

LEARNING MADE EASY



macOS Catalina™

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Take a tour of the macOS
Catalina™ interface

Get organized and save time
with macOS applications

Get pro tips on
speeding up your Mac

Bob “Dr. Mac” LeVitus



macOS Catalina™

by Bob LeVitus

Houston Chronicle "Dr. Mac" columnist

for
dummies®
A Wiley Brand

macOS Catalina™ For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2020 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and may not be used without written permission. macOS Catalina is a trademark of Apple, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book. *macOS Catalina™ For Dummies* is an independent publication and has not been authorized, sponsored, or otherwise approved by Apple, Inc.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit <https://hub.wiley.com/community/support/dummies>.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019950140

ISBN 978-1-119-60788-5 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-60799-1 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-60790-8 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	3
Icons Used in This Book	3
Beyond the Book	4
Where to Go from Here	4
PART 1: macOS BASICS	5
CHAPTER 1: macOS Catalina 101 (Prerequisites: None)	7
Gnawing to the Core of macOS	8
A Safety Net for the Absolute Beginner (or Any User)	10
Turning the dang thing on	10
What you should see on startup	11
Shutting down properly	14
A few things you should definitely not do with your Mac	15
Point-and-click Boot Camp	17
Not Just a Beatles Movie: Help and the Help Menu	19
CHAPTER 2: Desktop and Windows and Menus (Oh My!)	23
Touring Finder and Its Desktop	24
Anatomy of a Window	25
Top o' the window to ya!	28
A scroll new world	29
(Hyper)active windows	31
Dialog Dealie-Boppers	32
Working with Windows	34
Opening and closing windows	34
Resizing windows and window panes	35
Moving windows	36
Shuffling windows	36
Menu Basics	39
The ever-changing menu bar	39
Contextual menus: They're sooo contextual!	40
Recognizing disabled options	41
Navigating submenus	41
Under the Apple menu tree	42
Using keyboard shortcut commands	44

CHAPTER 3: What's Up, Dock?	45
A Quick Introduction to Your Dock	46
The default icons of the dock	46
Trash talkin'	49
Opening application menus on the dock	51
Reading dock icon body language	53
Opening files from the dock	53
Customizing Your Dock	54
Adding dock icons	54
Removing an icon from the dock	56
Resizing the dock	57
What should you put on your dock?	58
Setting your dock preferences	59
CHAPTER 4: Getting to Know Finder and Its Desktop	65
Introducing Finder and Its Minions: The Desktop and Icons	66
Introducing the desktop	66
Belying up to the toolbar	68
Figuring out what an icon is	71
Identifying your Finder icons in the wild	72
Aliases Are Awesome!	73
Creating aliases	75
Deleting aliases	75
Hunting down an alias's parent	76
The View(s) from a Window	76
Moving through folders fast in Column view	76
Perusing in Icon view	79
Listless? Try touring folders in List view	79
Hangin' in the Gallery (view)	81
What's next on the (View) menu?	82
Finder on the Menu	84
The actual Finder menu	84
Like a road map: The current folder's pop-up menu	86
Going places with the Go menu	87
Customizing Finder Windows	89
Adding folders to the sidebar	90
Setting Finder preferences	90
Digging for Icon Data in the Info Window	94
CHAPTER 5: Delving Even Deeper into Catalina's Desktop and Finder	97
Cleaning Up Your Desktop Automatically with Stacks	98
Managing your Stacks	100
Quick Actions: Now Playing All Over Catalina	101

Getting the most out of Markup	101
Trimming video without launching an app	104
Do It Quicker with Finder Quick Actions	105
Creating PDFs without launching an app.	105
Creating custom Finder Quick Actions.	106
Four More Cool Catalina Tricks	107
Shooting screens.	107
Dynamic desktop images	109
Recently used apps in the dock.	110
Mentions of Gallery view	111
PART 2: HOW STUFF WORKS	113
CHAPTER 6: Having It Your Way	115
Introducing System Preferences.	115
Putting a Picture on the Desktop	118
Setting Up a Screen Saver	120
Giving Buttons, Menus, and Windows a Makeover	121
Adjusting the Keyboard, Mouse, Trackpad, and Other Hardware	125
Keyboard.	125
Keyboard tab	125
Text tab	127
Shortcuts tab	129
Input Sources tab	130
Mouse	130
Bluetooth	131
Trackpad (notebooks and desktops with a Magic Trackpad)	132
Styling Your Sound	133
Changing sound effects	134
Choosing output and input options	134
CHAPTER 7: Opening and Saving Files	135
A Quick Primer on Finding Files.	136
Understanding the macOS Folder Structure.	136
Understanding nested folders.	137
From the top: The Computer folder	138
Peeking into the Applications folder.	139
Visiting the Library folders	139
Let it be: The System folder	140
There's no place like Home	141
Your personal library card	143
Saving Your Document Before It's Too Late	144
Stepping through a basic save.	146
Save As versus Duplicate: Different names for the same result.	152

