Chapter 1

How to Turn On Your Mac (and What to Do Next)

In This Chapter

▶ How to turn the Mac on (and off)

▶ New meanings for old words like *mouse, menu,* and *system*

▶ Doing windows

▶ Mindlessly opening and closing folders

*O*nce you've paid for your Mac, the hard part is over. Take it home, open the carton, and haul it out of its sculptured Styrofoam blocks.

Now you should set aside, oh, a good two minutes for getting it all plugged in (see Chapter 20).

At this moment, then, you should have a ready-to-roll Mac on your desk, in all its gorgeous glory, and a look of fevered anticipation on your face.

Switching On the Mac

In this very first lesson, you'll be asked to locate the On button. It's round, it's on the front, side, or top of the computer, and it bears the universal symbol for Mac On-Turning, like this:

On button

HANDS-ON
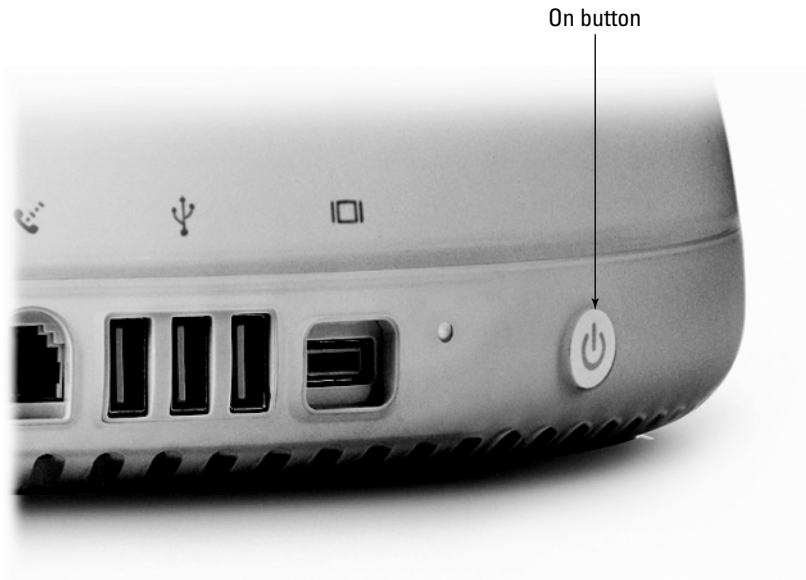
Try pushing this button now. If the Mac responds in some way — a sound plays, the screen lights up, missiles are launched from the Arizona desert — then your machine is working.

If pressing that button doesn't do anything, then your Mac isn't plugged into a working power outlet. I'll wait here while you get that problem sorted out.

If your On-button experiment was successful, you hear a chord, and after a few seconds, an image appears on the screen. Now you're treated to the famous Apple logo, revered by millions. It looks like this:

(In the rare event that your Apple logo appears like this —

Mac OS X

— your screen is upside-down.)

As the startup process proceeds, a progress bar inches its way across the screen as it fills with what looks like shimmering blue water. It telegraphs how much longer you have to wait.

What Happens Next

Life is never easy for computer-book authors (except for the screaming mobs of attractive fans in bookstores, of course). Pity the guy who has to explain what happens once you've turned on the Mac.

The truth is, you may encounter any of three things at this point. If the machine is fresh out of the box, you're guided through an interview in which you set the computer's clock and perform other digital paperwork. If it's already been set up, you might be asked to choose your name from a list before gaining access. And you may go straight to the swirling blue of the Mac *desktop* picture, ready for work. The following pages tell you what to do in each of these three situations.

All three situations, by the way, require your mastery of the *mouse.* If you've never used the mouse before, read the sidebar called "Mouse College."

The Setup Assistant

If you are the first person ever to turn on the Mac, the computer takes this opportunity to interview you, one question per screen. It's kind of unfortunate that your computing experience has to begin with paperwork instead of, say, blasting aliens, but that's life in the fast lane.

In any case, this setup program asks you what country you're in (twice), what your name and address are, and whether or not you want to get junk mail. Fill in the answers by clicking the multiple-choice buttons with the mouse and typing into the empty boxes with the keyboard. When you're finished with each screen, click the Continue button with your mouse.

Mouse College

The *mouse* is the transparent, capsule-like thing on the desk beside your keyboard. Having trouble visualizing it as a rodent? Think of the cord as its tail and (if it helps you) draw little eyeballs on the domed surface facing you.

To use the mouse, keep it turned so that the cord *always* points away from you.

