

•By John Nemerovski <nemo@mymac.com>•

Hewlett-Packard Official Printer Handbook

by Mark L. Chambers

IDG Books Worldwide

<<http://www.idgbooks.com>>

ISBN 0-7645-3289-8, 377 pages

\$19.99 U.S., \$29.99 Canada, £18.99 U.K.

The funny thing about this new book is that it's unique, meaning I'm not aware of any comparable books on the subject of printers. Considering how much time, effort, and expense our printers require, and how little thought we give to them most of the time, the Hewlett-Packard Official Printer Handbook should find a welcome spot on the bookshelves of people who need a handy reference work, or guidance with their printer hardware.

You would think such a book is going to be dull, and you are wrong. Mark Chambers' writing is both enjoyable and informative. He offers facts and opinions, based on personal knowledge and the resources of the H-P company.

Did you ever call Hewlett-Packard for telephone tech support? I have, with some success, but I would have been well-served by the 50+ pages in Appendix A: "Hewlett-Packard Tech Support's Frequently Asked Questions." If you find the answer to your printer problem here, it may be worth the entire cost of the book.

In contrast to our normal thorough approach in Book Bytes, I want to "leave you wanting more" info on Hewlett-Packard Official Printer Handbook. Whether you are planning a purchase or need reliable facts and figures on printers (ink jet, laser, or all-in-one units), this book is twenty bucks well spent. **RECOMMENDED.**

Mark Chambers comments, via email:

When IDG first contacted me about the project, I spent a few minutes researching the competing titles, and ended up very surprised that there really were no beginner-to-intermediate books that took a comprehensive look at selecting, installing, using and maintaining a printer. Now there is!

You can bet I'll be checking Book Bytes, and my friends and family will add to your hit count.

Real World Digital Photography:
Industrial-Strength Techniques
by Deke McClelland
<<http://www.dekemc.com>>
and Katrin Eismann
<<http://www.photoshopdiva.com>>
Peachpit Press
<<http://www.peachpit.com>>
ISBN 0-201-35402-0, 403 pages
\$44.99 U.S., \$67.50 Canada

One of the few genuine perks in being a Book Bytes reviewer is receiving a new title that is both outstanding in content and visually stunning. Over the years, Peachpit Press has taken a commanding lead in books of this type. Deke McClelland, the undisputed champion author on digital creativity, again teams up with Katrin Eismann, and we are the beneficiaries.

What is the fair market value of a high-quality professional computer book? Fifty dollars, more or less? When artists and designers are at work, they are using hardware and software worth thousands, and sometimes tens of thousands of dollars. A given project can be valued at even a higher amount. At what point does the creative pro decide to buy an expensive new workbook?

Once the prized purchase is in the studio or office of the artist/designer, how many users actually plow through the lessons, or at least refer to the tutorials?

I think about these ideas all the time. Am I alone? Are you talented readers on the same wavelength?

Real World Digital Photography follows in the celebrated path of Deke and Katrin's previous books, particularly since the release of Photoshop 5.

I have a personal interest in the future of digital photography, having been involved in photography for fun and profit for over 30 years. I decided that I will "retire"

from teaching photography when more students come to class with digital cameras than with conventional film cameras. Time will tell.

The book begins with a basic unit on camera selection and operation, loaded with explanatory terminology and greyscale photos. Deke and Katrin then ease readers into a discussion of pixels and image formats. Next comes a more thorough series of chapters on making the working digital camera experience as productive as possible. The authors realize that exciting improvements and price reductions are happening on a daily basis, and provide web URLs to help readers stay current with the latest and greatest.

At some point they simply had to grit their collective digital teeth and address “Mac versus Windows: Which OS Is Better?” Can you guess? Hint: turn to page 144.

Deeper and deeper we delve into successful photographic techniques (for once, in a Deke book, something I actually understand), before getting into the sexy stuff, such as “Immersive Imaging and QuickTime VR.” You guessed what comes next: working with Photoshop, and printed output. Never a dull moment, right Katrin and Deke? Final chapters cover Web imagery, plus cataloging and archiving your photos.

Attractive groupings of color plates appear after every few chapters, in four color-coded clusters for easy location. The physical book is printed on high-quality glossy paper stock, enhancing all the illustrations and text.

I’m not sure this book has any competition, making it straightforward to **RECOMMEND** Real World Digital Photography for serious computer-using photographers.

Adobe GoLive 4.0: Classroom in a Book
by “The Staff of Adobe”

Adobe Books / Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

ISBN 0-201-65889-5, 318 pages plus CD

\$40.00 U.S., \$60 Canada, £37.50 U.K.

