

LEARNING MADE EASY



macOS[®] Ventura[™]

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Master your Mac[®]
with minimal effort

Exploit macOS Ventura's
powerful new features

Learn expert techniques to
work faster and smarter

Guy Hart-Davis

International Man of macOS

macOS[®] Ventura[™]

for
dummies[®]
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by Guy Hart-Davis
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macOS® Ventura™ For Dummies®

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Introduction

L ooks like you've made three good choices: a Mac, macOS Ventura (aka macOS version 13), and this book. If you're brand-new to the Mac, you're all set to start enjoying computing with the finest operating system on the planet. If you've been using your Mac and macOS for a while, you're ready to start enjoying using them even more. Sure, this book is a computer book, but it's not one of those dull doorsteps; it's one that makes discovering the ins and outs of macOS Ventura easy and even fun.

About This Book

macOS Ventura For Dummies is the latest revision of the best-selling book by legendary Mac maven Bob “Dr. Mac” LeVitus, technology columnist at the *Houston Chronicle*. The book has been completely updated for macOS Ventura to cover all the exciting new features — such as Stage Manager, Passkeys, and the capability to unsend messages — and everything else that has changed. This edition combines all the old, familiar features of dozens of previous editions with the very latest information on Macs and on macOS Ventura.

Why write a *For Dummies* book about macOS Ventura? Well, Ventura is a big, somewhat-complicated personal-computer operating system. So *macOS Ventura For Dummies*, a not-so-big, not-too-complicated book, shows you what Ventura is all about without boring you to tears or poking you with sharp objects.

But why *For Dummies*? Well, that's the series name, and Wiley, the publisher, is understandably keen on using it. But remember, *dummy* is just a word. I don't think you're a dummy at all — quite the opposite, given your smart move in choosing this book!

The book is chock-full of information and advice, explaining everything you need to know about macOS Ventura in language you can understand — along with time-saving tips, tricks, techniques, and step-by-step instructions, all served up in generous quantities.

Another rule we *For Dummies* authors must follow is that our books can't exceed a certain number of pages. (Brevity is the soul of wit and all that.) So although I wish I could have included some things that didn't fit, I feel confident that you'll find what you need to know about using macOS Ventura in this book.

Still, a few things bear further looking into, such as these:

» **Information about many of the apps (applications or programs) that come with macOS Ventura:** An installation of macOS Ventura includes nearly 60 apps, mostly located in the Applications and Utilities folders. I'd love to walk you through each one of them, but that would have required a book a whole lot bigger, heavier, and more expensive than this one.

This book briefs you on the handful of bundled applications essential to using macOS Ventura — Calendar, Contacts, Messages, Mail, Safari, Siri, TextEdit, and the like — as well as several important utilities (such as Activity Monitor, Disk Utility, and Migration Assistant) you may need to know how to use someday.

» **Information about Microsoft Office, Apple lifestyle and productivity apps (iMovie, Numbers, Pages, GarageBand, and so on), Adobe Photoshop, Quicken, and other third-party applications:** Okay, if all the gory details of all the bundled (read: *free*) macOS Ventura applications don't fit here, you'll understand why digging into third-party applications that cost extra was out of the question.

» **Information about programming for the Mac:** This book is about *using* macOS Ventura, not writing code for it. Dozens of books, most of which are double the size and triple the density of this one, cover programming on the Mac.

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading it as an e-book, you've got it easy: Just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

Although I know what happens when you make assumptions, I've made a few anyway.

First, I assume that you, gentle reader, know nothing about using macOS — beyond knowing what a Mac is, that you want to use macOS, that you want to understand macOS without having to digest an incomprehensible technical manual, and that you made the right choice by selecting this particular book. So I do my best to explain each new concept in full and loving detail.

Oh, I also assume that you can read. If you can't, ignore this paragraph.

Icons Used in This Book

Little pictures (icons) appear to the side of text throughout this book. Consider these icons to be miniature road signs, telling you a little something extra about the topic at hand. Here's what the icons look like and what they mean.



TIP

Look for Tip icons to find the juiciest morsels: shortcuts, tips, and undocumented secrets about Ventura. Try them all; impress your friends!



REMEMBER

When you see this icon, it means that this particular morsel is something you may want to memorize (or at least write on your shirt cuff).



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Put on your propeller-beanie hat and pocket protector; these parts include the truly geeky stuff. They're certainly not required reading, but they'll help you grasp the background, get the bigger picture, or both.



WARNING

Read these notes very carefully. Warning icons flag important cautionary information. The author and publisher won't be responsible if your Mac explodes or spews flaming parts because you ignored a Warning icon. Just kidding. Macs don't explode or spew these days.



NEW

Well, now, what could this icon possibly be about? Named by famous editorial consultant Mr. Obvious, this icon highlights things new and different in macOS Ventura.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading right now, this book comes with a free access-anywhere cheat sheet that provides handy shortcuts for use with macOS Ventura, offers recommendations for backing up your Mac to avoid losing data, and more.