Open, Sez Me	154
With drag-and-drop	156
With a Quick Look	156
When your Mac can't open a file	157
With the application of your choice	158
CHAPTER 8: File and Folder Management Made Easy	161
Organizing Your Stuff in Folders	161
Files versus folders	162
Organizing your stuff with subfolders	162
Creating new folders	164
Navigating with spring-loaded folders	165
Smart folders	166
Shuffling Files and Folders	168
Moving files and folders	169
Selecting multiple icons	170
Playing the icon name game: Renaming icons	171
Renaming multiple icons at once	172
Compressing files	172
Getting rid of icons	173
The Incredible iCloud Drive	173
CHAPTER 9: Comprehending the macOS Clipboard	175
Introducing the Clipboard	175
Copying Files and Folders	177
Pasting from the Clipboard	178
Catalina's Universal Clipboard	179
PART 3: GETTING THINGS DONE	181
CHAPTER 10: Four Terrific Time-saving Tools	183
With a Quick Look	184
Share and share alike with the Share menu	185
Slide into Slideshow (full-screen) mode	186
Spotlight on Finding Files and Folders Faster	187
Using the Find command	188
Using the Spotlight menu and its keyboard shortcut	190
Blast Off with Mission Control	191
The Mission Control pane: It's painless	192
Hot corners are hot stuff!	194
Mission Control's Spaces from 30,000 feet (an overview)	195
Getting around in space(s)	197
Launchpad: The Place for Applications	198

CHAPTER 11: Organizing Your Life	201
Keeping Track with Calendar	202
Navigating Calendar views	202
Creating calendars	203
Deleting a calendar	205
Creating and managing events	205
Reminders: Protection Against Forgetting	208
Getting started with Reminders	209
To do or not to do: Setting reminders	210
Everything You Need to Know about Notification Center	211
Use Notes for Making Notes	215
Tracking Productivity with Screen Time	218
CHAPTER 12: Are You Siri-ous?	221
What Siri Can Do for You	221
Working with Siri	223
Making Siri Your Own	224
CHAPTER 13: Maps Are Where It's At	227
Finding Your Current Location with Maps	227
Finding a Person, Place, or Thing	228
Views, Zooms, and Pans	230
Maps and Contacts	231
Time-saving Map Tools: Favorites, Recents, and Contacts	232
Favorites	233
Recents	234
Contacts	234
Smart Map Tricks	234
Get route maps and driving directions	234
Get walking directions	236
Get directions for public transportation	236
Get traffic info in real time	236
Fly over cool landmarks with 3D flyover tours	238
Do more on the Info sheet	239
CHAPTER 14: Apps Born in iOS	241
Taking Stock of the Market with Stocks	241
Adding and deleting stocks, funds, and indexes	243
Details, details, details	244
Charting a course	244

Read All about It in News	245
What are your interests?	245
How News works	247
Managing your news	247
Recording Memos with Voice Memos	248
Recording a voice memo	248
Listening to a voice memo	249
Naming a voice memo	250
Trimming a voice memo	250
Controlling Lights, Locks, and More with Home	251
PART 4: GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS	253
CHAPTER 15: (Inter)Networking	255
Getting Connected to the Internet	256
Your Internet service provider and you	256
Plugging in your Internet-connection settings	257
Browsing the Web with Safari	259
Owning your toolbar	260
Using the Safari sidebar	263
Searching with Google	267
Protect Yourself from Malice (and Ads)	269
Checking out Help Center	269
Audio and Video Calls with FaceTime	269
CHAPTER 16: Dealing with People	273
Collecting Your Contacts	273
Adding contacts	274
Importing contacts from other programs	276
Creating a basic group	276
Setting up a smart group (based on contact criteria)	278
Deleting a group or smart group	278
The view is lovely	279
Sync + Contacts = your contacts everywhere	279
CHAPTER 17: Communicating with Mail and Messages	281
Sending and Receiving Email with Mail	281
Setting up Mail	282
A quick overview of the toolbar	282
Composing a new message	285
Sending email from the Contacts app	287
Checking your mail	288

