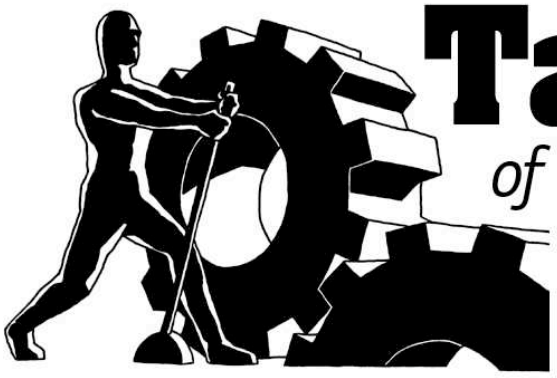

Take Control of Switching to the Mac

by Scott Knaster

Table of Contents (Version 1.0)

Read Me First 2

Introduction 5

Switching to the Mac Quick Start 6

Get Ready 7

Set Up and Use Your Mac 16

Learn More about Your Mac..... 56

Live as a Mac User in a Windows World..... 81

Glossary 84

Resources 87

About This Ebook 89

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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of Switching to the Mac,* version 1.0.

Note

This ebook was sponsored by Genentech. Special thanks to Mark Altenberg and the reviewers at Genentech: Bill Bennett, Dexter Chan, Kevin DuBay, Mark Jeffries, Jane Pray-Silver, Jerome Rainey, and Kathryn Woods.

This ebook was written by Scott Knaster, edited by Caroline Rose, and published by TidBITS Electronic Publishing. It guides you through the process of switching from a Windows PC to a Macintosh computer. You can contact TidBITS Electronic Publishing by sending email to tc-comments@tidbits.com and view the Take Control Web site and catalog at http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/. You can read About This Ebook to learn about the author, the publisher, and the Take Control series. The copyright page contains copyright and legal info.

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Onscreen Reading Tips

We carefully designed the Take Control ebooks to be read onscreen, and although most of what you need to know is obvious, note the following for the best possible onscreen reading experience:

- Blue text indicates links. You can click any item in the Table of Contents to jump to that section. Cross-references are also links, as are URLs and email addresses.
- Work with the Bookmarks tab or drawer showing so that you can always jump to any main topic by clicking its bookmark.
- In Adobe Acrobat Pro version 6 or 7, set your preferences to view Web URLs in a Web browser: choose Acrobat > Preferences,

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switch to the Web Capture pane, and choose In Web Browser from the Open Web Links pop-up menu.

- The Glossary defines a number of Macintosh-related terms, which also appear in the body of the ebook in blue italic text. You can click the blue text to go to the Glossary entry that defines it; you can then return from the Glossary to the place you were reading by using a menu command or keyboard shortcut, as noted in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Navigating to the Glossary and Back

Viewing Software	Menu Command	Keyboard Shortcut
Adobe Acrobat 6 and 7	View > Go To > Previous View	Command-Left arrow
Adobe Acrobat 5	Document > Go To > Previous View	Command-Left arrow
Preview	Go > Back	Command-[

- Find more tips at http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/faq.html#reading1.

Printing Tips

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- For a tighter layout that uses fewer pages, check your printer options for a 2-up feature that prints two pages on one piece of paper. For instance, your Print dialog may have an unlabeled pop-up menu that offers a Layout option; choose Layout, and then choose 2 from the Pages per Sheet pop-up menu. You may also wish to choose Single Hairline from the Border menu.

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- When printing on a color inkjet printer, to avoid using a lot of color ink (primarily on the yellow boxes we use for tips and figures), look for an option to print entirely in black-and-white.
- In the unlikely event that Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader cannot successfully print this PDF, try Preview; several readers have solved printing problems by using Preview.

