

*Switching
to a Mac*[®]
FOR
DUMMIES[®]

by Arnold Reinhold



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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to a Mac*[®]
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About the Author

Arnold Reinhold has over three decades experience in the software industry. His first Apple product was a Mac 512. Arnold helped found Automatrix, Inc., a pioneer in robotics and machine vision, and is coauthor of *The Internet for Dummies Quick Reference*, *E-mail For Dummies* and *Mac mini Hacks & Mods For Dummies*. He developed and maintains diceware.com, widely regarded as the “gold standard” in password security, and mathinthemovies.com.

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Dedication

To Max and Grete who put me here, and Josh who keeps me going. B”H.

Author’s Acknowledgments

Thanks to Barbara Model, Carol Baroudi, and Barbara Lapinkas for their help and suggestions. And thanks to the folks at Apple computer and their loyal customers who keep alive a dream that personal computers are not just utilitarian machines but can be tools that empower and inspire us.

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Introduction

Maybe you love your iPod or iPhone and are curious about other Apple products. Maybe you've had one virus scare too many and are fed up with Windows. Maybe the daunting prospect of upgrading to Vista has made you open to other possibilities. Maybe you are a Mac fan who wants to show some friend how easy and productive Macs can be. Wherever you are coming from, I hope you find this book meets your needs.

Apple Incorporated of Cupertino, California, is over 30 years old, and few brands in the history of business generate such fierce customer loyalty as Apple and its Macintosh line of personal computers. That loyalty runs both ways. Apple knows that the people who decide to buy its products, for the most part, are the ones who actually have to use them. Offering systems that satisfy and even delight its users is a matter of survival for Apple.

Many of the virtues of the Macintosh are a matter of taste: the easy-to-use graphical interface, the elegant industrial design, and the integrated suite of software. But one virtue is a simple matter of fact: In recent years, when Windows users endured wave after wave of computer viruses, worms, spyware, and other evil software, Mac users were completely immune. 'Nuff said.

About This Book

Macintosh computers and the OS X operating system have more in common with Windows than all the hoopla would suggest. Still there are differences, big and little, that can cause problems for the unaware.

In this book, you find helpful guides for every aspect of your switch, from deciding that you do in fact want to switch to Macs, to making buying decisions, to setting everything up. You even find suggestions for what to do with your old PC.

Much of this book looks at switching to a Mac from a Windows user's perspective, but most any new Mac user can find help. You find out the best way to transfer your things from Windows to a Mac, as well as tips on how to do common Windows tasks the Mac way. But users of Linux and older Mac operating systems who want some perspective on switching to OS X can also find assistance in this book, especially in Chapter 16, which was written especially

with these users in mind. Similarly, I address the needs of both home and business users who are making or considering a switch.

If you have already decided to buy a Mac, you can skip the first chapter. If you have already bought one, start with the second part of the book.

Of course, you may read this book from cover to cover, if you're that kind of person, but I try to keep chapters self-contained so that you can go straight to the topics that interest you most. Wherever you start, I wish you and your new Mac well.

Foolish Assumptions

Try as I may to be all things to all people, when it comes to writing a book, I had to pick who I thought would be most interested in *Switching to a Mac For Dummies*. Here's who I think you are:

- ✔ **You're smart.** You're no dummy. Yet the prospect of switching to a new computer platform gives you an uneasy feeling (which *proves* you're smart).
- ✔ **You own a personal computer based on an operating system different than Apple's OS X.** This book is mostly aimed at Windows XP users, but I think it will be helpful to users of Windows Vista, older Windows editions, DOS, and Linux, and even owners of older Macs.
- ✔ **You are considering buying or have bought an Apple Macintosh computer.** You want to transition to your new computer expeditiously. I suggest straightforward methods and don't attempt to cover every possible approach.
- ✔ **Alternatively, you're a Mac user who knows OS X well but wants a resource to give (okay, even lend) to friends who are considering abandoning the dark side. What a good friend you are.**
- ✔ **You have used the Internet and know about browsers, such as Internet Explorer, and search engines, such as Google.** (If not, I recommend picking up a current edition of *The Internet For Dummies*, by John R. Levine, Margaret Levine Young, and Carol Baroudi.) I do cover getting your own Internet connection in case you are not hooked up at the moment or it's time to update your service.
- ✔ **You are looking to buy a new Macintosh** (one based on microprocessors from Intel Corp.) rather than the older PowerPC or 68K models. While I briefly discuss the used market, this book primarily addresses the Intel Macs, which are all that Apple sells these days.

