How to use that new device

Have you ever purchased a new device (PC, Mac, Chromebook, tablet, smartphone, camera … the list is endless) and found yourself wondering how to use it? Device manufacturers these days all too often do not include a detailed user manual in the package containing the product. They've stopped including them because their internal research has found that so few people actually read them. That said, all is not lost. The information can usually be found on the Internet, often in multiple ways. The number of devices and manufacturers is so extensive that it is beyond the scope of this article to give specific guidance for individual devices or manufacturers. However, there is a process for finding the information you're seeking no matter what device you're dealing with. Here are some tips:

A.   Visit the manufacturer's website and look for a "Support" link

1. You may need to look around on the home page of the manufacturer's website to locate a link for their product support section. Sometimes it will be somewhere at the top of the page while sometimes it's way at the bottom of the page, if you don't see it simply hit <ctrl - f> (which in most all web browsers is the "search within this page" command) and search for "Support".

2. Some manufacturers may organize their website in a way such that you need to first find the product page for the device you're dealing with, and then find the "Support" link on that page.

3. So if you just browse along you should eventually get to a "Downloads" page for your product, and that downloads page will sometimes include a PDF file of the actual user guide for your product. However, the manufacturer may not publish a single downloadable "user guide", it may instead publish interactive website pages that you browse through online only. In some cases, if you want a printed manual, you'll need to turn to Amazon or some other book seller to seek a book someone has written for your particular device (and pay for it.)

B.   **Do a Google or DuckDuckGo Internet search for the product you're trying to learn to use.**

1. Sometimes it's easier to do a general Internet search to locate the info you're seeking. Doing a DuckDuckGo search for "<name of your device> user guide" will provide a search result that will take you right to the appropriate page on the manufacturer's website.

2. For example, you might search for something like "Apple iPAD Pro 10.5 inch user manual" or "Google Pixel 6 user guide".

3. You'll probably get a search result that will take you right to the appropriate page on the manufacturer's website where you'll find web pages that describe that product and how to use it. Sometimes you'll find that there is no written manual at all. Instead there will be links to a comprehensive set of web pages that discuss nearly every aspect of your device.

C.   Go into YouTube and search (within YouTube) for the device you're trying to learn to use.
At the top of the main YouTube page if you type into the "Search" box something like "Introduction to iPAD" or "Introduction to Pixel 6", etc, you'll be presented with quite an array of videos that you can watch. Some videos may be quite good while some are not worth even 2 minutes of watching, so as the saying goes – "Your mileage may vary." Many people find watching videos is easier than trying to digest a written book. Your preference often depends on what type of learner you are.

Hope this helps you figure out how to use that new device. If you would like individualized help, send an email note to uwra.tech@gmail.com and the members of the UWRA Madison Electronic Technologies Committee will help as much as time and resources permit.