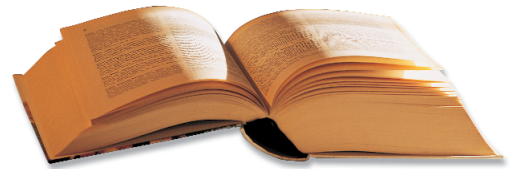


Book Reviews



Head first Java

This is the first in a new series by O'Reilly. The aim is a new way of learning, using pictures, diagrams, humor and a personal style of writing to impress upon your brain the importance of learning the subject. Tests have shown that variety is the key to learning so the book is packed with different ways to make

you remember. So, does it work? Well, it certainly kept my brain more alert than reading manuals usually does. The exercises were more like puzzle pages of the Sunday newspaper and so were much more enjoyable than the usual exercises that see me running to the fridge for a bottle of beer to help me out.

By the end I really did feel that I had got to grips with the subject. The style is less contrived than the "Dummies" series of books which is the closest in style that I could think of. I liked the personal way of talking, as if the book was your own tutor and I liked the notes and explanations that cover the pages, so that even in the pages of solid code you are alerted to the important words and where you have to be extra careful.

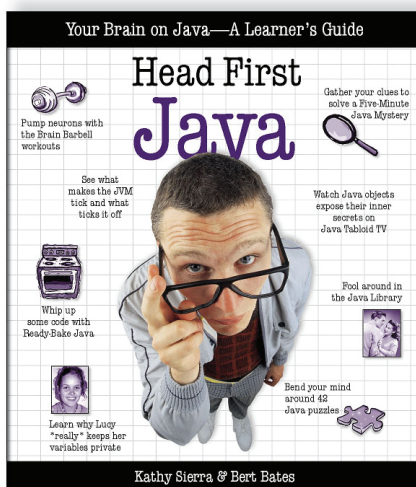
Some people may be put off by the style, but there are plenty of good Java textbooks out there with a more traditional approach. If you've tried them and been put off, try this one and you may find that all suddenly becomes

clear. You do need to have some programming experience, but most things are explained from the basics.

You are required to have a fairly up to date edition of Java, but you are told where to download it from if need be. The book covers all the necessary topics from objects and variables to the Java libraries, GUIs and connecting to hardware. You are even taught how to tidy up your code before implementing it.

A few other topics are covered briefly in the appendix, but once you have got to grips with the basics using this book you will be better able to tackle one of the more traditional books on advanced Java programming. I certainly look forward to seeing what other titles are brought out in this series – it is one to look out for. ■

Kathy Sierra & Bert Bates
600 pages
O'Reilly, 0-596-00465-6
£28.50, US \$39.95, EUR 44.00



Practical TCP/IP

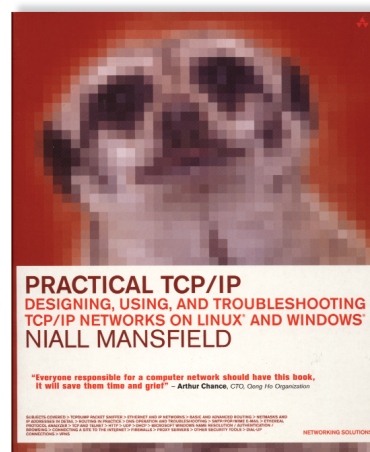
This book starts with a brief introduction to networks – what they are and how to build them, if you are already up to speed you could skip this bit. It covers both Windows and Linux, so you will have to turn to the sections that are relevant to you. There are practical "Labs" throughout the book to help you practice what you have learned. The book is very thorough, guiding you through simple networks before launching out onto the world wide web. It does, of course, cover the all important topic of security with firewalls and DMZs covered as well as virus scanners and filtering.

Five whole chapters are devoted to the unique problems of Windows networking. I cannot comment on these chapters, I am sure they are very useful, but those of us who don't use Windows

can just skip the section, thinking "there but for the grace of God...". Nearly an eighth of the book can be missed out, but you do at least have the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing it the easy way.

Practical TCP/IP is a very useful guide for anyone working within networks, from students to experts. A handy list of port numbers is located inside the front cover and a decimal, binary, hex conversion chart inside the back.

Debian Linux is the default version used, with information for other distrib-



textbook which should be a great help to many. ■

Niall Mansfield
864 pages
Addison Wesley, 0-201-75078-3
£38.99, US \$44.99, EUR 42.16

utions to be found on the book's website. I did not find the style of the book as interesting as that of "Head First Java", it was more of a traditional textbook – but having said that, it is a very clear and concisely written