Whoever you are, welcome aboard. I think this book can help you.

How This Book Is Organized

I divide this book into the following highly logical (to me) parts. Each is self-contained for the most part. Feel free to skip about.

Part I: Informed Switching Starts Here: In this part, I explain why the Apple Macintosh is such a big deal and why you should consider getting one. I also introduce you to the Apple product line and present a few different approaches to conversion (no dunking in water involved).

Part II: Making the Switch: I help you decide what to buy and what you can reuse from your old setup. Then, I hold your hand as you make the big leap, moving your computing life to a Mac. OS X is a little different from Windows. I tell you what you most need to know to get started.

Part III: Connecting Hither and Yon: Macs are to networking what ducks are to swimming. It comes naturally, but there are a few tricks. We cover what you need to do to get your Mac online and talking to any other computers you have, including that old PC.

Part IV: More Software, More Choices: Your Mac comes with a ton of pre-loaded software (0.907 metric tons). And you can buy — or even download for free — a lot more. Windows advocates complain that little software is available for the Mac, but so much is out there that I could write several books. And, yes, lots of cool games are available.

Part V: Specialty Switching Scenarios: Kids, seniors, and businesses all have a lot to gain from the Mac way of doing things. I also talk about converting from other operating systems and dive a bit deeper into OS X.

Part VI: The Part of Tens: If you've read other *For Dummies* books, you're no doubt familiar with The Part of Tens, entertaining lists containing ten (more or less) elucidating elements. They're fun to write; I hope they're fun to read.

And more!: In addition to all this, I've included a glossary in the back of this book and a Cheat Sheet in the front. The Mac world talks with a vocabulary all its own, and you may encounter other technical terms on your switching journey (everything is a journey these days). I think you'll be happy to have this glossary of words and definitions on your bookshelf.

Typographic Conventions

For the most part, stuff you need to do on a Mac is graphical, but from time to time, I may ask you to type something. If it's short, it appears in boldface,

like this: type **elm**. When I want you to type something longer, it appears like this:

```
terribly important text command
```

Be sure to type it just as it appears. Then press the Enter or Return key. Capitalization usually doesn't matter on a Mac. But OS X is based on UNIX (as I discuss in Chapter 17), and UNIX considers the uppercase and lowercase versions of the same letter to be totally different beasts.

In the text, Web addresses are shown in this typeface: `www.ditchmypc.com`. I leave out the geeky `http://` part, which Mac browsers don't need you to type in anyway.

Apple keyboards have a special key with an Apple logo (🍏) and a fan-shaped squiggle that looks like this: ⌘. It has various nicknames — Apple key, fan key, propeller key — but I use its formal name, the *Command key*, in the text.

Icons Used in This Book



A little tidbit that can save you time or money, or make life a little easier. “Avoid jackrabbit starts to save gas.”



Pay attention. Trouble lurks here. “Never open the radiator cap on a hot engine.”



These are words of wisdom to keep in mind that could save your derriere in the future. “Have your car battery checked before each winter.”



Macs keep the gears and pulleys pretty well hidden. This is under-the-hood stuff for the technically inclined; the rest of you can skip it.

Where to Go from Here

Hey, it's a Mac. You're set. If you do have problems not covered here, lots of resources are available to help you (see Chapter 18). You can also visit my

Web site, www.ditchmypc.com. I'd be happy to hear from you directly at switchtomac@ditchmypc.com, and would love to know what you think of this book and how it could be improved, but I cannot promise individual advice.

