

Dear Reader,

I would like to recommend you a book that I am not able to read because I don't speak German. What more, one might say I don't even know the author very well. Seriously. I have not met the guy. I have not spoken to him on the phone, I don't know how he looks and even how old he is. So what my recommendation is worth? Well, I know *something* about the author that people who meet him every day may not know. Something that is much more relevant than the looks or the age. The long story short is that we've been collaborating for several years on a software project for Mac OS X, communicating by e-mail, writing mostly about technical aspects of the project, rarely digressing. So what have I learned over the years about the author of this book? Primarily two things: passion for the Mac and attention to detail.

Passion. You rarely see a true passion in the present age. Short-lived bursts of enthusiasm don't count. Corporate-style, 5 days a week, nine to five »passion« is a joke. Severely overused, the term became almost meaningless. But, without formal definition, let me describe the passion I am talking about by way of example: a passion is when you do something for a living and then you come back home and you still do it. That type of passion is what a reader expects from an author on a given topic. And I believe we are dealing with a genuine case here: Knut and Mac OS X. We are talking about a guy who owns several different Macs, some vintage, some modern, not to mention numerous iPods. Always to get the newest Mac model, much to my jealousy. The guy who does Unix shell scripting for fun. The guy, who for several years, in his free time – too many weekends to count – has been developing a freeware program for Mac OS X just because he thinks it is useful and unique.

The collaboration on that freeware project is what bonded us and gave me an idea on Knut's many talents. It all started with an e-mail, in which Knut proposed he would write a helper application for the OnMyCommand project using REALbasic. I was highly skeptical to say the truth. I thought: »Oh no, another amateur writing in REALbasic, it will be a disaster«. The fact is that many applications are written in REALbasic by non-professionals and are terribly buggy and crashing so I expected a similar experience with the one written by Knut. He quickly proved me wrong. He developed a very solid and well behaving application. Some people said it was the best application written in REALbasic and certainly the best I have seen. But that's not the end: after several years developing in REALbasic he apparently got bored and he learned Cocoa only to rewrite this quite complex app in a matter of several months (remember: weekends only). And guess what: it is a very good Cocoa application too. And this brings us to the next topic.

Attention to detail. It seems to me that whatever Knut does, it needs to be perfect. It must be well designed and executed. He hates bugs in his application and fixes

them right away. He can't stand the sloppiness. Maybe it is a German trait. I don't know, but you want a guy like that when you write software and you want a guy like that to write a detailed, in-depth book about a new operating system. Combine this with a true interest in Mac OS X and you can be sure that all interesting things are covered in the book and described in detail. I am also certain that the author took great care to craft this book and polish it in all aspects. He refused to write it in English because he felt it would be less than perfect and that is not an option for him. Now, if you find a typo in this book I am pretty sure he will be very embarrassed and upset about it...

I don't know if this book is good. I can be sure of the author's passion and attention to detail. A good book like that also needs a clear and understandable language. I cannot tell you about that but you can check it yourself: go to the beginning of some chapter in the book, read a fragment and see if what he wrote makes sense. If you like it, it is very possible you may have just found an excellent book that will bring your Mac OS X knowledge to the next level.

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