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OS X *El Capitan*™

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Learn to:

- Navigate OS X El Capitan's desktop
- Find and manage your files and folders with ease
- Use the Calendar, Contacts, and Messages apps to stay connected
- Use your Mac® to play movies and music or read books

IN FULL COLOR!

Bob LeVitus

*Dr. Mac columnist for the
Houston Chronicle*



Introduction

You made the right choice twice: OS X El Capitan (OS X 10.11) and this book. Take a deep breath and get ready to have a rollicking good time. That's right. This is a computer book, but it's fun. What a concept! Whether you're brand spanking new to the Mac or a grizzled Mac vet, I guarantee that reading this book to discover the ins and outs of OS X El Capitan will make everything easier. The publisher couldn't say as much on the cover if it weren't true!

About This Book

This book's roots lie with my international best seller *Macintosh System 7.5 For Dummies*, an award-winning book so good that long-deceased Mac clone-maker Power Computing gave away a copy with every Mac clone it sold. *OS X El Capitan For Dummies* is the latest revision and has been, once again, completely updated to include all the tasty OS X goodness in El Capitan. In other words, this edition combines all the old, familiar features of previous editions — but is once again updated to reflect the latest and greatest offering from Apple as well as feedback from readers.

Why write a *For Dummies* book about El Capitan? Well, El Capitan is a big, somewhat complicated personal-computer operating system. So I made *OS X El Capitan For Dummies* a not-so-big, not-too-complicated book that shows you what El Capitan is all about without boring you to tears, confusing you, or poking you with sharp objects.

In fact, I think you'll be so darned comfortable that I wanted the title to be *OS X El Capitan Made Easy*, but the publishers wouldn't let me. Apparently, we *For Dummies* authors have to follow some rules, and using *For Dummies* in this book's title is one of them.

And speaking of dummies — remember, that's just a word. I don't think you're a dummy at all — quite the opposite! My second choice for this book's title was *OS X El Capitan For People Smart Enough to Know They Need This Book*, but you can just imagine what Wiley thought of that. ("C'mon, that's the whole point of the name!" they insisted. "Besides, it's shorter our way.")

The book is chock-full of information and advice, explaining everything you need to know about OS X in language you can understand — along with timesaving tips, tricks, techniques, and step-by-step instructions, all served up in generous quantities.

Another rule we *For Dummies* authors must follow is that our books cannot exceed a certain number of pages. (Brevity is the soul of wit, and all that.) So I wish I could have included some things that didn't fit. Although I feel confident you'll find what you need to know about OS X El Capitan in this book, some things bear further looking into, including these:

✓ **Information about many of the applications (programs) that come with OS X El Capitan:** An installation of OS X El Capitan includes roughly 55 applications, mostly located in the Applications folder and the Utilities folder within it. I'd love to walk you through each one of them, but that would have required a book a whole lot bigger, heavier, and more expensive than this one.

I brief you on the handful of bundled applications essential to using OS X El Capitan and keep the focus there — namely, Calendar, Contacts, Messages, Mail, Safari, TextEdit, and the like — as well as several important utilities you may need to know how to use someday.

✓ **Information about Microsoft Office, Apple lifestyle and productivity apps (iMovie, Numbers, Pages, and so on), Adobe Photoshop, Quicken, and other third-party applications:**

Okay, if all the gory details of all the bundled (read: *free*) OS X El Capitan applications don't fit here, I think you'll understand why digging into third-party applications that cost extra was out of the question.

✓ **Information about programming for the Mac:**

This book is about *using* OS X El Capitan, not writing code for it. Dozens of books — most of which are two or three times the size of this book — cover programming on the Mac; this one doesn't.

Conventions Used in This Book

To get the most out of this book, you need to know how I do things and why. Here are a few conventions I use in this book to make your life easier:

- ✓ When I want you to open an item in a menu, I write something like Choose File ⇒ Open, which means, “Pull down the File menu and choose the Open command.”
- ✓ Stuff you're supposed to type appears in bold type, **like this**.

- ✓ Web addresses and things that appear onscreen are shown in a special monofont typeface, like this. (If you're reading an e-book version of this book, web addresses are clickable links.)
- ✓ For keyboard shortcuts, I write something like ⌘+A, which means to hold down the ⌘ (Command) key and then press the A key on the keyboard.

