

Introduction

What the book covers

This book covers the basics which all operators and users should know. If your idea of “knowing Windows” is saving all your files to “My Documents”, playing games or drawing pictures, you will benefit greatly by reading and applying the ideas presented in this tutorial.

This book covers both Windows 95 and Windows 98. The basic elements of the two operating systems are very similar. Know one Windows version will allow you to operate the other operating system and you can navigate your way around the other. Most of the examples in this book use Windows 98 screens. When screen displays in the two programs vary substantially, both versions will be shown for comparison. The addition of Microsoft’s Internet browser, called Internet Explorer, changes the appearance of many Windows screens. Since most users have installed Internet Explorer, the screens in this book reflect these screen changes. Most new computers sold today have also installed these screen changes as their default installation.

Your computer might be set up a little like the one used to generate the screens in this book. Soon after users start working with their computer, they start changing screen displays, colors, wallpaper, screen savers and the like. I have made an underlining assumption that your Windows operating system is in its default setup mode. When the set up mode is critical to the explanation, you will be guided through the steps to insure that the proper mode settings have been made.

Stumbling Blocks

Computers have a language of their own. There is no way around learning the vocabulary and terms of the language if you want to communicate. To complicate the problem, terms often have double meanings. Take for example the word *Windows*. If the ‘W’ is capitalized, the word refers to the Operating system. If the ‘w’ is lowercase, it refers to the viewed screen on the monitor.

There is also quite a lot of jargon to learn. Upload. Download. Which way is which? Rather than defining terms each time they are used, they are defined the first time they are used. There is a glossary of terms included in the back of the book. Read through the glossary before starting to read this book. This will go a long way to insuring that you are interpreting the words with the same definitions that were intended.

Why this book was written.

This book was written out of frustration. I have been teaching computer operating systems and applications for several years and have found that students who want to learn applications such as word processing, spread sheets and databases have a very difficult time when they don’t have a good understanding of the operating system.

All the training books on the market are evidence that no two people agree on how training should be presented. Cartoon books are too simple. Books with a thousand pages too technical. Most books don't present material in a logical flow. They fail to take a new user's mental, visual awareness and physical dexterity into consideration. Finally, they lack examples.

For the most part, the sections of this book were compiled from lecture notes. This book is designed to be read from front to back. The Screens and Org chapters must be completed in the order presented.

Some sessions give you a chance to express your individuality by customizing the appearance of your desktop. Others are "nuts and bolts" sections leading you through several areas you need to be familiar with when adding new software (programs) or changing your hardware. (Modems, printers, etc.) The *Advanced* section covers topics relating to keeping your computer clean, efficient, up to date and customized to your usage.

Windows is really easy to use

The introduction of windows based operations systems was a milestone in creating consistent user interfaces. Once you begin to understand one Windows application and how to use the objects shown on the screen, the easier it is to learn new applications. It is the GUI (pronounced gooey) or Graphical Users Interface which makes Windows based applications consistent in appearance and "user friendly".

Don't rush the learning process.

This text is intended to be taken in separate sessions. Redo all sessions until you are comfortable. Take the time to refer back to sections while applying concepts in your daily work.

There are many, many concepts presented in each chapter. Experience has proved that you won't remember all the concepts during the first reading. Read through a section. Take a break. Then, read it again.

If you follow these proven guide lines, you can become a proficient user by the end of this book.

Above all, don't measure your ability to understand the concepts presented in this book based on someone else's learning skills. Don't be so sure that they learned it correctly. I spend many lecture hours watching students waiting for the student seated next to them to try a concept first. (The odds are that their pseudo-teacher did it wrong the first time.) This leaves me faced with the double duty of 'untraining' and retraining.

Even the PRO's have problems sometimes. The mouse won't always respond. Drag operations are sluggish. They have learned, however, to watch for signals the operating system sends. They have learned to sit back, relax and take these setbacks in stride.

I have read this manual several times searching for hidden words or words written between the lines. Take my word for it. THERE AREN'T ANY. So please, don't you add any words either. Read the information as presented and don't look for hidden meanings. There are times that my students have found double meanings for words. If this happens to you, review the text and see if another meaning for a word might apply when a concept doesn't work the first time.

After completing the tour, take the final exam and see what areas you need to review.

If you have read this far and are still not convinced that this book was written for you, consider taking the bypass exam included in the appendix. This exam was written for students who wanted to jump to advance topics without having a strong foundation of the operating system. Sometimes they didn't know how little they knew, while others felt they could pick up what they needed as they went.

The latter group is the one who the bypass test was written for. Trying to learn applications without the foundation knowledge of the operating system slows the whole learning process and too often is the major cause for drop outs and withdrawals.

Printing B has been expanded to include comments to explain the 'why' of the steps you are taking and how the concepts apply to other Windows applications.

Indirect reference to objects (it and it's) have been replaced with the objects proper names.

Best of luck on your Windows tour,

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