Dealing with spam	289
Mailboxes smart and plain	290
Changing your preferences	293
Sign here, please	293
Mail rules rule	295
Take a (Quick) look and (Slide) show me some photos	297
Markup and Mail Drop	298
Communicating with Messages	301
Chit-chatting with Messages	301
CHAPTER 18: Sharing Your Mac and Liking It	305
Introducing Networks and File Sharing	306
Portrait of home office networking	307
Three ways to build a network	309
Setting Up File Sharing	311
Access and Permissions: Who Can Do What	312
Users and groups and guests	312
Creating users	314
macOS knows best: Folders shared by default	318
Sharing a folder or disk by setting permissions	319
Useful settings for permissions	324
Unsharing a folder	326
Connecting to a Shared Disk or Folder on a Remote Mac	326
Changing Your Password	330
Changing your account password on your Mac	330
Changing the password of any account but your own on your Mac	331
Changing the password for your account on someone else's Mac	332
More Types of Sharing	333
Sharing a screen	333
Sharing the Internet	334
And yet more ways to share	335
PART 5: GETTING CREATIVE	337
CHAPTER 19: The Musical Mac	339
Apple Music and iTunes Match Rock!	340
Introducing Music (the App Formerly Known as iTunes)	341
Working with Media	344
Adding songs	345
Listening to Radio	347

All about Playlists	348
Creating a regular playlist	348
Filtering your library with Filter Field	350
Working with smart playlists	350
Burning a playlist to CD	351
Looking at the Genius playlist	352
CHAPTER 20: The Multimedia Mac	355
Playing Movies and Music in QuickTime Player	356
Watching TV	357
Using the Books App	358
Buying an e-book or audiobook	359
Shopping for e-books without Apple	361
Reading an e-book	362
Finding and Listening to Podcasts with the Podcasts App	364
You're the Star with Photo Booth	365
Viewing and Converting Images and PDFs in Preview	367
Importing Media from a Camera or Camcorder	369
CHAPTER 21: Words and Letters	373
Processing Words with TextEdit	373
Creating and composing a document	374
Working with text	375
Adding graphics to documents	378
Font Mania	380
Types of fonts	381
Managing your fonts with Font Book	381
CHAPTER 22: Publish or Perish: The Fail-Safe Guide to Printing	383
Before Diving In	384
Ready: Connecting and Adding Your Printer	384
Connecting your printer	385
Setting up a printer for the first time	385
One last thing: Printer sharing	387
Set: Setting Up Your Document with Page Setup	388
Print: Printing with the Print Sheet	389
Printing a document	390
Choosing among different printers	391
Choosing custom settings	391
Saving custom settings	394
Preview and PDF Options	394

PART 6: CARE AND FEEDING	397
CHAPTER 23: Features for the Way You Work	399
Finally, a Dark Mode	400
App Shopping, Improved	401
Using Your iPhone as Your Mac's Camera or Scanner	403
Talking and Listening to Your Mac	405
Keyboard System Preferences pane:	
You talk and your Mac types	405
Commanding your Mac by voice	407
Listening to your Mac read for you	409
Automatic Automation	412
Script Editor app: Write and edit AppleScripts	412
Automator app: Automate almost anything	413
A Few More Useful Goodies	416
Accessibility System Preferences pane: Make your Mac more accessible	416
Energy Saver System Preferences pane: For energy conservation and sleep	418
Bluetooth System Preferences pane: Where Bluetooth lives	419
Ink System Preferences pane: Visible to pen-input tablet users only	419
Automatic Login in the Users & Groups System Preferences pane: Don't bother with the login screen	420
Allow your Apple Watch to unlock your Mac	421
Boot Camp Assistant app: Run Windows on your Mac ... really	421
AirPlay Mirroring	422
Handoff	422
CHAPTER 24: Safety First: Backups and Other Security Issues ..	425
Backing Up Is (Not) Hard to Do	426
Backing up with Catalina's excellent Time Machine	426
Backing up by using the manual, brute-force method	430
Backing up by using commercial backup software	431
Why You Need Two Sets of Backups	432
Non-Backup Security Concerns	433
About viruses and other malware	433
Firewall: Yea or nay?	435
Install recommended software updates	437
Protecting Your Data from Prying Eyes	438
Blocking or limiting connections	438
Locking down files with FileVault	438
Setting other options for security	439

