

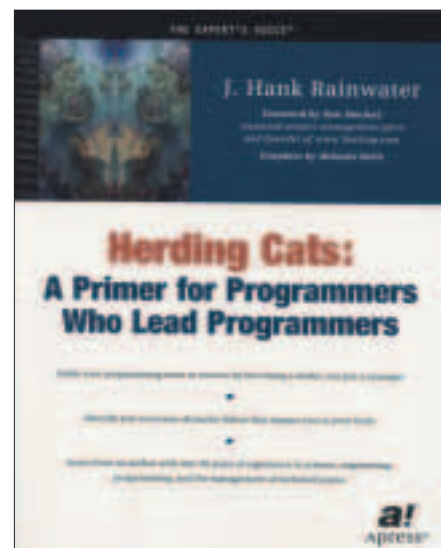
HERDING CATS

J Hank Rainwater's *Herding Cats* is a management book with a twist. Aimed specifically at programmers taking on a management role for the first time. The book deals with the difficulties of making a number of independently minded programmers work together as a team – a task that has been likened to herding cats. Keeping to the cat theme, Rainwater breaks different personality types down into breeds, highlighting good and bad aspects of each and how to get them working together. Various management pitfalls are illustrated with real life examples taken from the author's own experience. A couple of chapters are devoted to planning and organisation with details of software that can be used

to make your life easier.

Much of the content is similar to that found in general management textbooks but it is slanted towards our programming industry and takes into consideration the fact that programmers are unique and individualistic and that they cannot be led in quite the same way that workers in some other fields can be. Rainwater illustrates his point with quotations drawn an esoteric range of sources from Star Wars to T S Elliot and includes various classics of cyber literature, which reinforces the fact that there is nothing new and any problems that you might encounter have already been met before.

This is a very readable textbook and



touches on many aspects of management. Once you've read it you should feel better equipped to cope with all those cats you have to herd. If you happen to hate cats, keep an open mind and just accept the phrase as the amusing analogy it is intended to be.

Author J Hank Rainwater
Publisher Apress
Price £25
ISBN 1-59059-017-1

THE HACKER DIARIES



This is an entertaining account of modern teenage hackers. It barely touches on most of the older famous cases, dealing instead with more recent instances which many of us may recall from news items, bringing the book right up to date with events following 11 September 2001 and the US's increased paranoia about cyber terrorism. The book stresses the point that teenage hackers are normal in most ways and do not conform to stereotypes. It also goes out of its way to demonstrate that the majority of hackers can be converted to the light side of the force and can even end up with jobs in the industry, protecting the very things they once tried to break into. Most of the cases covered do seem to be "white hat" hackers and even those who did commit damage to the sites they hacked, for instance World of Hell, are shown as running down their

activities and maybe even seeing the error of their ways.

At the end there is a detailed chronology and a list of useful Web sites. It is a shame that it did not include a bibliography of further reading, guiding the reader to some of the earlier classics in this field, such as Stephen Levy's *Hackers* and Bruce Sterling's *Hacker Crackdown*. The hacker diaries is a worthy addition to the genre, bringing everything up to date, but do all the script kiddies have to come over as being nice, if slightly maladjusted young people?

Author Dan Verton
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