

Kate Shoup

# SIMPLY LAPTOPS



Step-by-step introduction  
to laptops



Concise, jargon-free  
instructions



Packed with screenshots  
in full-colour



*Make it simple for yourself!*

# Simply Laptops

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# Simply Laptops

## by Kate Shoup



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Simplified Tips & Tricks, and Internet Visual Quick Tips. She has also co-written a feature-length screenplay (and starred in the ensuing film) and worked as the Sports Editor for NUVO Newsweekly. When not working, Kate loves to ski (she was once nationally ranked), read, ride her motorcycle, and follow the IndyCar circuit – and she plays a mean game of 9-ball. Kate lives in Indianapolis with her daughter, her SO, and their dog.

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## **How to Use This Book**

### **Who Needs This Book**

This book is for readers who have never used a laptop. It is also for more computer-literate individuals who want to expand their knowledge.

### **Chapter Organisation**

This book consists of sections, all listed in the book's table of contents. A section is a set of steps that show you how to complete a specific computer task.

Each section, usually contained on two facing pages, has an introduction to the task at hand, a set of full-colour screen shots and steps that walk you through the task and a set of tips. This format allows you to quickly look at a topic of interest and learn it instantly.

Chapters group together sections with a common theme. A chapter may also contain pages that give you the background information needed to understand the sections in a chapter.

## **Using the Mouse**

This book uses the following conventions to describe the actions you perform when using the mouse:

### **Click**

Press your left mouse button once. You generally click your mouse on something to select something on the screen.

### **Double-click**

Press your left mouse button twice. Double-clicking something on the computer screen generally opens whatever item you have double-clicked.

### **Right-click**

Press your right mouse button. When you right-click on anything on the computer screen, the program displays a shortcut menu containing commands specific to the selected item.

### **Click, Drag and Release the Mouse**

Move your mouse pointer and hover it over an item on the screen. Press and hold down the left mouse button. Now, move the mouse to where you want to place the item and then release the button. You use this method to move an item from one area of the computer screen to another.

## **The Conventions in This Book**

A number of typographic and layout styles have been used throughout SIMPLY Laptops to distinguish different types of information.

### **Bold**

Bold type represents the names of commands and options that you interact with. Bold type also indicates text and numbers that you must type into a dialog box.

### **Italics**

Italic words introduce a new term, which is then defined.

### **Numbered Steps**

You must perform the instructions in numbered steps in order to successfully complete a section and achieve the final results.

### **Bulleted Steps**

These steps point out various optional features. You do not have to perform these steps; they simply give additional information about a feature.

### **Indented Text**

Indented text tells you what the program does in response to your following a numbered step. For example, if you click a certain menu command, a dialog box may open or a window may open. Indented text may also tell you what the final result is when you follow a set of numbered steps.

## **Notes**

Notes give additional information. They may describe special conditions that may occur during an operation. They may warn you of a situation that you want to avoid – for example, the loss of data. A note may also cross-reference a related area of the book. A cross-reference may guide you to another chapter or to another section within the current chapter.

## **Icons and Buttons**

Icons and buttons are graphical representations within the text. They show you exactly what you need to click to perform a step.

You can easily identify the tips in any section by looking for the tip icon. Tips offer additional information, including hints, warnings and tricks. You can use the tip information to go beyond what you have learned in the steps.

## **Operating System Differences**

The screenshots used in this book were captured using the Windows Vista operating system. The features shown in the tasks may differ slightly if you are using Windows 7, Windows XP or an earlier operating system. For example, the default folder for saving photos in Windows Vista is named “Pictures,” whereas the default folder in

Windows XP for saving photos is named “My Pictures.” The program workspace may also look different based on your monitor resolution setting and your program preferences.

# **Chapter 1: Choosing Your Laptop PC**

Portable computers, generally referred to as laptops or notebooks, began as a great tool for people who travelled and wanted to bring their computer along. Today, laptops with high-end displays and huge processing power are taking over the desktop, as well.

