

## Book Review

Title: "The Microsoft Certified Application Specialist Study Guide"

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Available through: <http://www.softpro.com/0-7356-2548-4.html> or [www.softpro.com](http://www.softpro.com) \$39.99 list price, SoftPro is showing a discounted price of \$31.99 at the time of writing.

This book covers the background necessary to prepare for the Microsoft Certified Application Specialist (MCAS) exams in: Word 2007, PowerPoint 2007, Excel 2007, Outlook 2007, and Access 2007.

I used it to pass the Excel and Access exams, and found it to be an excellent tool for this purpose.

The book is divided into sections by application, and each section is broken into chapters following the "skills measured" exam content as published by Microsoft at <http://www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/certification/mbc.aspx#section1>.

Each chapter is further broken into modules consisting of step-by-step explanations about how to perform the various tasks and useful screen shots. Each module is capped off by a set of practice problems using the included practice files.

The practice files were the key to getting comfortable with the exam material. The tasks were clearly explained and closely imitated what I later experienced in the live exam. I found no errors in the practice files, and the few errata in the text are available online.

The only downside is that there is no answer key or examples of correct results provided, and in one or two cases I would like to have seen how the authors would ideally have performed a particular task.

The text states that persons preparing for the exam should have at least six months of experience with the particular application. This is consistent with the purpose of the book – it is a very well designed test prep tool, but it is not adequate for self training by a person who has little or no experience using the application(s).

The book came with a link to the website of training company Certiport, through which one can purchase exam vouchers at a 25% discount off the standard \$89 fee. This also entitles the purchaser to one free practice exam (multiple choice, not like the live, practical exam) to help one gauge one's preparedness for the exam. The vouchers are accepted at local testing centers including Arapahoe Community College, Techskills, and New Horizons.

In sum, I highly recommend this book for those looking to acquire their MCAS certs or to update their MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) certs.

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