Foolish Assumptions

Although I know what happens when you make assumptions, I've made a few anyway. First, I assume that you, gentle reader, know nothing about using OS X — beyond knowing what a Mac is, that you want to use OS X, that you want to understand OS X without having to digest an incomprehensible technical manual, and that you made the right choice by selecting this particular book. And so I do my best to explain each new concept in full and loving detail. Maybe that's foolish, but ... that's how I roll.

Oh, and I also assume that you can read. If you can't, ignore this paragraph.

Beyond the Book

I have written a lot of extra content that you won't find in this book. Go online to find the following:

- ✓ **Cheat Sheet:** www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/osxelcapitan
- ✓ **Additional articles:**
www.dummies.com/extras/osxelcapitan
- ✓ **Updates to this book, if any:**
www.dummies.com/extras/osxelcapitan

Icons Used in This Book

Little round pictures (icons) appear off to the left side of the text throughout this book. Consider these icons miniature road signs, telling you a little something extra about the topic at hand. Here's what the different icons look like and what they all mean.



Look for Tip icons to find the juiciest morsels: shortcuts, tips, and undocumented secrets about El Capitan. Try them all; impress your friends!



When you see this icon, it means that this particular morsel is something that I think you should memorize (or at least write on your shirt cuff).



Put on your propeller-beanie hat and pocket protector; these parts include the truly geeky stuff. It's certainly not required reading, but it must be interesting or informative, or I wouldn't have wasted your time with it.



Read these notes very, very, very carefully. (Did I say *very*?) Warning icons flag important cautionary information. The author and publisher won't be responsible if your Mac explodes or spews flaming parts because you ignored a Warning icon. Just kidding. Macs don't explode or spew (with the exception of a few choice PowerBook 5300s, which

won't run El Capitan anyway). But I got your attention, didn't I?



These icons represent my ranting or raving about something that either bugs me or makes me smile. When I'm ranting, imagine foam coming from my mouth. Rants and raves are required to be irreverent, irrelevant, or both. I try to keep them short, for your sake.



Well, now, what could this icon possibly be about? Named by famous editorial consultant Mr. Obvious, this icon highlights all things new and different in OS X El Capitan.

Where to Go from Here

The first few chapters of this book are where I describe the basic things that you need to understand to operate your Mac effectively. If you're new to Macs and OS X El Capitan, start there.

OS X El Capitan is only slightly different from previous Mac operating systems, and the first part of the book presents concepts so basic that if you've been using a Mac for long, you might think you know it all — and okay, you might know most of it. But remember that not-so-old-timers need a solid foundation, too. So here's my advice: Skim through stuff you already know and you'll get to the better stuff sooner.



I would love to hear how this book worked for you. So please send me your thoughts, platitudes, likes and dislikes, and any other comments. Did this book work for you? What did you like? What didn't you like? What questions were unanswered? Did you want to know more (or less) about something? Tell me! I have received more than 100 suggestions about previous editions, many of which are incorporated here. So please (please!) keep up the good work! Email me at ElCapitan4Dummies@boblevitus.com. I appreciate your feedback, and I *try* to respond to all reasonably polite email within a few days.

So what are you waiting for? Go! Enjoy the book!

Part I
**Introducing OS X El
Capitan: The Basics**



Visit www.dummies.com for great *For Dummies* content online.

In this part ...

- ✓ In the beginning: The most basic of basics including how to turn on your Mac
- ✓ A gentle introduction to the El Capitan Finder and its Desktop
- ✓ Your Dock: Making it work harder for you
- ✓ Everything you need to know about El Capitan's windows, icons, and menus (oh my)!
- ✓ All the bad puns and wisecracks you've come to expect
- ✓ A plethora of Finder tips and tricks to make life with El Capitan even easier (and more fulfilling)

Chapter 1

OS X El Capitan 101

(Prerequisites: None)

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding what an operating system is and is not
 - ▶ Turning on your Mac
 - ▶ Getting to know the startup process
 - ▶ Turning off your Mac
 - ▶ Avoiding major Mac mistakes
 - ▶ Pointing, clicking, dragging, and other uses for your mouse
 - ▶ Getting help from your Mac
-



Congratulate yourself on choosing OS X, which stands for (Mac) *Operating System X* — and that’s the Roman numeral *ten*, not the letter *X* (pronounced *ten*, not *ex*). You made a smart move because you scored more than just an operating system (OS) upgrade. OS X El Capitan includes several new features that make using your Mac easier and dozens of improvements under the hood that help you do more work in less time.

