

Thinking Person's Complete Guide to Mac OS X



# Learn Mac OS X Snow Leopard

Scott Meyers | Mike Lee

Apress®



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Scott Meyers and Mike Lee

## **Learn Mac OS X Snow Leopard**

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# About the Authors



■ **SCOTT MEYERS** got his start with computers as a kid hacking around TRS-80s and Apple IIs (his first computer was an Apple IIe that served him well until he got his second computer . . . a shiny new Macintosh). Professionally, after college and after bartending for a few years, Scott took a job as an Apple sales specialist and consultant for a Midwestern computer retailer that was long ago bought out by another company. Since then, Scott has had many titles including Web Developer, Senior Development Editor, Marketing Product Manager, Information Systems Specialist, and Acquisitions Editor—all revolving around the computer industry and often alongside one of his trusty Macs (currently a MacBook Pro).

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Prior to the iPhone, Mike cut his teeth—and won an Apple Design Award—at the Seattle-based Delicious Monster Software. Mike is a popular blogger and occasional pundit and has been seen on Twitter as @bmf.

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■ **JOE KISSELL** is the senior editor of TidBITS, a web site and weekly e-mail newsletter about the Macintosh and the Internet, and the author of numerous print and electronic books about Macintosh software, including the best-selling *Take Control of Mac OS X Backups*. He is also a senior contributor to *Macworld*. Joe has worked in the Mac software industry since the early 1990s and previously managed software development for Nisus Software and Kensington Technology Group. He currently lives in Paris, France.

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Scott Meyers

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Mike Lee



# Introduction

**W**hether you're new to the Mac or just new to Snow Leopard, we wrote this book for you.

We didn't say new to computers. That's what makes this book unique. Maybe you're an infrequent upgrader or a programmer from another platform who bought a Mac to write software for the iPhone. We talk to you, without talking *down* to you.

We don't explain to you what a mouse is, but we do tell how using a mouse on a Mac is different from using a mouse on Windows. We give detailed summaries of every part of Mac OS X, from the Finder to Terminal.

We give you a tour of the Applications folder, with chapters dedicated to Snow Leopard applications and iLife, Apple's digital lifestyle suite. We get you connected, with chapters on Safari, iChat, and MobileMe, as well as on the productivity trio of Mail, Address Book, and iCal.

We don't stop at the consumer stuff. We point out the Pro versions and link to the documentation. We provide generous screenshots and actual, usable sample code. We talk about the UNIX layer that lives beneath Aqua's candy shell. We show you how to master your Mac with shell scripts, AppleScripts, and Automator.

We show you how to install the Xcode developer tools. We take you on a tour of the Cocoa frameworks and get up close and personal with Objective-C, the native programming language of both Mac OS X and iPhone OS.

Whether you want to learn how to produce a podcast with GarageBand or become the next App Store millionaire with Xcode, we get you started. With the power that we help you unlock from your Mac, this book doesn't just pay for itself; it beats the returns on Wall Street.

PART 1



# Getting to Know Snow Leopard



# Working in Snow Leopard: The Aqua Interface

**W**hether you are new to OS X or just new to Snow Leopard, the first step to getting the most out of your computer is to learn a bit about Aqua. Apple has designed what many people think is the most attractive, user-friendly interface of any popular computer operating system today; however, if you come to OS X after years of using Windows or some other operating system, you will likely encounter a number of features that are different and perhaps even confusing. Also, if you are just making the upgrade from Tiger or an earlier Mac OS X version, you will immediately notice a number of differences in Snow Leopard; even if you're upgrading from Leopard to Snow Leopard, you may notice a few refinements to the interface. This chapter will go over the interface basics of Snow Leopard and show you how to get the most out of it, specifically:

- The menu bar
- The Finder and the desktop
- The Dock

## The Menu Bar

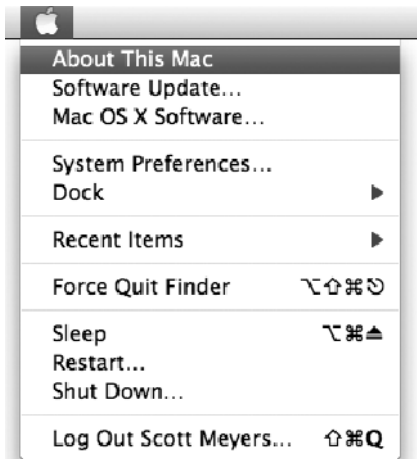
The menu bar may seem like an odd choice as the first topic to cover in this book; however, it is one of the primary user-interface (UI) elements for both controlling and getting information in OS X. It is also the UI element that is most unique to OS X (and actually the Mac OS since its inception). The menu bar (shown in Figure 1-1) is divided into three primary areas: the Apple menu, the application menus, and the status menus.



