

## **Book Review**

**“Mac OS X Disaster Relief”** subtitled **“Troubleshooting techniques to help fix it yourself”** by **Ted Landau** and published by **Peachpit Press**

It is a strange feeling to be buying a book that you hope you will never have to read. But that was exactly the case with “Disaster Relief” from Peachpit Press. Like a First Aid manual or the book on cleaning out your drainpipes, it’s very handy to have around . . . but not *always* fun to use.

That being said, it is also the kind of book that you will be darn glad you have when your trusty G3 serves up a blank grey screen or a dreaded “blue screen crash” at 8:00 PM on a Friday night and you don’t know who to call.

To begin with, “Disaster Relief” is set up in very sensible fashion. It starts with a chapter on “Why Mac OS X” and works through the trials and tribulations of installing and learning OS X. There is also a chapter on OS X “In Depth” if you really want to dig into the operating system. This digs into the layers of OS X and the structure of the system files.

There is also a later chapter devoted to the Classic Environment in OS X.

### **Uh-Oh!**

To me, the most interesting stuff dealt with what to do when there is a problem. It begins with a discussion of what causes crashes and freezes. It then talks about start-up paths and alternative start-up paths, i.e. how to get your machine to start at all when there are problems and you are faced with a seemingly deaf, dumb or blind machine.

I found the chapter on start-up crashes especially helpful. For the most part, the book is written in plain English. When the author does “go techie” he usually has a good reason.

There is also a good chapter on application quits. In OS X, these don’t usually crash your total system, but it is nice to know how to diagnose these irritating problems and solve them in the future.

Under this same section, the author goes through analyzing and fixing log out, restart and shut down stalls and crashes.

### **Problem Areas**

Most of us have learned by now that printing, file sharing and network set-up issues are almost inevitable if you use your computer long enough. Landau knows this too and has chapters on each of the major areas.

### **Bottom Line**

Since this book covers all of the major bases (as far I as I could tell) it works just fine as a “quick reference.” The book has a clear, intuitive table of contents and index. I would rate it a “must have” for anybody who is serious about his or her computer and what ails it.

Cover price is a hefty \$34.99, but it is available from Amazon for \$20.99 (cheaper if you buy used.) There are also special discounts available on occasion from the publisher or the Macintosh User Group Store. Check the our website.