In this chapter, I start at the very beginning and talk about OS X in mostly abstract terms; then I move on to explain what you need to know to use OS X El Capitan successfully.

If you’ve been using OS X for a while, most of the information in this chapter may seem hauntingly familiar; a number of features that I describe haven’t changed from previous versions of OS X. But if you decide to skip this chapter because you think you have all the new stuff figured out, I assure you that you’ll miss at least a couple of things that Apple didn’t bother to tell you (as if you read every word in OS X Help — the only user manual Apple provides — anyway!).

Tantalized? Let’s rock.



One last thing: If you’re about to upgrade to El Capitan from an earlier version of OS X, you might want to peruse the article on installing and reinstalling El Capitan in full and loving detail, found at www.dummies.com/extras/osxelcapitan.

Gnawing to the Core of OS X

The operating system (that is, the *OS* in *OS X*) is what makes a Mac a Mac. Without it, your Mac is a pile of silicon and circuits — no smarter than a toaster.

“So what does an operating system do?” you ask. Good question. The short answer is that an OS controls the basic and most important functions of your computer. In the case of OS X and your Mac, the operating system

- ✓ Manages memory
- ✓ Controls how windows, icons, and menus work
- ✓ Keeps track of files
- ✓ Manages networking and security
- ✓ Does housekeeping (No kidding!)

Other forms of software, such as word processors and web browsers, rely on the OS to create and maintain the environment in which they work their magic. When you create a memo, for example, the word processor provides the tools for you to type and format the information and save it in a file. In the background, the OS is the muscle for the word processor, performing crucial functions such as the following:

- ✓ Providing the mechanism for drawing and moving the onscreen window in which you write the memo
- ✓ Keeping track of the file when you save it
- ✓ Helping the word processor create drop-down menus and dialogs for you to interact with
- ✓ Communicating with other programs
- ✓ And much, much more (stuff that only geeks could care about)

So, armed with a little background in operating systems, take a gander at the next section before you do anything else with your Mac.

One last thing: As I mention in this book's Introduction (I'm repeating it here only in case you normally don't read introductions), OS X El Capitan comes with more than 50 applications. Although I'd love to tell you all about each and every one, I have only so many pages at my disposal.



The Mac advantage

Most of the world's personal computers use Microsoft Windows (although more and more people are switching to the Mac). But you're among the lucky few to have a computer with an OS that's intuitive, easy to use, and (dare I say?) fun. If you don't believe me, try using Windows for a day or two. Go ahead. You probably won't suffer any permanent damage. In fact, you'll really begin to appreciate how good you have it. Feel free to hug your Mac. Or give it a peck on the disc drive slot (assuming that your Mac has one; most, including the MacBook, MacBook Air, and Mac mini at this writing, don't). Just try not to get your tongue caught.

As someone once told me, "Claiming that OS X is inferior to Windows because more people use Windows is like saying that all other restaurants serve food that's inferior to McDonald's."

We might be a minority, but Mac users have the best, most stable, most modern all-purpose operating system in the world, and here's why: Unix, on which OS X is based, is widely regarded as the best industrial-strength operating system on the planet. For now, just know that being based on Unix means that a Mac running OS X will crash less often than an older (pre-OS X) Mac or a Windows machine, which means less downtime. Being Unix-based also means getting far fewer viruses and encounters with malicious software. But perhaps the biggest advantage OS X has is that when an application crashes, it doesn't crash your entire computer, and you don't have to restart the whole computer to continue working.

By the way, since the advent of Intel-powered Macs a few years ago, you can run Windows natively also on any Mac powered by an Intel processor, as I describe in [Chapter 17](#). Note that the opposite isn't true: You can run Windows on your Mac if you like, but you can't run OS X on a Dell or HP (or

any other computer not made by Apple) without serious hacking (which is technically illegal anyway).

And don't let that Unix or Windows stuff scare you. It's there if you want it, but if you don't want it or don't care (like most of us), you'll rarely even know it's there. In fact, you'll rarely (if ever) see the word *Unix* or *Windows* again in this book. As far as you're concerned, Unix under the hood means your Mac will just run and run and run without crashing and crashing and crashing. As for Windows, your Mac can run it if you need it; otherwise, it's just another checklist item on the list of reasons Macs are better.

