

"This is the best book ever written for a beginner." Chicago Tribune

DOS FOR DUMMIES®

3rd Edition

***A Reference
for the
Rest of Us!®***

*Run DOS
applications on
your Windows PC*

Dan Gookin

*#1 bestselling author of
PCs For Dummies®*



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by Dan Gookin

author of *DOS For Dummies[®]*, *Windows[®] 95 Edition*;
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About the Author

Dan Gookin got started with computers back in the post slide rule age of computing: 1982. His first intention was to buy a computer to replace his aged and constantly breaking typewriter. Working as slave labor in a restaurant, however, Gookin was unable to afford the full “word processor” setup and settled on a computer that had a monitor, keyboard, and little else. Soon, his writing career was under way with several submissions to fiction magazines and lots of rejections.

The big break came in 1984 when he began writing about computers. Applying his flair for fiction with a self-taught knowledge of computers, Gookin was able to demystify the subject and explain technology in a relaxed and understandable voice. He even dared to add humor, which eventually won him a column in a local computer magazine.

Eventually Gookin’s talents came to roost as a ghostwriter at a computer book publishing house. That was followed by an editing position at a San Diego computer magazine. During this time, he also regularly participated on a radio talk show about computers. In addition, Gookin kept writing books about computers, some of which became minor bestsellers.

In 1990, Gookin and IDG Books Worldwide, Inc., connected on an outrageous book idea: a long overdue and original idea for the computer book for the rest of

us. What became *DOS For Dummies* blossomed into an international best-seller with hundreds and thousands of copies in print and many translations.

Today, Gookin still considers himself a writer and computer “guru” whose job it is to remind everyone that computers are not to be taken too seriously. His approach to computers is light and humorous yet very informative. He knows that the complex beasts are important and can help people become productive and successful. Gookin mixes his knowledge of computers with a unique, dry sense of humor that keeps everyone informed — and awake. His favorite quote is, “Computers are a notoriously dull subject, but that doesn’t mean I have to write about them that way.”

Gookin’s titles for IDG Books Worldwide include the best-selling *DOS For Dummies*, 1st and 2nd Editions and the Windows 95 Edition; *Real Life Windows 95*; *Word For Windows 95 For Dummies*; *Microsoft MS-DOS 6.2 Upgrade For Dummies*; *MORE DOS For Dummies*; *WordPerfect For Dummies*; *WordPerfect 6 For Dummies*; *MORE WordPerfect For Dummies*; *PCs For Dummies*, 1st and 2nd Editions; *Word For Windows For Dummies*; *Word For Windows 6 For Dummies*; and all three editions of the *Illustrated Computer Dictionary For Dummies*. All told, he has written more than 30 books about computers and contributes regularly to *DOS Resource Guide*, *InfoWorld*, and *PC Computing* magazine. Gookin holds a degree in communications from the University of California, San Diego, and lives with his wife and three sons in the as-yet-untamed state of Idaho.

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Introduction

Welcome to *DOS For Dummies*, 3rd Edition, a book that wastes no time and gets right to the point about the world's most loathsome computer operating system, DOS.

The idea here is simple: You're a smart person but a DOS dummy — and you have absolutely no intention of ever becoming a DOS wizard. You don't want to learn anything. You don't want to be bored by technical details or background fodder. All you need to know is that single answer to one tiny question, and then you want to close the book and be on with your life. This is the book you're looking for.

This book covers 100 percent of the things you do with your computer. All the common activities, the daily chores, and the painful things that go on with a computer are described here — in English — and in a style that I believe you'll find engaging, informative, and, at socially correct times, humorous.

About This Book

This book isn't meant to be read from front to back. It's more like a reference. Each chapter is divided into sections, each of which has self-contained information about doing something in DOS. Typical sections include

Changing Disks
Typing at the Prompt
Deleting a Group of Files
“My Keyboard Beeps at Me!”
Formatting a Disk
Finding a Lost File
“Where Am I?”

You don't have to remember anything in this book. Nothing is worth memorizing. You never “learn” anything here. The information is what you need to know to get by, and nothing more. If any new terms or technical descriptions are offered, you're alerted and told to ignore them.

How to Use This Book

This book works like a reference: You start by looking up the topic that concerns you in either the table of contents or the index. That refers you to a specific section in the book. In that section, you read about doing whatever it is you want to do. Some special terms may be defined, but usually you're directed elsewhere if you want to learn about the terms.

If you're supposed to type something, it appears in the text as follows:

```
C> TYPE THIS STUFF
```

Always press Enter after you're told to type something. In case you're baffled, a description of what you're typing usually follows (with explanations of the more difficult stuff).

Occasionally, you may have to type something specific to your system. When that happens, you're told how to type the command particular to your situation, usually by replacing the bogus filename in this book with the name of a file on your disk. Nothing is ever harder than that.

