

Apple launches app store for Mac computer software

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Apple Inc. is expanding the "app store" idea that caught fire on the iPhone and iPad to its line of Mac computers.

Mac users who have the latest version of Apple's computer [operating system](#), called [Snow Leopard](#), will be prompted to update their software starting Thursday. When the upgrade is complete, an icon for the new Mac app store will appear in the dock.

After launching the store software, people can browse through more than 1,000 programs for Macs. Some are free, and some will cost money; people can log in and buy software using their existing iTunes account information. As with the existing app stores for Apple's other gadgets, people can see lists of the most popular programs and rate software they purchase.

Also similar to the existing system, software developers will name their own prices. Apple will vet all of the applications before they're accepted for sale in the store.

The [iPad](#) and [iPhone](#) have been successful in part because of the tens of thousands of games and other programs available as free or paid downloads in Apple's app stores. Apple may be looking to the Mac app store to boost interest in its computers, which make up a tiny but growing percentage of the [personal computer](#) market.

The arrival of the app store for mobile gadgets "dramatically changed

how software is discovered and purchased," said Phil Schiller, Apple's top product marketing executive, in an interview. "It will have a big impact in the desktop world as well."

Among the programs for sale on Thursday are Apple's own iLife programs for organizing photos, editing video and other tasks, which will be sold separately for \$14.99 each, and iWork programs for creating documents, spreadsheets and presentations, for \$19.99 each.

The Mac app store is available in 90 countries starting Thursday. People who use older versions of the [Mac operating system](#) will not be able to access the app store.

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