sites out there, many of them free. Googling "online storage Mac" will bring up a lot of them.

Gathering the Information

Scan - Drivers license, passport, insurance cards, etc. Scan to a jpeg file to keep the file size low.

Export - Emergency contacts from Address Book. (If you use 1Password to store website logins, you can export those too.)

Create - Type lists of things like current health conditions and prescriptions, credit card data, website logins etc. into a word processor document or spreadsheet

Copy & Paste - Tour itineraries, destination information, etc., can be selected and copied from a web page, then pasted into a TextEdit document. (TextEdit is not only quick, but is particularly good at handling text and images from web pages.)

Download - User Manuals. Most user manuals can be downloaded from the web already in .pdf format.

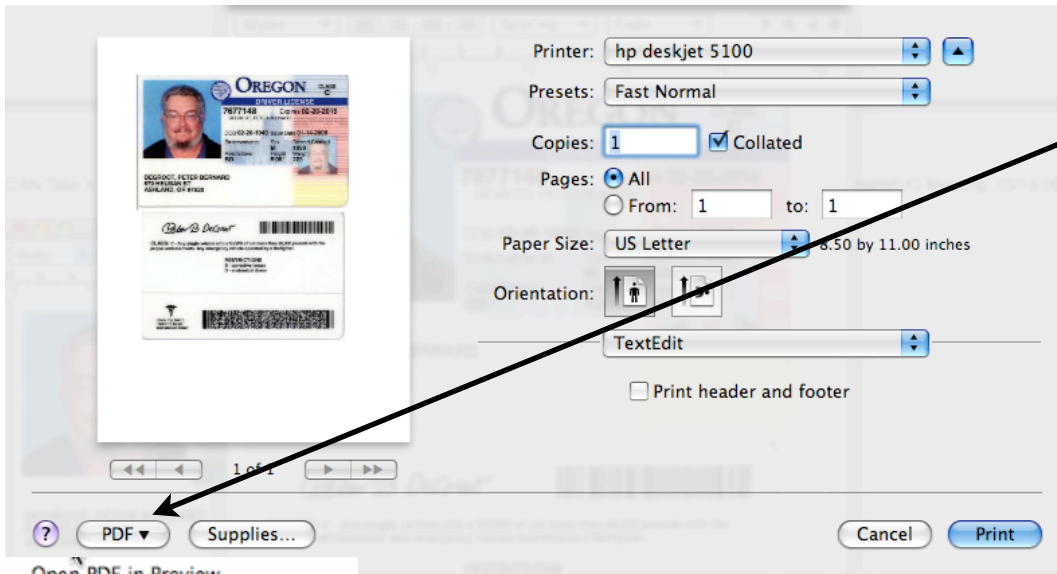
.pdf-Ready - Anything already in a document that can be printed can be taken directly to a .pdf, encrypted or not, from the Print menu in virtually any application (see p. 4). This is especially useful for Mail messages confirming reservations and the like.

Creating the .pdf

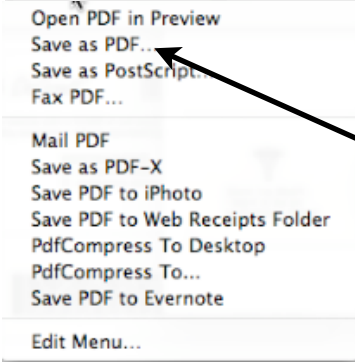
I'm going to illustrate with the example of a Driver License.

I've scanned both sides of my Driver License and have saved the two images as jpegs. Next, I open a new TextEdit document and drag the two images to it.

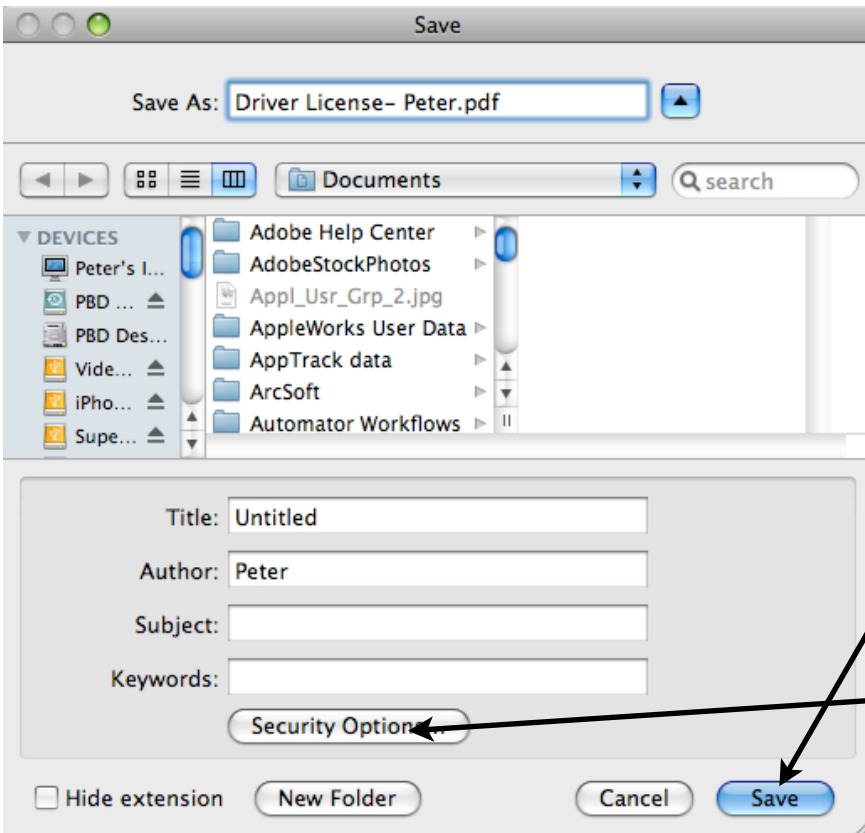




Now go to File/Print
And open up the PDF
pull-down menu.

