

AirDrop 101: Easily Send Content Between Nearby iPhones, iPads, and Macs

AirDrop allows you to quickly and easily send links, photos, files, and more content between nearby iPhones, iPads, and Macs.

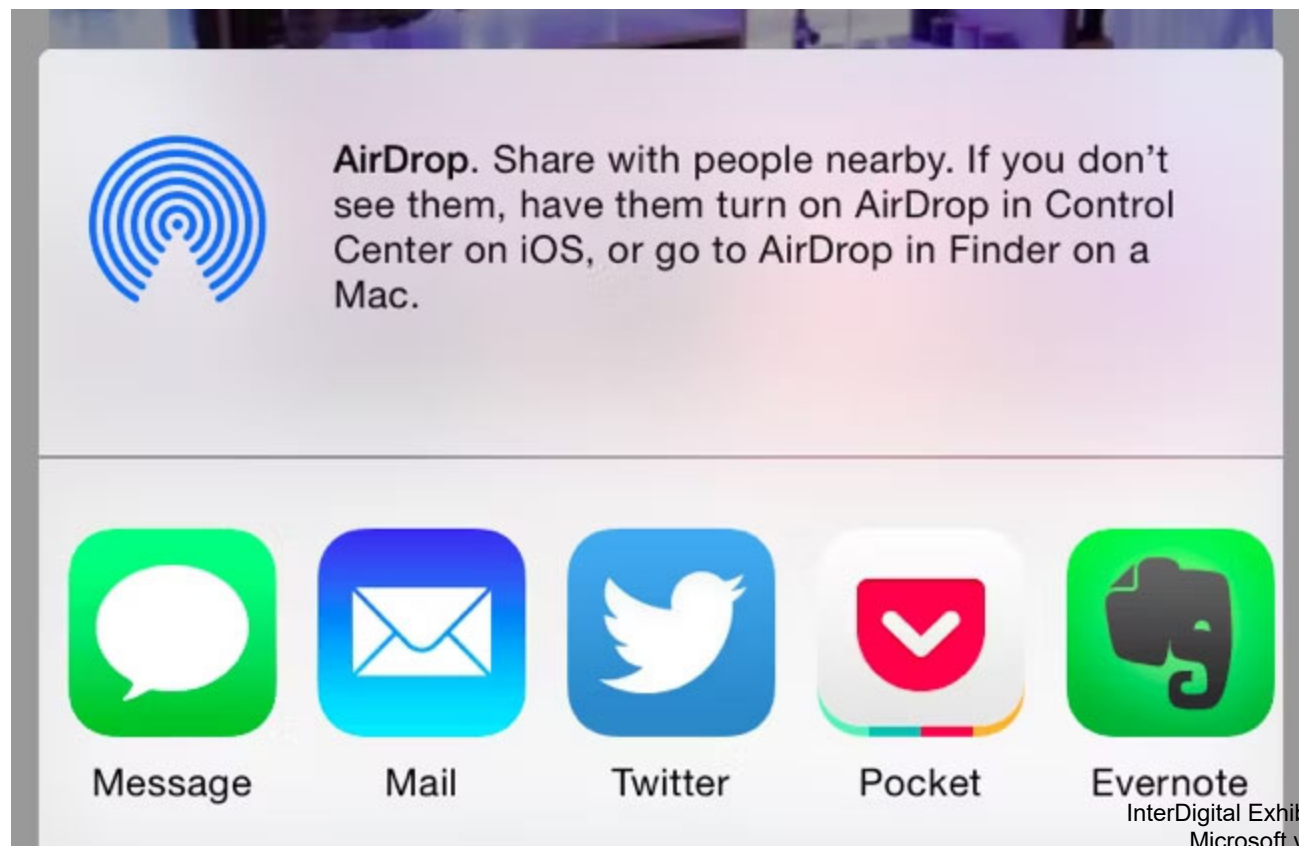
AirDrop allows you to quickly and easily send links, photos, files, and more content between nearby iPhones, iPads, and Macs. Just open up the Share panel and tap a nearby device.

This works a bit like [Android Beam on Android phones and tablets](#). However, it all works wirelessly over Bluetooth with no [NFC](#) contact required. It's only compatible with Apple's own devices.

Why AirDrop is So Useful

If you have Apple devices, AirDrop is a simple way to send content back and forth with another person -- or between your devices. It just takes a few taps, and everything happens entirely wirelessly. If someone is nearby -- and they have to be nearby, within Bluetooth range -- you won't need to rely on SMS, iMessage, email, or other communication apps to send stuff back and forth.