Adobe has goosed its “new” GoLive web page creation application up to version 4.0, and quickly produced this title as an aftermarket workbook. The classroom

approach blends lessons in print with corresponding electronic files on the disk. The book is not meant to replace the User Guide that comes with the software purchase, or supplementary updaters on the company website.

The production quality of the physical book is high, using heavy, glossy paper stock, with ample margin space for reader scribbling. Pages contains helpful and well-structured screen shots, which must have taken hundreds of hours to produce.

Each of the eight chapters is lengthy, consisting of consecutive tutorials. There are review questions and answers at the end of every chapter. The course material remains uniform, carrying a specific web page project from concept to completion, step by detailed step. Chapter titles are simple (“Laying Out Web Pages,” “Links,” or “Animation”), yet the content is extensive.

Lesson Seven is heavy-duty: “Using Cascading Style Sheets,” and I can really use some help in this department! The book concludes with a vital unit on site management.

How much time and money is it worth to learn GoLive correctly out of the box? If \$40 seems reasonable, then we can agree to **RECOMMEND** Adobe GoLive 4.0: Classroom in a Book.

indows for Mac Users:

The Macintosh-to-Windows Guide
by Cynthia L. Baron and Robin Williams
Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

ISBN 0-201-35396-2, 421 pages

\$19.99 U.S., \$29.95 Canada

Here’s an intriguing idea: make it easy for Mac people to use Windows. Why didn’t somebody think this one up previously? The authors encourage readers to “jump in, learn the dumb thing, and move forward empowered!”

Let’s get serious, okay? Windows for Mac Users prepares us physically and mentally to “do Windows,” starting with choices of Macintosh hardware and software for running Windows on a Mac. Every page of text has an outside column containing valuable terminology and tips, in bold type. Thanks, Robin and Cyndi.

Next come the basics of the Windows platform, and how it's both similar and different from the Mac universe. If you ever wondered how to operate “the amazing two-headed mouse,” you will find the answer, beginning on page 84.

I was uninformed on how to use the Taskbar and Start Menu, until I studied chapter eight in Windows for Mac Users. Throughout the book, the writing and tutorial chores are clearly written and illustrated. The sections on display settings and control panels are particularly helpful.

Chapter 14 is clever, entitled “Mac Desk Accessories a la Windows.” The authors work their way through each well-known Mac item, such as Stickies or the Chooser, then patiently describe its Windows counterpart. A little later comes a chapter on file transfers, with special emphasis on correct creation and naming of Mac-to-Win files.

To conclude, in Chapter 28, a troubleshooting unit covers loads of essential techniques to try when all else fails, plus plain old common sense: backing up, defragmenting, and similar procedures. Overall, this book has outstanding content at exceptional value. When Windows is a necessity, the time you spend with Windows for Mac Users: The Macintosh-to Windows Guide will be much less than you would need to figure out what to do (and what not to do!) on your own.

RECOMMENDED.

he Ultimate iMac Book

by Dan Parks Sydow

MacCentral Press

<<http://www.maccentral.com>>

<<http://www.imacbook.com>>

ISBN 096670260-3, 344 pages

\$17.95 U.S.

The race is on, and at the last count there are nine competing books on the mighty iMac, including this new title. If Book Bytes has overlooked any other ones, let me know right away.

My source at MacCentral tells me that this is the first book with their imprint, with hopes for future titles. They certainly have a high-visibility website, so the potential may soon lead to a reality.

The author begins at the beginning, patiently and thoroughly explaining newbie hardware and software terminology, including plenty of essential operating system stuff. Gigantic screen shots make the learning experience visually accessible.

URLs are liberally sprinkled throughout, and are printed in legible Courier font, for easy recognition in contrast to the primary text font. The Internet features prominently in *The Ultimate iMac Book*, again with the fundamentals getting most of the content.

Ambitious readers can learn about “Creating Your Own Web Page” in the extensive Chapter Eight, before wrestling with USB and peripherals in the following chapters. Sydow offers a well-presented section on “Networking With Other Macs,” knowing that many iMac owners already have an older computer.

The final chapters have discussions on maintaining, upgrading, and playing games with your colorful new iMac, plus several pages of suggested websites for pleasure and information.

Overall, it is a good book. I hope MacCentral sells enough copies of *The Ultimate iMac Book* to subsidize their next item. Book Bytes **RECOMMENDS** this title for total newcomers to the iMac.

he Complete Idiot’s Guide to
A Career in Computer Programming
by Jesse Liberty
<<http://www.libertyassociates.com>>
Alpha/Que/Macmillan
<<http://www.mcp.com>>
ISBN 0-7897-1995-9, 282 pages
\$16.99 U.S., \$25.95 Canada, £15.99 U.K.

