COMPUTERS FOR POETS:
A Technical Guide for Left-Brain Learners

by David Boles

The Backstory

As a husband, son, co-worker and friend of artistic and creative folks, I've always butted up against the technological glass ceiling with these people I love and respect. They refuse to learn or get involved with computers and the internet – not because they don't want to – but because they are frightened of appearing idiotic or dumb as they climb the inevitable learning curve. They'd rather stay in the dark than risk a tumbling and uncertain trek into the light.

These folks are bright and beautiful but in the current climate of computer publishing, they're made to feel stupid first in order to learn later when they purchase beginner books like the DUMMIES and IDIOTS series.

As the resident "computer guy" who also is a playwright and a creative writer, I've struggled to bring these people into the technological light that is overtaking us all on a daily basis. I feel their embarrassment of having to learn a new language and culture and it has been my recent task to help them along on *their terms*, not on the terms of the present line of learning books where one must confess their inadequacy before purchasing a book.

During the ramp up for the Windows 95 launch, Microsoft chose me as one of five "everyday" spokespeople to describe on film the beauty and ease-of-use of Windows 95 for the PR Launch Tour. I told them I was happy to participate and that my volunteer work as a member of Team Toshiba providing peer support for end users would help make me credible as an expert on Windows 95.

WaggEd and Microsoft turned pale. They actually glowered at me! They looked me in the eye and said very quietly… "No. You're a Playwright. You love Windows 95 for its ease-of-use. Team Toshiba? No!"

Ah!, and the reality of the stereotype I was allegedly shattering hit me squarely between the eyes: Artistic types needed inspiration and a role-model for success in using Windows 95 and that was my role to play. A Playwright with technical chops was special, where a Team Toshiba member with a working knowledge of Windows 95 was commonplace.

Lesson Learned. Book series, inspired.

As a Playwright with an M.F.A. from Columbia University, I realized that I could take my artistic training and use that aesthetic methodology for teaching computer topics to those frustrated family, friends and associates of mine.

I have taught this method of learning at both Columbia University and New York University to playwrights, actors, artists and business people who wanted a structured class setting to learn how to master computers and the internet on terms they could universally understand and embrace. By using my classroom teaching style and translating it to the page, I believe the *COMPUTERS FOR POETS* series will be one of the most unusual, unique and successful book series to hit the shelves with the right writers and advertising campaign.

The next few pages of this pitch may seem overly intellectual, but I'm including this information to demonstrate the philosophy and soul behind the *COMPUTERS FOR POETS* book series. The books themselves will be fun to read and easy to understand, but by employing the following "structure of the story" of the topic at hand as the magic behind the message, our readers will be able to learn these ideas on a gut level without realizing why.

The Idea

Everyone has the capacity to tell and enjoy a story. This inborn ability to recognize, spin and experience an exciting story is what makes us all human beings. Storytelling is our common touchstone.

People who interpret and relate to the world as "Poets" use the left side of their brain as their primary resource of learning. These Left-Brain Learners best understand the world via demonstrative and visual examples – "show, don't tell."

Right-Brain Learners (Some call them "Propeller Heads" or "Technocrats") are highly technical, step-oriented and auditory learners who use the "tell, don't show" method of learning.

Unfortunately for Left-Brain Learners, the majority of Computer Book Agents, Authors and Acquisition Editors come from The Right Brain Learning Camp – and that means Left-Brain Learners are left to wrestle with technical ideas and computer theories that are harder to understand than they need be simply because they cannot wrap their Left Brain learning lobe around a Right-Brainer's rigid thought pattern.

The result of this conflict is confusion, abandonment and a feeling of doom for Left-Brainers who yearn to ken an ever-increasing technical world.

It Came From The Left Brain!

The hook of the *Computers for Poets* book series is to target the Left-Brain market of readers who presently only have the *Dummies* and *Idiots* series to turn to for what Right-Brain authors think Left-Brain readers need to capture technical computer methods and theorems.