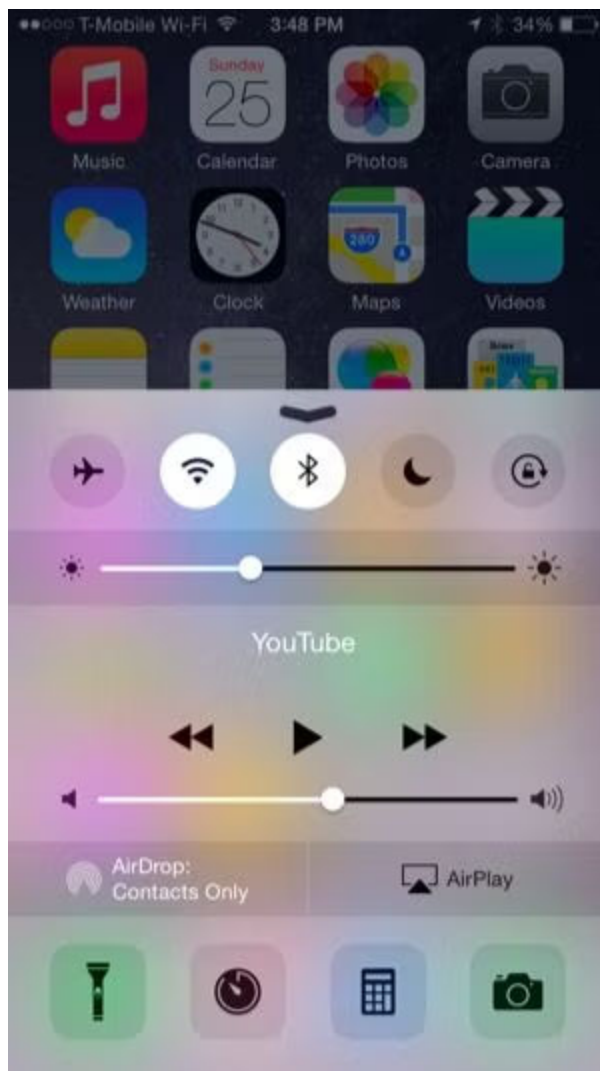
Unlike similar Android and Windows Phone solutions that require back-to-back NFC contact of your phones, AirDrop works entirely wirelessly over Bluetooth. It's available on iPhones and iPads since iOS 7, and Macs since OS X 10.10 Yosemite. You can use it to send content between your own devices, or share it with someone else's devices if they're nearby. Unfortunately, AirDrop does require Apple devices, so it isn't compatible with Android or Windows devices.



AirDrop Depends on Your Contacts for Privacy

By default, AirDrop only makes you discoverable to people who are in your contacts list. If you want to AirDrop with people, they'll need to add you to their contacts, and you'll need to add them as a contact. This shouldn't require much effort -- if you're doing this with someone you know, you're probably already in each other's contacts. If you want to AirDrop with people without adding each other to your contacts, you can always temporarily switch AirDrop to work with everyone, ignoring contacts.

This feature ensures you won't just appear in other people's AirDrop panels as you walk around. People won't be able to see your name if you're nearby, and they won't be able to send anything to you. Only those in your contacts will have permission to see you.

