

Switching to the Mac: the missing manual

Tired of fighting spyware? Frustrated by the constant barrage of ever-more-persistent viruses? For these reasons and others, both neophytes and die-hard Windows PC users are turning to the Mac in increasing numbers. Some have security concerns, others are simply beguiled by the undeniable 'cool' factor of a computer that operates, looks, and feels as slick as your iPod.

The authors of "Switching to the Mac: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition" simplify the switch and accelerate the learning curve with a guide that delivers what some say Apple doesn't - everything you need to know to move painlessly to the Mac.

The authors admit that switching to the Mac is not 'all sunshine and bunnies'. They say the Mac is, "a different machine, running a different operating system, built by a company with a different philosophy. When it comes to their missions and ideals, Apple and Microsoft have about as much in common as a melon and a shoehorn."

Pogue and Goldstein's guide to the Mac OS X "Tiger" operating system confronts the similarities and differences head-on, with straightforward explanations and more than a little humour.

"Windows refugees" will quickly become comfortable with the new features and capabilities of their Macs. For those who are adding a Mac to their computer repertoire, they'll show you how to get the two computers talking over a network, sharing an Internet connection and working with each other's files.

"Switching to the Mac: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition" begins with a crash course in Mac essentials, including all the nifty features you see

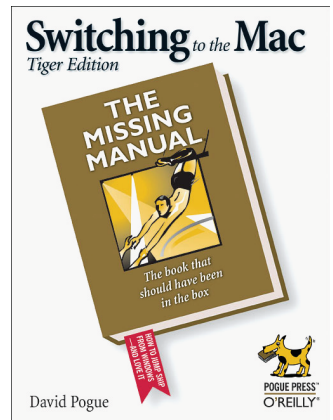
when you turn the machine on and continues with sections on making the transition to the Mac as smooth as possible:

Moving In: how to haul your software, settings and even peripherals (like printers and monitors) across the chasm from the PC to the Mac. It covers the easy parts (copying over documents, pictures, and music files) and the harder ones (transferring email, address books, buddy lists, etc.).

Making Connections: where to find your Internet settings on the old Windows machine and where to plug them in on the Macintosh. It demystifies Apple's Internet software suite—Mail, Address Book, Safari, and iChat.

Putting Down Roots: how to become a Macintosh power user. You'll learn how to set up private accounts for people who share a Mac, navigate the System Preferences program, and operate the 50 free bonus programs that come with Mac OS X.

Two appendices cover troubleshooting and installation and provide a "Where'd It Go?" dictionary of where to find familiar controls in the new Macintosh environment. A third appendix explains standard Mac keystrokes.



Business Objects acquires information visualisation technology

Business Objects has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire privately-held Infommersion, the leading vendor of information visualisation and presentation software. The acquisition will be a cash transaction of approximately US\$40 million.

Infommersion develops and markets industry leading information visualisation and presentation software that enables individuals and businesses to access, analyse and share critical data in a manner previously unachievable - visually, interactively and in real-time.

The company's technology gives executives, analysts and educators the power to turn complex and confusing data into clear, engaging presentations for PowerPoint, Acrobat PDF and the web. Based in San Diego, California, the Infommersion team combines talent from traditionally unrelated industries such as interactive entertainment, information technology, multimedia development, and business intelligence.

"The acquisition of Infommersion adds another chapter in Business Objects' long history of delivering innovative products that enable users to gain the most value from their corporate information," said John Schwarz, chief executive officer of Business Objects. "Our patented semantic layer gave business users a way to access corporate data that helped to catapult Business Objects into the leadership position in the fast-growing business intelligence market. Similarly, we believe the acquisition of Infommersion will allow us to bring visual innovation to business users in ways never seen before."

"Infommersion pioneered interactive information visualisation software, building a large, satisfied customer base and receiving tremendous industry recognition," said Santiago Becerra, CEO of Infommersion. "By joining Business Objects, we believe we will be able to give customers the best the business intelligence industry can offer."

Efficient SCM for 21st Century development

The role of Software Configuration Management (SCM) in the development of games, business best practice and stringent compliance regulations were the themes raised and debated at a recent symposium hosted by Perforce. The SCM tools and consultancy specialist brought together leading industry pundits who analysed how SCM, when implemented correctly, can enable businesses to respond more quickly to changes in their markets.

Attendees expressed their opinions on the significance of SCM in mainstream business today and many of the points raised related to the increasingly topical subject of compliance. Investing in SCM could be viewed as an 'insurance policy' with SCM providing visibility into an organisation's operation and reducing the potential risk of a company being fined for not demonstrating that it has taken the required measures to be compliant. In other words, SCM is often implemented to avoid problems, rather than to enable opportunities.

On this point, Perforce presented on 'The Flow of Change', a view on how 21st Century development projects will demand SCM that can speed up development time. 'The Flow of Change' concept proposes a lateral view of managing parallel development projects covering subjects including high versus low risk development; 'branching for release management'; timelines; and management reporting.

The management reporting session triggered a discussion about the contentious issue of merging files within SCM systems, in general and the amount of time developers potentially lose because of their discomfort with this practise.

Present at the briefing was Neil Ward Dutton, from specialist IT advisory firm Macehiter Ward-Dutton. Commenting on the themes and issues raised during the afternoon Ward-Dutton said, "As development becomes more complex, and the risks of failure become greater, IT delivery organisations are realising that managing the IT delivery lifecycle effectively in a fast-changing environment is a major challenge and a high priority. A solid SCM strategy has to be a core component of IT lifecycle management."