

The Mac Panther Bible

book review by David L. Davis

When I was just starting to get serious about learning and using the Macintosh, I went to the local public library and discovered an early version of the "Macintosh Bible." This hefty book covered a myriad of subjects dealing with virtually every part of the Mac experience. It was the ideal reference book for the new Mac user. I quickly bought my own copy. I was hooked. Every few years a new edition came out, and I would give my old one away, and add the new one to my own library.

It has been a few years since the last edition was released, so I was eager to see what this latest version, the 9th, had in store. Originally the work of one or two people, today there are over 30 authors contributing to 20 chapters of edited material.

Generally speaking, the book is divided into 4 sections, so you can easily jump to your particular area of interest. As a caution, there is a lot of material contained here, and you will use it well if you understand how it is organized. Besides a single page "contents guide," there is the usual table of contents, a glossary, and a 60 page index that references this 1,000 page manual quite well.

Looking at the Mac

The first section of eight chapters deals with all the currently available Macs, the Mac OS (10.3, as well as the Classic OS 9) and how to use it on a daily basis. New users will appreciate the way the information is organized.

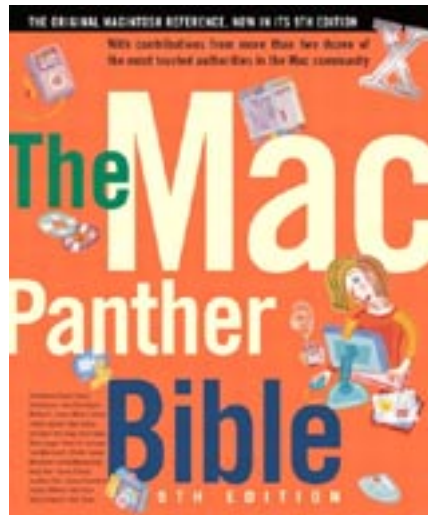
Mac OS X is the main focus here, although there are pages for OS 9 carry-overs as well. Set up, printing issues, add-ons, troubleshooting approaches, etc. are explained in very good detail.

Getting Productive

These four chapters in this section explain basic software for the new computer user. Not just how to approach applications, but the differences between them and how to choose one that is right for your needs.

Getting Creative

The creative area of graphics, page layout, fonts, web design, and related topics are covered here with added emphasis



on the new iLife suite of programs. The coverage of fonts is particularly well done, but when it comes to the iLife apps, only iTunes is discussed in much depth with only slight discussion of iPhoto, iMovie, iDVD and GarageBand. To be fair, a book of this sort is clearly only a starter for serious work. There are many other available texts devoted entirely to specific applications.

Extending Your Reach

The last three sections include the Internet, networking and help for cross-platform or new converts to the Macintosh. The content here is among the most helpful in the book.

Finally, since this edition celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Mac, they have included interviews with some of the early developers at the end of each chapter, which makes nice anecdotal reading.

If you are new to the Mac, here is the book you need to get started. As a basic reference book for learning about the Macintosh platform, its computers and practical, everyday use, the "Mac Panther Bible" will serve you well. And as you need more guidance than the book contains, there are many suggestions for software and sources of information contained within the pages of this huge book.

"Mac Panther Bible" is available from PeachPit Press for \$34.99. See "Member Benefits" on page 5 for ordering and discount information.

Macworld Expo '04

The 2004 east coast Macworld Conference & Expo will be held from Monday, July 12 through Thursday, July 15 at the brand new Boston Convention and Exhibition Center on the South Boston Waterfront. This is the inaugural event for the convention center.

Visit the official Macworld Conference & Expo website <<http://www.macworldexpo.com/>> for a list of exhibitors, schedule of events, directions, and registration information.