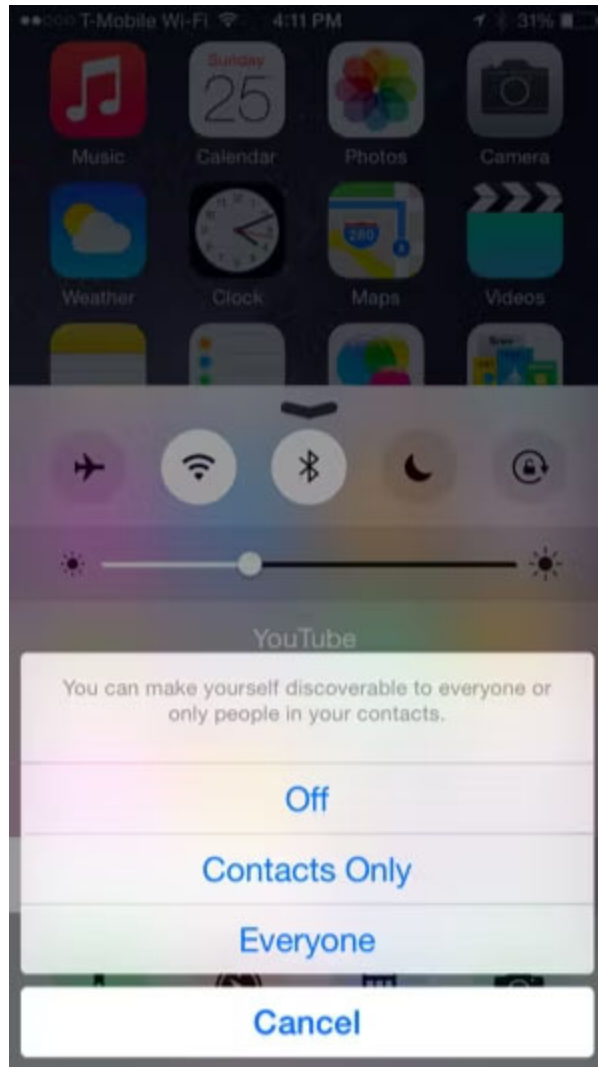


Using AirDrop on an iPhone or iPad

Related: [8 Navigation Tricks Every iPad User Needs to Know](#)

Pull up the "Control Center" panel on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch by placing your finger below the screen and moving it upward. You can see whether AirDrop is enabled by looking at the "AirDrop" status here. As AirDrop relies on Bluetooth, it'll be off if Bluetooth is disabled.

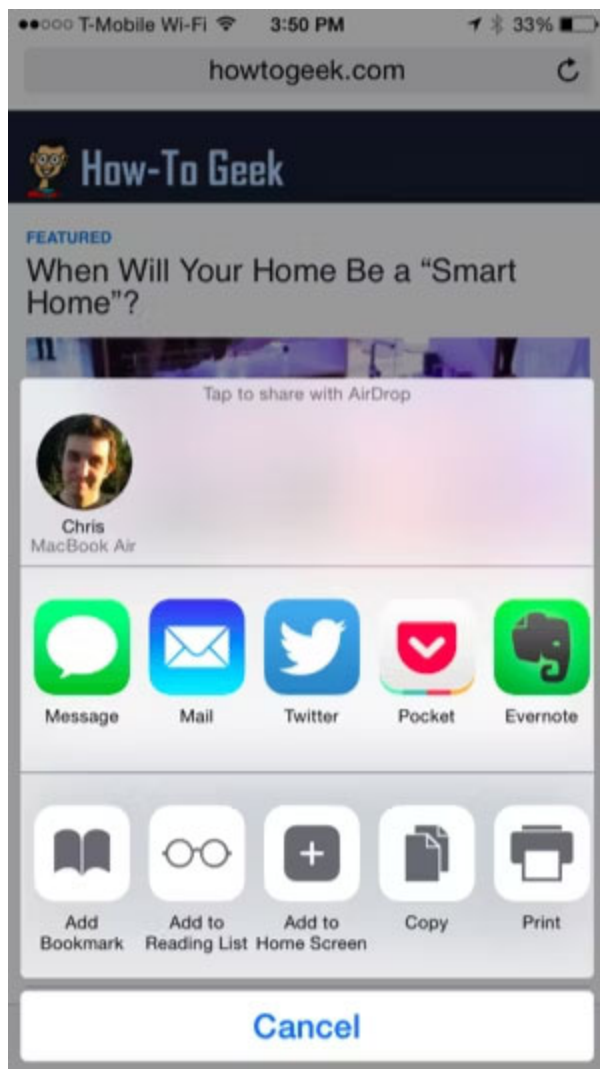
Tap the AirDrop option to control how AirDrop works. You can disable it, only enable AirDrop for people in your contacts (this is the default), or allow AirDrop for everyone.



Related: [How to Use App Extensions on an iPhone or iPad With iOS 8](#)

To actually use AirDrop, tap the Share button in any application on iOS. You'll see the list of nearby people and devices you can AirDrop to at the top of [the Share panel](#). Tap a name and device to share the current content with them, sending it wirelessly via Bluetooth

It may take a moment for your phone or tablet to discover nearby devices, so hold on. You can also try waking up a device if it's not found -- for example, you may need to wake up an iPhone or iPad if you want to AirDrop to it and it doesn't appear immediately.

