



## Reviewer Details

## Review Details

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PugViews Interactive Training CD/DVD Review  
FileMaker Pro 8.5 Beyond the Basics  
<http://www.lynda.com/>

### Ratings

Ease of use:



Support:



Features:



Quality/Stability:



Price:



Overall Rating:



### Q. Instructor Name

Cris Ippolite, President of iSolutions, Inc

### Q. Item Type

Training Specific

*If Other, please specify*

### Q. Platform

Cross Platform

### Q. FileMaker Version

*Check all versions that apply*

8.5

8.5 Advanced

**Q. General Description**

*(in your own words):*

This CD is actually the third in a series of training videos produced by Lynda.Com. The three are:

FileMaker Pro 8.5 Essential Training 8.5 hours  
FileMaker Pro 8.5 New Features 1.5 hours  
FileMaker Pro 8.5 Beyond the Basics 7 hours

The first one was aimed more at regular end users; the 2nd dealt mainly with the new Features of 8.5 and this CD is directed more to a developer's point of view.

I did not review or see the first two except for "free" demo movies that were available on line at Lynda.com. There are literally hundreds of videos available on line and can be viewed either by paying a monthly fee, a yearly fee, or purchasing the CD. I had the actual CD to review for FMPug and with the CD, comes exercise files. I will get into more of the details as I go through this review. I do want to say right up front that I think this website is a fabulous resource for many software titles and FileMaker Pro has been well-served by them.

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**Q. Who is the target audience?**

*Run-of-the-Mill Everyday User, Heavy-Duty Industrial User, Newbie Developer, God-like Developer*

Newbie Developer  
Heavy-Duty Industrial User

*Feel free to elaborate -*

It's always hard to judge whether a really unbelievably skilled developer would find a particular training video as helpful as I do. They probably already know everything and may get a little bored. However, I do think that Cris has done a really good job of reviewing and enhancing many of the features and functions of FileMaker Pro 8.5. Even when someone uses the program a lot, there are little things, little touches, little tricks that may escape notice when upgrading to a new version of Filemaker Pro. Cris started out with a review of Data Modeling and went through relationships, functions, objects, reports, scripting, converting files and sharing files. Quite a lot of information and well suited to anyone who has already achieved fairly advanced knowledge. Even those who are quite advanced will find value here.

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**Q. In your opinion, do you think it's targeting the "right" audience?**

Yep, perfect fit

*PLEASE ELABORATE – Have they overshoot, undershot, tell us your honest opinion...*

I think it is aimed at those with some knowledge and helps build on that knowledge without being redundant or boring.

**Q. As you worked through the material, was the speed of the presentation topic(s) appropriate?**

*In other words, was the material presented in a natural progression & hence, easy to follow?*

Whizzed-through it – Fast Forward/Next Chapter was my friend

*Whether you whizzed through it or are still trying to figure out that first lesson, tell us more about what lead to your above impression, what could be improved, eliminated, added-to, etc.....*

I had some technical issues with the way the CD was laid out and how the interface worked but I will address that later. I think that Cris' approach and his delivery were right on. He has an easy to listen to voice and he kept everything moving at a pace that was quick but not too fast. Of course the good thing about CD training is that you can stop and go back if you do happen to miss anything.

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**Q. Sticking with the material, let's discuss the finer points. In your opinion how would you rate the material coverage, was there an adequate amount of live demonstrations, details, practice samples, etc?**

Plentiful: Not too much, not too little, not too easy, not too hard - the number of fine points is just right.

*When it comes to these finer points, is there room for improvement? What would your suggestions be (if any) to make the next version even better – keep in mind we're talking about lesson examples, details, etc:*

The CD came with a folder of exercise files which were the same files that Cris was using in his examples. I think this is great. I found that I didn't use them so much at the same time I was watching him, but later it was very helpful to go back and review some of the points he had made. And in general, they are great files to delve into and take apart to study scripts and relationships, etc. Cris used lots and lots of examples when explaining a function or a script step, etc. These were very helpful. Cris covered some very specific things like individual functions and scripts steps very nicely. He also took on bigger, broader issues like Converting Older Files and Sharing a Database. He handled each type effectively.