Basics

To understand this ebook, you don't have to know anything about Macintosh computers or how they work. However, a working knowledge of Microsoft Windows will help. Also note the following conventions:

- **Menus:** When I describe choosing a command from a menu in the menu bar, I use an abbreviated form. For example, the abbreviated form for the menu command that saves a file from Microsoft Word is "File > Save."
- **Descriptions:** When I describe hardware, such as the Mac keyboard, I'm assuming you have a newer Mac, made in 2005 or later. Some descriptions—mostly minor details—don't fit older Macs.
- **Operating system terminology:** The Macintosh operating system is called Mac OS X (the X is pronounced "ten," like a Roman numeral). Major releases have both a number and a name. The current release is 10.4 Tiger, and the previous version was 10.3 Panther.
- **Path syntax:** This ebook occasionally uses a *path* to show the location of a file or folder in your file system. Path text is formatted in bold type. For example, the Mac stores most utilities, such as Disk Utility, in the Utilities folder. The path to Disk Utility is: **`/Applications/Utilities/Disk Utility`**.

  The slash at the start of the path tells you to start from the *root directory* of the disk (similar to C: in Windows). You will also encounter paths that begin with **~** (tilde), which is a shortcut for any user's *home folder* (similar to My Documents in Windows). For example, if a person with the user name **`joe`** wants to install fonts that only he can access, he would install them in his **`~/Library/Fonts`** folder, which is just another way of writing **`/Users/joe/Library/Fonts`**.

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Introduction

There has never been a better time to be a Macintosh user. And there's never been a better time to *become* one if you're not one already. Thanks to the success of the iPod and of recent Macintosh models, Apple is enjoying a renaissance.

Mac users tend to be dedicated to their computer of choice. There are reasons for this devotion. Apple's fanatical attention to detail and ease of use, and high-tech-with-a-smile personality, have been rewarded with loyal customers. And Mac users welcome new members to their ranks.

In this ebook, I take you through the steps you need to switch your computing life from Windows to Macintosh. By the end of the ebook, you'll be running on your Mac with your files moved over from your Windows PC, and you'll have a pretty good idea of how to get around on your new Mac.

Note Because this ebook is written with Macintosh beginners in mind, I refer to many other Take Control ebooks that you might find useful. I don't mean to be pushy by doing this, just thorough. This ebook is designed to be useful all by itself, but if you want to find out more about particular topics, I highly recommend other Take Control ebooks. I also suggest you visit Apple's Web site, especially http://www.apple.com/macosx/, to learn more about topics that interest you.

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Switching to the Mac Quick Start

Switching from Windows to Macintosh doesn't have to be hard. Here's an overview of how this ebook can help:

Get ready to switch:

- Why switch to the Mac? You probably have some ideas already. Find out more in What's Cool about the Mac, and balance that by reading What's Not So Cool (and What to Do about It).
- Be sure to Choose the Best Mac for You.

Set up and use your Mac:

- If your Mac isn't already set up, begin by reading Set Up Your Mac.
- You can figure out a lot about your Mac by playing around with it, but it's better to first Understand User Interface Differences.
- Next, you'll start to get ready for real work on your Mac. It's time to Choose Mac Applications and Move Your Data to Your Mac.

Learn more about your Mac:

- You've got the basics down; now start diving deeper by reading Set Up Multiple Users and Learn More about File Views.
- Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger includes a new tool for locating information on your computer, as explained in Find Files with Spotlight.
- Figure out how to use more of your Mac's features. See Manage Applications and Windows, Use the Network, and Try Printing.
- Apple offers an easy-to-use service that downloads new software to your computer via the Internet. See Use Software Update.
- Inevitably, you'll run into problems. Find out how to solve them by reading Glitches and Gotchas: Troubleshooting.
- Expand your Mac mind by perusing Five Mac Features You Must Learn, followed by Five Useful Tips.

Learn to live as a Mac user in a Windows world:

- You might want to know how to Share Documents with Windows Users, and you might have to Run Windows Applications.

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Get Ready

OK! You've decided to take the plunge: you're switching to the Mac. Well, although you might think you're a Mac island in a vast sea of Windows, you're far from alone. Apple is on a roll, and millions of people are buying Macs, many of them for the first time.

When Windows computers seem to be everywhere, why should you be using a Mac? Let's take a look.