CHAPTER 25: Utility Chest	443
In the Applications and Utilities Folders	443
Calculator	443
Activity Monitor	444
Disk Utility	446
Grapher	451
Keychain Access	451
Migration Assistant	454
System Information	454
Terminal	455
Capturing Your Screen	455
Catalina screen-shooting 101	457
Catalina screen-shooting options	459
Catalina screen recording	460
CHAPTER 26: Troubleshooting macOS	461
About Startup Disks and Booting	461
Finding or creating a startup disk	462
They call it a prohibitory sign for a reason	462
Recovering with Recovery HD	464
Step 1: Run First Aid	464
Step 2: Safe boot into Safe mode	465
Step 3: Zapping the PRAM/NVRAM	466
Step 4: Reinstalling macOS	467
Step 5: Things to try before taking your Mac in for repair	467
If Your Mac Crashes at Startup	468
Optimizing Storage	469
PART 7: THE PART OF TENS	471
CHAPTER 27: Ten Ways to Speed Up Your Mac Experience	473
Use Those Keyboard Shortcuts	474
Improve Your Typing Skills	475
Change Your Resolution	475
Purchase a Faster Mac	477
Add RAM	477
Add a Second Display	478
Use Your iPad as a Second Display	478
Upgrade to a Solid-State Drive (SSD)	479
Get More Storage	479
Subscribe to My Free Newsletter	481

CHAPTER 28: Ten Great Websites for Mac Freaks	483
The Mac Observer	484
Macworld	484
TidBITS	484
iMore	485
AppleWorld.Today	485
The Wirecutter	485
Apple Support	486
Other World Computing	486
dealmac/dealnews	487
Working Smarter for Mac Users	487
INDEX	489

Introduction

You made the right choice twice: macOS Catalina (version 10.15) and this book. Take a deep breath and get ready to have a rollicking good time. That's right. This is a computer book, but it's fun. What a concept! Whether you're brand spanking new to the Mac or a grizzled Mac vet, I guarantee that reading this book to discover the ins and outs of macOS Catalina will make learning easy. If it weren't true, I couldn't say it right on the cover!

About This Book

This book's roots lie with my international best seller *Macintosh System 7.5 For Dummies*, an award-winning book so good that long-deceased Mac clone-maker Power Computing gave away a copy with every Mac clone it sold.

macOS Catalina For Dummies is the latest revision and has been, once again, completely and thoroughly updated to include all the tasty goodness in macOS Catalina. In other words, this edition combines all the old, familiar features of dozens of previous editions — but is once again updated to reflect the latest and greatest offering from Apple as well as feedback from readers.

Why write a *For Dummies* book about Catalina? Well, Catalina is a big, somewhat complicated personal-computer operating system. So, I made *macOS Catalina For Dummies* a not-so-big, not-too-complicated book that shows you what Catalina is all about without boring you to tears, confusing you, or poking you with sharp objects.

In fact, I think you'll be so darned comfortable that I wanted the title to be *macOS Catalina Made Easy*, but the publishers wouldn't let me. Apparently, we *Dummies* authors have to follow some rules, and using *Dummies* in this book's title is one of them.

And speaking of dummies — remember, that's just a word. I don't think you're a dummy at all — quite the opposite! My second choice for this book's title was *macOS Catalina For People Smart Enough to Know They Need This Book*, but you can just imagine what Wiley thought of that.

The book is chock-full of information and advice, explaining everything you need to know about macOS Catalina in language you can understand — along with time-saving tips, tricks, techniques, and step-by-step instructions, all served up in generous quantities.

Another rule we *Dummies* authors must follow is that our books cannot exceed a certain number of pages. (Brevity is the soul of wit, and all that.) So, while I wish I could have included some things that didn't fit, I feel confident you'll find what you need to know about macOS Catalina in this book.

Still, a few things bear further looking into, such as these:

» **Information about many of the applications (programs) that come**

with macOS Catalina: An installation of macOS Catalina includes more than 50 applications, mostly located in the Applications and Utilities folders. I'd love to walk you through each one of them, but that would have required a book a whole lot bigger, heavier, and more expensive than this one.