A Safety Net for the Absolute Beginner (or Any User)

In the following sections, I deal with the stuff that OS X Help doesn't cover — or doesn't cover in nearly enough detail. If you're a first-time Macintosh user, please, *please* read this section of the book carefully; it could save your life. Okay, okay, perhaps I'm being overly dramatic. What I mean to say is that reading this section could save your Mac or your sanity. Even if you're an experienced Mac user, you may want to read this section. Chances are you'll see at least a few things you've forgotten that will come in handy now that you've been reminded of them.

Turning the dang thing on

Okay. This is the big moment — turning on your Mac! Gaze at it longingly first, and say something cheesy, such as, “You're the most awesome computer I've ever known.” If that doesn't turn on your Mac (and it probably won't), keep reading.

Apple, in its infinite wisdom, has manufactured Macs with power buttons on every conceivable surface: on the

front, side, and back of the computer itself, and even on the keyboard and monitor.

So if you don't know how to turn on your Mac, don't feel bad; just look in the manual or booklet that came with your Mac. It's at least one thing that the documentation *always* covers.



These days, most Macs have a Power button near the keyboard (notebooks) or the back (iMacs). It usually looks like the little circle thingy you see in the margin.



Don't bother choosing Help ⇒ Mac Help, which opens the Help Viewer program. It can't tell you where the switch is. Although the Help program is good for finding out a lot of things, the location of the power button isn't among them. If you haven't found the switch and turned on the Mac, of course, you can't access Help anyway. (D'oh!)

What you should see on startup

When you finally do turn on your Macintosh, you set in motion a sophisticated and complex series of events that culminates in the loading of OS X and the appearance of the OS X Desktop. After a small bit of whirring, buzzing, and flashing (meaning that the OS is loading), OS X first tests all your hardware — slots, ports, disks, random access memory (RAM), and so on. If everything passes, you hear a pleasing musical tone and see the tasteful whitish Apple logo in the middle of your screen, as shown in [Figure 1-1](#).



Figure 1-1: This is what you'll see if everything is fine and dandy when you turn on your Mac.

Here are the things that might happen when you power-up your Mac:

- ✓ **Fine and dandy:** Next, you might or might not see the OS X login screen, where you enter your name and password. If you do, press Return after you type your name and password, of course, and away you go.



If you don't want to have to type your name and password every time you start or restart your Mac (or even if you do), check out [Chapter 17](#) for the scoop on how to turn the login screen on or off.

Either way, the Desktop soon materializes before your eyes. If you haven't customized, configured, or tinkered with your Desktop, it should look pretty much like [Figure 1-2](#). Now is a good time to take a moment for positive thoughts about the person who convinced you that you wanted a Mac. That person was right!

✓ **Blue/black/gray screen of death:** If any of your hardware fails when it's tested, you may see a blue, black, or gray screen.

Some older Macs played the sound of a horrible car wreck instead of the chimes, complete with crying tires and busting glass. It was exceptionally unnerving, which might be why Apple doesn't use it anymore.



The fact that something went wrong is no reflection on your prowess as a Macintosh user. Something is broken, and your Mac may need repairs. If this is happening to you right now, check out [Chapter 20](#) to try to get your Mac well again.



If your computer is under warranty, set up a Genius Bar appointment at your nearest Apple Store or dial 1-800-SOS-APPL, and a customer service person can tell you what to do. Before you do anything, though, skip ahead to [Chapter 20](#). It's entirely possible that one of the suggestions there can get you back on track without your having to spend even a moment on hold.



✓ **Prohibitory sign (formerly known as the “flashing question mark on a disk”):** Most users eventually encounter the prohibitory sign shown in the left margin (which replaced the flashing question-mark-on-a-disk icon and flashing folder icon back in OS X Jaguar). This icon means that your Mac can't find a startup disk, hard drive, network server, or DVD-ROM

containing a valid Macintosh operating system. See [Chapter 20](#) for ways to ease your Mac's ills.

- ✓ **Kernel panic:** You shouldn't see this very often, but you may occasionally see a block of text in six languages, including English, as shown in [Figure 1-3](#). This means that your Mac has experienced a *kernel panic*, the most severe type of system crash. If you restart your Mac and see this message again, look in [Chapter 20](#) for a myriad of possible cures for all kinds of ailments, including this one.