What's Cool about the Mac

People have various reasons for buying and using Macintosh computers. Here are the most common ones:

- **Macs are stable.** In general, fewer weird and unreliable things happen when you're using a Mac. Programs don't crash or freeze as often. Inexplicable problems, such as no sound from the computer or the mouse not working, are almost unknown. And although applications occasionally misbehave, full system crashes (the equivalent of the dreaded Blue Screen of Death in Windows) are rare.
- **Macs don't get viruses.** If you're tired of cleaning viruses off your computer—and according to recent press reports, some people are actually choosing to *get rid of their PCs* rather than deal with virus infections—you're bound to love having a Mac. You won't find viruses, worms, Trojan horses, spyware, or other ill-meaning software running in Mac OS X.
- **Almost everything is easier on a Mac.** Ease of use is a cornerstone of Macintosh hardware and software design. Macs come with lots of friendly software included, and more is available from Apple and other companies. Because Mac users tend to expect higher-quality software, other companies have to make sure their Mac software is good, too.
- **Little things on the Mac seem to work better.** Waking your Mac from sleep (system standby) will make you smile: the process is almost instantaneous. Joining a wireless network usually happens automatically. The Mac is filled with small touches that make your computing experience more enjoyable.

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Set Up and Use Your Mac

Now it's time to go to your workspace, stretch out your fingers, and set up and use your Mac. At this point, you might find it helpful to recall the words printed in large, friendly letters on the cover of the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*: Don't Panic. You'll see and experience all sorts of strange new things, but it's going to be OK. It'll be fun and rewarding, too.

Note Before you go ahead with setting up your Mac, make sure this is a good time to proceed. You should clear at least a few hours on your schedule to make the transition and move your data; a weekend is ideal. Although you might be itching to start working with your Mac as soon as possible, it's not a good idea to begin the process 10 minutes before you leave for an appointment. If you use your Mac at work, the beginning of a new project is an excellent time to switch. You should choose a point of relative calm in your computing life—not, for example, while you're simultaneously trying to finish up your company's annual plan.

Set Up Your Mac

If you haven't already done so, take your Mac out of its box and set it up in your workspace. Connect the mouse and the keyboard (if it's not built in, as on a portable) to the USB ports on the Mac. Make sure you've plugged your Mac into AC power.

Turn your Mac on by pressing the Power button—that's the round one marked with a circle broken by a vertical bar. Enjoy the welcome from Apple, and then follow the steps and answer the questions that appear on the screen as the first-time setup program runs.

Tip The Mac emits a melodious tone when it starts up. If you've connected your Mac to external speakers, or you're turning it on for the first time late at night at home, be sure to lower the speaker volume or make sure the door to the room is closed.

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NOTE If your computer has already been set up by someone else, you won't see the first-time setup program. Instead, your Mac will go directly to the Desktop or to the login screen, depending on how it's been set up.

Understand User Interface Differences

Your first time in the Macintosh universe might feel like a trip to Bizarro world: everything is sort of familiar, but nothing is quite right. Favorite objects are missing or have moved, and the colors are all wrong. This section will help get you through those first minutes and hours with your new Mac as you endeavor to figure out what's what.

Mouse differences

The mouse or trackpad on a Windows PC has at least two buttons. You use left-click to select and click things, such as menus and buttons, and right-click to bring up a shortcut menu of operations that work on whatever you're pointing at.

In contrast, Macintosh trackpads and mice have only one button. This is an immediate, concrete example of the Mac philosophy of simplicity: when there's only one button, you can't click the wrong one. Use the single button on your Mac mouse or trackpad to select and click objects. Macs have *contextual menus*, which are the same as shortcut menus on Windows. (This is a rare case of Microsoft using a friendlier name for a technology than Apple does.) To see contextual menus, you hold down the Control key (which is marked "Ctrl" on most keyboards) while you click.

Many people switching from Windows miss having that right mouse button. Well, I have good news: although Macs don't come with two-button mice, Mac OS X fully supports them. You can connect any multi-button USB mouse to your Mac, and both left- and right-click are supported automatically, as is a scroll wheel. USB mice with three or more buttons usually come with software that lets you set up the additional buttons to perform other functions. You might want to bring your favorite mouse with you from your PC to your Mac; it will probably work fine.

If you have an Apple mouse, it might actually be a two-button mouse in disguise. Apple's Mighty Mouse has no visible buttons at all. It works by detecting pressure on the left or right side of its face. Mighty Mouse comes configured as a one-button mouse: it treats all "clicks"

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TIP Apple's Help has a similar table of Windows-Mac terms, but with a few additional entries. To see it, in the Finder choose Help > Mac Help, and then search for Microsoft Windows. One of the Help Topics found is "What's it called on my Mac?". Double-click that topic to see the table. Alternatively, you can find the table at http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?path=Mac/10.4/en/cdb_whatcalled.html.