Although laptop models vary by weight, size, keyboard configuration and more, they share some common traits. For example, on a laptop, the keyboard, pointing device and monitor are built-in.

Like their desktop counterparts, laptop computers run an operating system, most commonly Microsoft Windows. Computers that run Windows are generally referred to as PCs, which stands for personal computers.

# Explore a Laptop

Laptop computers are very similar to their desktop counterparts. Both contain a hard drive and other hardware. Both use an operating system, run software and save files. And both can be connected to peripheral devices, such as printers.

Key differences exist, however. For example, laptops, which are designed for portability, are much more compact. In addition, whereas desktops require an external keyboard and mouse, these features along with a monitor are built into laptops (although you can plug in a standard keyboard or mouse if desired). Finally, laptops can run on a battery, whereas desktops require an electrical outlet.





## **A Monitor**

The monitor on a laptop is typically made of a soft-to-the-touch, and somewhat fragile, liquid crystal display.

## **B Keyboard**

Keyboard configurations vary based on the size of the laptop, with larger laptops having a separate number pad and smaller ones embedding number-pad functionality within the regular keys.

## **C Touchpad Pointing Device**

Laptops feature a built-in pointing device – usually a touchpad, as shown here. You move your finger over the pad to move the mouse pointer on your screen.

## **D Function Keys**

Most laptops preassign functions to these aptly named function keys. Typical uses are for muting the speakers or accessing the Internet.



## **E DVD Drive**

Most laptops include a DVD drive, although some still feature a CD drive. The location of these drives varies by model.

## **F Battery**

A battery usually slots into the bottom of a laptop. The battery needs to be recharged on a regular basis.

## **G Power-Cord Connector**

To recharge your battery, you plug your laptop into a power socket using this power-cord connector.

# Explore Slots and Ports

You can use the various slots and ports built into your laptop to connect peripheral devices to it, such as a printer, a mouse, a keyboard, an extra monitor, headphones, a microphone, a digital camera and more. Most of these slots and ports are located on the sides or back of the chassis.

Note that, in addition to using the slots and ports built into your laptop to connect peripheral devices, you can also connect these devices to ports and slots in a docking station. You can then plug your laptop into the docking station to access the peripheral devices.

## USB Port



You can use a universal serial bus (USB) port to connect a wide variety of devices, from a flash drive for data storage to a printer or digital camera. Devices that can be connected via USB are generally plug-and-play – that is, you need not restart your computer to use them after connecting them via a USB cable. Windows can automatically install many USB devices when you connect them, requiring no additional input from you.

## **Memory Card Reader**



A memory card is a small, removable digital storage device used in many electronic gadgets such as digital cameras, MP3 players and so on. Many laptops feature memory card readers – small slots into which you can insert a memory card. You can then view the contents of the memory card and even use the memory card as an external storage device to save data from your laptop.

## **Monitor Port**





Some laptop computers include a monitor port. If you want to connect an external monitor to your laptop – for example, to show a presentation on a larger screen or if you use a dual-monitor system in your workflow – you can connect a standard monitor cable to the laptop's monitor port.

## **Ethernet Jack**



You use an Ethernet jack to connect your computer to a router that controls your local area network (LAN) through a coaxial or fibre-optic cable. You can also use an Ethernet jack to establish a high-speed connection to the Internet. You simply plug the Ethernet cable into the Ethernet jack on your laptop and then connect the other end of the cable to a high-speed modem.

### **Modem Jack**





Although most people use an Ethernet cable or a wireless signal to access the Internet, there may be times when you must use a phone line. If you need to use a phone line to dial up your Internet connection, you can plug a phone cable into the modem jack to pick up a signal.

### **PC Card Slot**



The Personal Computer Memory Card International Association (PCMCIA), a group of industry-leading companies, defined and developed a standard for PCMCIA (or PC) cards. A PC card was originally a type of storage card but it has expanded to house other devices, such as network cards and modems. Many laptops include slots for PC cards.

## **Headphone and Microphone Jacks**