Now then, scrape the mouse across the desk (or mouse pad). See how the arrow pointer moves across the screen? For the rest of your life, you'll hear that pointer called the *cursor*. And for the rest of your life, you'll hear moving the mouse called *moving the mouse*.

Try lifting the mouse off the desk and waving it around in midair like a remote control. Nothing happens, right? The mouse controls the cursor only when it's on a flat, opaque surface. (An electronic eye on the bottom of the mouse is constantly scanning the table surface. That's how it knows when you're moving it. That's also why dragging it across a glass or mirrored surface is a mean prank to play on this helpless little gadget.)

You can pick up the mouse when you run out of desk space, but the cursor will stay in place on the screen. Only when you set the mouse down and begin to roll it again will the cursor continue moving.

Now put your index finger on the far end of the mouse and briefly press down (and then release). If all goes well, you should feel the mouse *click.*

Congratulations — you've learned how to *click the mouse.* You'll encounter that instruction over and over again in your budding computing life.

Oh — and if you have a laptop (an iBook or PowerBook), you don't have a mouse. Studies have shown that rolling an ovoid plastic box across the thigh of the guy next to you on the plane can have unpleasant results, ergonomically and socially speaking. Therefore, you've been given, instead, a *trackpad.* The principle is the same: Stroke the pad away from you, and the cursor moves up the screen. Instead of a mouse button, you have a broad, clicky button nestled against the pad.

I won't mention this distinction again, because if you're smart enough to have bought a laptop, you're smart enough to translate future references to the mouse into trackpad terms.

Eventually, you arrive at a Create Your Account screen. It's somewhat technical looking, but as computer screens go, this one is pretty important.

This is where you identify yourself to the Mac. Fill in the boxes called Name (example: *Huckleberry Finn*), Short Name (example: *Huck*), Password (*don't forget it!),* and Password Hint (which the Mac will show you if you ever *do* forget your password).

If this is your own personal Mac that nobody else uses, count your blessings: You'll only rarely need to type in this password. If you share the computer

with other people in your family, school, or office, you'll be grateful that that little password keeps your own stuff safe from the inquiring minds of your comrades. (Details on this *user accounts* feature in Chapter 13.)

When you click Continue again, you're asked how you want to get onto the Internet.

- ✔ If you don't have an Internet account, click "I'd like a free trial account with Earthlink." (When you click an option like this, you can click *either* the little round button *or* the sentence itself.) When you click Continue, you'll be guided through the process of getting an account with Earthlink, one of the biggest Internet service companies. It won't let you into its hallowed halls, however, without your credit-card number, even though the first month is free. (Your Mac will actually dial into the Internet during this process, so make sure that you've connected a phone wire from the Mac's phone jack to a wall phone jack.)

- ✔ If you already have an Internet account, choose "I'll use my existing Internet service." When you click Continue, you'll be asked what kind of connection you have (telephone modem, cable modem, and so on), and then asked for a lot of technical parameters like IP addresses and DNS addresses. Unless you're some kind of competent Internet guru, skip this option and set up your account later, as described in Chapter 6.

- ✔ If all of this red tape is giving you a tension headache, you can always confront the Internet later. In that case, choose "I'm not ready to connect to the Internet" and click Continue. You can set up an Internet account when you're reading Chapter 6.

The interview continues. You'll be asked to register (click Register Later, unless you're a real fan of junk mail). You'll be shown a map of the world, which you can click to specify your time zone. You'll be asked to set the Mac's clock. You're invited to sign up for Apple's $100-a-year *.Mac account* (see Chapter 6; decline for now).

Finally, the Mac thanks you for your bureaucratic efforts. Click the Done button.

At last, the colored full-screen pattern, called the *desktop*, appears. Congratulations! You've arrived.

(If you saw anything else during the startup process — a blinking question-mark icon, a strange error message, or thick black smoke — you've just met your first computer problem. Proceed directly to Chapter 16, which is all about troubleshooting.)

The Welcome screen

If turning on the Mac produces a list of people's names, like this —

— then you're not the first person to use this machine. Somebody has beat you to the setup process. Click your name, if you see it; type your password, if you've been given one; and then read on.

In any case, you'll find an explanation of this name-and-password signing-in process at the end of Chapter 13.

The desktop and menu bar

For some people, turning on the Mac takes you directly to the *desktop,* as shown in the upcoming illustration.

You also wind up here *after* encountering the Setup Assistant or list of names described in the previous pages. In any case, the machine is officially on now, and ready to do work for you.