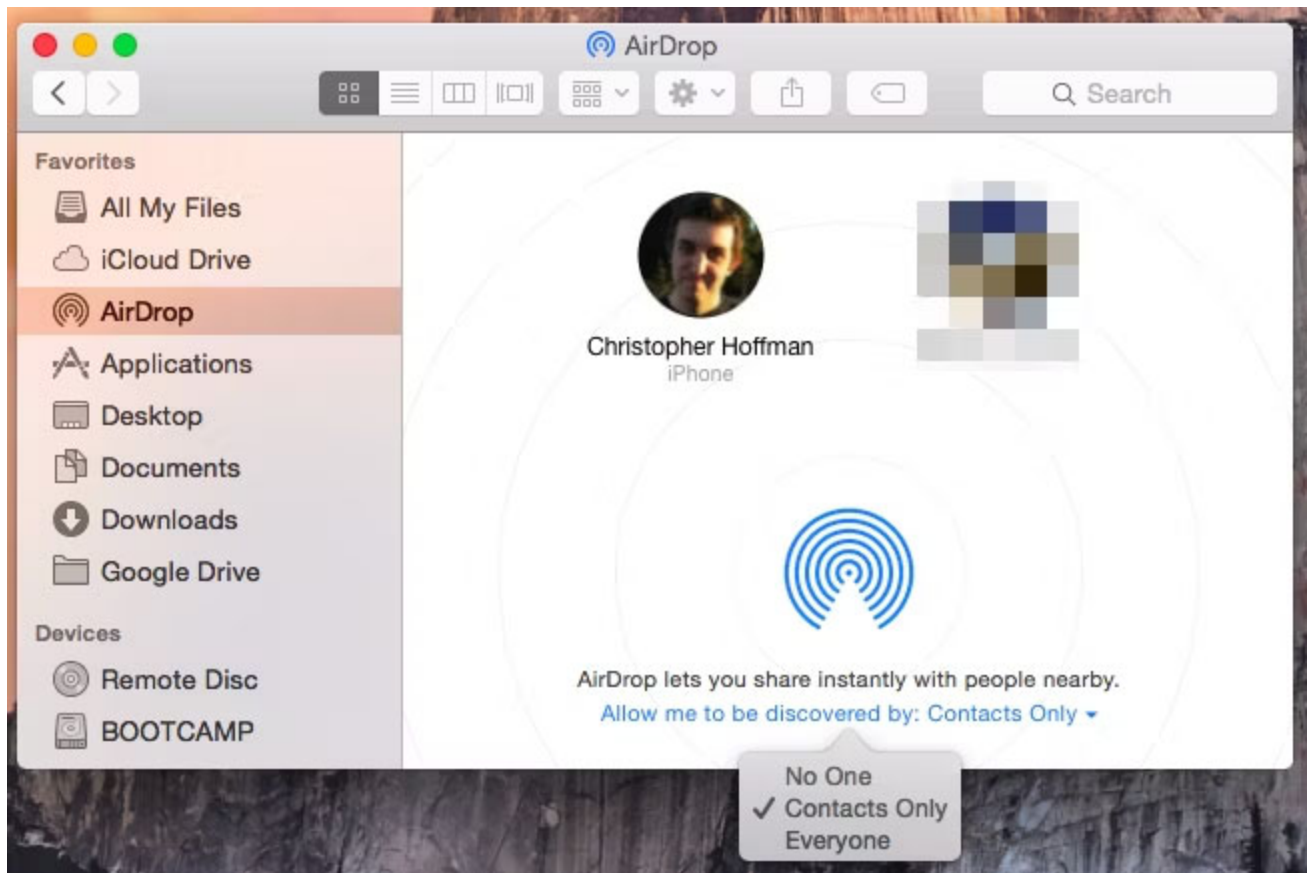


The person you're AirDropping to will see a notification on their device, informing them that you want to send them some sort of content -- a web address, photo, or something else.