Figure 1-2: The OS X El Capitan Desktop after a brand-spanking-new installation of OS X.

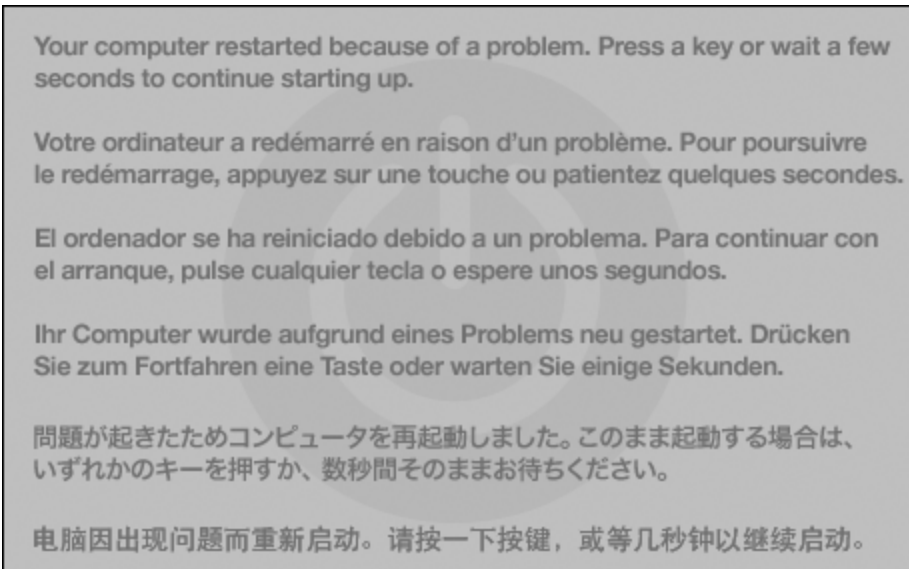


Figure 1-3: If this is what you're seeing, things are definitely *not* fine and dandy.



How do you know which version of the Mac OS your computer has? Simple:

- 1. Choose About This Mac from the  menu (the menu with the  symbol in the top-left corner of the menu bar).**

A window pops up on your screen, as shown in [Figure 1-4](#). The version you're running appears just below *OS X El Capitan* near the top of the window. Version 10.11 is the release we know as *El Capitan*.



If you're curious or just want to impress your friends, OS X version 10.10 was known as Yosemite; 10.9 was known as Mavericks; 10.8 as Mountain Lion; 10.7 as Lion; 10.6 as Snow Leopard; 10.5 as Leopard; 10.4 as Tiger; 10.3 as Panther; 10.2 as Jaguar; 10.1 as Puma; and 10.0 as Cheetah.

2. **(Optional) Click the Overview, Displays, Storage, Support, or Service tabs to see additional information about your Mac and the version of OS X that it's running.**
3. **Click the System Report button to launch the System Information application and see even more details.**

The System Information app shows you even more about your Mac including bus speed, number of processors, caches, installed memory, networking, storage devices, and much more. You can find more about this useful program in [Chapter 19](#).



Figure 1-4: See which version of OS X you're running.


Shutting down properly

Turning off the power without shutting down your Mac properly is one of the worst things you can do to your poor Mac. Shutting down your Mac improperly can really

screw up your hard or solid-state drive, scramble the contents of your most important files, or both.



If a thunderstorm is rumbling nearby, or you're unfortunate enough to have rolling blackouts where you live, you may really want to shut down your Mac and unplug it from the wall. (See the next section, where I briefly discuss lightning and your Mac.)

To turn off your Mac, always use the Shut Down command from the  menu or shut down in one of these kind-and-gentle ways:

- ✓ Press the Power button for approximately two seconds and then click the Shut Down button in the Are You Sure You Want to Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog.
- ✓ On keyboards that don't have a Power key, press Control+Eject instead, and then click the Shut Down button that appears in the Are You Sure You Want to Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog.



You can use a handy keyboard shortcut when the Shut Down button (or any button, for that matter) is highlighted in blue and pulsating slightly. Pressing the Return key is almost always the same as clicking a highlighted button.

The Are You Sure You Want to Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog sports a check box option in OS X El Capitan: Reopen Windows When Logging Back In. If you select this check box, your Mac will start back up with the same windows (and applications) that were open when you shut down or restarted. I think that's pretty

darn sweet, but you can clear this option if that's not what you want!