The *…For Poets* series sees these Left-Brain Learners as "Poets" (based upon Aristotle's theory of *The Poetics* – more on that later) instead of *Dummies* or *Idiots* and that philosophy is what sets the *…For Poets* series apart from all others. While Osborne's *…For Busy People* is closer to the spirit of the *…For Poets* series than *Dummies* or *Idiots*, our series brings the twist of a core-understanding of the building blocks of inborn learning to the page. Readers of the *…For Poets* series may be "busy" but we take them beyond mortal time and into the universal realm of understanding how and why they can learn computing on a level they already understand.

Only Right-Brain thinkers would feel series titles like *Idiots* and *Dummies* are funny, welcoming and self-deprecating. As of this moment, the only place Left-Brain Learners have to go for technical information that *attempts* to help them "understand" the computing world are the *Idiots* and *Dummies* series of books. Left-Brainers are forced to keep stiff upper lips as they buy books in a those series that brand them as stupid.

The *…For Poets* series will address Left-Brain Learners on their visual and sensory level of understanding the world. Here's how.

Spelling it Out

The following is a short breakdown of how computer books series like *Dummies* and *Idiots* presently teach and how the *…For Poets* series will differ:

Current Books	Computers for Poets
Text Based Examples	Storytelling – anecdotes that enlighten the Task at hand using base semiotics.
Technical Minutiae	The Big Picture giving context to creating The end result.
Book topic's place in Program	The Program's Place in the World and how to Achieve your task by relating it to Something already understood or Previously learned.
Textual Steps	Steps via Screenshots – this aids the visual Left-Brained learner in directly Seeing each step necessary to get The desired end result.

Show, Don't Tell

There aren't any computer book series presently on the market that cater to the Left-Brainer's "show, don't tell" method of learning! There is a large river of professional people who want to get into computers. These folks are not only scared of having to learn a new method of working, but they're intimated by having to learn a new mode of relating to foreign ideas – these professionals are used to being in charge and looked up to for leadership. They don't like the idea of buying a *Dummies* or an *Idiots* book in order to being the learning process.

There are also Left-Brain learners who are already computer literate, but they desire to deepen their river of technical knowledge. They are presently unable to do this because they are slaves to the Right-Brainer's "tell, don't show" style of writing. Think of these computer literate Left-Brainers as held back by a "Learning Ceiling" created by a Technocratic Knowledge Curve they cannot climb nor comprehend beyond a beginning plateau.

Beating the Bell Curve

Here's how the *…For Poets* series will help Left-Brainers beat the Bell Curve of Technical Computing:

✓ Everyone has the Left-Brain ability for storytelling. Exploiting that inborn ability to tell a story is the key to getting Left-Brain *Learners* to understand non-visual technical concepts.

✓ Tapping into the common rhythm of communication is the secret to a great movie, a great stage play, a great novel and now... a great computer book series. This holds true for whichever side of the brain one uses to learn and interpret the world. Aristotle's *Poetics* details this process in the Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Music and Spectacle building blocks of learning through storytelling. (We'll discuss these in depth later in this proposal…)

✓ Sounding out the mutually shared rhythms of how Left-Brainers perceive and interpret the universe is what the *…For Poets* series is all about. Right-Brainers may not need or appreciate the methodology employed in the series, but they'll be able to see merit in the new way of teaching the information.

✓ By relating the foreign concept of computing with the inborn ability to create a story via common touchstones, the Left-Brain Learner can easily be brought into the computer arena through experiences already mastered.

How are these inborn rhythms discovered and then exploited? What method of attack can we use to persuade the Left-Brainer's artistic and emotional side to enlighten the right side of their mind?

The answer to this conundrum is found in Aristotle's *Poetics*. I've held off bringing Aristotle into this pitch until now because his philosophy is important to the undercurrent of the *…For Poets* book series, but one need not read nor understand Aristotle's philosophy in order to reap the rewards of the *…For Poets* series.