Choose Mac Applications

Macs and their software are good-looking, but what matters is whether they can do the jobs you need them to do. Operating systems create a foundation, but the real work is done by applications. In this section, I discuss how to pick applications that do the work you've been doing with Windows programs.

As you choose Mac applications and compare them to what you've been using on Windows, you'll find five rough categories of options:

- **Programs that are virtually identical on Mac and Windows:** These tend to come from large software companies that have an interest in making all their applications look and work the same. That way, they have to create only one manual or Help system, and their support department has to learn only one universal version of the program. Many of Adobe's applications are examples of this, as is Apple's iTunes.

  When you switch to Mac, these programs are the easiest to learn, but they don't always take full advantage of the Mac's benefits. However, a few Mac-only features sometimes sneak in; for example, Adobe's applications let you use some of the Mac's superior graphics features.

- **Programs that have the same name and basic functions but have additional features that are different on Mac and Windows:** Microsoft Word exists on both operating systems, and the two versions have many identical features, making it relatively painless for you to switch. They're similar enough that you can exchange files between them. But there are niche features in each version that are not in the other; Microsoft has allowed two development teams to follow two different sets of customers.

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drawings. OmniGraffle, from The Omni Group, is a popular tool that's included with some Macs; check yours to see if it's installed already.

Adobe Reader is the standard Windows way to view PDF files. There's a Mac version of Adobe Reader, but many Mac users prefer Preview, an Apple program that comes with Mac OS X and provides a more Mac-like way to read PDF files.

Database programs

The most popular database program, Microsoft Access, doesn't have a Mac version. If you need a powerful database, look into FileMaker, which has both Mac and Windows versions. Of course, you'll have to export your data from Access and get it into FileMaker, but at least that's a start.

Where to find more software

I've named only a small number of Mac applications in this section. Despite the Mac's reputation for having little software, thousands of programs are available. Here's how to find them:

- Visit an Apple Store. Apple retail stores carry a selection of independent software for Macs. See http://www.apple.com/retail/ for a list of locations.
- Look at Apple's online list of programs. Apple keeps track of thousands of applications that work with Mac OS X. To view the list, choose Apple > Mac OS X Software, or point your Web browser at http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/. You can also search the Macintosh Products Guide, a catalog of software (and hardware) products for the Mac, at http://guide.apple.com/.
- Try VersionTracker. The folks at http://www.versiontracker.com/ maintain an exhaustive list of software releases for programs that work with various operating systems, including Mac OS X. To see what's available, go there and search or browse the vast listings.

Move Your Data to Your Mac

Your Mac is set up, you know your way around, and you've selected applications. Now you have to move all your stuff from the PC to the Mac. Moving your data isn't technically hard, but it can be tedious. Even after you're done with the transfer, you should keep your PC around, even if you don't intend to use it any more, just in case you inadvertently left something behind.

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Learn More about Your Mac

If you've been playing along this far, you're now using your Mac, you've figured out which applications to use, and your files and settings are there with you. Congratulations! This section tells you more about how to use your new Mac.

Set Up Multiple Users

Mac OS X provides an easy, powerful way for more than one person to use a single Mac and each get a private space. To see how it works, open the Accounts preference pane in System Preferences. The left side of the pane lists the user accounts registered on the computer. If you set up your computer yourself, you'll probably see only your name on the left side. If you got your computer from your company's IT department, there might be additional accounts.

You might want to add additional accounts for your family members or (less likely) your co-workers. Note that a word appears under each account name on the left side: Admin, Standard, or Managed. To add an account, your own account must be of the Admin type. At some companies, the IT department doesn't give everyone Admin access, so you might not be able to add accounts. If you do have an Admin account, you first have to prove you're really who you say you are, through a process called *authenticating*: click the padlock at the lower left and enter your password to unlock it. Once the padlock opens, click the + (plus) button just above it to add an account.

