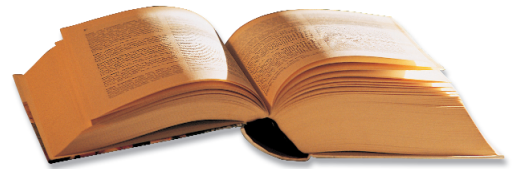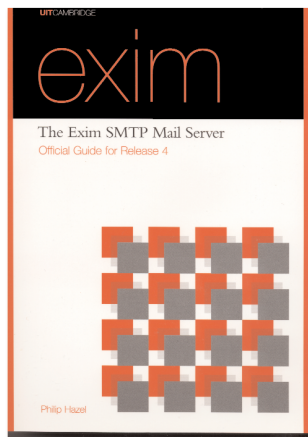# Book Reviews

Exim – Official Guide for release 4

Philip Hazel wrote Exim and so is undoubtedly the best man to write the official guide to using the program. The guide is clearly set out with chapters on all the main features of Exim.

The book starts with an introduction to email in general and then goes into a detailed overview of Exim. The middle part of the book devotes one chapter to each feature of Exim with plenty of examples and scenarios so that, no matter what you need to do, you should be able to find a way with Exim. The book has two appendices, one summarizing string expressions and the other regular expressions.

If you are setting up an email system with Exim, then this book clearly sets out how to configure your system with all the bells and whistles you can imagine. You don't need much experience – everything is well explained. If you do have experience, then this book is probably not what you need as much of it covers things that you will already know. Unlike its predecessor, the guide to release 3, published by O'Reilly, the guide to release 4 is written more as a manual, without the attempts to inject humor into the topic, that are so much a charctaristic of O'Reilly books. If you want a straightforward guide to the subject, then this is the one for you. ■
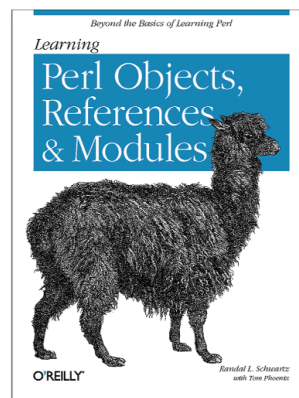
Philip Hazel
621 pages
UIT Cambridge, 0-9544529-0-9
£37.50, US $60.00, EUR 55.00

Learning Perl Objects, References & Modules

Here we have a typical O'Reilly book, with all the humor that makes them so popular. The book is littered with examples trying to bring a lighter side to what is often a pretty heavy subject. The authors assume that the reader has a basic knowledge of the subject, preferably from reading the earlier volume "Learning Perl", and taking this as their starting point, go on to show how to write longer pieces of code (over 100 lines) and develop more advanced applications.

It starts with simple ideas and slowly adds more complex ones, all fully illustrated with exercises so that the reader can at all times know exactly how much he or she understand. There should in fact, be no difficulty understanding any of the topics, as the book explains everything very clearly. If you need an introduction to more advanced Perl programming, then I have no hesitation in recommending this one. ■

**Randal L Schwartz &**
Tom Phoenix
205 pages
O'Reilly, 0-596-00478-8
£24.95, US $54.95,
EUR 34.95

Red Hat Linux 9 – Professional Secrets

This is a weighty tome. It comes with Red Hat 9 Publisher's Edition on two CDs and is a beginner's guide to installing and running Linux. If you are a regular reader of this magazine, then you probably do not need this book for yourself. The book is over a thousand pages and two CDs.
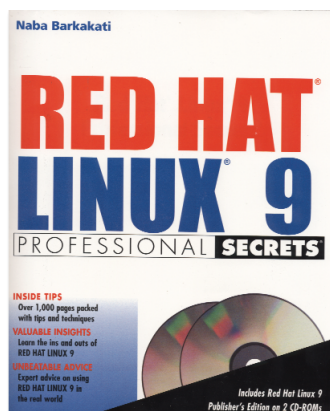
The book follows the regular format of an introduction to Linux in general, and Red Hat in particular, and then a guide to installation, making the assumption that the reader used to be a Windows user. The majority of the book deals with very basic stuff, hardware, software, networking and suchlike but part V onwards does cover more advanced topics, discussing Perl and Java programming, along with other similar subjects. The appendices cover Linux commands and a detailed look at the hardware. The text is easy to follow and is broken up with "Secrets" (i.e. Tips) and "Insider Insights" (additional comments) that can be very useful reminders.

To sum up, this is a nice book for beginners – if they are not put off by the length. ■

Naba Barkakati
1070 pages
Wiley, 0-7645-4133-1
£34.95, US $50.00, EUR 52.50
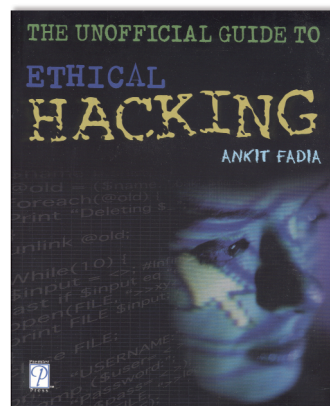
The Unofficial Guide to Ethical Hacking

This book works on the principle of "Know your enemy". In order to make your system more secure, you should understand just how it can be hacked and what to do in each case. If you can hack, you are better prepared to stop yourself being hacked. That is the justification for the book and it seems to be a very reasonable one, although, I think perhaps the author protests a little too much at times.

The start of the book gives the usual explanation of the difference between "hackers" and "crackers" and the author's definition of "ethical hacking". A short chapter then covers how to find information on the Internet, but much of this is very elementary stuff. The next section deals with hacking Windows, much of this is common knowledge.

Chapter 5 onwards contains the more practical information, several pages devoted to default passwords could come in useful. Two chapters on viruses describe the virus and tell you how to deal with each one, unfortunately this section has rapidly gone out of date – perhaps a second edition of this book could update the information.

Unfortunately, Ankit Fadia occasionally lets himself down and allows his youth to show through, the spelling of "kewl" throughout the book is just annoying to anyone over the age of 20 and the chapters on Windows hacking show a juvenile delight in playing tricks and getting around authority that most of us have grown out of. Various grammatical errors and mis-spellings should have been picked up by the editorial team. The majority of the book is of greatest use to a wannabe Windows script kiddie, although little mention is made of Windows Me or XP, most references being to Windows 95 and 98.

Rather than trying to explain all of Perl and C in 44 pages, perhaps a better use would have been to have extended the chapter on vulnerabilities. If any, this section would be the reason to buy the book. Where it is easy to find a list of security errors and patches, this book goes further and explains how the exploit works, along with the necessary code. However, £37 seems a little steep just for this. ■

Ankit Fadia
723 pages
Premier Press Inc., 1-931841-72-1
£36.99, US $49.99, EUR 59.45