Switching to a Mac®

POCKET GENIUS

Second Edition

Switching to a Mac® Pocket Genius, 2nd Edition

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Paul McFedries is a Mac expert and full-time technical writer. Paul has been authoring computer books since 1991, and he has more than 70 books to his credit. Paul's books have sold more than four million copies worldwide. These books include the Wiley titles *Teach Yourself VISUALLY Macs,* Second Edition, *Macs Portable Genius,* Second Edition, and *iPhone 4 Portable Genius*. Paul is also the proprietor of Word Spy (www.wordspy.com), a website that tracks new words and phrases as they enter the language. Paul invites you to drop by his personal website at www.mcfedries.com, and to follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/paulmcf and www.twitter.com/wordspy.

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For Karen.

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suggestions throughout the manuscript. Many thanks to all of you for outstanding work on this project.

Introduction

The stats tell us that people are switching from Windows to the Mac in record numbers, but those stats don't tell us why. Perhaps it's because Windows users would like to actually enjoy using a computer for a change. Perhaps it's because Macs just work: you take them out of the box, plug them in, and within minutes you're doing your thing. Perhaps it's because Macs just look so darn good that Windows folks can't help but admire their stylishness and innovative design. Or, perhaps, it's those funny and strangely irresistible commercials.

Whatever your reason for switching to the Mac, the bottom line is that you've made the move and now your new Mac life is about to begin. It's true that any computer is going to have problems, but your Mac is likely to have far fewer problems than any other type of system, particularly any Windows system.

The Mac uses a graphical, mouse-centric interface like Windows, but only some of your Windows know-how will transfer to the Mac. While the Mac can handle most types of data, you will face the task of getting your data onto your Mac in a form you can use. There's no doubt the Mac is dead simple to use out-of-the-box, but some of its most useful and powerful features are hidden away in obscure parts of the operating system. Sure, the Mac's robust design makes it a reliable machine day after day, but even the best-built machine can have problems.

When you come across the Mac's dark side, you might be tempted to make an appointment with your local Apple Store's Genius Bar, and it's likely the on-duty genius will give you good advice on how to overcome the Mac's limitations, work around its annoyances, and fix its failures. The Genius Bar is a great thing, but it isn't exactly a convenient thing. You can't just drop by to get help; you may need to lug your Mac down to the store; and in some cases you may need to leave your Mac for a day or two while whatever problem gets checked out and hopefully resolved.

What you need is a version of the Genius Bar that you can access at your fingertips. What new Mac users like you really need is a "portable" genius that enables you to be more productive and solve problems wherever you and your Mac happen to be.

Welcome, therefore, to *Switching to a Mac Portable Genius,* Second Edition. This book is like a mini Genius Bar all wrapped up in an easy to use, easy to access, and eminently portable format. In this book you learn how to get comfortable in your new Mac home by learning the ins and outs of the interface, what programs to use, how to perform the most important everyday tasks, and how to get your precious data onto your Mac. You also learn how to work around Mac challenges, prevent Mac problems from occurring, and fix many common problems yourself.

This book is for ex-Windows users who already know their way around a computer, and just want to transfer and apply that know-how to the Mac. It's a book for people who want to get productive, efficient, and creative with their new Mac without have to wade through long and ponderous tutorials. It's a book I had a blast writing, and I think it's a book you'll enjoy reading.

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Chapter 1: What Are the Differences Between Mac and Windows?

If you were going to move to a new country, you'd probably spend a bit of time learning as much as you could about the culture of your new home. In particular, you'd want to learn how the new place is different from your old country. For things like currency and customs, dress and driving, food and finance, it's important to know how things are different. It's the same when you make the move from a Windows PC to a Mac. Yes, they're both computers, but the similarities pretty much end there. Everything from windows and menus to using the mouse and the keyboard is different on a Mac, and this chapter takes you through the most important of these differences.

Understanding Interface Differences
Understanding Hardware Differences
Understanding System Differences
Understanding User Account Differences

Understanding Interface Differences

An old TV ad for a camera told us that "Image is everything." That's probably true for a camera, but not (I hope) for the rest of life. When you switch from Windows to the Mac, it's probably true that "Interface is everything." That's because, as with any computer, you must use the Mac interface to get things done, but the Mac interface is quite a bit different than the Windows interface you're used to, so mastering the interface should be your first chore.

The next few sections help you do that by showing you how the new Mac interface differs from the old Windows interface that you're leaving

behind. (I also point out where they are similar, so you know the parts of the Mac terrain where the learning curve isn't so steep.)

The Dock

When you start your Mac, one of the first things you probably notice when the desktop appears is the colorful ribbon of icons that appears along the bottom of the screen, as shown in Figure 1.1.

1.1 The collection of icons along the bottom of the Mac desktop is the Dock.

This strip is the *Dock* and you might think it's the Mac OS X equivalent of the taskbar in Windows. Actually, although it does have its taskbar-like moments, the Dock is quite a bit different than the Windows taskbar. The main difference is that you can search high and low but you won't find anything like the Windows Start button on the Dock. In fact, the Mac doesn't have an equivalent to the Start menu at all (although see my discussion of the Apple menu in the next section). Instead, the Dock itself is a kind of amalgam of the Windows Quick Launch toolbar (or pinned taskbar icons in Windows 7) and the taskbar:

- Most of the Dock icons represent applications, and you click an icon to launch that application. This is just like the Windows Quick Launch toolbar, or application icons that have been pinned to the taskbar in Windows 7.