Aristotle's Poetics

Aristotle understood the Left-Brain Learning connection via storytelling and revealed the secret to tapping into this process of "education by imitation" in his cornerstone book, *The Poetics*. By using Aristotle's method for building an effective story: Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Music, Spectacle, we can also construct a highly entertaining and friendly computer book on any topic we desire.

Aristotle's *Poetics* will be lightly peppered throughout the book as recognizable signposts of where the reader is in the "story" of the computer topic at hand. Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Music and Spectacle will all be "on the page" icons of reference during the technical explorations of the book. These Poetic signposts will help ease Left-Brainers into understanding a complex passage by cross-relating the idea at hand with a previously understood experience.

The Hook

The unique hook of the *...For Poets* series is using the reader's innate ability to tell and understand a dramatic story by presenting the computer topic at hand in those concepts already understood:

We tap the past to hook the present.

Breaking Down The Hook

	The Poetics	The *Computers For Poets* Book Series (with An Example)	The *...For Poets* text Icon Design, Title and Meaning
Plot	What happens.	The inside story about what happens (i.e. the why and how Windows 2000 was created and constructed).	Icon Design: Branches of a tree. Icon Title: Plot (Sidebar)
Character	The values and morals of the people in the experience.	Pieces of evidence that provide insight into the personality of the program (i.e. the new GUI design in Windows 2000).	Icon Design: A mysterious visage. Icon Title: Character (Note)
Thought	The unified idea of the plot.	Repeating ideas are woven in the fabric of the topic (i.e. how Plug and Play lives inside Windows 2000).	Icon Design: A Mobius Strip (Infinity Symbol). Icon Title: Thought (Cross-Reference)
Diction	The method used to convey the thought.	The underlying program code, macros and OS info (i.e. how the Windows 2000 Registry and *.INF files work together).	Icon Design: "ABC" in an interesting typeface. Icon Title: Diction (Code).
Music	The exploitation of another emotional sense to enrich the overall experience.	The surprises and extra touches that make a program special (i.e. Windows 2000 environment preferences).	Icon Design: A 3-D Ear. Icon Title: Music (Tip!)
Spectacle	The unified splash, flash and brilliance of the experience.	The secret scoops that make the topic explode and expand (i.e. adding components to Windows 2000 that are on your system, but hiding).	Icon Design: An Explosion! Icon Title: Spectacle (Secret!)

The icons and their dual titles are important to continually link the past idea of the *Poetics* with the present idea of the *...For Poets* series throughout the book. I only included a single example for each idea: there would be many instances throughout the book demonstrated by each idea and icon. I wanted to try and give you a here for my vision of how the *Computers For Poets* book series would look and feel to the reader. I would work closely with the Series Project Editor and the Art Department in order to come up with a unique design for the book series.

The Series

Don't think, however, that the *…For Poets* series will be only for new computer users. The series will re-align the means of communication with Left-Brain Learners – and any computer topic can be addressed using this method of teaching. *Visual InterDev for Poets* is certainly a book that should appear in the series.

The *...For Poets* series would start with *Windows 2000 for Poets* followed by *Office 2000 for Poets* and then possibly *Internet Communications for Poets, Visual InterDev for Poets, Dynamic HTML for Poets, Director for Poets, Netscape Communicator for Poets, Windows CE for Poets*… and so on…

Each book in the series would be 200 pages and have a 5.5"wx8"h footprint for easy handling. A giant 800 page behemoth of a book is not only heavy and hard to handle, it doesn't offer fast access to simple, step-by-step information. *…For Poets* will be a quick and easy reference for everyone with a thoroughly cross-referenced Index by a professional Indexer in order to bring a clear and cogent resource to the Left-Brain Learner.

Author and Series Editor

As the *...For Poets* series creator, I would write at least the first two books in the series, *WINDOWS 2000 FOR POETS* and *OFFICE 2000 FOR POETS*. As the Series Editor I would also edit the other books in the series to guarantee unification of tone, philosophy and direction.

