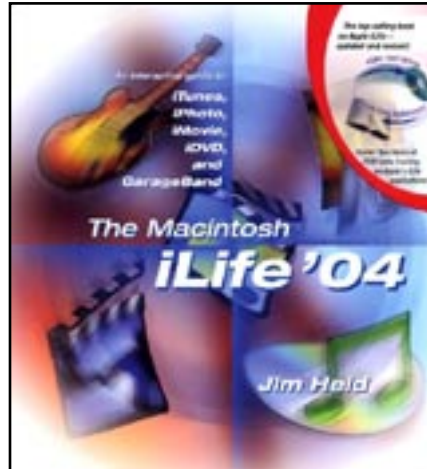


“The Macintosh iLife ‘04” by Jim Heid

book review by David L. Davis

Sometimes when I check out the revised second edition of a very popular title, I go to the index pages and see what is different. So it was, when I started to read the new version of Jim Heid’s “The Macintosh iLife ‘04” (Peachpit Press/Avondale Media). Not only is there an additional 60 pages to the book, but the index section has three columns per page (vs. two in the 2003 edition) and the point size is about three sizes smaller... Now this does not tell you anything about quality, but quantity is definitely up!



So I began my quality check of this volume and the two-hour companion CD that accompanies it. The layout of the book is clean and clear and contains full-color screen shots and drawn illustrations. Where appropriate, there is a symbol on the upper right hand corner of a page telling you to go to the DVD for more information. By playing “show and tell”, Jim Heid provides a learning experience that is rich and more complete than most other attempts at documenting a subject. And this fellow knows his stuff!

So what about content? The book is divided into five sections, one for each of the iLife applications. After



iLife '04 ships with all new Macs, and is also available from Apple for \$49. Purchase Mac OS X Panther and iLife '04 together by September 25, 2004, and get \$50 back via mail-in rebate. See Apple online store for details.

you read through a very helpful introductory section on the concept of iLife integration and how to use the materials,

iTunes

Jim gets you right into the iTunes and iPod arena. The “mysteries of the MP3 and ACC formats, the new iTunes music store, creating special playlists and mixes, using internet radio, managing the music library on your Mac...” And then there is the iPod, from simply setting it up to heavy-duty usage.

iPhoto

The section on iPhoto covers the importation of digital images from cameras and other sources, file management techniques and some image editing basics, including camera usage and resolution settings.

iMovie and iDVD

The iMovie and iDVD sections are fleshed out from the previous edition with emphasis on the newer features in each. Already a superb resource on these applications, you can pick up some new ways of working by checking out the videos on the beautifully presented DVD and by following Jim’s lead.

GarageBand

The last portion of the book is devoted to a primer on GarageBand. A deceptively simple to use application, GarageBand does require some explanation to get past the ease and casualness that marks early efforts at compiling a piece of “music”.

While not the most definitive work on the subject, there are many good suggestions that a GarageBand composer would benefit from. Several pages on recording and editing “Software Instruments” are particularly helpful. Refining the final product through effects, filters, and mixing and fine tuning the arrangement are welcome information, as is the essay on optimizing performance on different Macs.

All in all, “The Macintosh iLife ‘04 ” should be part of anyone’s library of quality books. It is a real bargain at \$29.99... and MACNJ members can order it online directly from Peachpit Press at 20% off.