Meanwhile, use your new Mac to build a Web site, create a business, solve the world hunger problem, write the great novel of the twenty-first century, produce your first feature film, meet some cool people, or just have fun. After all, the rest of your computing life has just begun.

6

Switching to a Mac For Dummies

Part I

Informed Switching Starts Here

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“He saw your MacBook and wants to know if he can check out the new Mac OS X features.”

In this part . . .

Perhaps you are fed up with Windows and are ready to try something different, or maybe you're a happy Microsoft user who is curious to read what silly justifications someone might come up with for switching to a Mac. In this part, I suggest some reasons I find compelling and address common objections. Then, I introduce you to the Mac family and help you figure out what to buy when you're ready to take the plunge.

Chapter 1

Why Switch? Demystifying the Mac Mantra

In This Chapter

- ▶ Why switch?
 - ▶ Take your best shot — overcoming objections
 - ▶ Advantage Apple
 - ▶ It's okay to switch
-

Apple's Macintosh computers aren't perfect. They won't cure bad breath, save your marriage, or fix a bad hair day. Apple has had its share of product recalls. Talk to enough Mac owners, and you'll find one who thinks he got a lemon and wasn't satisfied with Apple's service. You can probably find a cheaper computer that will do what you really need. The vast majority of computer users get by using Microsoft Windows, and you can, too. So why even think about switching?

Macs offer you a far better experience; that's why. In big ways, such as security and industrial design, and in countless little details, Apple makes the extra effort to get things right — right for the user, not some corporate purchasing department. For those of us who spend a good part of our lives in front of a video display, those easier-to-use controls, well-thought-out software choices, and better hardware fit and finish all add up to create a tool that lets us do what we want and doesn't get in our way. For more casual users, Mac's simpler design means less head scratching while you figure out how you did that task the last time.

Life is too short for Windows aggravation. Computers are now integral parts of our lives: We use them for work, for play, to communicate, to find mates, to shop, to express ourselves, to educate our children, and to manage our money. They help us fix our homes, cure our diseases, and even clean out our attics. No one has time to fuss over them, fix crashes, fight viruses, clean out hard drives, figure out why the printer won't work, reload the software, or press Ctrl+Alt+Delete. We need computers to be there when we want them. And for the most part, Macs are. Macs just work.

Microsoft isn't run by a bunch of idiots. The company is run by some very smart people, and they hire top-notch engineers. Just getting a product as complex as Windows out the door takes extraordinary talent. But Windows is designed for corporations. A Microsoft engineer revealed on his blog that one of the company's corporate users had 9,000 programs for Windows. The user simply couldn't afford to update them for new releases. Microsoft Windows has to support all the old software that is out there. Apple is better able to let go of the past and is therefore more nimble in developing new ways to make your life easier.

Apple sees its mission as harnessing the rapid advances in computing hardware to create revolutionary new products that improve our lives. The Macintosh, the iPod, and the iPhone are each filled with groundbreaking innovations. They are cool to look at and to own. Why buy boring?

Be Happy You Waited

In many ways, now is an ideal time to switch to Macs. Windows users who upgrade to the new Vista operating system will have a lot of new stuff to get used to anyway. So one way or another, a switch is in your future. If your PC is more than a year or two old, you'll probably have to buy a new computer or do a major upgrade of your existing hardware to run Vista — the PC industry is counting on it. Meanwhile, Apple has just gone through a major transition in its product line that makes Macs much more attractive to Windows users. All new Macs now run on Intel microprocessors, the same ones that power most Windows machines. In fact, any Mac sold today is a full-fledged, strictly kosher PC, one that can run the Windows XP and Vista operating systems as well as any PC on the market. So if you must run some software that is available only for Windows, you can use it on a Mac too. Yeah, you'll have to buy and install Windows separately, but I walk you through that in Chapter 13.