As the current Publisher & Editor-in-Chief of GO INSIDE Magazine, I presently manage an all-volunteer writing staff of 25 and we presently have over 2.1 million monthly readers at (http://goinside.com). GO INSIDE is a valuable entity to this series because it not only proves my ability to arouse and inspire 2.1 million readers a month, but it also demonstrates my continued mission over five years to lead, teach and share my philosophy of writing with an eager staff who willing "Serve the Spirit of Humanity while Covering the Web of the World."

My entire resume is attached at the end of this pitch.

Windows 2000 for Poets:
A Technical Guide for Left-Brain Learners

by David W. Boles

Building The Story (3 pages)

This is where the stage of the experience and expectations are set for each book in the *...For Poets* series. The method for spicing the rest of the book with these ideas as icons of cross-reference is also determined here. The historical significance of the other books in the *...For Poets* series is discussed here as well. We'll also examine the differences between Left-Brain and Right-Brain learning patterns and why this book was built for Left-Brain Learners.

Plot (1 page)

What is Windows 2000? Why was it created? Who created it? What was the process of creation and were expectations met and matched? Why or why not?

Character (1 page)

Who are the people involved with Windows 2000? What is the personality of the program? What is the intent of its purpose of being?

Thought (1 page)

How does Windows 2000 work? How does it imagine and construct thoughts inside your computer for you?

Diction (1 page)

What is the language of Windows 2000? Anything special to learn? How does a sticky menu relate to a regular menu and how does that change in vocabulary affect me as a Left-Brained Learner?

Music (1 page)

What are the unique rhythms of Windows 2000 and how do they work? Is there a commonality of beat and purpose in how applications interact with each other and with the interface? What are the sound and music capabilities born into Windows 2000 that will help me learn and better understand the concepts at hand as a Left-Brainer?

Spectacle (1 page)

What is the flash in Windows 2000 and why is it there? What purpose does it serve? Is the enhanced GUI interface purely spectacle? Or does it serve a greater purpose than only beauty?

The Prologue (1 page)

The Prologue sets the table. We've examined the basic structure of Windows 2000, we've placed it context in the world at large and the Prologue will give us the real-world theoretical map of what our journey into Windows 2000 will entail.

ACT ONE: The Basics (42 pages)

Instead of being broken up into Parts, the *...For Poets* series will be broken into 3 simple Acts of Information – enforcing the idea of telling the story of the program instead of breaking the program down into parts and tools.

Act One will always cover the basics: installation, applications, intent of practicality and perspective and how all the pieces are set together in a base installation and are then orchestrated to perform beautifully overall as one.

- Setting Up Your Workspace Environment For A Successful Setup And Installation
- Test Your System Against The Book's Suggested Setup For Routine Compatibility
- Installation Feats and Secrets
- Caveats and Concerns About Using A Custom, Typical or Laptop Installation
- Where To Find The Latest Operating System Updates After Your Initial Installation
- How To Avoid Incompatibility With Legacy Applications And How To Achieve Subtle Execution Of Purpose With 32-bit Applications And Why

ACT TWO: Advanced Actions (77 pages)

Act Two will be the Expert Act where secrets, tips, tricks and manipulation of the Operating System or program beyond the ordinary and into the special happens.

This Act is the meat of the book.

- The Desktop and Taskbar: GUI Twins of Beauty
- Interface Conventions: Shortcuts, Briefcases, Files
- Your Tablet and Chisel Into The Future
- Customization, Safe Mode, Starting Up and Loading Large
- Folders, Windows: What They Hold and How They Show You
- Copy, Cut, Paste, Rename and Delete Easy as Counting Sheep
- Explorer: Surface Structure
- The Registry: Substrate Structure
- The How and Why Of Plugging And Praying
- Your Control Folder Commands Your Mind
- Saving You From Yourself by Recycling
- Docu-Centricity In A Self-Centric World
- Keyboarding, Characters and Fonts Express and Define
- Viewing, Pointing, Scanning and Printing To Your Heart's Content Gives You Complete Aesthetic Control Over How You Present Yourself To The Universe of Man
- The Care and Loving of your Hard Disk Drive: Scandisk, Compression and HTFS
- Getting MAPI and TAPI Happy
- Comms! Modems, PPTP, VPNs and Telephony
- Mobile Computing Keeps You In Contact With Yourself
- Dial Up Scripting and InterNetworking
- Bundled Applications Enhance Your Life

ACT THREE: Beyond Today (66 pages)

Act Three brings Acts One and Two into focus and then expands their view beyond the horizon and into the vastness of where the technology is headed and why.