One of the things though that I did not like about the visual interface was that it did not list the length of each video. When you go to lynda.com and use the videos on line, each movie is listed with it's running time. This is actually very helpful. That is not available on the CD. Also, on the CD, when you watch a particular video, an indicator comes up to let you keep track of where you are. However, if you quit the program or remove the CD, the indicators disappear. It's not the end of the world but it would be a nice fix. Also, when an individual movie is running, the title doesn't reflect the chapter title, it just says: Movie. I have seen some interfaces that do give you the chapter title which I like. This CD does give you the option of running full screen or in a window which is a nice touch. When running in a window, it is easy to work on the exercise files in the background. There were a couple of spots where the sound fluctuated slightly but didn't last too long.

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**Q. Let's get the low-down on the instructor. In your opinion, was he/she an effective teacher? Did he/she help, hinder or confuse your learning process?**

A – Top Marks. Smart, clever, witty & engaging, this teacher kept my attention & taught me more than a thing or two along the way. I'd go out of my way to find this teacher's material again!

*Additional Comments - Tell us your overall impressions of the instructor:*

I would definitely like to learn some more from Cris and, as I mentioned earlier, I have watched most of his "free" videos on lynda.com. His examples are interesting and well-thought out. He has great files to share. He is fast without being speedy and he really knows his FileMaker Pro.

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**Q. Has the product been helpful?**

Extremely Helpful – Bottom line, it rocked my world!

Very helpful. I have been learning more and more about FileMaker Pro through various avenues and I know I still have a long way to go. As "user friendly" as FileMaker is, there is an incredible amount of creativity and productivity available to those who can harness all the power of the underlying program. I don't even know all the right questions to ask to get all the answers and maybe no one really "knows" everything (except, of course a few people I could name associated with FMPug but I don't want them to get a big head...) Sorry, back to the review, I got a little carried away there. Cris reviewed a lot of areas that helped me get beyond some stumbling blocks which I really appreciated. Also his section on Converting Old Files was extremely well done and very helpful. I have converted a number of files but I think after listening to Cris, I'll be way ahead of the game for the next time.

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**Q. Highlights / Downfalls**

*Tell us about the best & worst:*

I've covered pretty much all of the good and bad but for a quick review, here goes.

Instructor - very good

Exercise Files - very good

Interface - had a few problems with the CD but I do want to say that I think the lynda.com website is great. You could sign up there for on-line training and spend hours every day and still not get to everything. You only get the exercise files if you either buy the CD or pay for the premium service but the training is good even if you don't have the files.

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**Q. Overall Impression(s)?**

I will be referencing these lessons for many a year to come

*Feel free to elaborate -*

This is the kind of resource that you can go back to over and over again. For example, there are some functions or calculations that you may only use once or twice and then forget. With a CD like this, you can pop this in and refresh your memory.

"If" I forget what to do next, and then come to the "End If", well what should I do in that "Case?" Questions like this may come to you and what do you do? Get out that CD again and let Cris help you figure it out.

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**Q. In your opinion, do you feel the product is priced right? Do you feel it is a good value for the money?**

Bottom line, it's a great product for the money

*Feel free to elaborate -*

This CD costs \$149.95. Many of the CD's on lynda.com are priced at \$99.95 so I'm not completely sure why this one is listed at this price. Even at the \$149.95, it is still a good value. It is 7 hours of very useful information. There is also that option of going on line and you can pay for a month at a time for \$25.00, a year for \$250.00 or the premium subscription for \$375.00. This allows you to view as many videos as you want to within that time period. So, you could sign up for one month and see not only this video but the other videos that Cris made and some others as well for as little as \$25.00. That's really a good deal.

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**Q. Would you recommend it and to whom?**

I would recommend it to anyone who is using FileMaker Pro 8.5 and wants to push their knowledge a little further along. A strictly end-user may not care to delve into the functions, scripts, relationships, etc. but anyone who does any kind of developing, there is a lot of helpful information here.

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**Q. Did it meet your expectations? Did it deliver? Why or why not?**

Yes it did. I had watched some of the "free" movies that Cris did and I knew I would like to see the whole CD. He has a very nice approach and I like his series of exercise files. I was not at all disappointed.

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**Q. Thoughts / Comments / Suggestions**

*Have an idea on how to make it better, or an idea for the next edition or just a top-of-mind comment, this is the place to give it.*

I mentioned my wish list a littler earlier as far as the interface is concerned so I won't repeat myself.

As for Cris, I getting ready to move on to:

FileMaker Pro 9 Essential Training 10.75 hours  
FileMaker Pro 9 Beyond the Basics 8.75 hours

Both of these are available on the website and I think you all might want to check them out.

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