Books

First Steps on the Internet

Sandra Vogel
Aurelian
132pp
£12.99
ISBN: 1-899247-08-4

The author of this particular guide claims it is different from many other Internet books. She's right, but unfortunately for the wrong reasons.

Many other Internet books are detailed, generously illustrated and easy to follow. *First Steps...* can boast none of these attributes. It is a thin collection of text-heavy pages, and adverts outnumber the few (poorly-chosen) illustrations. As if to compound the problem, the author has based some of her tutorials on out-moded software the likes of which needs to be obtained from the Internet, but by this point she hasn't even got around to telling you how to connect.

Also, there are some surprising instances of misinformation ('the latest [modems] can transmit at 56.6Kbps' – in fact, to be precise, they receive at 56Kbps and, to clarify, their transmission speed is still limited to 33.6Kbps) which demonstrates a lack of research and sub-standard editing.

When you find *First Steps...* in the bargain bin (in a couple of weeks, we'd estimate), it still won't be worth buying.

The Essential Word 97 Book

Nancy Stevenson and Elaine Marmel
Prima Publishing
507pp
£22.99
ISBN 0-7615-0427-3

Written in an easy-going tutorial style, *Essential Word 97* sets out to cover pretty much everything Word can do by showing you how to do it. Things start off simply – describing the Word screen and editing a new document, before moving on to basic text formatting and using styles. Useful examples are used, be they letters, presentations or reports and there are plenty of screen shots to clue you in as to what your screen should look like.

Later chapters get more sophisticated – from creating newsletters to using tables in documents and mail merging. Word's online awareness isn't ignored either and Web page creation is covered in detail, though there is no mention of HTML (no bad thing).

The book wraps up with customising the way Word looks and works, a glossary and extensive index. In short, it is a useful volume for any Word user who wants more from the product but doesn't know how to get it.

Teach Yourself: Computers and their use

2nd edition
Lionel Carter and
Eva Husan
Hodder &
Stoughton
136pp
£6.99
ISBN 0-340-65494-5

This was first written in 1984 and, although it was updated last year, most of the diagrams and some of the text seem to have missed out on the facelift.

It claims to be ideal if you are using computers for the first time, introducing some of the tasks a computer can help with, and then moving on to some of the basic technical aspects of a PC. Unfortunately, it starts with overly complex technical information, then tries to show how wonderful computers are through spurious and unhelpful 'case studies.'

Moreover, it's very densely written, introduces computer jargon without making an effort to explain it, is poorly structured and contains too much that is useless to a beginner. ●

Y > FEEDBACK > SURVEY > FEEDBACK > SUR

What PC? has gone through some changes this month, and we'd like to know what you think of them. Give us your opinion by rating each section in this form and returning it to Feedback, *What PC?*, VNU House, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG. Upon receipt your form will be entered in a mystery prize draw.

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Competition	❏	❏	❏	❏
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Glossary	❏	❏	❏	❏
Home & Entertainment	❏	❏	❏	❏
How to Buy	❏	❏	❏	❏
Letters	❏	❏	❏	❏
News	❏	❏	❏	❏
Online	❏	❏	❏	❏
PC Doctor	❏	❏	❏	❏
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Watchdog	❏	❏	❏	❏

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How do you rate our features and group tests?
❏ Poor   ❏ Average   ❏ Good   ❏ Excellent

Which of this month's features did you like the best?
❏ Poor   ❏ Average   ❏ Good   ❏ Excellent

How do you rate our What CD? cover disc
❏ Poor   ❏ Average   ❏ Good   ❏ Excellent

If there was one thing you could change about *What PC?*, what would it be?

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