Matt Neubergs REALbasic: The Definitive Guide is a diligent and thorough introductory text for REALBasic 2 on the Macintosh, an object-oriented programming environment based on components and BASIC. Even if youve never programmed before, this title--combined with the power and ease of use of REALbasic--is all you need to start writing your own software for the Mac. In addition to being a tutorial to the REALbasic tool itself, the authors introduction to object-oriented software is remarkable for its patience while also getting the beginner to think in objects. (Besides an authority on Macintosh programming, Neuberg has a Ph.D. in ancient Greek. This book is probably alone in that it discusses objects while quoting Plato.) There is a full tour of REALbasic program statements, data types, and the nuts and bolts of working with the environment and building basic programs. The heart of this text covers the various controls and features available in REALbasic. The author discusses simple and advanced user controls (like buttons, edit controls, menus, and list boxes). Neubergs tour here will let any reader design user interfaces and add event handlers to provide program functionality. Highlights include how to display images and create animation, sound, and video within REALbasic. (Here, the author extends the already strong multimedia support in REALbasic with his own code for a simple video game.) For more experienced users, there are how-tos on using files, databases, and socket programming with TCP/IP and AppleScript. In all, REALbasic: The Definitive Guide serves its purpose well as a one-volume reference and tutorial to getting the most out of this capable tool, whose functionality certainly rivals any of todays RAD-style programming environments. --

Richard Dragan

Topics covered: Overview of the REALbasic environment, BASIC language keywords, constructs and datatypes, arrays, objects, classes and instances, subclasses, events, menus, application architecture, building and debugging, window basics, system events, mouse processing, canvases and graphics, displaying images, basic
controls, list boxes, progress bars, sliders, shapes, menus, tab panels, keyboard and mouse processing, files, databases, clipboard, drag-and-drop functionality, sound and MIDI, playing movies, game animations, printing, socket programming, Apple Events and AppleScript, and language extensions with XCMDs and plug-ins.

Features:
* Used Book in Good Condition

My Personal Review:
Matt Neuburg is a genius. This is both a blessing and a curse for those who want to learn REALbasic. In his love for REALbasic, and his desire to teach it all and be exhaustive, as well as write a book that he himself would like to read, he takes a certain course: he covers terrain that is both flat, smooth and quick to run over, and terrain that is deep, craggy, convoluted and only for the determined traveler. There is no warning when you might suddenly encounter the unforgiving steep canyon or sheer wall.

At one time I decided to try and learn REALbasic, and it sounded from the introduction to the book and his biography that he could give me the deep grounding in theory that I wanted, and that his style and personality would be a good match for mine (I was a philosophy major; he taught classics). Well, I got bogged down in Chapter Three in both of my attempts to get through the book. Among the thickets of Classes and Instances, I lost interest. I found myself reading sentences over and over again, trying to grasp what he was saying. Perhaps he is someone that gets a thrill from the extreme cleverness of the design of REALbasic, but it is not always clear what the utility of these mental convolutions is. He reminds me of some of my philosophy professors, getting off on their own brilliance and love of the subject but forgetting what its like to be someone else listening, and so they lose their audience. Its like a mild form of autism. In the long run I suppose we are lucky to have a teacher like Neuburg, despite his flaws, for it is rare to find such a combination of raw enthusiasm, old-fashioned scholarly depth, and knowledge in a writer of computer books.

Unfortunately he doesnt always explain in common sense terms what something is and why we should be interested in it. Sometimes he does, and sometimes he doesnt. Sometimes the explanation comes later: he is too strict about what is relevant to the current technical topic. Im not sure this achieves anything except make it harder than it has to be. Is he trying to be pure to his subject matter? I dont think there is anything wrong with catering to an audience in a computer book.

In summary, this book has more in common with a reference bible than a beginners tutorial, though it isnt really a reference book per se. Im only half-joking when I say its more like a philosophy book for super-nerds. He is telling you not only the basics, but also abruptly dives into the story
behind the scenes, the ultimate truths as it were, of REALbasic. These explanations can go on for quite some time - whether you want to hear it or not. This is an generalization of course, but it may help you get a feel for the flavor of his approach and style.

I would recommend this book in combination with a faster-paced book that is more of a tutorial.

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