Steve Jobs' other company

For ten years, Apple CEO Steve Jobs moonlighted in another job: running Pixar Animation. There have been many movie studios in the history of film, but few have produced eight smash hits in a row: *Toy Story 1 and 2*; *A Bug's Life*; *Monsters, Inc.*; *Finding Nemo*; *The Incredibles*; *Cars*; and *Ratatouille*. All were critically

acclaimed box office successes that made extensive use of the very latest in computer animation technology. But the key to their popularity was subordinating the gee-whiz special effects to the telling of a compelling story. Want to know what makes Macs different? Rent one of these movies.

Take Your Best Shot

The question of which is a better personal computer, a Macintosh or a Windows PC, provokes passion matched by few other controversies. Were the world less civilized, Apple fans would long since have been burned at the stake by more numerous Windows users fed up with hearing how great Macs are. Instead, the debate rages over claims that Macs are not a suitable choice because they're too this or can't do that. The following sections outline the principal objections.

“Macs are too expensive”

If you are looking for the absolute cheapest computer you can find, you are reading the wrong book. As of this writing, you can buy a new Windows XP computer for as little as \$300. But when you price higher-end configurations from name-brand manufacturers — ones that match what you get standard with a Mac — the difference in price is less and often disappears. In the United States, you can buy a complete and very usable Mac desktop setup for under \$600, assuming that you already own a suitable display, keyboard, and mouse; you can buy an excellent MacBook laptop for about \$1,100.

The arguments for buying a Mac are based on quality and total cost of ownership, not initial purchase price. Few people boast about how cheap their car is or how little they spent for their home entertainment center. A cheap product that causes you years of aggravation is no bargain.

“Switching is too hard”

I'm not saying that switching from Windows to a Mac is painless. If you have been using Windows for a while, you are used to its idiosyncrasies. You made a big investment in learning how to use all that Windows software, not to mention what you paid for it. You may find some aspects of the Mac hard to get used to, though I guide you through all this in Chapter 4. But on the whole, it's not that bad. Macs and Windows PCs have more in common than they have differences. All in all, I think you'll find a switch worth the effort.

“I'll be left with no software”

Many Windows advocates claim that less software is available for the Macintosh. The standard smart-aleck Mac user answer is, “Yeah, we really miss all those viruses and spyware programs.” But some truth to this objection exists.

Certain highly specialized programs in many fields only run in Windows. If equivalents exist for the Mac, you might have fewer choices. On the other hand, thousands of software titles are available for the Mac, and they cover the needs of most users quite well.

Some great software is available only for the Mac. Every new Mac comes with Apple applications for e-mail, instant messaging, address book, calendar, and of course, iTunes. Apple's iLife suite, also included, has programs for photo management, making movies, burning DVDs, creating Web sites, and even composing your own music. New Macs that have a built-in display (laptops and iMac desktops) all have a built-in camera and include powerful video-conferencing software that works with industry standards.

The Mac OS X operating system is built on top of UNIX, and Apple follows the Single UNIX Specification. This means that a large amount of software developed for UNIX and Linux operating systems can run on your Mac, including many popular, free, open source packages. Much of that software does not run in Windows.

Finally, as I mention earlier in this chapter, Macs can also run Windows, so you can still run the odd program for which an equivalent isn't available on the Mac.

“Macs are dying out”

Macs *were* close to dying a decade ago. Their share of the personal computer market was less than 3 percent. However, their share has been climbing steadily, and at last report was 7.6 percent in the United States. But that isn't the whole story. Consumers buy only about 37 percent of the total PCs sold. The rest are purchased by corporations — think of all those PC-based cash registers you see in stores and restaurants. Add in all those office workers who have no say in the computer they use. Apple has very little presence in the corporate world. Most companies restrict Macs to the creative departments. So that 7.6 percent of total sales may represent up to 20 percent of the consumer market — people who buy the computer for their own use. And Apple's share is growing. More than half of all new Macs are purchased by people who were using Windows before.