What I don’t know about computer programming would fill a much larger book than this one. Let’s see if I can become inspired.

If the first chapter, “Market Opportunity,” is any indicator, the author is an experienced, thoughtful writer. He explains the realistic possibilities of a career in programming, including some obstacles.

Both self-study and formal education can be used to learn one or more

programming language. Jesse Liberty presumes readers will be writing for Windows, but many of his suggestions are cross-platform. You can learn to program either/both for applications or the Internet, but usually one at a time.

As we proceed deeper into The Complete Idiot's Guide to A Career in Computer Programming, the techie terminology becomes more strenuous, so be patient as you push on. I became mired on page 113, finding myself reading, for the 99th time, the section on "Execution Falling Through the switch Statement." Sorry, but I'll need more time to finish this book!

Skipping ahead to lucky Chapter 13, "Looking for Work," readers can take a self-evaluation test to determine how to delve into the profession. The book concludes with additional real-world work suggestions, plus a helpful reading list and section on binary math.

If I were 21 and not 51, my enthusiasm for this exciting and expanding field would be greater. Does anyone know how to reset my clock back 30 years? Younger, more energetic readers should take a long, hard look at The Complete Idiot's Guide to A Career in Computer Programming before deciding on a lifetime occupation.

penSources: Voices from the Open Source Revolution

<<http://www.oreilly.com>>

Edited by Chris DiBona, Sam Ockman, and Mark Stone

O'Reilly and Associates

<<http://www.oreilly.com>>

ISBN 1-56592-582-3, 272 pages

\$24.95 U.S., \$36.95 Canada

I'll spare you a detailed review of this ground-breaking book, because the entire content has been "open sourced" at the long URL just under the title, a few lines above here. See for yourself.

Do you get as annoyed as I do when someone says "If you have never heard about blahblahblah you must have been living in a cave during the last XYZ years?" In this case, the topic under discussion is the open source movement, spearheaded by many of the contributors to OpenSources: Voices from the Open Source Revolution.

Open sourcing refers to software developers allowing other people free access to

enhance the original code, for ultimate benefit to the entire user community. The most famous example of this practice is with LINUX, a heavy-duty free operating system initially based on the UNIX-OS.

Before our non-review becomes really tedious, I'll mention that this book is geared to people who are comfortable thinking and talking about computer programming and its economic/political consequences. Early chapters provide historical perspective, before the writers begin to discuss "microkernels" or the "GNU General Public License."

Much of the geeky material is way beyond me, but I am drawn to OpenSources by the pervasive, radical power of the concept of free software. Reading the book (in print or on the web) as a non-programmer with a sense of history and an ear aimed into the future, I can pick and choose from among the paragraphs, and feel some degree of participation in the process.

If the names Larry Wall, Linus Torvalds, Tim O'Reilly, and their visionary colleagues don't mean anything to you, spend a few minutes or hours learning about the revolution, because it will affect you, positively, sooner rather than later.

he Inmates Are Running the Asylum:
Why High-Tech Products Drive Us Crazy
and How to Restore the Sanity
by Alan Cooper
<<http://www.cooper.com>>
Sams Publishing
<<http://www.sampublishing.com>>
ISBN 0-672-31649-8, 261 pages
\$25.00 U.S., \$37.95 Canada, £22.95 U.K.

In content and style, The Inmates Are Running the Asylum is aimed toward the "technology-savvy businessperson," which includes many of you Book Bytes readers. Beginning with a description of the bizarre ways in which computers have invaded the infrastructure of our lives, the author segues into his chosen field: software design and implementation.

Cooper and I think alike, when he writes that the international computer experience has led to an "apartheid" of economic and cultural proportions. Hear, hear! By page 52, we're treated to "The Hidden Costs of Bad Software," and our eyes are

opened to the harsh realities of good/bad programming.

The author is a lateral-thinker more than a naysayer. He encompasses computer-related issues from several perspectives. Then he zeros in on their practical consequences, such as “customer disloyalty,” “an obsolete culture,” and his final major section on software design for power and/or pleasure.

I’m not going to pretend I have studied *The Inmates Are Running the Asylum* in depth yet, but I will do so sooner rather than later. The text is not exactly vacation reading, but should be on the nightstand of tens of thousands of clear-headed managers and executives. They ignore Cooper’s message at their peril.

•John Nemerovski• <nemo@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

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<<http://www.dekeme.com>>

<<http://www.photoshopdiva.com>>

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