Reviewer Details	**Review Details**
Kathy Shea **Orlando**	**PugViews Interactive Training CD/DVD Review** **FileMaker Pro 9 Essential Training** **http://www.lynda.com**

Ratings

Ease of use:	🐾🐾🐾
Support:	🐾🐾🐾🐾
Features:	🐾🐾🐾🐾
Quality/Stability:	🐾🐾🐾
Price:	🐾🐾🐾

Overall Rating: 🐾🐾🐾🐾

Q. Instructor Name

Cris Ippolite, President and founder of iSolutions, Inc.

Q. Item Type

Training Specific

If Other, please specify

Q. Platform

Cross Platform

Q. FileMaker Version

Check all versions that apply to this product

9
9 Advanced

Q. General Description

(in your own words):

The CD consists of 10.75 hours of movies covering just about every aspect of FileMaker Pro 9. There are also 21 folders of exercise files to go along with the instructional movies. They are presented by Cris Ippolite and are produced by Lynda.com. These same training videos are available on the Lynda.com web sight.

When FileMaker Pro 7 came along, there was not just a slight tremor in the database world but a huge shift in thinking and planning and viewing data using FileMaker. I for one, had some serious misgivings and road blocks to making that shift. Since then, we've had versions 8 and 8.5 and now version 9. Each new version has added some great features and that "new way of thinking" is getting a little easier to understand. In this training video, Cris Ippolite has done an incredible job of walking a user through the whole gamut of working with a database using FileMaker Pro 9. Someone who has never used a database before could study this CD and have a great shot at using FileMaker Pro 9 with some finesse. He takes the "big picture" of what a relational database is all about and how those relationships work and makes sense of it. Then he steps through all the essentials - managing fields, auto-entering, working with records, creating layouts, web viewer, finds, sorts, value lists and on and on. The possibilities are endless when using FileMaker Pro and Cris has touched on just about everything. An end user can work with FileMaker Pro without knowing about all the nuts and bolts inside but if you want to do some developing and creating, Cris offers up a big collection of those nuts and bolts to help you out.

And for those who have been using FileMaker Pro but haven't really gotten a strong hold on the changes since Version 7, this is a great tool for finally getting up to speed. Great examples, neat tricks and a very nice presentation makes this a great asset for anyone wanting to hone their skills a bit. He has another CD available for when you finish this one which will really bring it all together.

Q. Who is the target audience?

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

Newbie Developer
Run-of-the-Mill Everyday User
Heavy-Duty Industrial User

Feel free to elaborate -

The box the CD comes in says that it is geared to "Beginning to Intermediate" and I think that is pretty accurate. If you already know everything about FileMaker Pro 9, this may be a little too elementary but for everyone else who wants to either get a great head start on using FMP 9 for the first time or anyone wanting to get a deeper grasp on everything about FMP 9, then this is for you.

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

Yep, perfect fit

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

Each new version of FileMaker Pro brings new and improved features.   There are always lists and books telling all about the new features but seeing them in action while at the same time, reviewing the other aspects of FileMaker Pro helps make them more real and more applicable to our own projects.   Cris has integrated all the new features along with a refresher of all the other elements available in FileMaker Pro to create, design, build and use databases.

This also is good for those who have never used FileMaker Pro before. He explains everything very methodically and it all flows together very nicely so that a complete newbie can follow and understand.

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?

Fisher-Price Friendly – I understood the material first go-round, no problem

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 critiqued an earlier CD from Cris and Lynda.com and I had a few reservations about the visual interface and they remain here as well. I would like to see the length of each movie listed on the main screen but I will say that there is a very nice printed sheet that does list each movie and it's length.   The interface has a way of marking the movies you have seen but if you quit or remove the CD, that marking goes away. On the whole though, it is simple to use and the exercise files are a big asset.

If you go to the Lynda.com website, you can actually preview a number of the movies from the CD so you can see for yourself how effective Cris is.

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:

I have to say that I am incredibly impressed by the amount of time and energy that Cris put into making this a very useful tool.   I can't imagine how many hours he must have spent to lay this all out, relate the examples to the included files and do the actual recordings. This is a massive amount of work and it is presented in an easy to follow format with a very good flow of information.