This Act is breezeway into the next edition of the software and the next edition of the *...For Poets* book!

- Skiing The Sky: How the Internet Raids Your Life
- Windows 2001?
- Internet Services
- Future Operating Systems
- When Two Operating Systems Transmogrify Into One
- The Future of IP
- The Best Applications for Windows 2000 and How They Make You Work Better
- The Long Stretch for Communications and Demon Speed
- The Computing Future: A Straight Line With No Corners
- Illuminating Appendices

The Epilogue (1 page)

The Epilogue is where the entire book hardens into meaning and substance. We look back from here and evaluate the journey we took over the course of the book. We also re-confirm the universal rhythms of the computer topic learned through the structure of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

In Conclusion

The *...For Poets* computer book series fills a need by educating the intelligent, artistic and visionary Left-Brained Learner via parallel life lessons and storytelling cornerstones applied to concrete computer terms and technical theories.

By exploiting the pre-programmed natural rhythms of storytelling Left-Brainers use to learn and cope in the world, we are ensuring in the *…For Poets* series that no one will be left behind the technological bandwagon presently built, described and ridden hard by those ruled only by their Right-Brains.

The beauty part is while Aristotle plays an important role in the *…For Poets* series, no one need even know his name when cracking open the book binding to learn computing at his knee.

David Boles

620 East 13th Street, Suite 5-P
New York, NY 10009
212-529-3939

Awards
First Place S.U.N.Y. Purchase Playwriting Contest
The Vreeland Award for outstanding writing
When A Life Trembled to Death - High Honors Columbia University M.F.A. Thesis
Shubert Foundation/Columbia University President's Scholarship
James Hammerstein Grant for production of Maslova

Books
A Windows 2000 InterNetworking Primer published by MIS Press
Windows 95 Communication and Online Secrets published by IDG Books Worldwide

Director
Woyczek - Director, produced by The Inside Ensemble.
Sincerity Forever - Associate Director produced by En Garde Arts.
A Christmas Carol - Assistant Director, produced by Ford's Theatre
Kennedy Center Victory Awards - Assistant Director produced by Bonnie Nelson-Schwartz
Red Scare - Assistant Director to Rex McGraw produced by UNL

Editor
Go Inside Magazine - Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
Click Here - Technical Editor, published by New Riders
Internet Insider Magazine - Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
Marshall Jamison's PoetPourri - Publisher and Editor
ClubIExpress Magazine - Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
The Husker Insider - Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
the mag - Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
The Microsoft ClubWin Journal - Editor
ClubWINNEWS - Editor
Literary Editor - The Producer Circle
Deaf Student's Guide to NYU - published by New York University
The Prairie Schooner - Editorial Associate
The Daily Nebraskan - Editorial Columnist
The Northeastern - Columnist

Film
The Tattered Heart - screenplay for The Walt Disney Company
Touch The Horizon - screenplay for Sony Pictures
Quake - wrote and directed, produced by The Manhattan Film Studio
Watershed - wrote, directed, produced - premiered at The Sheldon Art Gallery
Amerika - Production Assistant - produced by ABC Pictures
Terms of Endearment - Production Assistant - produced by Paramount Pictures

Founder
Go Inside Magazine
ClubWin Classic
Internet Insider Magazine
Marshall Jamison's PoetPourri
The ClubIExpress Online Magazine
The Husker Insider
ClubWINNEWS
The United Stage of America
the mag!
The Microsoft ClubWin Journal
The Producer Circle Literary Department
Deaf Student's Guide to New York University

