# How do I use the airport command on Mac OS X?

## Q: How do I use the airport command on Mac OS X?

- What is the `airport` command on Mac OS X?
- Can I control my Mac's wireless card from the command line?
- Can I get information about my Mac's wireless connection from the command line?

## Context

- Mac OS X 10.5 and later (and possibly other versions)
- Mac Airport wireless card or built in Wi-Fi
- Command line via Terminal application
- This command requires familiarity with the Mac OS X command line

## Answer

Mac OS X (tried on 105 but probably on earlier versions as well) contains a well-hidden command line command for querying and controlling a Mac's Airport card and connection to wireless networks. The command is not well-documented but contains some built-in help. It can be very useful in quickly showing you which specific access point you are connected to, channel numbers, signal strength, and so on.

### Location

On 10.5 or later, the command can be found at:

```
/System/Library/PrivateFrameworks/Apple80211.framework/Versions/Current/Resources/airport
```

### Basic usage

To get information about your wireless connection, run the command with the option `--getinfo` or `-I`:

```
othomas$ /System/Library/PrivateFrameworks/Apple80211.framework/Versions/Current/Resources/airport
--getinfo
     agrCtlRSSI: -65
     agrExtRSSI: 0
    agrCtlNoise: -90
    agrExtNoise: 0
          state: running
        op mode: station
     lastTxRate: 108
        maxRate: 270
lastAssocStatus: 0
    802.11 auth: open
      link auth: unknown
          BSSID: 0:21:d8:49:db:fe
           SSID: MIT N
            MCS: 11
        channel: 161,-1
```

If you use the command frequently you may want to create a symbolic link to it in your home directory or a directory in your path so you don't have to type the full path name every time.

### Advanced usage

You can run the command with the `--help` or `-h` argument to get it to show you all available options and arguments. It allows you to associated

and disassociate with different wireless networks from the command line, along with a lot of other functionality.

While the risk is low, you do want to be careful if you are not sure what the different options are, as it could cause your Mac to lose its network connection or set up a peer-to-peer wireless network.