Book Review:
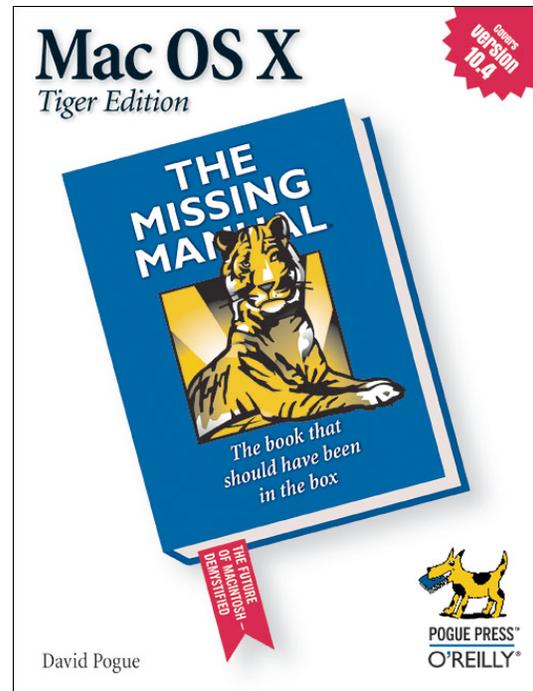
Mac OS X: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition

Reviewed by Jim Macak,

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There's an old Apple commercial that shows a Windows PC and a large stack of manuals that come with it contrasted to a Macintosh and its single, thin user manual. It exemplifies the ease-of-use of a Mac as compared to a PC, but in reality, is that single, thin user manual all you need for a Mac? David Pogue, author of the book in review, certainly thinks not, and I'd tend to agree with him.

The retail box of OS X—Tiger contains that relatively thin manual from Apple. Maybe you glanced at it as you pulled the Install DVD out of the box, but I bet you didn't come back to it for OS X help very often! Apple apparently expects the Tiger user to depend on the Mac OS X Help menu or the Apple website to learn about Tiger and, although these are indeed useful sources of information, they simply cannot compare to a hefty tome (about 850 pages) like *Mac OS X: The Missing Manual.*

The intended audience of this *Missing Manual* is advanced beginners or intermediate Mac users and I would agree that these groups are well served by this book. Nevertheless, the brand new beginner will find informative side bar "Up to Speed" articles with intro-

ductory information and the more advanced user will find "Power User's Clinic" boxes filled with technical tips, tricks and shortcuts intended for the more experienced Macintosh aficionado.

Having read the book cover-to-cover (no small feat, mind you), I found it to be sprinkled with delightfully witty comments that serve as a brief break from the serious and extremely informative text that covers every aspect of OS X—Tiger. Truly all aspects of OS X are covered, from installation to new Tiger features like Spotlight to System Preferences and the use of all of the "free" programs included in OS X. Although you won't become an iLife expert by reading this book's chapters on iTunes, iPhoto, etc., a fine overview of these programs is presented and you'll be able to use them productively with the basics that you learn from *Mac OS X: The Missing Manual.*

I've been using OS X since it first came out and I feel pretty comfortable using it. Given my long experience with OS X, I didn't expect to learn a lot about it from this book. Yet I was repeatedly surprised at

finding tips and tricks previously unknown to me that this book noted about most every aspect of OS X—Tiger.

My one regret is that I didn't take notes or mark up the book as I was reading all the tips that were new to me. There were so many new tips to me that I'm sure that I've forgotten the majority of them already!

This experience leads me to make a recommendation to you about *Mac OS X: The Missing Manual.* To get the most of it, read it a bit at a time with one of those yellow fluorescent hi-lighter markers in hand and don't be afraid to mark up important information. Then grab the book and sit in front of your Mac and review the information that you've highlighted via hands-on experience at the keyboard. If you do so, I guarantee you'll be a Mac expert when you finish this book.

Mac OS X: The Missing Manual has appendices about OS X installation options, troubleshooting, "Where'd It Go?" (relative to previous versions of OS X, OS 9 and Windows), tips about obtaining more info

and a comprehensive "Master Mac OS X Secret Keystroke List." The index is extensive and inclusive of all of the important topics covered in the book.

Finally, *Mac OS X: The Missing Manual* also "contains" a missing CD (which really means that *no* CD-ROM is included), in contrast to many "manual" books of this sort. Instead, the reader is encouraged to visit the MissingManuals.com website to view a chapter-by-chapter list of links of the shareware and freeware mentioned in the book. The "missing CD" reduces the cost of the book and provides a method of keeping the software listings up-to-date, so I don't consider the lack of a CD to be a drawback, especially now that most users have high-speed access to the Internet.

Mac OS X: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition is 100 pages longer than the previous Panther edition and the author claims that there is not a single page that hasn't changed since the last edition. So even if you own a previous edition, you should consider purchasing this new Tiger Edition. Apple keeps adding new features to

OS X with every new version. Are you using them to your benefit? You may never know about what you are missing until you read *Mac OS X: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition!* I highly recommend it to each and every one of you...

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/macxtigermm/index.html>

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