To get this cheat sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and type **macOS Ventura For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

The first few chapters of this book explain the basic things you need to understand to operate your Mac effectively. If you're new to Macs and macOS Ventura, start there.

Although macOS Ventura looks slightly different from previous versions, it works the same as always (for the most part). The first part of the book presents concepts so basic that if you've been using a Mac for long, you may think you know it all — and okay, you might know some (or most) of it. But remember that not-so-old-timers need a solid foundation too. Here's my advice: Skim the stuff you already know, and you'll get to the better stuff sooner.

Enough of the introduction. Go on and enjoy the book!

1 macOS Basics

IN THIS PART . . .

Master the basics, including how to turn on your Mac.

Make the dock work harder for you.

Get a gentle introduction to Finder and its desktop.

Find everything you need to know about Ventura's windows, icons, and menus (oh my)!

Get all the bad puns and wisecracks you've come to expect.

Discover a plethora of Finder tips and tricks to make life with macOS even easier (and more fulfilling).

Wrangle System Settings to make your Mac easier to use.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding what an operating system is and is not
- » Turning your Mac on and off
- » Getting to know the start-up process
- » Avoiding major Mac mistakes
- » Pointing, clicking, dragging, and other uses for your mouse
- » Getting help from your Mac

Chapter **1**

macOS Ventura 101 (Prerequisites: None)

Congratulate yourself on choosing macOS version 13, generally known as Ventura. Now congratulate yourself again for making your Mac even easier to use, with hundreds of tweaks to help you do more work in less time, and even easier on the eye.

This chapter starts at the very beginning and talks about macOS in mostly abstract terms; then it moves on to explain what you need to know to use macOS Ventura successfully. A number of features described here haven't changed in years, so if you've been using macOS for a while, much of the information in this chapter may seem hauntingly familiar.

But if you decide to skip this chapter because you think you have all the new stuff figured out, you'll miss at least a couple of things that Apple didn't bother to tell you.

Tantalized? Let's rock.

Okay, What Does macOS Do?

The operating system (that is, the OS part of macOS) is what makes your Mac a Mac. Without it, your Mac is nothing but a pile of silicon and circuits — no smarter than a toaster.

“So what does an operating system do?” you ask. Good question. The simple answer is that an OS controls the basic and most important functions of your computer. In the case of macOS and your Mac, the operating system

- » Manages memory
- » Controls how windows, icons, and menus work
- » Keeps track of files
- » Manages networking and security
- » Does housekeeping (but only its own — not yours)

Other forms of software, such as word processors and web browsers, rely on the OS to create and maintain the environment in which they work their magic. When you create a memo, for example, the word processor provides the tools for you to type and format the information and save it in a file. In the background, the OS is the muscle for the word processor, performing the following crucial functions:

- » Providing the mechanism for drawing and moving the onscreen window in which you write the memo
- » Keeping track of the file when you save it
- » Helping the word processor create drop-down menus and dialogs for you to interact with
- » Communicating with other programs
- » And much, much more (stuff that only geeks could care about)

So, armed with a little background in operating systems, take a gander at the next section before you do anything else with your Mac.

One last thing: macOS Ventura comes with nearly 60 applications in its Applications and Utilities folders. Although I'd love to tell you all about each and every one, I have only so many pages at my disposal.

THE MAC ADVANTAGE

Someone wise once said, “Claiming that macOS is inferior to Windows because more people use Windows is like saying that all other restaurants serve food that’s inferior to McDonald’s.”

We might be a minority, but Mac users have the best, most stable, most modern all-purpose operating system in the world, and here’s why: Unix, on which macOS is based, is widely regarded as the best industrial-strength operating system on the planet. For now, just know that being based on Unix means that a Mac running macOS benefits from nearly four decades of continuous Unix development, which means less downtime. Being Unix-based also means getting far fewer viruses and encounters with malicious software. But perhaps the biggest advantage macOS has is that when an application crashes, it doesn’t crash your entire computer, and you usually don’t have to restart the computer to continue working.

A Safety Net for the Absolute Beginner (or Any User)

The following sections deal with the stuff that macOS Help doesn’t cover — or doesn’t cover in nearly enough detail. If you’re a first-time Mac user, please, *please* read this section of the book carefully; it could save your life. Okay, okay, perhaps that’s overly dramatic — but reading this section could save your Mac, your sanity, or both. Even if you’re an experienced Mac user, you may want to read this section. Chances are you’ll see at least a few things you’ve forgotten that will come in handy now that you’ve been reminded of them.

Turning the dang thing on

Okay. This is the big moment: turning on your Mac!

Apple, in its infinite wisdom, has manufactured Macs with power buttons on every conceivable surface: on the front, side, and back of the computer itself, and even on the keyboard and monitor.