Most Mac users have been forced to shut down improperly more than once without anything horrible happening, of course — but don't be lulled into a false sense of security. Break the rules one time too many (or under the wrong circumstances), and your most important files *could* be toast. The *only* time you should turn off your Mac without shutting down properly is when your screen is completely frozen or when your system crashed due to a kernel panic and you've already tried everything else. (See [Chapter 20](#) for what those “everything elses” are.) A really stubborn crash doesn't happen often — and less often under OS X than ever before — but when it does, forcing your Mac to turn off and then back on might be the only solution.

Eternally yours ... *now*

OS X is designed so that you never have to shut it down. You can configure it to sleep after a specified period of inactivity. (See [Chapter 17](#) for more info on the Energy Saver features of OS X.) If you do so, your Mac will consume very little electricity when it's sleeping and will usually be ready to use (when you press any key or click the mouse) in a few seconds. On the other hand, if you're not going to be using it for a few days, you might want to shut it down anyway.

Note: If you leave your Mac on constantly, and you're gone when a lightning storm or rolling blackout hits, your Mac might get hit by a power surge or worse. So be sure you have adequate protection — say, a decent surge protector designed specifically for computers — if you decide to leave your Mac on and unattended for long periods. See the section “[A few things you should definitely *not* do with your Mac](#),” elsewhere in this chapter, for more info on lightning and your Mac. Often as not, I leave it on when I'm on the road so that I can access it from my laptop via remote screen sharing. So, because OS X is designed to run 24/7, I don't shut it down at night unless the night happens to be dark and stormy.

One last thing: If your Mac is a notebook and will be enclosed in a bag or briefcase for more than a few hours, turn it off. Otherwise, it could overheat — even in Sleep mode.

A few things you should definitely not do with your Mac

In this section, I cover the bad stuff that can happen to your computer if you do the wrong things with it. If something bad has already happened to you ... I know, I'm beginning to sound like a broken record, but see [Chapter 20](#).

- ✓ **Don't unplug your Mac when it's turned on.** Very bad things can happen, such as having your OS break. See the preceding section, where I discuss shutting down your system properly.

Note that this warning doesn't apply to laptops as long as their battery is at least partially charged. As long as there's enough juice in the battery to power your Mac, you can connect and disconnect its power adapter to your heart's content.

- ✓ **Don't use your Mac when lightning is near.** Here's a simple life equation for you: Mac + lightning = dead Mac. 'Nuff said. Oh, and don't place much faith in inexpensive surge protectors. A good jolt of lightning will fry the surge protector and your computer, as well as possibly frying your modem, printer, and anything else plugged into the surge protector. Some surge protectors can withstand most lightning strikes, but those warriors aren't the cheapies that you buy at your local computer emporium. Unplugging your Mac from the wall during electrical storms is safer and less expensive. (Don't forget to unplug your external modem, network hubs, printers, and other hardware that plugs into the wall as well; lightning can fry them, too.)

For laptops, disconnect the power adapter and all other cables because whatever those cables are connected to could fry and fry your laptop right along with it. After you do that, you can use your laptop during a storm if you care to. Just make sure that it's 100 percent wireless and cableless if you do.

✓ **Don't jostle, bump, shake, kick, throw, dribble, or punt your Mac, especially while it's running.**

Many Macs contain a hard drive that spins at 5,200 revolutions per minute (rpm) or more. A jolt to a hard drive while it's reading or writing a file can cause the head to crash into the disk, which can render many — or all — files on it unrecoverable. Ouch!



Don't think you're exempt if your Mac uses a solid-state drive with no moving parts. A good bump to your Mac could damage other components. Treat your Mac like it's a carton of eggs, and you'll never be sorry.

- ✓ **Don't forget to back up your data!** If the files on your hard drive mean anything to you, you must back up. Not maybe. *Must*. Even if your most important file is your last saved game of Bejeweled, you still need to back up your files. Fortunately, El Capitan includes an awesome backup utility called Time Machine. (Unfortunately, you need either an external hard drive or an Apple Time Capsule device to take advantage of it.) So I beg you: Please read [Chapter 18](#) now, and find out how to back up before something horrible happens to your valuable data!



I *strongly* recommend that you read [Chapter 18](#) sooner rather than later — preferably before you do

any significant work on your Mac. Dr. Macintosh says, “There are only two kinds of Mac users: Those who have lost data and those who will.” Which kind do you want to be?