Musicals
Fade Away - 16 state and 27 city tour (Brooklyn Academy of Music and The Kennedy Center)
Taylor Goes to the Far Away – AT&T Artists Commission
Raising Arizona: The Musical - Book & Lyrics, based upon the motion picture
Maslova - Book and Lyrics, produced by The Hammerstein Center
Zorro! - Book and Lyrics, produced by The Foreign Language Exchange Council

Periodicals
GO INSIDE Magazine – Over 100 published articles
Cross-Browser Dynamic HTML - c|net, February 1998
Firing the Online Afterburner - How-To, boot magazine, March 1997
Swift Sites - Feature, Windows Magazine, November 1996
Form-idable Function - Feature, Windows Magazine, October 1996

Plays
Romanico - The Gaelic Traveler's Theatre
The Binding of Isaac - commission from the American Cathedral in Paris
The Unknowable Killing of Little Boy Blue - the Maxwell Anderson Playwright's Series
The Bitterness of Ash - produced by The Hammerstein Center
The Straight Arrow from Broken Bow - produced by The Hammerstein Center
Sisyzeck - produced by The Hammerstein Center
Murder In Ernest - produced by the Nebraska Directors Theatre
Cracked Stained Glass - produced by the Nebraska Directors Theatre
Weeping Water Cafe - produced by the Lincoln Community Playhouse
A Stone's Throw - ACTF production by The University of Nebraska

Radio
Hophenperle: The Swiss Beer is Here - Talent, National Ad Campaign, Silver Slate winner
KFOR Radio 1240 - Adult Contemporary On Air Talent
X103 - Rock On Air Personality
KBHL - Country On Air Personality
1480 KLMS - Pop On Air Personality
KFRX - Hard Rock On Air Personality
The King Biscuit Flower Hour - Remote Teen Host
Unique Youth - At 14, hosted, wrote, and produced this radio interview program

Teaching
Computers For Poets: Understanding Technical Theorems Through Aristotle's Poetics - NYU
Publish and Prosper on the World Wide Web - Columbia University Graduate Seminar
The Playwright as Poet - University of Nebraska Theatre Workshop
Büchner: The Father of Modern Drama - Graduate UNL Seminar
Arthur Miller: An In-Depth Analysis of the Life in Death of a Salesman – Two UNL Lectures
Deaf English: Methods of ASL Adaption into The Written Word – NYU Seminar
The Playwright as Play Builder - Four Workshops, UNL
The Art of Crafting Saleable Television Scripts - Seminar/Lecture, UNL

Technical
Click Here - Technical Editor, published by New Riders
Microsoft ClubIE - founding Team Captain
Microsoft ClubWin - founding Chapter Head
Windows 95 World Tour - one of four in the world interviewed on film for Microsoft
Team Toshiba - provided exclusive online support for modems and serial comms
Microsoft's Powered by Windows 95 Advisory
Toshiba Canada - wrote presentations for The Ingram Showcase, Canada Pacific Rail,
Imperial Tobacco and the Banks of Canada and Montreal

Television
The Trial of Standing Bear - Assistant Director and produced by PBS
The Magnificent Loser - co-written with Marshall Jamison for Nebraska ETV
The Weeping Water Cafe - wrote, directed and produced for KPTM in Omaha
The Westborough Crusaders - wrote, directed and produced for Cox Cable
Kidding Around - film critic for KOLN/KGIN-TV

Training
M.F.A. - Columbia University in the City of New York (1991)
B.A. - The University of Nebraska at Lincoln (1987)
The Will Rogers Follies (Broadway - New York City) Book Associate for Peter Stone
Road to Nirvana (New York City) Assistant to Arthur Kopit
Phantom: The Musical (New York City) Assistant to Arthur Kopit
Sincerity Forever (New York City) Associate Director for Jim Simpson
Book Writer (New York City) The BMI/Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop
Circle Rep (New York City) Reader
Arena Stage (Washington, D.C.)Reader
Ford's Theatre (Washington, D.C.) Reader
Applause Books (New York City) Reader
Woolly Mammoth (Washington, D.C.) Reader
Helen Merrill (New York City) Reader