So if you don’t know how to turn on your Mac, don’t feel bad; just look in the manual or booklet that came with your Mac. It’s at least one thing that the documentation *always* covers.



You don't have that little booklet? Most MacBook models have the power button in the upper-right corner of the keyboard, most iMac models have the button at the back of the screen, the Mac mini and the “trash can” Mac Pro have it at the back of the enclosure, and the big Mac Pro boxes have it on the front. The power button usually looks like the little circle thingy you see in the margin — but on some Mac models, the power button doubles as the Touch ID button for identifying you via your fingerprint and doesn't show the icon.



TIP

Launch the Books app, click the Search field at the top of the sidebar on the left, and type the name of your Mac plus the word *Essentials* — for example, “MacBook Air Essentials” or “iMac Essentials.” In the Suggestions section, click the right result, and grab the free Essentials ebook with your Mac's name, by Apple. At around 150 pages each, these booklets aren't in any way comprehensive, but they do include some vital information, including where to find the power button on your particular Mac.

What you should see on start-up

When you finally do turn on your Mac, you set in motion a sophisticated and complex series of events that culminates in the loading of macOS and the appearance of the macOS desktop. After a small bit of whirring, buzzing, and flashing (meaning that the OS is loading), macOS first tests all the Mac's hardware — slots, ports, disks, random access memory (RAM), and so on. If everything passes, you'll see a tasteful whitish Apple logo in the middle of your screen, as shown in Figure 1-1.



FIGURE 1-1: This is what you'll see if everything is fine and dandy when you turn on your Mac.

Here are the things that you might see when you power up your Mac:

- » **Login screen:** Depending on your settings, you might or might not see the macOS login screen. Here, you choose your user account, enter your password, and press Return (or click the little right-arrow-in-a-circle in the password field), and away you go.



TIP

If you don't want to type your password every time you start or restart your Mac (or even if you do), check out Chapter 20 for the scoop on how to turn the login screen on or off.



WARNING

You should turn off the login screen only if you can guarantee you'll be the only one touching the machine. With the login screen disabled, your Mac and everything in it is completely available to anyone who turns it on, which is usually *not* a good thing. So I don't recommend turning off the login screen on a MacBook. And even desktop Mac users should think twice before turning it off.

Either way, the desktop soon materializes before your eyes. If you haven't customized, configured, or tinkered with your desktop, it should look pretty much like Figure 1-2. Now is a good time to take a moment for positive thoughts about the person who convinced you that you wanted a Mac. That person was right!

» **Blue/black/gray screen of death:** If any of your hardware fails when it's tested, you may see a blue, black, or gray screen.



REMEMBER

The fact that something went wrong is no reflection on your prowess as a Mac user. Something is broken, and your Mac may need repairs. If this is happening to you right now, check out Chapter 23 to try to get your Mac well again.



FIGURE 1-2: The desktop after a brand-spanking-new installation of macOS Ventura.



TIP

If your computer is under warranty, set up a Genius Bar appointment at your nearest Apple Store or dial 1-800-SOS-APPL, and a customer-service person can tell you what to do. Before you do anything, though, skip ahead to Chapter 23. It's entirely possible that one of the suggestions there will get you back on track without your having to spend even a moment on hold.




» **Prohibitory sign or flashing question mark in a folder:** Most users eventually encounter the prohibitory sign or flashing question mark in a folder (as shown in the margin). These icons mean that your Mac can't find a start-up disk, hard drive, USB thumb drive, or network server containing a valid Mac operating system. See Chapter 23 for ways to ease your Mac's ills.

» **Kernel panic:** You may occasionally see a block of text in several languages, including English, as shown in Figure 1-3. This means that your Mac has experienced a *kernel panic*, the most severe type of system crash. If you restart your Mac and see either message again, look in Chapter 23 for a myriad of possible cures for all kinds of ailments, including this one.

FIGURE 1-3:

If you're seeing something like this, things are definitely not fine and dandy.



How do you know which version of macOS your computer has? Just click the  menu at the left end of the menu bar and then click About This Mac. A window pops up on your screen, as shown in Figure 1-4. The version you're running appears on the macOS line.



TECHNICAL STUFF

If you're curious or just want to impress your friends, you might want to know that version 12 was Monterey; version 11 was Big Sur; version 10.15 was Catalina; 10.14 was Mojave; 10.13 was High Sierra; 10.12 was Sierra; 10.11 was El Capitan; 10.10 was Yosemite; 10.9 was Mavericks; 10.8 was Mountain Lion; 10.7 was Lion; 10.6 was Snow Leopard; 10.5 was Leopard; 10.4 was Tiger; 10.3 was Panther; 10.2 was Jaguar; 10.1 was Puma; and 10.0 was Cheetah.

Shutting down properly

Turning off the power without shutting down your Mac properly is one of the worst things you can do to your poor Mac. Shutting down your Mac improperly