I brief you on the handful of bundled applications essential to using macOS Catalina — namely, Calendar, Contacts, Messages, Mail, Safari, Siri, TextEdit, and the like — as well as several important utilities you may need to know how to use someday.

» **Information about Microsoft Office, Apple lifestyle and productivity apps (iMovie, Numbers, Pages, and so on), Adobe Photoshop, Quicken, and other third-party applications:**

Okay, if all the gory details of all the bundled (read: *free*) macOS Catalina applications don't fit here, I think you'll understand why digging into third-party applications that cost extra was out of the question.

» **Information about programming for the Mac:** This book is about using macOS Catalina, not writing code for it. Dozens of books — most of which are two or three times the size of this book — cover programming on the Mac; this one does not.

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

Although I know what happens when you make assumptions, I've made a few anyway.

First, I assume that you, gentle reader, know nothing about using macOS — beyond knowing what a Mac is, that you want to use macOS, that you want to understand macOS without having to digest an incomprehensible technical manual, and that you made the right choice by selecting this particular book. And so I do my best to explain each new concept in full and loving detail. Maybe that's foolish, but . . . that's how I roll.

Oh, and I also assume that you can read. If you can't, ignore this paragraph.

Icons Used in This Book

Little pictures (icons) appear off to the left side of the text throughout this book. Consider these icons miniature road signs, telling you a little something extra about the topic at hand. Here's what the different icons look like and what they all mean.



TIP

Look for Tip icons to find the juiciest morsels: shortcuts, tips, and undocumented secrets about Catalina. Try them all; impress your friends!



REMEMBER

When you see this icon, it means that this particular morsel is something that I think you should memorize (or at least write on your shirt cuff).



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Put on your propeller-beanie hat and pocket protector; these parts include the truly geeky stuff. It's certainly not required reading, but it must be interesting or informative, or I wouldn't have wasted your time with it.



WARNING

Read these notes very, very, very carefully. (Did I say *very*?) Warning icons flag important cautionary information. The author and publisher won't be responsible if your Mac explodes or spews flaming parts because you ignored a Warning icon. Just kidding. Macs don't explode or spew (with the exception of a few choice PowerBook 5300s, which won't run Catalina anyway). But I got your attention, didn't I?



Well, now, what could this icon possibly be about? Named by famous editorial consultant Mr. Obvious, this icon highlights all things new and different in macOS Catalina.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading right now, this product also comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that provides handy shortcuts for use with macOS Catalina, offers my backup recommendations, and more. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and type **macOS Catalina For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the search box.

Where to Go from Here

The first few chapters of this book are where I describe the basic things that you need to understand to operate your Mac effectively. If you're new to Macs and macOS Catalina, start there.

macOS Catalina is only slightly different from previous Mac operating systems, and the first part of the book presents concepts so basic that if you've been using a Mac for long, you might think you know it all — and okay, you might know most of it. But remember that not-so-old-timers need a solid foundation, too. So here's my advice: Skim through stuff you already know and you'll get to the better stuff sooner.

I would love to hear how this book worked for you. So please send me your thoughts, platitudes, likes and dislikes, and any other comments. Did this book work for you? What did you like? What didn't you like? What questions were unanswered? Did you want to know more (or less) about something? Tell me! I have received more than 100 suggestions about previous editions, many of which are incorporated here. So please (please!) keep up the good work! Email me at Catalina4Dummies@boblevitus.com. I appreciate your feedback, and I *try* to respond to all reasonably polite email within a few days.

So what are you waiting for? Go! Enjoy the book!

1 macOS Basics

IN THIS PART . . .

Find the most basic of basics, including how to turn on your Mac.

Make the dock work harder for you.

Get a gentle introduction to Finder and its desktop.

Find everything you need to know about Catalina's windows, icons, and menus (oh my)!

Get all the bad puns and wisecracks you've come to expect.

Discover a plethora of Finder tips and tricks to make life with Catalina even easier (and more fulfilling).