**Figure 1-1.** *The OS X menu bar in Leopard*

## The Apple Menu

The Apple menu on the far-left side of the menu bar (shown expanded in Figure 1-2) is a special menu containing a number of system-level commands and resources that are particularly handy to have easily accessible. This includes the About This Mac command; shortcuts to Software Update; the System Preferences command; shortcuts to Dock preferences; the Recent Items command (including shortcuts for applications, documents, and servers); the Force Quit command that allows you to immediately quit an application; the Sleep, Restart..., and Shut Down... commands; and the Log Out *User...* command. Most of these are fairly obvious as to what they do; however, some additional information about some of these items may be helpful.



**Figure 1-2.** *The Apple menu*

The About This Mac command opens a window (shown in Figure 1-3) that gives you some fairly self-explanatory information about your computer. Clicking the light gray text under the large Mac OS X that reads Version 10.6 will cycle through additional information, including the exact operating system build number and the computer's serial number (this is a much easier way to get your serial number than searching around for it on your actual computer). The More Info button in the About This Mac window launches the System Profiler application that contains all sorts of information about your computer and the software installed on it.



**Figure 1-3.** *About This Mac* window

The Recent Items command opens a submenu that by default shows you the last ten applications, documents, and servers you accessed (for a total of up to thirty items). You can adjust these defaults in the Appearance panel in System Preferences (we'll talk about System Preferences in depth in Chapter 4). You'll also see an option here to clear all items if, for whatever reason, you don't want that information to display.

The Force Quit command opens a new window that shows all the currently running Aqua applications. From this window you can select any of those applications to quit immediately. By immediately, we mean right away—no saving files or anything. The application will just quit. About the only times you may find yourself needing this is if an application freezes up (or in Apple lingo, *stops responding*) or if you need to *relaunch* the Finder (if you force quit the Finder, it will start back up, so in Apple lingo, rather than force quit the Finder, you relaunch it).

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**Tip** You can also force quit any item from the Dock by Control-Option-clicking on the desired item in the Dock and selecting Force Quit from the contextual menu (if you apply this to the Finder instead of Force Quit, you will see Relaunch). If all else fails, holding down Command-Option-Shift-Esc for a few seconds will force quit the foreground application.

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**Note** You may notice that some menu items have an ellipsis (...) after them, and some don't. According to Apple's Human Interface Guidelines (<http://developer.apple.com/documentation/userexperience/Conceptual/AppleHIGuidelines/XHIGIntro/XHIGIntro.html>), items with the ellipsis require some additional user interaction to complete a task. In general, this means an item will either prompt you or open a window with additional options. Another item common in menus is the sideways triangle on the far right, which indicates the menu item will open a submenu, and of course keyboard shortcuts are viewable for a number of menu items.

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## Application Menus

Moving just to the right of the Apple menu begins the application menus. This is where people new to Macs tend to get thrown off; you see, in OS X, there is only one application menu bar, and this is it. The application menus, however, are dynamic in the sense that the information in one menu bar reflects the application running in the foreground. So if Microsoft Word is the active foreground application, the menu bar will provide the menu items provided by Microsoft Word (see Figure 1-4). If you bring the Finder or another application to the foreground, the menu bar will change to provide menu items for that application.



**Figure 1-4.** The menu bar's application menu presents Microsoft Word's menus when you're using Microsoft Word. Compare this to the Finder's menus in Figure 1-1.

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**Note** While Mac OS X runs many applications concurrently (i.e., it multitasks), it assumes that the user is generally actively using one application at a time. The application that is currently being used is referred to as the *foreground* application; other applications are said to be running in the *background*. Sometimes the foreground application is also called the application that has *focus*.

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In keeping with standard Mac UI guidelines, many menu items are the same from one application to another; additionally, the general arrangement of the menus should be fairly consistent from one application to another (however, developers can create applications that deviate from this in sometimes minor and sometimes major ways). The first menu to the right of the Apple menu, called the *application menu*, should always reflect the name of the current foreground application. In addition to the application menu, almost all proper Aqua applications have at least the following additional menus: File, Edit, Window, and Help. Interface Builder, part of the Xcode tools, sets up the following application menus by default: New Application, File, Edit, Format, View, Window, and Help. Everything between the Edit and Window menus tends to vary from application to application.