

MS Office how-to guide lets you compare 2007 & 2010 versions

Book: *Microsoft Office 2010 and 2007 for Seniors – Practical Applications for Every Day Usage*

By Studio Visual Steps

\$24.95, 440 pages

Rating: ★★ ★

This book, *Microsoft Office 2010 and 2007 for Seniors*, is designed to instruct the user how to:

- Work with the most essential features in Word, creating professional-looking documents, custom greeting cards, and booklets.
- Track your family finances in Excel. Choose from a variety of built-in formulas to automatically calculate and analyze columns of data, and maintain lists of your CD/DVD collection, your books, or your stamp collection.

- Create slideshows highlighting pictures in PowerPoint, adding text, illustrations, audio clips, video clips, and voice messages to share with family or friends.

The Visual Steps series of books aims for the special needs and requirements of beginning users with little or no technical background. They are self-paced and step-by-step. Plentiful use of screen illustrations show if you are on the right track. All are in large print for easy reading.

Each chapter begins with a description of what the chapter is about, as well as what you will learn by reading it. In addition, Visual Steps' website offers bonus online chapters that can be downloaded, handy computer tips and informative booklets, as well as the practice files recommended by the book.

This is my second review of a book in the Visual Steps series. In some sections, this manual has the same inconsistencies as did the "Google for Seniors" book (reviewed in April 2011). At times, explanations are complete and thorough. At other times, minor parts are just not there, or worse, skipped altogether.

I found, as I did with the Google book, that having to flip back and forth between the current chapter and the "How Do I Do That Again?" section, was tedious, inconvenient, and defeated continuity.

In the chapter "Writing and Printing a Letter," the book's authors assume readers are familiar with keyboard use and able to type letters, spaces, numbers, capital letters and delete a typing error. I thought putting in the obvious "backspace" function would have been valuable, considering that many people in the senior age group once used typewriters with a backspace key to erase mistakes.

The instruction section of this chapter teaches readers about line spacing and font size. Mentioning the font size and spacing used in this manual would have been a great way to compare

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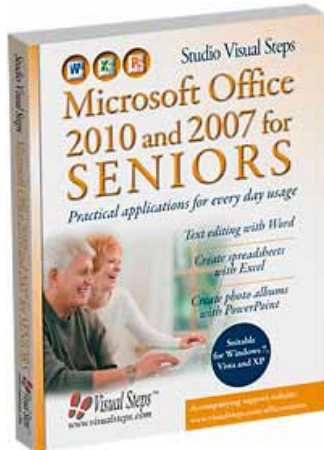
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to what is being worked with in the practice document.

The manual also doesn't mention how or when to use Tabs or how to set them. I would also have liked to see something said about keyboard shortcuts, since they keep my mouse hand from tiring.

The MS Word section is fraught with instances where the author seems unfamiliar with American phrases with respect to computers; it used: "Press the Control button and keep it pressed in" instead of a more familiar phrase: "Press and hold down the Control key"; USB stick instead of the standard USB drive.



On the plus side, the dictionary at the end of each chapter clarifies and reinforces terms used.

The tips throughout the book are well-written and easy to understand.

I like the "Pictures in a Document" chapter; everything from inserting, enlarging, shrinking and editing a photo or illustration in a document to using and inserting WordArt was clearly described. It teaches you how to wrap the text above, below, behind, or around your photo; remove the background of the photo; and wash out the photo for use as a watermark.

The template section is, for the most part, beneficial, but it does include a few vague instructions, such as closing the template document and not saving the changes. I would want to save the version I'd just created.

Of particular note, the Greeting Card, CD case insert (called an inlay), the Book template (especially the Family History Book) stand out.

The section describing a great little feature called "Set Up Your Document as a Booklet" could have been confusing, but wasn't.

The remainder of the book is devoted to MS Excel and MS Power Point. Did someone else write these sections? Inasmuch as I struggled through some of the previous sections – I breezed through both of these. They are easy to read, make sense, and are practical in their descriptions.


I appreciated that this book is a guide to MS Office 2010 as well as MS Office 2007. By including both versions, it gives anyone who hasn't yet upgraded an idea of what the money will buy. It also extends its usefulness as an instructional book.

I recommend this book with a mixed rating:

For Excel and Power Point—thumbs up!

For Word—try it and but look for a second book from the library.

—Reviewed by Karen Stagg, GGCS



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