

This is hands-down the easiest way to remotely fix a Mac during quarantine

Helping friends and family troubleshoot computer issues over the phone is sure to be a slow, frustrating process. This hidden iMessage feature will prevent headaches and save time.

For those of us who use Apple products daily, there's no question that iMessage on the iPhone, iPad and Mac is for unmatched chatting, sharing photos or even playing games. But a little-known gem can turn iMessages into a powerful tool to help a friend or loved one remotely troubleshoot an issue on their Mac.

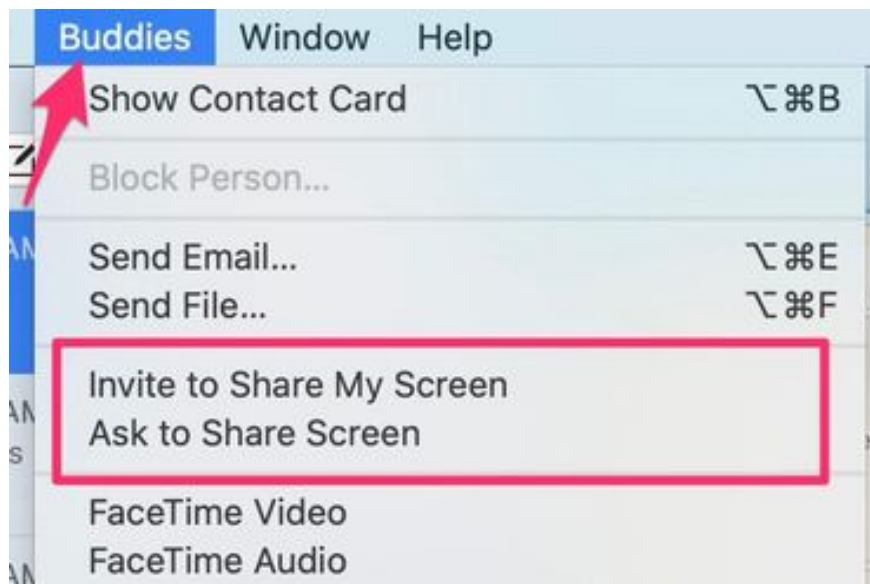


With their permission, you can pilot a relative's Mac to walk them through how to set up their work email, help install software so they can work from home or troubleshoot an issue. It's an enormous help right now as we're all practicing social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic, and actually visiting a loved one to fix their Mac just isn't possible.

The best part? You don't have to walk them through installing and setting up a specific screen-sharing or a remote access app -- Messages, the app used to access iMessage on a Mac, is built directly into MacOS.

If you're already signed into the Messages app, you're ready to use screen share. If you haven't set up Messages on your Mac, it takes just a couple of seconds.

First, launch the Messages app and sign in with your Apple ID, linking your iMessage account to the app. With that done, here's how you use screen share in Messages.

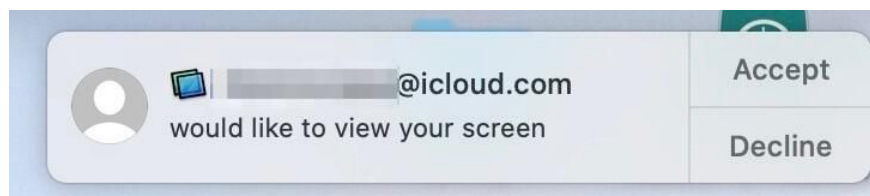


Send a screen share request

On your Mac, open the Messages app and select the conversation thread for the contact you want to use screen share with. For example, if I wanted to screen share with my wife, I would open Messages and select that thread.

With the conversation selected, click on **Buddies** in the menu bar at the top of your screen. If you want them to connect to your computer, select **Invite to share my screen**. Click on **Ask to share screen** if you want to view their screen.

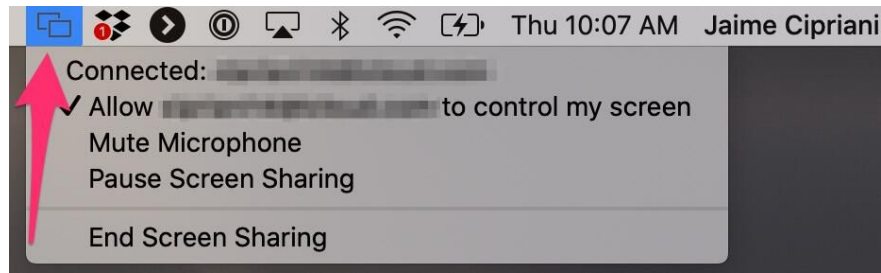
Alternatively, you can click on the **Details** label next to the contact's profile photo, then click on the **Screen Share button** and choose between the two screen share options.



An invitation will pop up on the screen of their Mac, which they will need to accept or decline. After accepting the share request, the person who will be sharing their screen will choose between allowing observation of their screen only, or full remote control.

If you're taking control of a Mac, the Screen Share app will open on your Mac and you'll be able to use their computer as if it were your own. If someone else is taking control of your Mac, the screen share icon will display in the menu bar and your mouse cursor will appear to begin moving on its own. But don't worry, it's not a ghost: The person who connected to your Mac is doing that.

An audio call will automatically start whenever screen share is on, allowing you to talk as if you're on the phone. This also gives you a chance to ask questions or explain what you're doing.



Either party can stop the screen share session by clicking on the Screen Share icon in the menu bar and selecting **End Screen Sharing** or by closing the screen share window.

Screen share in the Messages app is a feature I've known about for years, but just haven't put to use. That's going to change in the coming days and weeks, I'm sure of it. In fact, I plan on using it to help my mom set up her new Wi-Fi system in the coming days.

After fixing your friend's Mac, make sure to point them to our guide for placing Group FaceTime calls so the entire family can stay in touch. It's probably not a bad idea to walk them through the five best MacOS Catalina features and how to use them, or help them get the most out of the Photos app.

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