Let's try some real computing here. Move the cursor up to the lightly striped strip at the top of the screen. It's called the *menu bar,* named after a delightful little pub in Silicon Valley. Touch the arrow on the logo at the upper-left corner of the screen. (The *tip* of the Mac's arrow is the part you need to worry about. Same thing with real-life arrows, come to think of it.)

Pointing to something on the screen in this way has a technical term: *pointing.* (Think you're going to be able to handle this?)

The big turn-off

Before we get into 3-D color graphs, space-vehicle trajectories, and DNA analysis, I guess I should tell you how to turn the Mac *off.*

In a pinch, sure, you can just yank the power cord out of the wall. But regularly turning off the Mac by chopping off its power can theoretically invite technical problems with the hard drive.

Instead, you're supposed to turn off your Mac using one of the commands listed in the menu that you opened just a moment ago. Click the logo; when the list of commands appears, roll the mouse downward so that each successive command turns dark. When each menu command turns dark, it's said to be *highlighted.*

(The only commands that don't get highlighted are the ones that are dimmed, or *grayed out.* They're dimmed because they don't make any sense at the moment. For example, if no disc is in the CD-ROM drive, choosing Eject wouldn't make any sense. So the Mac makes that command gray, which means it's unavailable to you.)

If you've had enough of a computer lesson for now, let the cursor come to rest on the *Shut Down* command — and then click the mouse again. The computer promptly shuts itself off. See? This thing's no harder than a toaster.

(Another way to turn off the Mac: Press the power button again. This box appears:

Click Shut Down with the mouse, or press the Return key, which triggers the blue, pulsing button in any box on the screen.)

If you're ready to read on, though, confident that you now know how to turn this thing off, move the mouse cursor away from the menu and click anywhere else on the screen. The Mac, amazingly, does nothing at all but continue looking extremely cool.

Why not to turn off the Mac

Believe it or not, many Mac owners *never* turn the machine off. Instead, whenever they're not using it, they let the Mac drift off to *sleep*.

When the Mac is asleep, the screen is dark, the components inside stop whirring, all activity stops, and electricity consumption slows to a trickle. When you press a key later, the computer brightens right up. Whatever was on the screen is still there, ready for you to begin working again.

When you first buy a Mac, it's set to sleep automatically several minutes after you've stopped using it. But you can also make the machine sleep instantly, on your command, which is useful when you're browsing the "Survivor" Web site at work just as the boss walks by.

To do so, open the menu again and then click the Sleep command. The Mac blinks right off to sleep. (Or press the power button; in the resulting box on the screen, click the Sleep button.)

While it's dozing, a little white or bluish light near the screen (or on the edge, if it's a laptop) stays on, slowly "breathing" on and off, your cue that the machine isn't entirely off. It makes a handy night light for the office (well, if your office is about one inch wide).

Desktop, Dock, and Icons

Take a look around the screen. At the bottom is a row of icons called the *Dock*. Most of these icons represent the various programs that came with your Mac. (To find out their names, try pointing to them without clicking.) The Dock is described in Chapter 3.

Menu bar   Desktop   Hard-drive icon

Dock

Near the upper-right corner of the screen, you see an *icon,* a little, inch-tall, symbolic picture. Unless you've changed it, that icon is called *Macintosh HD.*

Icons represent everything in the Mac world. They all look different: One represents a letter you wrote, another represents the Trash can, another represents a CD you've inserted. Here are some examples of icons you'll probably be seeing before long:

A CD   A hard drive   A folder   A picture   A program

All systems are go

An *operating system* is the behind-the-scenes software that runs your computer. But because everyone's in such a hurry these days, people now just call it the *OS.* (Say it "O. S.," not "oss.") Your computer, in fact, runs one of the most advanced and beautiful operating systems on earth: Mac OS X.

(That X is supposed to be a roman numeral 10. Say "Mac Oh Ess Ten." Don't say "Mack Ossex," unless you want people to look at you funny.)

Just like car companies, Apple Computer piles on a few new features to Mac OS X every year. It distinguishes one version from the previous by tacking on additional decimal points. Your Mac may run Mac OS X version 10.1, or 10.2.8, or even 10.3-point-something.

Want to find out what you've got? Get a pencil.

Remember the logo in the upper-left corner of the screen? Point your arrow cursor tip on the apple and click the button to open the menu. Click the first command here, About This Mac. A window appears, like the one shown here, revealing what version of Mac OS X you have.

