



Mac OS X **For Absolute Beginners**

Wallace Wang

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San Diego, California, USA

ISBN-13 (pbk): 978-1-4842-1912-6
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4842-1913-3

ISBN-13 (electronic): 978-1-4842-1913-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016943053

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Distributed to the book trade worldwide by Springer Science+Business Media New York, 233 Spring Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10013. Phone 1-800-SPRINGER, fax (201) 348-4505, e-mail orders-ny@springer-sbm.com, or visit www.springer.com. Apress Media, LLC is a California LLC and the sole member (owner) is Springer Science + Business Media Finance Inc (SSBM Finance Inc). SSBM Finance Inc is a Delaware corporation.

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This book is dedicated to everyone who has suffered through the complexity, confusion, and chaos of other types of computers and finally discovered the simplicity and ease of use that the Macintosh offers. Welcome to the future, where computers actually work to make the lives of people easier and more enjoyable.

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About the Author

Wallace Wang has written dozens of computer books over the years, beginning with ancient MS-DOS programs like WordPerfect and Turbo Pascal, and graduating up to Windows programs like Visual Basic and Microsoft Office. After taking one look at the incredible mess that Microsoft made with Vista, he decided to abandon the Windows world and shift toward the friendlier and less frustrating world of the Macintosh. (His decision was confirmed when Microsoft released Windows 8 to an unsuspecting public.)

After being a happy Macintosh user for nearly a decade, he's spent the last several years helping people make the transition from Windows to Macintosh as painless as possible. When he's not helping people discover the joys of personal computing with a computer that's actually fun to use, he performs stand-up comedy and appears on two radio shows on KNSJ in San Diego (<http://knsj.org>) called *Notes From the Underground* and *Laugh In Your Face Radio* (www.laughinyourfaceradio.com).

He also writes a screenwriting blog called *The 15 Minute Movie Method* (<http://15minutemoviemethod.com>), a blog about the latest cat news on the Internet called *Cat Daily News* (<http://catdailynews.com>), and a blog about the latest technology related to Apple products called *Top Bananas* (www.topbananas.com).

About the Technical Reviewer



Brandon Scott specializes in software engineering for desktop applications, software development kits, and distributed systems. He currently leads development efforts for AspiraCloud Ltd., focusing on Microsoft SharePoint and Azure work streams. Additionally, Brandon also partners with Razer Inc., aiding with the design of SDK products and open source libraries. He experience comes from working for a variety of companies in different industries, including JP Morgan Chase & Co. and Microsoft.

Acknowledgments

Thanks go to all the wonderful people at Apress for giving me a chance to write about OS X and the Macintosh.

Additional thanks go to Dane Henderson and Elizabeth Lee (www.echoludo.com), who share the airwaves with me on our radio show *Notes From the Underground* on KNSJ.org. More thanks go to Chris Clobber, Diane Jean, Ikaika Patria, and Robert Weems for letting me share their friendship and lunacy every week on another KNSJ radio show called *Laugh In Your Face Radio* (www.laughinyourfaceradio.com), where we combine comedy with political activism and commentary.

A special mention goes to Michael Montijo and his indomitable spirit that has him driving from Phoenix to Los Angeles at least once a month for the past 20 years to meet with Hollywood executives. One day when you hear about his cartoon series *Life of Mikey* and *Pachuko Boy*, you'll know how they finally appeared on television because he never gave up on his dream, despite all the obstacles in his way.

Thanks also go to my wife, Cassandra, and my son, Jordan, for putting up with a house filled with more gadgets than actual living people. Final thanks go to my cats, Oscar and Mayer, for walking over the keyboard, stepping on the trackpad and mouse, and chewing on power cords at the most inconvenient times of the day.

Introduction

Most people don't buy a Macintosh because they want to use Photos, iTunes, or Pages. Instead, most people buy a Macintosh because they want to accomplish a specific result, such as saving and viewing photographs, playing music, or typing and printing a letter. That's why thick books explaining how to use the Macintosh operating system, called OS X, can be so intimidating. These thick books assume readers want to become computer experts by learning how OS X works.

As a result, most computer books exhaustively explain every possible feature of OS X without telling you why you might want to use that particular feature. That's like forcing you to learn how a six-cylinder internal combustion engine works before you learn how to drive.

This book is different because it teaches you the most common tasks you'll need to be productive on your Macintosh. You won't learn every possible feature of iTunes or Mail. Instead, you'll just learn enough so you can feel comfortable using a Macintosh.

A computer is nothing more than a tool. What you do with that tool is entirely up to you.

A paintbrush is also a tool, but if you give a paintbrush to the average person, they might be able to scribble some blobs of pretty colors on a canvas. Yet if you give a paintbrush to an artist like Michelangelo, you get a work of art painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

The co-founder of Apple, Steve Jobs, once described computers as "bicycles for the mind." Jobs said this after reading a *Scientific American* article that showed that condors used the least amount of energy to move a kilometer. In comparison, humans were extremely inefficient in moving that same distance by walking or running. However, when humans used a bicycle to travel a kilometer, they expended far less energy than even a condor. Just as a bicycle is a tool to make humans more efficient in getting from one place to another, computers are a tool to make humans more efficient in tapping their creativity.

So this book won't waste your time by teaching you what different tools can do. Instead, this book focuses on teaching you how to use different tools so that you can create useful results on your Macintosh.

Whether you need to write a letter, jot down some notes, edit a picture, or play music, this book will show you the fastest, simplest, and easiest way to achieve a given task—so that your Macintosh becomes a bicycle for your mind.

Understanding How a Macintosh Works

Whether you have an iMac or Mac mini that sits on a desk, or a MacBook laptop that you can take with you, every Macintosh is nothing more than a chunk of hardware. What makes that chunk of hardware work is a special program called an *operating system*.

If you've used a PC before, you're probably already familiar with an operating system called Microsoft Windows. With a Macintosh, the operating system is called OS X.

Don't worry. You don't have to know anything about OS X to use your Macintosh. All you need to know is that any time you want to do something, you need to find the right program that works with OS X to accomplish it. On OS X, you can do such things as

- Play music
- Write letters
- Edit video
- Browse web pages on the Internet
- Send and receive e-mail
- And many other tasks

While OS X makes your Macintosh work, individual programs stored on your Macintosh let you perform specific tasks. For example, your Macintosh might have a word processor that lets you type and print letters from it, an e-book viewer that allows you to read books on it, or a game that lets you to play chess with it.

Each time you install a new program, you make your Macintosh more versatile and capable of performing different tasks. With the right program, your Macintosh can do almost anything. However, this book focuses solely on the programs that come free with every Macintosh.

So whether you've used a computer before or you're a complete novice, don't worry. This book won't bog you down with technical details. Instead, you'll learn what to do, how to do it, and more importantly, why to do it.

There's a reason why more people are buying and using Macintosh computers. It's because a Macintosh is easier, more reliable, and maybe more fun to use than most other types of computers. So get ready to learn shortcuts, tips, and basic instructions for getting the most out of your Macintosh today.

What to Expect from this Book

Don't expect to learn every possible feature available on a Macintosh. Also, don't expect dense explanations that show how to do something without telling you why you might want to do it in the first place.

What you can expect from this book is a chance to learn how to use your Macintosh as quickly, easily, and painlessly as possible.

This book doesn't have all the answers to using a Macintosh, but it does have lots of tips and tricks for helping you work faster and more efficiently than ever before.

Once you learn just enough to get started, you'll feel more comfortable—until you're able to figure out how to use your Macintosh all by yourself. Fair enough? If so, then turn the page and let's get started.