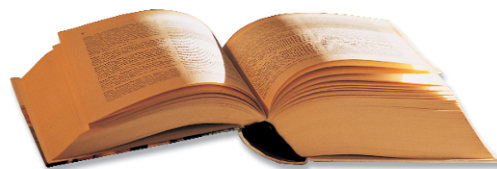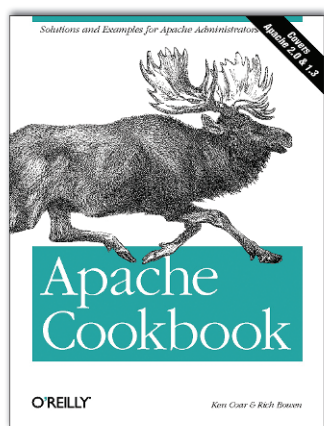# Book Reviews

Apache Cookbook

If you run an Apache server or if you are intending to install Apache, then this book may well make your life easier. Following O'Reilly's tried and tested cookbook format, the book takes around 150 problems that might be encountered and not only gives solutions, but also discusses the reasoning. This is so that it is possible to adapt the solutions to any similar problems that are not covered.

The first section covers installation, so that there may well be several pages that are unnecessary for anyone who is already running Apache. Care is taken to cover different operating systems, so that solutions are provided for Windows users as well as for users of Unixish systems. Only Red Hat is mentioned by name, other Linux flavors have to make do with generic instructions.

Later sections of the book divide the recipes up into topics, including logging, security, error handling and performance.

There are also two appendices covering regular expressions and troubleshooting.

It is a shame that there is not more cross-referencing between recipes within the book – as the authors point out the book is not intended to be read from cover to cover, but used to locate specific problems. So it might make adapting the recipes a bit easier if other similar and related solutions were highlighted in each section.

There is a website to go to with the book that contains errata and updates, but when I looked at it, it did not seem to have been updated recently – I hope that just means no errors have been found since last October and not that the site is no longer being supported.

There are some problems that do not have solutions and it is nice that these are pointed out. Readers are directed to partial solutions or third party implementations or are simply told to keep checking the website or later editions of the book as a solution may well be written by someone in the future.

As a whole this book is well written and practical. As such it should be useful to anyone who needs to set up and run an Apache web server. ■

Ken Coar and Rich Bowen
254 pages
O'Reilly, 0-596-00191-6
£20.95, US$ 29.95, EUR 29.00

Samba 3 By Example: Practical Exercises to Successful Deployment

Samba is one of those applications that you need to be confidant with. This book, although at first may seem expensive, soon becomes one of your mainstays.
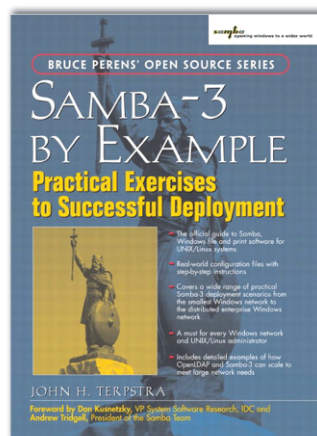
It is written as a system administrator's notes as he initially brings in Samba to a small company and the needs change as the company grows until it is a multinational empire. This has the advantage that you can choose problems that are likely to occur in whatever company you are in, but does make it harder to find topics once you have worked through the book.

The question and answer sessions at the end of each section show some thought and the worked answers are very revealing. It is worth the time and effort to work through these as you can be sure that the problems will occur in real life. Being Samba, it is aimed at those in a mixed OS environment.

The first section is naturally a Windows networking primer. This explains with the aid of a network sniffer, ethereal, just how Windows machines communicate. This is then followed by a guide on how to set up a no-frills Samba server. By page 100 we are already up to a 500 user network, but at no time does the book feel as though it has left information out or failed to explain just what is needed.

Security and how to make your users happy are both covered and with good practical examples.

The book style is straightforward, in that it explains honestly where problems exist and does not assume any computer system is better than any other. The book does defer some of the very technical levels to the Official Samba-3 HOWTO and Reference Guide, and together they make an invincible pair.

For any system administrator who has Windows machines on a network, this book is a must. Forget the cost as it will pay you back many fold over your working career. Bad points – there are none! ■

John H. Terpstra
256 pages plus 1 CD-Rom
Prentice Hall PTR , 0-131-47221-6
£35.99, US$ 44.99, EUR 41.90