- ✓ **Don’t kiss your monitor while wearing stuff on your lips.** For obvious reasons! Use a clean, soft cloth and/or OmniCleans display cleaning solution (I love the stuff, made by RadTech; www.radtech.us) to clean your display.



Don’t use household window cleaners or paper towels. Either one can harm your display. Use a soft clean cloth (preferably microfiber), and if you’re going to use a cleaner, make sure it’s specifically designed not to harm computer displays. Finally, spray the cleaner on the *cloth*, not on the screen.

Point-and-click boot camp

Are you new to the Mac? Just figuring out how to move the mouse around? Now is a good time to go over some fundamental stuff that you need to know for just about everything you’ll be doing on the Mac. Spend a few minutes reading this section, and soon you’ll be clicking, double-clicking, pressing, and pointing all over the place. If you think you have the whole mousing thing pretty much figured out, feel free to skip this section. I’ll catch you on the other side.

Still with me? Good. Now for some basic terminology:

- ✓ **Point:** Before you can click or press anything, you have to *point* to it. Place your hand on your mouse, and move it so that the cursor arrow is over the object you want — like on top of an icon or a button.

If you're using a trackpad, slide your finger lightly across the pad until the cursor arrow is over the object you want.

- ✓ **Click:** Also called *single click*. Use your index finger to push the mouse button all the way down and then let go so that the button (usually) produces a satisfying clicking sound. (If you have one of the optical Apple Pro mice, you push the whole thing down to click.) Use a single click to highlight an icon, press a button, or activate a check box or window. In other words, first you point and then you click — *point and click*, in computer lingo.

If you're using a trackpad, press down on it to click.

- ✓ **Double-click:** *Click twice* in rapid succession. With a little practice, you can perfect this technique in no time. Use a double-click to open a folder or to launch a file or application.

Trackpad users: Press down on the pad two times in rapid succession.

- ✓ **Control-click:** Hold down the Control key while single-clicking. (Also called *secondary-click* or *right-click*.)

Trackpad users can either hold down the Control key while pressing down on the pad with one finger, or by tapping the trackpad with two fingers without holding down the Control key.

If tapping your trackpad with two fingers didn't bring up the little menu, check your Trackpad System Preferences pane (see [Chapter 5](#)).

Control-clicking — the same as right-clicking a Windows system — displays a menu (called a *contextual* or *shortcut menu*). In fact, if you're blessed with a two-or-more-button mouse (such as the Apple

Magic Mouse), you can right-click and avoid having to hold down the Control key. (You may have to enable this feature in the Mouse System Preference pane.)

- ✓ **Drag:** *Dragging* something usually means you have to click it first and hold down the mouse or trackpad button. Then you move the mouse on your desk or mouse pad (or your finger on the trackpad) so that the cursor and whatever you select moves across the screen. The combination of holding down the button and dragging the mouse is usually referred to as *clicking and dragging*.



- ✓ **Wiggle (or jiggle):** This welcome improvement, introduced in El Capitan (and terrific if I do say so myself) is awesome when you lose track of the pointer on your screen. Just wiggle your mouse back and forth (or jiggle your finger back and forth on the trackpad) for a few seconds and the pointer will magically get much bigger, making it easier to see on the screen. And, of course, when you stop wiggling or jiggling, the pointer returns to its normal size.

- ✓ **Choosing an item from a menu:** To get to OS X menu commands, you must first open a menu and then choose the option you want. Point at the name of the menu you want with your cursor, press the mouse button, and then drag downward until you select the command you want. When the command is highlighted, finish selecting by letting go of the mouse button.



If you're a longtime Mac user, you probably hold down the mouse button the whole time between

clicking the name of the menu and selecting the command you want. You can still do it that way, but you can also click the menu name to open it, release the mouse button, point at the item you want to select, *and then click again*. In other words, OS X menus stay open after you click their names, even if you're not holding down the mouse button. After you click a menu's name to open it, you can even type the first letter (or letters) of the item to select it and then execute that item by pressing the spacebar or the Return key. Furthermore, menus remain open until you click something else.

Go ahead and give it a try ... I'll wait.



The terms given in the preceding list apply to all Mac laptop, desktop, and tower systems. If you use a MacBook, MacBook Pro, MacBook Air, or Apple Magic Trackpad, however, there are a few more terms — such as *tap*, *swipe*, *rotate*, *pinch*, and *spread* — you'll want to add to your lexicon. You can read all about them in full and loving detail in [Chapter 4](#).

