

# iLife '04: The Missing Manual Review

by Alan Skora

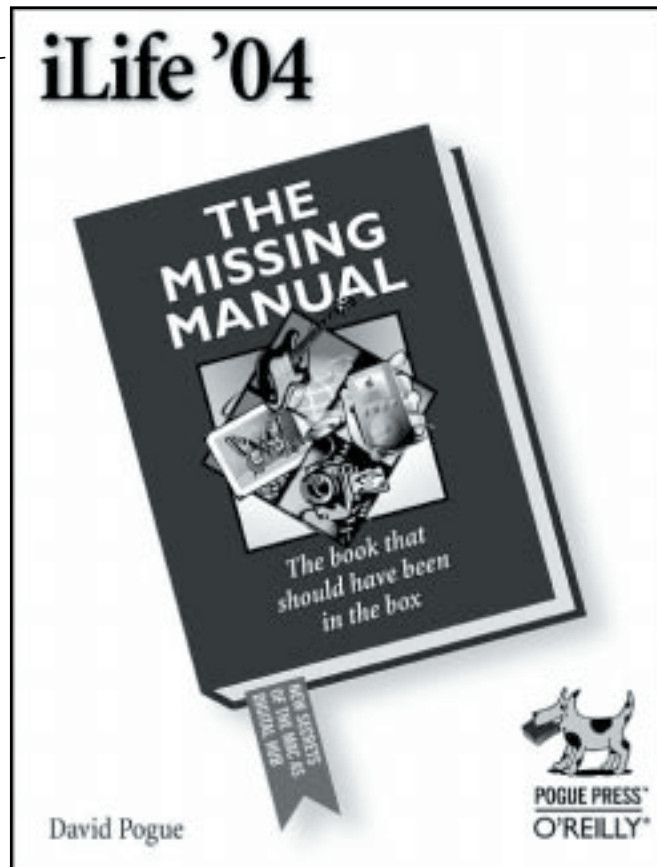
The Missing Manual (herein after labeled MM) introduction by the publisher modestly states that MM "...are superbly written guides to computer products that don't come with printed manuals...", and this title "...covers all five programs with clarity and wit". iLife '04 is "...a special project, a 'best of' compilation..." that covers Apple software products that are also the subject of individual Missing Manuals. David Pogue is credited as editor and one of four authors. With such a positive attitude can there be any caveats?

Not really. It gives the purchaser a lot of well organized, useable information at a reasonable price.

## The Nitty Gritty Content Listing-

iTunes	470 pages (appx)
iPhoto	160
iMovie	155
iDVD	60
GarageBand	110
Troubleshooting	45
Index	15

A year and a half ago I reviewed positively *The Macintosh Digital Hub*, by Jim Heid. (160 pgs + DVD, © 2003, Peachpit \$29.99) which was replaced by his very similar but updated "*The Macintosh iLife*" both with an included DVD. I felt that was a very successful polished combination that covered a lot of ground and made good use of the DVD. Comparing that book with this MM, I would say the Heid book is an excellent teaching manual and good reference, while this MM is very good at teaching, and excellent as a reference. The MM has more depth and detail for each program; but the material is covered in a series of bumps, rather than a smooth flow.



The iLife '04 Missing Manual discusses each aspect of a program in a logical manner, and is well indexed for problem solving. It has a great number of clear screen shots, plenty of those boxes that tell us of not-so-evident features or hidden pitfalls, and highlighted Hints and Tips. The writing is concise, but not terse, and explanations are typically laid out in a step-by-step sequence so the user is not required to have substantial prior experience.

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**The book that should have been in the box.**

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Pages have footers with chapter number and title for fast skimming, the text is legible and layout is clean with enough white space for easy reading. The overall look is a little "gray", but the publisher probably feels even two-color printing and brighter paper is not economically feasible for a manual that has such rapid obsolescence in this world of yearly software updates.

I had previously bought an individual volume in this series, *iPods & iTunes 2nd ed, The Missing Manual*, © 2004, 350 pages, \$24.95. In comparing the two, I would say the compilation is reasonably complete for iTunes, but has minimal coverage of the iPod. The individual manual also deals with connectivity in our evolving digital information and entertainment environment.

This book does not have an included CD because the publisher states it would add \$5 to the cost. But, the web site for the Missing Manuals has a "Missing CD-ROM" listing with links to downloadable articles and

software. There is also an errata page which would make any editor proud, as it lists only one confirmed error one month after publication.

In summary, this is a worthy, workman-like book that serves well as both a basic introductory manual and for continuing reference. Of special appeal is that while covering each of five programs as stand-alones, it also deals with their interaction. 🍏

*David Pogue*

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*www.missingmanuals.com*

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