The version is a number you'll need to know later in this book and later in your life. Therefore, take this opportunity to write it onto your Cheat Sheet (the yellow cardboard page inside the front cover of this book). You'll find a little blank for this information in the upper-left corner of your card, where it says, "Your System version."

But write it in pencil, because as Apple improves its software, fixes bugs, and dreams up speed enhancements, it will send them to your Mac automatically the next time you connect to the Internet. One day, you'll wake up to discover that your 10.3.1 machine now runs 10.3.2, or whatever. Strange, useful — and freaky.

(The instructions and pictures in this book, by the way, depict Mac OS X 10.3-point-whatever, nicknamed Panther.)

When you're finished with this little piece of homework, close the About This Computer window by clicking the little, round, red button in the upper-left corner — the Close button.

About This Mac

Mac OS X
Version 10.3.1

(Software Update...)

Processor Dual 800 MHz PowerPC G4
2 MB L3 cache per processor

Memory 768 MB SDRAM

(More Info...)

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HANDS-ON

You can move an icon by dragging it. Try this:

1. **Point to the Macintosh HD icon.**

2. **Press and then hold down the mouse button continuously — and, while it's down, move the mouse to a new position.**

   This sophisticated technique is called, by the way, *dragging*. You're dragging the hard drive icon now.

3. **Let go of the mouse button.**

Other than the fact that there's a Trash can near the bottom of the screen, nobody's really sure why they call this main screen the *desktop*. It has another name, too: the *Finder*. It's where you file all your work into little electronic on-screen file folders so that you can *find* them again later. The word *Finder* even appears at the top of the screen, next to the menu.

Macintosh syntax

Point once again to the hard-disk icon in the upper-right corner of the screen, like this:
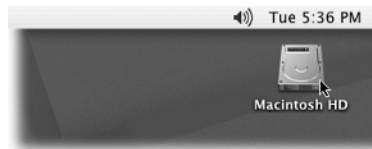
This particular icon represents the giant disk inside your Mac, known as the *hard drive* or *hard disk,* which serves as your filing cabinet. It's where the computer stores all your work, all your files, and all your software.

So how do you see what's in your hard drive? Where do you get to see its table of contents?

It turns out that you can *open* any icon into a window, where you'll see every item inside listed individually. The window has the same name as the icon you opened.

Before we proceed, though, it's time for a lesson in Macintosh syntax. Fear not; it's nothing like English syntax. In fact, everything that you do on the Macintosh has this format: *noun-verb*. Shakespeare it ain't, but it's sure easy to remember.

Let's try a noun-verb command, shall we?

1. **Click the hard-disk icon in the upper-right corner of the screen.**

   The icon turns black, indicating that it's *selected*. Good job — you've just identified the *noun*.

2. **Using the mouse, click the File menu, and choose Open.**

   You guessed it — Open is the *verb*. And, sure enough, your hard disk opens into a window, where you can see its contents. (If another window was already on your screen, it immediately disappears to make way for the Macintosh HD window.)

In the world of Macintosh, you always specify *what* you want to change (using the mouse) and then you use a menu command to specify *how* you want it changed. You'll see this pattern over and over again: *Select* something on the screen and then *apply* a menu command to it.

The complete list of window doodads

Look over the contents of your hard-drive window, as shown in the following figure. (Everybody's got different stuff, so what you see on your screen may not exactly match the illustration.)

Better yet, look over the various controls and gadgets around the *edges* of this window. Using these controls and buttons, you can do all kinds of neat things to a window: stretch it, move it, or make it go away. These various gadgets are worth learning about — you're going to run into windows *everywhere* after you start working.
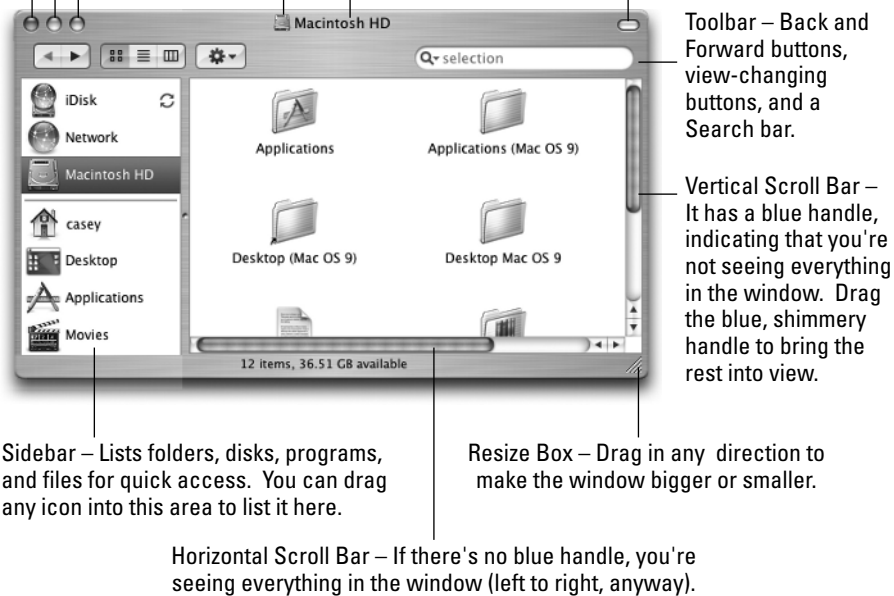
Close Button – Click here to close the window.

