

Book review: MacOSX Leopard

Belinda Carter

**Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard:
Learn Mac OS X the Quick and Easy Way
Visual Quickstart Guide**
by Maria Langer

First published by Peachpit Press, November 2007

A print manual is a useful thing to have when your usual source of help goes down. Luckily my connection to the internet via Paradise cable is pretty stable and I haven't had to prove this theory by hard-won experience. Sometimes it is easier to consult the book rather than wade through webpages full of questions and pasted console messages to find the answers, if you are lucky.

Although this book has a good chapter covering the Mac basics, it is probably best suited to intermediate users and switchers who have a few ideas on how computers work but don't know their way around a Mac.

The volume starts with an overview and ends with a section on using Windows on Bootcamp. I can't say it covers everything in between because it doesn't. It does not include information about iLife applications or iWork, which are topics for other books. Nor does it give much coverage to the Unix underpinnings.

Each page is liberally illustrated with small greyscale screenshots that give enough information without holding the reader's hand every step of the way. Maria gives clear short explanations with how-tos and tips on each page. Not too much information, just the right amount.

I like the way the book is laid out with and plenty of breathing space for handwritten annotations and post-its. It is well organised and the contents page and index make it easy to dip into, in a search for quick answers.

Publishing a book so soon after a new operating system is released does have its shortcomings though. This one came out a week after 10.5 was finally released and some of the incorrect comments about Air Disk (backing up wirelessly) indicate that the presses could not be stopped. It was there in the beta version of Leopard but pulled when 10.5 was distributed.

Having a comprehensive manual like this one gives me a feeling of safety, should things go wrong, that at least I can look for answers in a book if I can't access email or the internet. A good time to buy a manual is some months after the new OS is released, but having said that Apple has a habit of springing changes such as Time Capsule, which makes it a challenge for the writers and publishers of printed editions to keep pace.

Author Maria Langer is well known internationally in Mac circles, having written a slew of books on Mac topics. If you want to find out more she has a website: <http://www.marialanger.com>.