I had only one issue and I am pretty sure it is just because it takes so long to put these together, that there just wasn't time to go back and fix it so I almost hate to say anything. However, at one point when discussing Portals, Cris showed an example of creating a portal and indicated that he was clicking on "Show vertical scroll bar" but no scroll bar showed up and he never went on to fix it or explain why it wasn't showing. When I looked at the example file, the scroll bar did not show up there either. I finally figured out that it was simply a matter of the line being "transparent" and when I changed that, the scroll bar appeared. This is really a very minor point considering there are over 10+ hours of video but it is something that a new user could get confused by and never figure out what happened. I sort of wish that he had fixed it himself on the video or at least mentioned it.

Other than that minor thing, I think Cris did an excellent job of presenting very complicated elements in an understandable fashion.

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?

B – Great Job. An all-around winner, this teacher definitely enhanced the learning material & kept the confusion factor to a bare minimum. I'd say they deserve a nice shiny apple.

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

I think that Cris is a great instructor - very easy to listen to, extremely organized and he offers great real world examples. He makes even complex ideas easier to understand. I fully intend to go on and get the next installment which is
FileMaker Pro 9 Beyond the Basics.

Q. Has the product been helpful?

Extremely Helpful – Bottom line, it rocked my world!

Even though I've been using Filemaker Pro for many years, there are always new things to learn and reviewing the program from top to bottom can only add to my understanding. For "newbies," this is the best possible way to start using FileMaker Pro effectively. I wish I had used a product like this when I first started because I would have gotten a much better foundation than I did from my "figure it out on my own" learning system. I often "figured it wrong" and then embedded poor procedures in my developing that were hard to break.

Q. Highlights / Downfalls

Tell us about the best & worst:

Lots of "high" - very few "lows"
Easy to follow format if you use the included printed index. "Newbies" can go from front to back and get a really good explanation of just about anything they would need to know. Others more familiar with FileMaker Pro may only need refreshing in certain areas and you can get that here as well. Relationships and "Context" are the two areas that have changed the most since the introduction of FileMaker Pro 7 and Cris covers these very well.

Web publishing, external SQL data sources, networking and Server are not covered in this CD but they are going to be part of the next CD in the series. And frankly, how much can you learn all at one time???   A user could live their whole database lives quite productively without these extras. Just ask me. I don't know if it is fear of the "unknown" or fear of "sharing," but I'm pretty content just working on getting better at the basics.

Q. Overall Impression(s)?

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

Feel free to elaborate -

For Developers who are already quite proficient, you might want to go with the next CD - "Beyond the Basics." For "newbies" or anyone who is still learning and searching for someone to show them a more in-depth look at the ins and outs of FileMaker Pro 9, this is for you.   Even fairly simple things like formatting text and layout objects can be a lot to remember "for all time." If you don't "use it," you might "lose it."   Reviewing this CD can help rekindle that faulty memory. And you can never get enough pointers when it comes to calculations, scripts and functions.

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 -

The price is $99.95 which is quite a fair price. Big note here: FMPUG members can get a 20% discount on this or any Lynda.com videos which makes this a really great product for the money. In addition, you can go to Lynda.com and pay either monthly or yearly for access to this and hundreds of other titles.   Also check you FMPUG page for discounts on the yearly on-line prices as well. Also, if you are still unsure of whether you want to buy this CD, go on-line and view the "free" movies and you will see for yourself just how good this is.

Q. Would you recommend it and to whom?

I would highly recommend this training program to anyone interested in a good hands-on view of FileMaker Pro 9. As I mentioned earlier, a highly trained developer may not need this but just about anyone else could find something to help them.

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

I had previously reviewed "FileMaker Pro 8.5 Beyond the Basics" so I expected to like "FileMaker Pro 9 Essential Training" and I did.   Cris had also done an Essential Training for 8.5 so if you had watched that video, you may not feel you need to check this one out too. However, I looked at the index on line for the "8.5 Essential Training" and saw some similarities but I also noticed that Cris did not just simply copy over the movies from one to another. Each one has valuable information and I wouldn't mind in the least watching both of them. "FileMaker Pro Essential Training" obviously has more information about all the new features of FMP 9.

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.

You can never have too much of a good thing. FileMaker Pro is a fabulous database program but if you really want to take control of all the deep down capabilities, you need to learn, learn, learn followed by review, review, review. Lynda.com offers an astounding array of training videos for just about any program on the market. Using Cris Ippolite to deliver the training for FMP 8.5 and 9 was a very good choice on her part. I would like to add at this point that there are some other FileMaker Pro instructional videos available on Lynda.com which are also very good and they feature Vincenzo Menanno (FileMaker Pro 7; Inspector, etc)