Minimize Button – Click the yellow glob to hide the window.

Title Bar Icon – Click and hold, and then drag, to move the entire window to the Trash, to another disk, or to another window.

Zoom Button – Click to make the window just big enough to show all its contents.

Title Bar – Drag anywhere in this striped area to move the whole window.

Toolbar Button – Click to hide (or bring back) the toolbar and the Sidebar.

Toolbar – Back and Forward buttons, view-changing buttons, and a Search bar.

Vertical Scroll Bar – It has a blue handle, indicating that you're not seeing everything in the window. Drag the blue, shimmery handle to bring the rest into view.

Sidebar – Lists folders, disks, programs, and files for quick access. You can drag any icon into this area to list it here.

Resize Box – Drag in any direction to make the window bigger or smaller.

Horizontal Scroll Bar – If there's no blue handle, you're seeing everything in the window (left to right, anyway).

Try out some of the little boxes and scroll bars. Click them. Tug on them. Open the window and close it again. No matter what you do, *you can never hurt the machine by doing "the wrong thing."* That's the wonderful thing about the Mac: It's the Nerf appliance.

Double-clicking in theory and practice

So far, all of your work in the Finder (the desktop) has involved moving the mouse around. But your keyboard is useful, too. For example, do you see the System folder, the one with a big X on it? Even if you don't, here's a quick way to find it: Quickly type **SY** on your keyboard.

Presto, the Mac finds the System folder (which happens to be the first thing that begins with those letters) and highlights it, in effect dropping it in front of you, wagging its tail.

Now try pressing the arrow keys on your keyboard — right, left, up, down. The Mac highlights neighboring icons as you do so.

Suppose you want to see what's in the System folder. Of course, using your newfound noun-verb method, you could (1) click the System folder to select it and then (2) choose Open from the File menu.

But that's the sissy way. Try this power shortcut: Point to the System folder icon so that the tip of the arrow cursor is squarely inside the picture of the folder. Keeping the mouse still, click twice in rapid succession. With stunning originality, the Committee for the Invention of Computer Terminology calls this advanced computing technique *double-clicking*.

If all went well, your double-click opened a different window, showing you the contents of the System folder. (If it didn't work, you probably need to keep the mouse still or double-click faster.)

Remember this juicy golden rule: *Double-click means "open."*

In your Mac life, you'll be asked (or tempted) to click many an item on-screen: buttons that say "OK"; tools that look like paint brushes; all manner of multiple-choice buttons. In every one of these cases, you're supposed to click *once*.

The only time you ever *double*-click something is when you want to *open* it. Got it?

One window

Now you have the System window open. Well, that's just great, but what happened to the hard drive window?

The Mac tries to keep your life simple by showing you only one window at a time. When you open one folder, its window *replaces* whatever window you were just looking at. It works like a TV: You can change channels, but the frame around your screen always looks the same.

That's all great, but what if you want to backtrack? What if, now that you've savored the System folder for a moment, you want to return to the Macintosh HD window that you opened first?

That's what the Back button is for. Just click the button to go back to whatever window you had open before. In fact, if you'd opened several folders in succession, you can click the Back button *repeatedly* for a little reverse slide show of the windows you've recently opened.

Multiple windows

This business of keeping only one window before you at all times is fine for timid beginners, and it certainly keeps your screen tidy. But sooner or later, you're going to wish you could open two windows simultaneously — when you want to move a picture or a chapter from one window into another.