To learn more about the things you can do with user accounts and how to do them, see the ebook *Take Control of Users & Accounts*. There are versions for Mac OS X versions 10.3 Panther and 10.4 Tiger (http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/panther/users.html and http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/tiger-users.html, respectively).

Learn More about File Views

The Finder provides three different views that show files using columns, lists, or icons:

- **Column view:** The Finder's column view is a hierarchical series of panels, with the hierarchy expanding from left to right. This view can take a little getting used to, but it's quite useful. In particular, the preview column at the far right provides some information about the selected file, such as its name, kind, size,

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- Start the Console application, which is found in the folder **`/Applications/Utilities`**, and then choose File > Open Quickly > /Library/Logs > panic.log. Try copying parts of the log and searching the Web for someone reporting a similar problem.
- If you're not far from an Apple Store, make an appointment with the Apple Genius there.

Five Mac Features You Must Learn

This section describes five important Mac features I haven't mentioned yet that are either so handy that you're likely to use them every day or so important that they'll make a significant difference in your Mac work environment.

Use multiple Finder windows

When you're working in the Finder, you can open as many windows as you need. To open a new window, choose File > New Window or press Command-N. You can also open a folder into its own window by Command-double-clicking it.

Each window can show whichever Finder item you want: folder, disk, network, and so on. Having multiple Finder windows open is especially helpful when you're moving or copying files.

You can use various views in different windows to see your files. For example, you might use column view (View > As Column) to see an overview of your disk's hierarchy, but you might want to see a folder of documents listed in the order the documents were modified. To do that, choose View > As List and then click the Date Modified column.

Move and copy files

The most direct way to move files from one folder to another on the same disk is to drag their icons in the Finder. This is easiest if you have both the starting and destination windows open before you begin. If you drag an icon to a different disk, the file is copied to the new disk, but the original is left intact as well.

You can use dragging to make a copy of a file in a new place on the same disk, leaving the original alone. Hold down the Option key and then start dragging the file's icon. You'll see a green bubble with a + (plus) on it, indicating that you're creating a copy of the file. Drag the copy to the destination folder, and then let go of the mouse button to complete the copying.

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Let's face it: the vast majority of our family members, friends, and co-workers have managed to resist the Mac's charms so far. This can make for some rough edges as you transition from Windows and become a Mac user. In this section, I cover some of the difficulties you might run into as you continue to work with Windows users, along with possible solutions.

Share Documents with Windows Users

You can exchange many kinds of files, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, GIF, JPG, and PDF files, with your Windows counterparts. Usually, you'll share documents via email, but any form of transfer is fine.

Although sharing documents across operating systems works well, here are some troublesome areas you should be aware of:

- Many Excel documents include macros, which are generally portable between Mac and Windows. The major exception is macros that use ActiveX controls on Windows: those don't work on Macs and can't be converted.
- PowerPoint presentations can have problems moving from Mac to Windows if they include movies. Movies created on the Mac are typically in QuickTime format, but for them to work in PowerPoint on Windows you must convert them to AVI format. Apple's QuickTime Pro lets you export QuickTime movies to other formats, including AVI.
- You'll occasionally have problems with documents that appear or print slightly differently after they cross operating systems. Sometimes you can fix these problems by avoiding exotic fonts and sticking with a well-known set. In particular, some fonts on the Mac are installed in Windows only if the computer has Microsoft Publisher. If you send documents with these fonts to Windows users, they won't appear or print correctly if the recipient doesn't have Publisher.

Microsoft Office 2004 for Mac includes a helpful feature that tries to determine whether a document will have any problems when viewed

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NOTE If you know the name of a Windows term and you want to find out what the Mac equivalent is, see Table 3.

application menu: The second menu in the menu bar. Its title is the name of the current application, and it contains commands for that application.

authenticating: The process of providing your user name and your password, as requested by your Mac before it will let you change an important setting.

brushed metal: A type of Mac OS X window that looks as if it's made of metal and can be dragged by its edges. The Finder and QuickTime Player are examples of applications that use brushed metal windows.

contacts: A collection of names and addresses, primarily used by email programs. Some email programs call this the address book.

contextual menu: A menu that appears at the cursor location when you Control-click or, on a multi-button mouse, right-click. Contextual menus are called shortcut menus in Windows.

disclosure triangle: The small triangle next to a folder in a Finder list view window, also sometimes called *expansion triangle*. Click it to show or hide the contents of the folder. Disclosure triangles appear in other places on the Mac as well, such as in the Keyboard Shortcuts tab in the Keyboard & Mouse preference pane. Some Mac users call these flippies or twiddles for short. Disclosure triangles work like the small plus and minus signs in Windows Explorer folder view.

