

The Magic of Apple Remote's IDs

These tiny Apple Remotes with only 6 buttons are carrying some "magic": **they have a hidden identifier, an ID.**

This feature is basis of the not-too-well-known function of "pairing remotes" with your Mac. Imagine, you have more than one Mac and want to control either one with a respective Apple Remote. To achieve this, Apple implemented "pairing" which is a little bit hidden in Apple's user guides (Open Mac Help and search for "pairing").

The technical background to accomplish this: every Apple Remote has an identifier within a range from 0 to 255. Right, if you have more than 256 Macs, you've got a problem ;-)

iRed Lite is able to look for the ID of the Apple Remote in use and so allows for some really outstanding functions:

- Use more than one Apple Remote, each for a specific application
- Jump to a specific iRed Lite layer with a press of a button
- Use a random programmable remote control to simulate up to 256 Apple Remotes

Please read on for the details on how to use this unique feature.

Technical Drawbacks

To be honest, I have to tell you about some technical drawbacks which result from the "hidden character" of this feature:

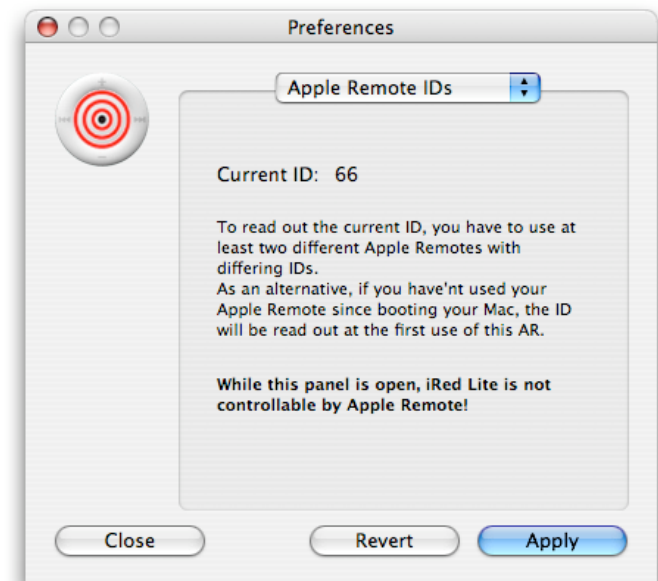
- Getting the ID of the AR is not too easy. In fact, **only changing the ID is notified** by the IR sensor in your Mac. At startup, iRL does not know the current ID, unless you have't used your AR since restarting your Mac.

- You have to **switch off remote pairing**, to give iRL the chance to look for different IDs. Go to System Preferences, tab "Security".

Which ID does my Apple Remote have?

To determine the ID of your AR

- Switch off remote pairing in System Preferences, tab "Security"
 - Restart your Mac
 - Don't use the Apple Remote for now!
 - Startup iRed Lite
 - Open its Preferences Panel
 - Pop up to "Apple Remote IDs"
 - Press your AR once
- ➔ The ID is displayed:



How to change the ID of Apple Remotes

Apple has implemented a clever way to change the ID of your Apple Remote. Imagine, you have got two AR's with the identical ID? In that case no remote pairing would be possible.

On the other hand, if you want to read out the AR's infrared codes to your programmable remote, you'll need different IDs.

To change the Apple Remote's ID:

- Take your Apple Remote
- Hold down MENU and PLAY simultaneously for about 5 seconds
- Use iRed Lite's preferences panel to verify the ID change
- ➔ The ID is increased by one. ¹