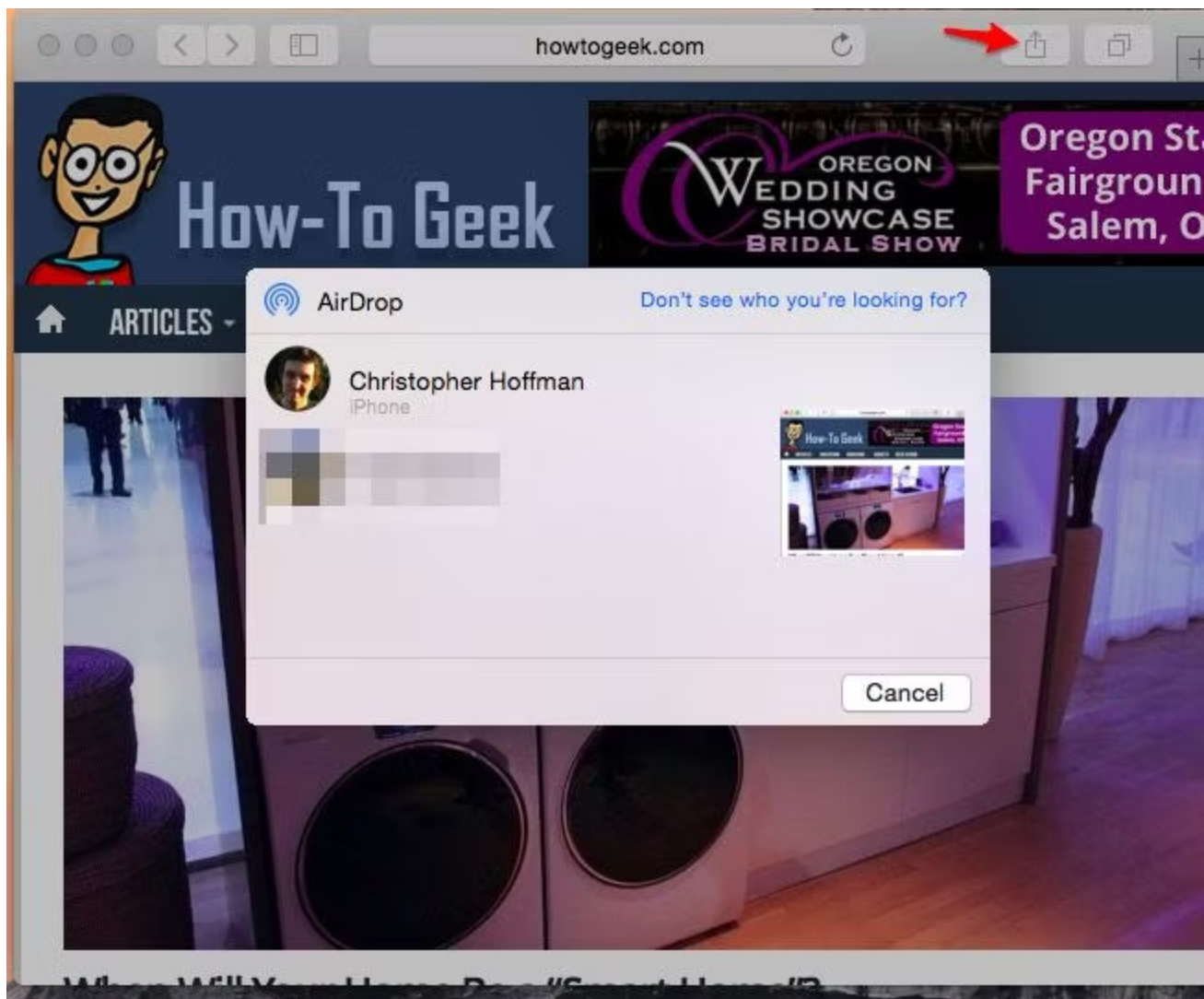
Using AirDrop on a Mac

On a Mac, you'll find the list of available devices you can AirDrop to under Finder. Drag-and-drop files into another device to share them. For example, you could drag-and-drop a file onto a person's name and it'd send it to their Mac. Or you could send a photo from your Mac to your iPhone.

As you can on iOS, you can choose who can see you in their AirDrop list with the options at the bottom of the window. Just click the "Allow me to be discovered by:" menu.



AirDrop is also integrated into Mac OS X 10.10 Yosemite's new sharing features. For example, you can click the Share button in the Safari web browser and choose AirDrop to send a link to the current web page via AirDrop, just as you can on a mobile device.



Crucially, AirDrop is compatible between both iOS devices and Macs, making it a convenient way to wirelessly send content between nearby devices of any tpe -- as long as they're made by Apple. AirDrop works very well if you use Apple devices, and it's the kind of solution that should really be adopted by Android and Windows devices as well. AirDrop helps solve the problem of sharing files, photos, and other bits of data between nearby devices.