Dock: The bar of icons, located by default at the bottom of the screen, that provides quick access to applications, folders, and documents. The Dock is broadly similar to the Windows taskbar in function.

expansion triangle: See *disclosure triangle*.

Finder: The Macintosh program that controls your desktop and provides a way for you to see, move, and copy your files, as Windows Explorer does. The Finder's icon is always first in the Dock. See *Dock*.

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Books

In this ebook, I've tried to present the fundamentals of switching to the Mac in a relatively small number of pages. If you'd like a lot more material about switching (for a higher price, of course), take a look at the book *Switching to the Mac: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition* by David Pogue and Adam Goldstein, ISBN 0-596-00660-8 (http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0596004524/).

Web Sites

Software downloads and services:

- Firefox browser: http://www.getfirefox.com/
- VLC video player: http://www.videolan.org/
- Software from Apple and others: http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/
- Audion music player (plays and converts WMA files): http://www.panic.com/audion/
- Email conversion tools: http://www.emailman.com/
- Outlook2Mac mail conversion utility: http://www.littlemachines.com/
- Eudora vCard Export conversion utility: http://homepage.mac.com/aamann/
- TinkerTool utility: http://www.bresink.de/osx/TinkerTool.html
- Microsoft Remote Desktop Connection Client: http://www.microsoft.com/mac/downloads.aspx
- Web service for sending large files: http://www.yousendit.com/

Apple sites:

- List of Apple retail stores: http://www.apple.com/retail/
- Apple's official support site: http://www.apple.com/support/
- Apple-hosted support forums: http://discussions.info.apple.com/
- Apple Consultants Network: http://consultants.apple.com/

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About This Ebook

In contrast to traditional print books, Take Control ebooks offer clickable links, full-text searching, and free minor updates. We hope you find them both useful and enjoyable to read. Keep reading in this section to learn more about the author, the Take Control series, and the publisher.

About the Author

Scott Knaster has been writing about Macs for as long as there have been Macs. Scott's book *How to Write Macintosh Software* was required reading for Mac programmers for a decade, and his groundbreaking *Macintosh Programming Secrets* became a cult classic. Scott's writing experience ranges from books for software developers to April Fool's Day hoaxes. Scott's books have been translated into several languages, including Japanese and Pascal. Scott has every issue of *MAD* magazine, which explains a lot about him.

Author's Acknowledgments

Mark Altenberg and Genentech have generously sponsored the creation of this ebook and offered it to the Mac community. Mark had the idea for the ebook and then helped guide it from conception, giving me insight on what switchers want to know. Mark and his colleagues at Genentech, a company that has been using Macs since the very first one, reviewed the ebook and provided excellent suggestions for its improvement.

Adam and Tonya Engst gave me the opportunity to write this ebook and to work on it with Caroline Rose, and for that I thank them profusely. Adam and Tonya have helped me immeasurably throughout the process, shepherding the ebook from idea to publication and beyond.

Thanks to Matt Neuburg, whose table of status menus in *Take Control of Customizing Tiger* inspired the similar table in this ebook. And thanks to the members of the Take Control community for their valuable review of the manuscript.

And at last, thanks to Caroline Rose, my friend (for many years) and editor (for the first time). Being edited by Caroline has been just the

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wonderful experience I always thought it would be. She "gets" what authors are trying to say at both the big picture and detail levels, and then helps them say it better. Some years ago I wrote that Caroline was the best technical writer I'd ever known, and now I can add that she's the finest editor I've ever worked with.