If you need more information, you're directed to that chapter and section. If anything goes wrong, you're told what to do and how to remedy the situation.

At no time does this book direct you back to the DOS manual (yuck!). If you're into learning about DOS, however, I recommend a good tutorial on the subject. Although this book helps you after the tutorial is done, the book is not meant as a substitute. (You definitely don't need to read a tutorial before using this book. Just having to breathe the same air as a computer qualifies you!)

What You're Not to Read

Several sections offer extra information and background explanations. (I just couldn't resist — after writing 20-odd books about using computers, I can't compel myself not to do this.) Those sections are clearly marked, and

you can quickly skip over them, as you please. Reading them only increases your knowledge of DOS — and that's definitely not what this book is all about.

Foolish Assumptions

I'm going to make only one assumption about you: You have a PC and you “work” with it somehow.

Furthermore, I assume that someone else set up your computer and may have even given you a few brief lessons. It's nice to have someone close by (or on the phone) who can help. But you know how unbalanced they can become when you ask too many questions (and don't have enough M&Ms or Doritos handy).

Icons Used in This Book



Alerts you to nerdy technical discussions you may want to skip (or read — for that nerd in all of us).



Any shortcuts or new insights on a topic.



Something different or strange about using DOS with Windows 95 or later.



A friendly reminder to do something.

A friendly reminder *not* to do something.



Where to Go from Here

Now you're ready to use this book. Look over the table of contents and find something that interests you. Just about everything you can do with DOS is listed here. Primarily, you spend your time in what Chairman Mao called "the great struggle with the computer." Do so. Toil, toil, toil. When you hit a speed bump, look it up here. You'll have the answer and be back to work in a jiffy. (Or half a jiffy, if you're a quick reader.)

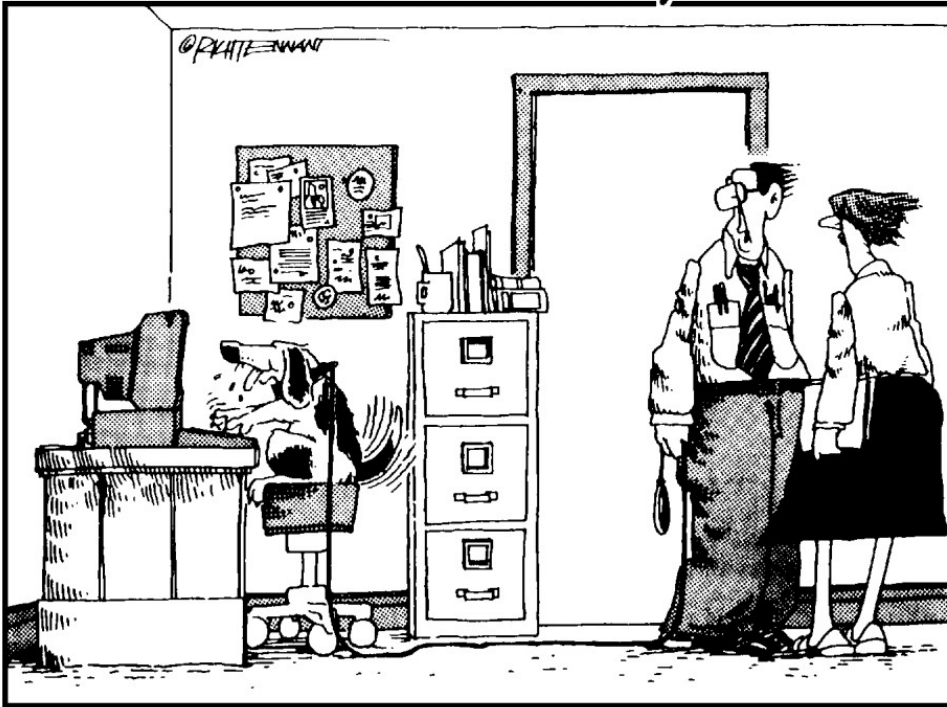
Good luck! And keep your fingers crossed.

Part I

The Absolute Basics

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"NAAH - HE'S NOT THAT SMART. HE WON'T BACK UP HIS HARD DISK, FORGETS TO CONSISTENTLY NAME HIS FILES, AND DROOLS ALL OVER THE KEYBOARD."

In this part . . .

You know the type: The person who tells a long story? They take longer to tell the story than it took for the story to happen in the first place. Some computer books are like that. They take so much time getting around to telling you what it is that you *really* need to know — and know right now — that you could get a Ph.D. in computer

science by the time they got around to it. No, no, no. You want to know the good stuff now. Up front! Very obvious! With some cheer and fun tossed in.

Welcome to the book written just for you.