

Preface

FileMaker Pro is a mature database product. We're not talking about some company's latest brainchild that is being foisted bug-laden onto an unsuspecting public. In its various incarnations and from its various publishers, this product has been known as FileMaker, FileMaker 2, FileMaker IV, FileMaker Pro, FileMaker Pro 2, 3, 4, 5, 5.5, 6, 7 . . . and now, FileMaker Pro 8. FileMaker Pro has been around the block—and we've been in lock step with it.

Unlike many computer products that are periodically redefined by having drastic changes made to the program's focus (changing a simple text editor into a desktop publishing program, for example), FileMaker Pro's versions have all shown steady progression. This means that if you've used any version of FileMaker Pro—even one that is several years old—the information and experience that you've gained haven't been a waste of your time. Much of your knowledge can be applied directly to the current version of the program.

Although we've reviewed computer programs for more than 20 years for magazines such as *Macworld* and *PC World*, only a surprisingly few products have impressed either of us enough to stick with them over the years. FileMaker Pro is such a program. Apparently, much of the computer community agrees with this assessment because FileMaker Pro currently owns the vast majority of the Mac database market, and it's making steady inroads into the world of Windows. Because we assume that you own or use a copy of FileMaker Pro, you're in excellent company.

About This Book

FileMaker Pro 8 Bible is a different kind of computer book. First, it's not a manual. Many people don't like computer manuals—perhaps because they feel obligated to read a manual from cover to cover, or perhaps because manuals are designed to explain how features work rather than how to make a program work for you. *FileMaker Pro 8 Bible* is not a book you *must* read. Rather, it's a book we hope you'll *want* to read and reference because it provides easy-to-find and easy-to-understand explanations of the common tasks for which you bought or use FileMaker Pro in the first place. When you want to know how to use a particular program feature, you can use the extensive table of contents or the index to identify the section of the book you need to read.

Second, like previous incarnations of *FileMaker Pro Bible*, this is a cross-platform book. Whether you use a Macintosh or a Windows PC, the material in this book is applicable to you. Windows- and Mac-specific materials are clearly delineated so you never have to guess whether a particular procedure or explanation is relevant to you.