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding what an operating system is and is not
- » Turning on your Mac
- » Getting to know the start-up process
- » Turning off your Mac
- » Avoiding major Mac mistakes
- » Pointing, clicking, dragging, and other uses for your mouse
- » Getting help from your Mac

Chapter **1**

macOS Catalina 101 (Prerequisites: None)

Congratulate yourself on choosing macOS Catalina version 10.15, the 16th release of the venerable operating system (OS) formerly known as OS X. Congratulate yourself for scoring more than just an OS upgrade. See, macOS Catalina includes a few new features that make using your Mac even easier, plus hundreds of tweaks to help you do more work in less time.

In this chapter, I start at the very beginning and talk about macOS in mostly abstract terms; then I move on to explain what you need to know to use macOS Catalina successfully.

If you've been using macOS (the operating system formerly known as Mac OS X) for a while, most of the information in this chapter may seem hauntingly familiar; a number of features that I describe haven't changed in years. But if you decide to skip this chapter because you think you have all the new stuff figured out, I assure

you that you'll miss at least a couple of things that Apple didn't bother to tell you (as if you read every word in macOS Help — the only user manual Apple provides — anyway!).

Tantalized? Let's rock.

Gnawing to the Core of macOS

The operating system (that is, the OS part of *macOS*) is what makes your Mac a Mac. Without it, your Mac is nothing but a pile of silicon and circuits — no smarter than a toaster.

“So what does an operating system do?” you ask. Good question. The short answer is that an OS controls the basic and most important functions of your computer. In the case of macOS and your Mac, the operating system

- » Manages memory
- » Controls how windows, icons, and menus work
- » Keeps track of files
- » Manages networking and security
- » Does housekeeping (No kidding!)

Other forms of software, such as word processors and web browsers, rely on the OS to create and maintain the environment in which they work their magic. When you create a memo, for example, the word processor provides the tools for you to type and format the information and save it in a file. In the background, the OS is the muscle for the word processor, performing the following crucial functions:

- » Providing the mechanism for drawing and moving the onscreen window in which you write the memo
- » Keeping track of the file when you save it
- » Helping the word processor create drop-down menus and dialogs for you to interact with
- » Communicating with other programs
- » And much, much more (stuff that only geeks could care about)

So, armed with a little background in operating systems, take a gander at the next section before you do anything else with your Mac.

One last thing: As I mention in this book's Introduction (I'm repeating it here in case you normally don't read introductions), macOS Catalina comes with more than 50 applications in its Applications and Utilities folders. Although I'd love to tell you all about each and every one, I have only so many pages at my disposal.

THE MAC ADVANTAGE

Most of the world's personal computers use Microsoft Windows (although more and more people are switching to the Mac). But you're among the lucky ones who have a computer with an OS that's intuitive, easy to use, and (dare I say?) fun. If you don't believe me, try using Windows for a day or two. Go ahead. You probably won't suffer any permanent damage. In fact, you'll really begin to appreciate how good you have it. Feel free to hug your Mac. Or give it a peck on the mouse or trackpad.

As someone once told me, "Claiming that macOS is inferior to Windows because more people use Windows is like saying that all other restaurants serve food that's inferior to McDonald's."

We might be a minority, but Mac users have the best, most stable, most modern all-purpose operating system in the world, and here's why: Unix, on which macOS is based, is widely regarded as the best industrial-strength operating system on the planet. For now, just know that being based on Unix means that a Mac running macOS will crash less often than an older (pre-OS X) Mac or most Windows machines, which means less downtime. Being Unix-based also means getting far fewer viruses and encounters with malicious software. But perhaps the biggest advantage macOS has is that when an application crashes, it doesn't crash your entire computer, and you don't have to restart the computer to continue working.

By the way, since the advent of Intel-powered Macs more than a decade ago, you can run Windows natively also on any Mac powered by an Intel processor, as I describe in Chapter 23. Note that the opposite isn't true: You can run Windows on your Mac if you care to, but you *cannot* run macOS on a Dell or HP or any other computer not made by Apple (at least not without serious hacking, which is probably illegal anyway).

And don't let that Unix or Windows stuff scare you. It's there if you want it, but if you don't want it or don't care (like most users), you'll rarely even know it's there. In fact, you'll rarely (if ever) see the word *Unix* or *Windows* again in this book. As far as you're concerned, Unix under the hood means your Mac will just run and run and run without crashing and crashing and crashing. As for Windows, your Mac can run it if you need it; otherwise, it's just another checklist item on the list of reasons Macs are better than PCs.