“Macs are not expandable”

Since the earliest days of the IBM Personal Computer, PCs have come in big boxes that a user could open to install expansion cards or to add memory and hard drives. Steve Jobs horrified the techie end of the PC world when he built the original Macintosh as a self-contained unit that users were not supposed to open. Apple later relented and offered the Mac II, which had expansion slots — six of them — but few users filled them. So instead, Apple developed a blazingly fast expansion port, called FireWire, that lets users attach high-performance devices without opening the box. The PC world responded by developing its own fast expansion port called USB 2.0, which Apple then adopted as well. All

new Macs offer both these ports, allowing a wide range of accessories to be attached just by plugging them in. Macs also offer networking and wireless capabilities. For those who think they must have expansion cards, the top-of-the-line Mac Pro comes in a big box that you can open to install the same PCI Express expansion cards that modern PCs use. But I don't think most of you will ever need to do that.

See Chapter 2 for an introduction to the Mac models currently available.

“Macs don't comply with industry standards”

Early in Apple's history, Steve Wozniak, a cofounder of Apple and its engineering genius, came up with a clever way to squeeze more bits onto a floppy disk (an early form of portable data storage for you youngsters). Unfortunately, this design made floppy disks written on early Macs unreadable on IBM PCs. That gave Apple a reputation of being an odd duck, from a standards standpoint, which it has never been able to shake completely, even though it later added PC-compatible floppy drives and is now exemplary in sticking to industry standards. Indeed, Apple was the first to popularize now-ubiquitous computer industry standards such as WiFi wireless networking and the Universal Serial Bus (USB). Other standards gobbledygook that Macs support include Gigabit Ethernet, Bluetooth, IEEE-1394 FireWire, PCI Express, ExpressCard/34 (see Chapter 3 for more details), and now the Intel microprocessor architecture. Apple's Web browser, Safari, now also available for Windows, carefully follows Internet standards — more so than Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

“I need Windows for work”

So run Windows XP or Vista on your Mac. You will have to buy a copy, which is an added expense. But both run fine on a Mac, and you can still use Mac OS X when you're not working. With third-party virtualization software, you can run both operating systems at the same time, with Windows applications appearing on the Macintosh OS X desktop alongside native Mac applications. I tell you more about how all this works in Chapter 13.

“Macs are a poor game platform”

True, more games exist for the PC, but plenty are available for Macs, many of the top titles too. And many more are coming. Electronic Arts and id Software now support Macs. Macs come with built-in networking for multiplayer games. How much of your life do you want to spend playing video games anyway? Sorry, dumb question.

Will Apple license OS X for other PCs?

A perennial question in the Apple-watching community is whether Apple will license its OS X operating system to run on other PCs. With Apple's switch to Intel processors, there is no technical reason why this could not be done. Indeed Apple has to go to some lengths to discourage clever programmers from modifying (hacking) OS X to run on personal computers sold by other manufacturers. One scenario has Apple mimicking Microsoft's strategy and

selling OS X to anyone to run on any computer that meets minimal standards. A perhaps more likely scenario might be licensing OS X to one or two manufacturers who would produce computers complementary to Apple's current link, a sub-notebook, perhaps. At the moment there is every indication that Apple will keep OS X to itself and continue to play its high-end branding strategy, but Steve Jobs is known for surprises.

"Vista will kill Apple"

Microsoft spent five years and billions of dollars developing its new Vista operating system, in part to end the scourge of computer viruses and spyware that have plagued the PC world for over a decade. I hope Microsoft finally got it right. In the same period, Apple has been devoting its energy to improving its OS X operating system from the user's perspective. While Vista was gestating, Apple released a series of improved versions of OS X, code-named Jaguar, Panther, Tiger, and Leopard — someone in Apple likes big cats. Microsoft still has catching up to do, but it has indicated that Vista may be its last big operating system release. The race may be too exhausting for Microsoft. Still, Microsoft will have to find some way to keep up with Apple.

Considering All Aspects — Advantage Apple

Standard business school theory says that a company that sells the most product can't be stopped because it just gets better and better at what it does, to the point where no one can catch up. But Apple has adopted some strategies that give it some important advantages that let it win against the competition provided by Microsoft.

One neck to wring

Microsoft sells its Windows operating system to dozens of companies that make personal computers. This has some benefits in that competition among these