Not Just a Beatles Movie: Help and the Help Menu

One of the best features about all Macs is the excellent built-in help, and OS X El Capitan doesn't cheat you on that legacy: This system has online help in abundance. When you have a question about how to do something, the Help Center is the first place you should visit (after this book, of course).

Clicking the Help menu reveals the Search field at the top of the menu and the Mac Help and New to Mac items. Choosing Mac Help opens the Mac Help window, as shown in [Figure 1-5](#); choosing New to Mac launches Safari and displays a tour of OS X El Capitan.

Table of Contents button

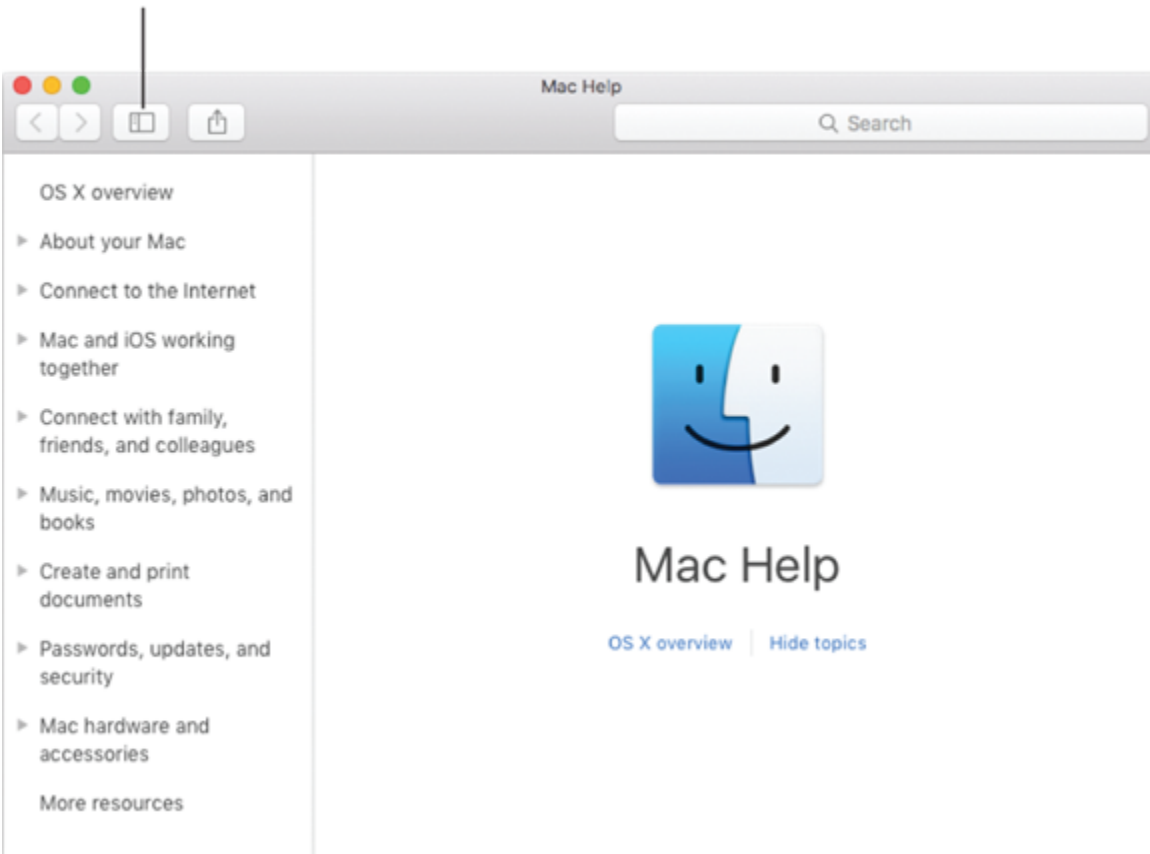


Figure 1-5: Mac Help is nothing if not helpful.



Though the keyboard shortcut for Help no longer appears on the Help menu, the same shortcut as always, Shift+⌘+?, still opens Help.

You can browse Help by clicking a topic in the Table of Contents and then clicking a subtopic. If you don't see the Table of Contents, click the Table of Contents button as shown in [Figure 1-5](#).