A Safety Net for the Absolute Beginner (or Any User)

In the following sections, I deal with the stuff that macOS Help doesn't cover — or doesn't cover in nearly enough detail. If you're a first-time Mac user, please, *please* read this section of the book carefully; it could save your life. Okay, okay, perhaps I'm being overly dramatic. What I mean to say is that reading this section could save your Mac or your sanity. Even if you're an experienced Mac user, you may want to read this section. Chances are you'll see at least a few things you've forgotten that will come in handy now that you've been reminded of them.

Turning the dang thing on

Okay. This is the big moment — turning on your Mac! Gaze at it longingly first, and say something cheesy, such as, “You're the most awesome computer I've ever known.” If that doesn't turn on your Mac (and it probably won't), keep reading.

Apple, in its infinite wisdom, has manufactured Macs with power buttons on every conceivable surface: on the front, side, and back of the computer itself, and even on the keyboard and monitor.

So if you don't know how to turn on your Mac, don't feel bad; just look in the manual or booklet that came with your Mac. It's at least one thing that the documentation *always* covers.



You don't have that little booklet? Most Macs have the power button in the upper-right corner of the keyboard (notebooks) or at the back of the screen (iMacs); it usually looks like the little circle thingy you see in the margin.

Don't bother choosing Help ⇨ macOS Help, which opens the Help Viewer program. It can't tell you where the switch is. Although the Help program is good for finding out a lot of things, the location of the power button isn't among them. If you haven't found the switch and turned on the Mac, of course, you can't access Help anyway. (D'oh!)



TIP

Launch the Books (formerly iBooks) app and click the Book Store button (top left) to search its built-in store for the name of your Mac plus the word *Essentials* (for example, “MacBook Essentials,” “iMac Essentials,” or “MacBook Pro Essentials”). Click the Only Show Free Titles check box near the upper-right corner of the Books window, and grab the free Essentials e-book with your Mac's name, by Apple. At around 150 pages each, these booklets aren't in any way comprehensive, but they do include information you won't find elsewhere, including where to find the power button on your particular Mac.

What you should see on startup

When you finally do turn on your Mac, you set in motion a sophisticated and complex series of events that culminates in the loading of macOS and the appearance of the macOS desktop. After a small bit of whirring, buzzing, and flashing (meaning that the OS is loading), macOS first tests all your hardware — slots, ports, disks, random access memory (RAM), and so on. If everything passes, you hear a pleasing musical tone and see the tasteful whitish Apple logo in the middle of your screen, as shown in Figure 1-1.



FIGURE 1-1:

This is what you'll see if everything is fine and dandy when you turn on your Mac.

Here are the things that you might see when you power-up your Mac:



TIP



WARNING



REMEMBER

» **Login screen:** You might or might not see the macOS login screen, where you enter your name and password. If you do, press Return after you type your name and password, and away you go.

If you don't want to type your name and password every time you start or restart your Mac (or even if you do), check out Chapter 23 for the scoop on how to turn the login screen on or off.

You should turn off the login screen only if you're confident you'll be the only one touching the machine. With the login screen disabled, your Mac and everything in it is completely available to anyone who turns it on, which is usually *not* a good thing.

Either way, the desktop soon materializes before your eyes. If you haven't customized, configured, or tinkered with your desktop, it should look pretty much like Figure 1-2. Now is a good time to take a moment for positive thoughts about the person who convinced you that you wanted a Mac. That person was right!

» **Blue/black/gray screen of death:** If any of your hardware fails when it's tested, you may see a blue, black, or gray screen.

Some older Macs played the sound of a horrible car wreck instead of the chimes, complete with crying tires and busting glass. It was exceptionally unnerving, which might be why Apple doesn't use it anymore.

The fact that something went wrong is no reflection on your prowess as a Mac user. Something is broken, and your Mac may need repairs. If this is happening to you right now, check out Chapter 23 to try to get your Mac well again.

FIGURE 1-2:
The desktop
after a brand-
spanking-new
installation of
macOS Catalina.





TIP



If your computer is under warranty, set up a Genius Bar appointment at your nearest Apple Store or dial 1-800-SOS-APPL, and a customer service person can tell you what to do. Before you do anything, though, skip ahead to Chapter 26. It's entirely possible that one of the suggestions there will get you back on track without your having to spend even a moment on hold.

