

Introduction

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Equipment needed: a computer; Internet Explorer program and a connection to the Internet.



Skills needed: some knowledge of the keyboard and mouse.



This book is for those people who have started their computing career but have become becalmed in the waters of the Internet. A certain amount of basic computing knowledge would be very useful if you are to get the full benefit of this book. The first book – *Computing for the Older and Wiser* – was targeted at beginners while this book tends to assume some previous knowledge, even if it is limited.

During my years of teaching people to use their home computers I have found that, after the first few lessons, they are quite happy to experiment with their new-found knowledge but come back to me after a few months with questions about more advanced topics. This book hopes to answer some of those questions. It is like letting a person into a field and allowing them to explore the wildlife but, after a while, they begin to look over the hedges and see further possibilities lying in adjacent fields but find that the gates are locked. This book provides the keys to some of those gates.

I have based all my teaching on the PC machine using either Windows XP or Windows Vista Home Edition and the basic Windows programs such as Internet Explorer, Windows Mail and Outlook Express. The reason for this is that these programs are available to every owner of a PC computer. That is not to say that they are necessarily the very best programs for the job; in fact, there are better

programs mentioned in the book which will have to be installed on your computer. You will learn how to achieve such results in the earlier chapters. For instance, you may find that you enjoy surfing the Internet using an alternative web browser to Internet Explorer such as Firefox, Safari or Google's latest project, the Chrome browser. Apple Mac users may find some useful information within these pages, but the book is not really designed for those computer users.

The book follows a similar pattern to that of the first one in that the early chapters lead the reader through the complications of filling in registration forms and downloading programs in considerable detail. The later chapters assume that these lessons have been taken on board and therefore there is less need for detailed instruction. Most chapters also provide revision sections in the shape of brain-training for those subjects which are essential if you are to get the most out of your computer. There is little point in trying to set up an online banking account if you are unsure of how to search for your bank's website using a search engine.



This is not to say that you have to follow the chapters one by one. If you see something later in the book that appeals to you, feel free to explore, but bear in mind that I will have assumed some previous knowledge gained from the earlier chapters.

Not all the chapters will appeal to everyone so just choose those that are of interest to you. You may have developed a burning desire to explore your family tree, in which case you will find valuable advice in Chapter 18 while the contents of Chapter 16 on Social Networking may hold no attraction for you whatsoever.

There are hints and tips littered throughout the book to make your computing experience more enjoyable and efficient, but there will be times when you find yourself completely stuck. Don't worry. I am always on the end of an email at bu33kin@tiscali.co.uk, or alternatively you can contact me through the 'Ask a Question' function on the website www.pcwisdom.co.uk.



If I have one piece of advice that runs throughout the book it would be 'give it a go.' The sky will not fall in if you make a mess of creating a family video or listen to the wrong radio programme on your computer.

This book is about the acquisition of knowledge, but the margin notes of trivia need not be remembered. They are placed there to bring a smile to your face while you are working your way through the book. Computing should be fun and not a chore. Enjoy yourself!