Try this: From the File menu, choose New Finder Window. Presto: A second window appears. (It's probably the window where you're supposed to keep all your stuff, the one that bears your name — your *Home folder*. Details in Chapter 2.)

You can tell that this window is in back, because it looks sort of faded. Click anywhere in the window to bring it to the front.
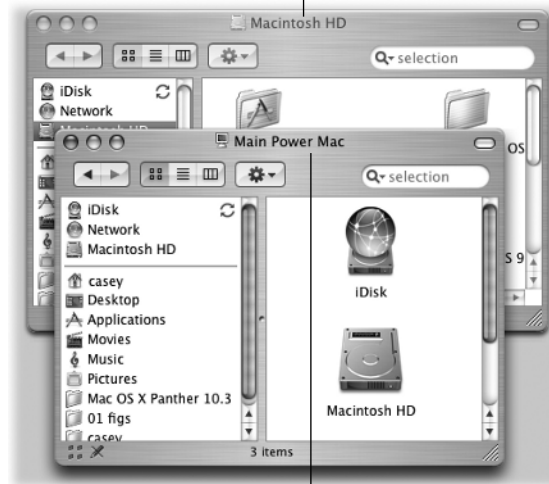
You can tell that this window is in front, because its title bar is bright and bold.

Windows on a computer are like pieces of paper on a desk: There may be a whole pile of them, but only one can be on top. And on a Mac, you bring a window to the top just by clicking it.

HANDS-ON

Take a stress-free moment to prove the point, using the two windows now before you: Click the back one to bring it forward; then click the one that was in front to bring it to the front again. To move a window, drag it with the mouse, using anything that looks like brushed metal as a handle (like the strip at the top — the title bar).

When you're finished goofing around, close each window by clicking its Close button (the little red glob of Colgate Very Berry Gel in the upper-left corner).

Where to Get Help

It's true that your Mac didn't come with a printed manual. If you're cynical, you might guess that Apple was hoping to save a few bucks. If you're idealistic, you might assume that Apple is simply concerned about global deforestation.

In any case, your computer does come with a manual, of sorts — an electronic one. It's very terse, somewhat incomplete, and contains no jokes whatsoever, but it's there. To find it, open the Help menu, and choose Mac Help. You get a window that looks something like this:

You can use this Help Center in two ways. First, you can type a Help topic into the blank at the top of the window (such as *naming files* or *dialing the Internet*) — and then press the Return key. If you're having a good night, the window will then show you a list of Help pages that might contain the answer you're looking for; click the name of the topic that seems to hold some promise, as shown here:
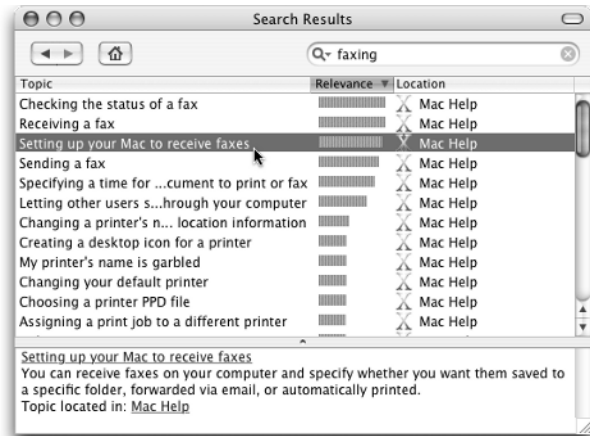
Second, you can click your way through this little Help program. In the previous illustration, see the heading called Browse Mac OS Help?

By clicking that headline, and then (on the next screen) by clicking the topic you want, you can often home in on the precise Help article you're interested in.

𝒫it stop

Shut the Mac down now, if you want (flip back a few pages to the section "The big turn-off" for complete instructions). Or just walk away, confident that it will put itself into an energy-saving Sleep mode after half an hour.

Chapter 2 shows you how to harness your new mastery of icons and windows to begin organizing the clutter of your life.

Top Ten Similarities between You and Your Mac

Before you move boldly forward to the next chapter, ponder the following frightening similarities between a Mac and its owner:

1. Each is pulled out of a very special container on Day One.
2. Each is most attractive when it's young.
3. Each has slots to provide adequate ventilation.
4. Each reacts to sudden movements of mice.
5. Each may crash when asked to do too much at once.
6. Each has a button in (or on) its abdomen.
7. Each lights up when turned on.
8. Each occasionally enjoys a good CD.
9. Each may be connected to a phone line for days at a time.
10. Sooner or later, each goes to sleep automatically.