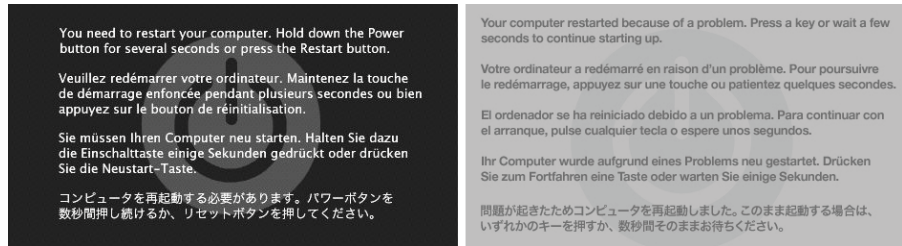
- » **Prohibitory sign or flashing question mark in a folder:** Most users eventually encounter the prohibitory sign or flashing question mark in a folder (as shown in the margin). These icons mean that your Mac can't find a startup disk, hard drive, network server, or DVD-ROM containing a valid Mac operating system. See Chapter 26 for ways to ease your Mac's ills.
- » **Kernel panic:** You may occasionally see a block of text in several languages, including English, as shown in Figure 1-3. This means that your Mac has experienced a *kernel panic*, the most severe type of system crash. If you restart your Mac and see either message again, look in Chapter 26 for a myriad of possible cures for all kinds of ailments, including this one.

How do you know which version of the macOS your computer has? Simple:

1. **Choose About This Mac from the  menu (the menu with the  symbol in the top-left corner of the menu bar).**

A window pops up on your screen, as shown in Figure 1-4. The version you're running appears just below *macOS* near the top of the window. Version 10.15 is the release we know as *Catalina*.

FIGURE 1-3:
If you're seeing this, things are definitely not fine and dandy.



**TECHNICAL
STUFF**

If you're curious or just want to impress your friends, you'll might want to know that OS X version 10.14 was called Mojave; 10.13 was known as High Sierra; 10.12 was Sierra; 10.11 was El Capitan; 10.10 was Yosemite; 10.9 was Mavericks; 10.8 was Mountain Lion; 10.7 was Lion; 10.6 was Snow Leopard; 10.5 was Leopard; 10.4 was Tiger; 10.3 was Panther; 10.2 was Jaguar; 10.1 was Puma; and 10.0 was Cheetah.

FIGURE 1-4:
See which version of macOS you're running.



2. (Optional) Click the Displays, Storage, Support, or Service tabs to see additional details about your Mac.
3. Click the System Report button to launch the System Information application and see even more details.

The System Information app shows you even more about your Mac, including bus speed, number of processors, caches, installed memory, networking, storage devices, and much more. You can find more about this useful program in Chapter 25.

Shutting down properly

Turning off the power without shutting down your Mac properly is one of the worst things you can do to your poor Mac. Shutting down your Mac improperly can really screw up your hard or solid-state drive, scramble the contents of your most important files, or both.



WARNING

If a thunderstorm is rumbling nearby, or you're unfortunate enough to have rolling blackouts where you live, you may really want to shut down your Mac and unplug it from the wall. (See the next section, where I briefly discuss lightning and your Mac.) If it's a laptop, you can just disconnect it from its charging cable and continue using it if you like.

ETERNALLY YOURS . . . NOW

macOS is designed so that you never have to shut it down. You can configure it to sleep after a specified period of inactivity. (See Chapter 23 for more info on Energy Saver.) If you do so, your Mac will consume very little electricity when it's sleeping and will usually be ready to use (when you press any key or click the mouse) in a few seconds. On the other hand, if you're not going to be using your Mac for a few days, you might want to shut it down anyway.

Note: If you leave your Mac on constantly, and you're gone when a lightning storm or rolling blackout hits, your Mac might get hit by a power surge or worse. So be sure you have adequate protection — say, a decent surge protector designed for computers — if you decide to leave your Mac on and unattended for long periods. See the section “A few things you should definitely not do with your Mac,” elsewhere in this chapter, for more info on lightning and your Mac. Often as not, I leave it on when I'm on the road so that I can access it from my laptop via remote connection. So, because macOS is designed to run 24/7, I don't shut it down at night unless the night happens to be dark and stormy.

One last thing: If your Mac is a laptop and will be enclosed in a bag or briefcase for more than a few hours, turn it off. Otherwise, it could overheat — even in Sleep mode.