Take Control: The Series

Take control of computing with the Take Control series of highly practical, tightly focused electronic books! Written by leading authors, edited by TidBITS, and delivered to your electronic doorstep within moments of "going to press," Take Control ebooks provide just the technical help you need.
http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/

You may be especially interested in:

- *Take Control of Buying a Mac,* by Adam Engst
  http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/buying-mac.html
- *Take Control of Customizing Tiger,* by Matt Neuburg
  http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/tiger-customizing.html
- *Take Control of Mac OS X Backups,* by Joe Kissell
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Adam and Tonya are well-known in the Macintosh world as writers, editors, and speakers, and they have written innumerable online and print publications. They are also parents to Tristan, who thinks ebooks about trains, ships, and dinosaurs would be cool.

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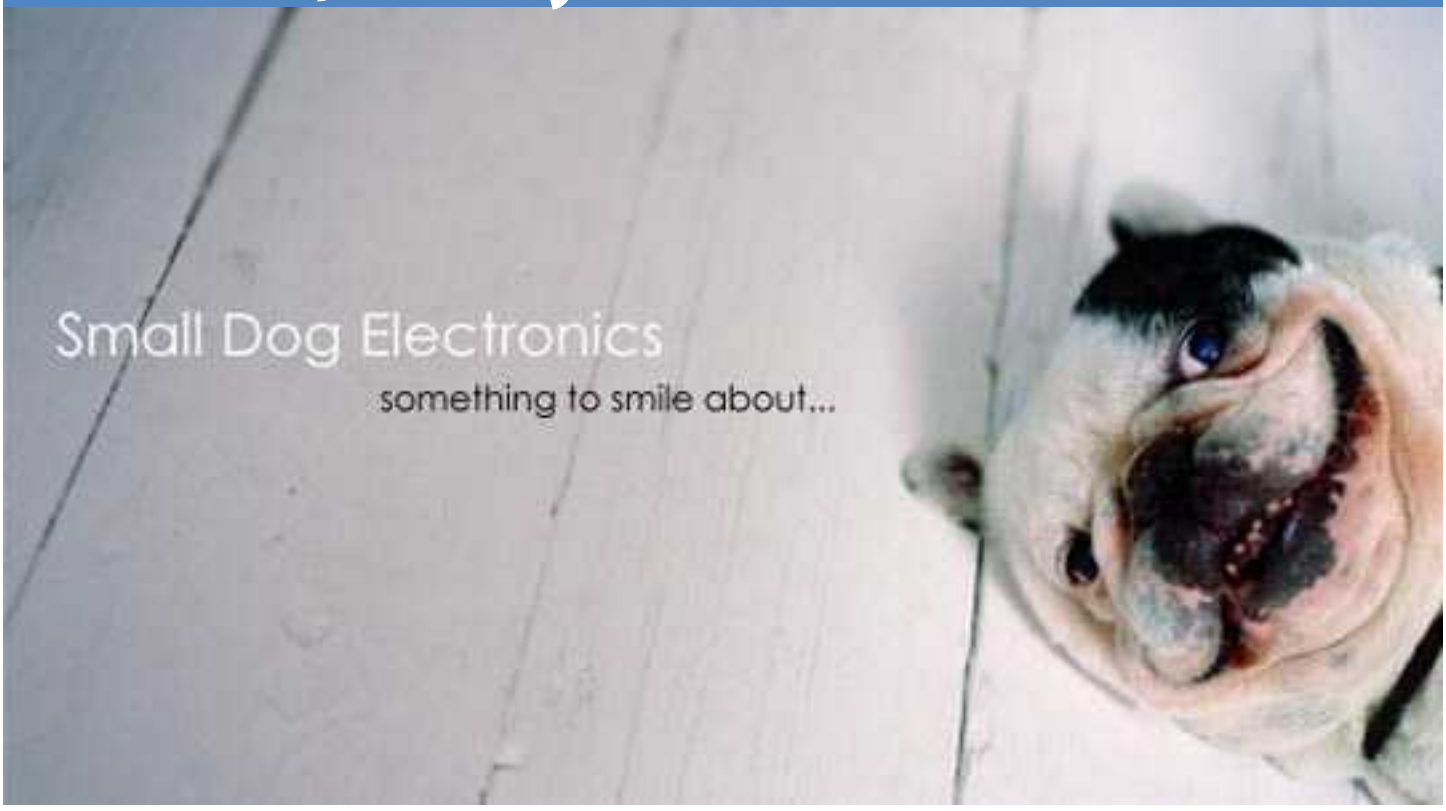

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