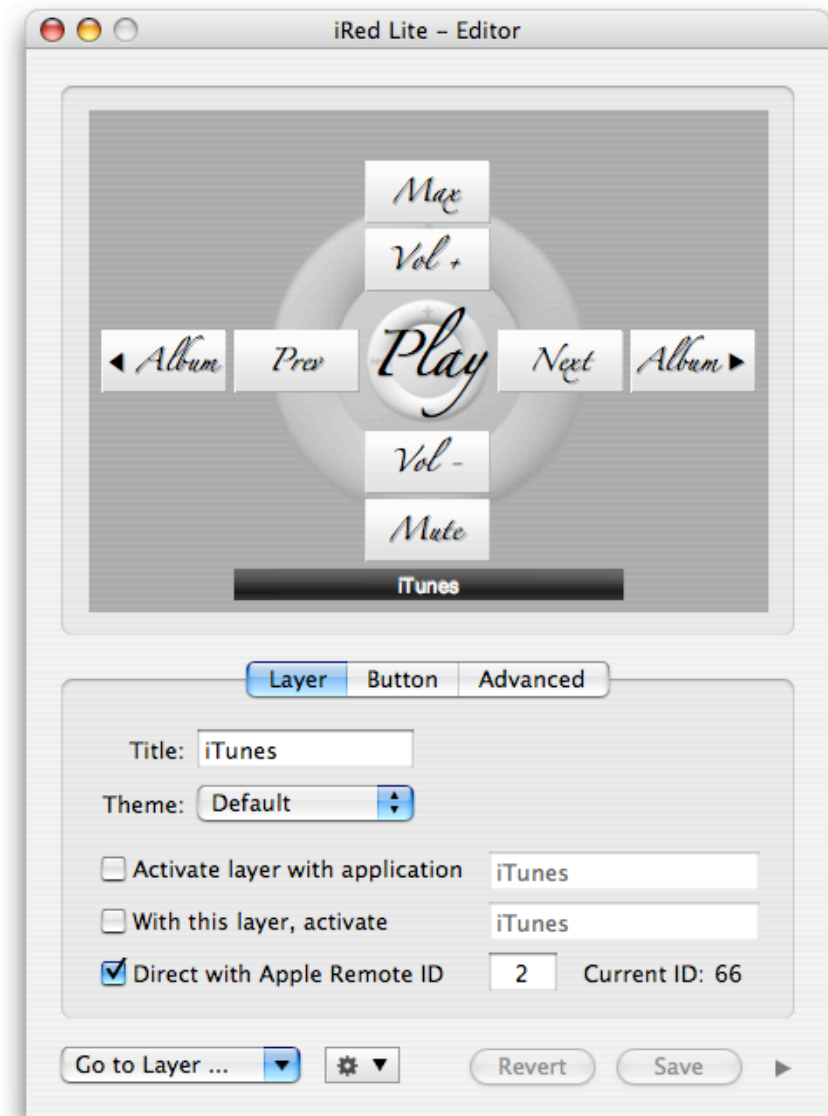
This measure will also try to pair your AR with your Mac. Because this only works within a small distance from your Mac, you probably want to do this ID switching not too near to your Mac. Else you'll need to switch off pairing from System Preferences again.

How to configure the ID in iRed Lite?

After you have determined your AR's ID, you may assign this ID to a specific layer of iRL.

On this screenshot you see the new feature at the bottom.

- Open iRed Lite
- Show the Editor window (from iRL's menu)
- Switch to the tab "Layer"
- Check on the option "Direct with Apple Remote ID"
- Enter the respective ID



¹ Please note that you may pair the Apple Remote **without** an ID change by holding MENU and NEXT for 5 seconds. See Apple Help.

How to use an AR-ID with iRed Lite?

Direct buttons:

Assumed you have an Apple Remote with ID 2, pressing "play" on this AR will directly use the play button of the respective layer, in this example iTunes/Play. There is no need to manually navigate to the target layer before.

Direct menu:

Pressing MENU on a AR will directly show the respective Onscreen display (OSD). Pressing MENU again, will hide the OSD as expected, pressing MENU of a different AR will directly switch to "its" layer.

Using arbitrary IDs:

You may use a spare Apple Remote to "normal" navigate through iRL's layers, i.e. if this AR's ID is not entered on any layer, using this AR will not switch OSDs nor perform buttons on non-active layers.

How to fill up your Programmable Remote

To use different AR-IDs with your programmable remote (PRC) first requires you to teach it all the codes. A tedious process, agreed.

Example:

- Teach every code (PLAY/MENU/LEFT/RIGHT/...) to your PRC

- Find a simple way to note which PRC button belongs to a AR button and to the current AR-ID!
- Increase the ID of your AR as described above
- Start over again for the next set of codes ...

There's another caveat: the Apple Remote does IR code repeating a little bit special: the first code, say "left" or "right" is a specific IR code, of course. The "repeat" code, though, is similar for all buttons! So if you incidentally teach the repeater code to your PRC, you are stuck.

Some rare PRCs are able to learn the repeater code together with the normal code.

Please note that transmitting these repeater is mandatory for the nice "fast scrolling feature" in Front Row.

Unfortunately there is no easy way to share all these codes, so you'll have to teach them by yourself.²

Have Fun,

Robert Fischer, [tin:b Software](#), February 2007

² Owners of a [Philips Pronto](#) may share their codes easily. Because I am a lucky one I will share my codes shortly. Stay tuned.