In this section we are going to cover some of the basics of using a computer running Mac OS X. We will look at the general structure of how OS X is organized and identify metaphors that can help you navigate that structure. We will also provide you with a short exercise exposing some tricks about Mac OS X’s impressive help system.

**DESIGN METAPHORS**

Laptops and tablet devices do similar things, but look completely different. This is because they were designed with different metaphors in mind. Knowing the design metaphor used to create a tool will often make learning that tool easier.

**METAPHOR**

In design, a metaphor is a way of creating something so it functions like something familiar. A computer keyboard uses the typewriter as its design metaphor.

This is especially true of Photoshop, a software application that you will use quite a bit in Visual Language and beyond. It is also true of the computers you will use.

**COMPUTER AS OFFICE**

The designers of the Xerox Alto (an early graphical computer that inspired the original Mac interface) used an office metaphor, which is why the first screen we see is called a desktop. Just like a physical desk, our computer contains files, folders and tools (applications) to create or change those files.

Everyone who works in a busy office might have their area to work where their desk and files are safe. This would be called a User Account. Often users will have a password so no one can access their office or files while they are away. Applications behave almost like the utilities in the office. Every user can use electricity to run their tools, but they may not be able to access the special rooms where these utilities are stored. For this reason the computers you use at school will allow you to launch and use software applications like Photoshop or Keynote, but you won’t be able to update or delete them.

Special users called admins have the privileges to install and update software applications. They are like the custodians in the office that can unlock any room, repair or install things and keep the office running. Coordinating everything in the office is the operating system. In our labs this

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1 Adapted from Digital Foundations CS6 Chapter 01
Most of us work on the desktop and stay organized within our User Account. On the desktop you will notice a bar at the top of the screen called the Menu Bar and a bar (usually) at the bottom called the Dock.

The menu bar is taken over by any active application providing menus that help you use features of those programs. The first word in the menu bar is the name of the active application. The last word will always be help. If that last sentence is all you remember from this section you will be all right, provided you use it. We will cover that in the exercise later.

The Dock contains shortcuts to applications, files and folders so you can get to common ones quickly.

**HELP AS TUTOR**

Opening the help file of a program and scanning the topics can give you a very fast introduction to a program.

**HELP & HOW TO USE IT**

In this exercise we will examine the Mac help system learning how it provides help for most applications. We will also use the help’s built-in book marking so you can quickly go back to or share things you find.

**YOU WILL NEED:**

- A Mac running OS X 7 or later.
- Internet Access

**STEPS:**

1. Click on Finder, the first icon in the dock which looks like a smiling face. When you click on it the application will open a window. Ignore the window we want to look at the menu bar.

2. The first word you see in the menu bar at the upper left corner of the screen should say Finder. If this is the case click on help.

3. This opens the help menu. You should notice two options: Search and Help Center. Click on help center.

4. Look at the help center layout. On the left there is a list of topics, next to these are subtopics on the right.

5. Click on the last item in the left hand column: “Help for all your apps.” This opens help center.

The Dock: notice how some of the icons have a blue light under them. This signifies that they

The Menu bar is always present, and changes depending on which application is active. The name of the active application will always appear next to the Apple icon.
6. You should see two or three rows. The top row contains recent apps. The second row contains Apple apps. To see them all click the blue “Show all” link on the right hand edge of the window. If you see a third row this will help for software not created by Apple.

7. Click an Apple help file. Now for the bookmark button under the search far of the help window. Click it.

8. Once a bookmark has been set a book icon will appear to the left of the bookmark button, this is your Book Mark Index. Click on it.

9. At the very bottom of the bookmark index window there is a link to email a bookmark. This can be very helpful when you are on a public computer.

SHORT CUT SYMBOLS
⌘ Command Key
⌥ Option KEY
⇧ Shift Key

HELP W/ SHORTCUTS
You never have to memorize keyboard shortcuts. Once you know the location of some important keys you can discover keyboard shortcuts as you need them: Click on help in the menu bar and type the name of a command, e.g. “Cut” notice the top part of the search results says: Menu Items. If you hover your mouse over the menu item “Cut” the computer will open the menu for you containing the command and place an arrow next to the keyboard shortcut? See if you can try to discover some other shortcuts.