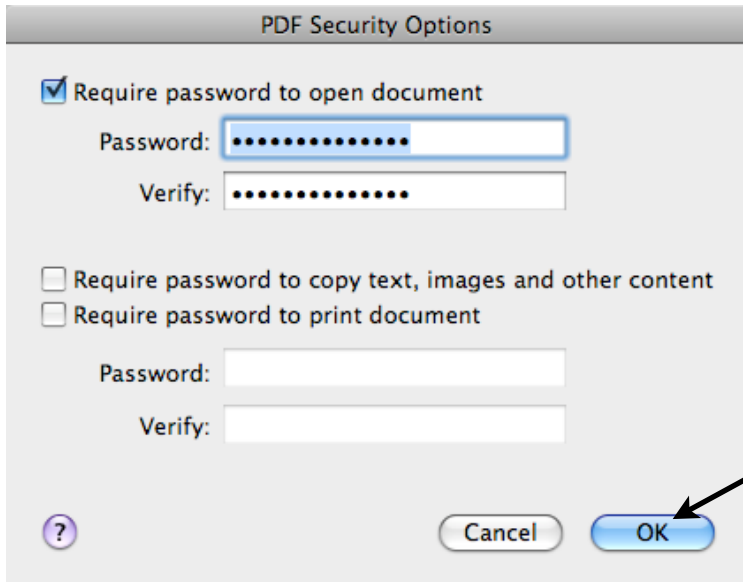


Choose Save as PDF, and the next screen appears.



Click on Save if you just want to save it
as a regular pdf.

If you need an encrypted, password-
protected pdf, click on Security Options...



...and enter your password in the pop-up screen.

Click OK, then click Save

For documents other than images, open the document with the appropriate application (Pages, Mail, TextEdit, Numbers, etc.) then go to the PDF tab in the Print menu. If you only have a single image, you can save it directly to a pdf by opening it in Preview, then selecting Print and the PDF tab.

Using an iPod Touch in lieu of a laptop

I gave this concept a real workout on a recent month-long trip to Europe. Here are some observations and some apps that made things easier.

What worked well

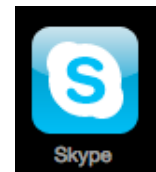
- Portability - great not having a laptop to carry around
- General web surfing
- Paying bills and managing money

What made this work really well was Bank of America's app. I could pay bills and move money from savings to checking on a site specifically designed for mobile devices. It would have been a lot harder navigating their regular website via Safari on the iPod Touch.



- Skype internet phone service.

Worked well as long as you had a good, reasonably fast WiFi connection. It cost only pennies per minute vs about \$2 per minute on my cell phone.



Again, there is a iPhone/iPod Touch app for this, which links to your Contacts (just like the desktop version) making it really convenient to call.

- Contacts and iCal on the iPod Touch
- The alarm function of the built-in Clock app
- The pdfs of all the information I discussed above
- I've already mentioned the Air Sharing Pro app.
- Reading Email (but not sending it - see next section)



What didn't work so well

-WiFi connectivity

The range at which the iPod Touch will join a network and maintain a stable connection is definitely less than a laptop. Several people using laptops (including one MacBook Air) could connect successfully in situations where I could not.

-Making reservations online

Navigating websites like train and airline reservation pages where you had to fill in a lot of information in various places was very difficult.

-Sending Email

Typing even a short Email on the little screen was REALLY REALLY tedious. I did find a nice solution for keeping in touch with the folks back home. It is the app Say It & Mail It, which allows you to send voice messages via email. Not only was it a lot easier than typing. but the recipients said they enjoyed hearing our voices instead of just getting a typed message. As a bonus, the app allows you to include a Google Map showing your location and you can also include a photo (especially nice if you have an iPhone with a camera). Since the iPod Touch doesn't have a built-in microphone, I used Apple's earbuds/microphone combo which worked very well.



What will I do next time? Probably take both a laptop and the iPod Touch to take advantage of the strengths of each.

Other iPhone/iPod apps that were useful when traveling

-Ultralingua German-English dictionary.

I tried a couple of others, but I liked this one because it gave more examples of usage in context and of colloquial expressions. There are several other languages available too.



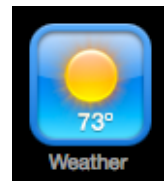
-Convert

This app can convert currencies, temperature, volume, weight, and much more. A very user-friendly interface. Currency exchange rates are automatically updated whenever you have a WiFi connection.



-Weather (comes with the iPod or iPhone)

A lot easier to get the forecast for the places you will be than slogging around the Weather Channel's web page with Safari. You can set up a whole list of the cities on your itinerary.



-1Password

I use 1Password on my desktop and laptop Macs to store and retrieve all my website logins. You can sync all these with the 1Password app for the iPhone/Ipod Touch. It is a little more difficult to use on the mobile devices, but a whole lot easier than trying to remember the passwords or look them up in a saved document every time you need them.



You can find all of these and more by searching the App Store in iTunes.