

PETER H. SALUS

the bookworm



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BOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS COLUMN

MOVING TO THE LINUX BUSINESS DESKTOP

Marcel Gagne

Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2004. Pp. 638 + CD-ROM. ISBN 0131421921.

LINUX COOKBOOK

Michael Stutz

2nd ed., San Francisco: No Starch, 2004. Pp. xxxi + 788. ISBN 1593270313.

HIGH-TECH CRIMES REVEALED

Steven Weber

Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 2004. Pp. 312. ISBN 0-674-01292-5.

SUCCEEDING WITH OPEN SOURCE

Steven Branigan

Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2004. Pp. xxix + 412. ISBN 0321218736.

BUDGETING FOR SYSADMINS

Adam Moskowitz

Short Topics in System Administration #10, Berkeley, CA: USENIX, 2003. Pp. 37. ISBN 1-931971-12-9.

THE TURING TEST

Stuart Shieber, ed.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004. Pp. 346. ISBN 0262692937.

Time for the December column again! And I gotta pick my annual holiday “best” list. Let me say here that it was no easy pick. Last year, Gibson, Stephenson, and Waldrop weren’t eligible, so that gets rid of Sterling this year. But there is a consolation: I also get to list a bonus book. But first, the books at hand.

TWO PENGUINS

Gagne’s keyboard must generate a lot of heat. Earlier this year there was *Moving to Linux*, and now there’s a large *Business Desktop* version. While there is a lot of space in this “new” book given over to material from the earlier one, there is an admirable amount of new material. I think Gagne does a really fine job. But I’m afraid that this isn’t a book for a true newbie, either. Gagne explains Samba very well, and I was thrilled by his exposition on OpenOffice, but this is not a book that can be used readily by someone with no computer background. If you’ve got some command line experience, this will be the perfect book. It comes with a Knoppix CD.

Stutz’ *Linux Cookbook* has waxed since 2000, when the first edition appeared, from 402 to over 800 pages. But there’s a lot more useful stuff here. Well worth getting.

BLACK HATS

Branigan has been involved in high-tech forensics at Bell Labs and at Lumeta for quite a while. With *High-Tech Crimes Revealed* he’s produced something quite out of the ordinary: a “security” book as compelling as a whodunit. Peppering his book with anonymized anecdotes, he’s given us a gripping story.

MONEY PROBLEMS

When I was in Boston at the ATC, I saw Moskowitz’ pamphlet. For some reason, SAGE hadn’t sent it to me, so this brief review is late. I apologize, mainly because this is 30 pages that should be read and re-read by anyone who needs to construct and

present a budget, whether large or small. Adam, it’s a very fine job.

TURING COMPLETE

I would guess that 60% of the books I receive each year contain the name “Turing” at some point. Usually in the phrases “Turing complete” or “Turing test.” I would guess further that over half of those uses are irrelevant (stuck in for intellectual color) or just inappropriate. Shieber has put together a truly superb anthology concerning the “indistinguishability test” (between artifact and person).

Beginning with Descartes and La Mettrie and moving through all four of Turing’s papers, Shieber provides us with 13 essays for and against the “test,” ending with Chomsky’s “Turing on the ‘Imitation Game’” (written for this anthology in 2002). A great read.

THE VERY BEST

Marshall Kirk McKusick and George V. Neville-Neil, *The Design and Implementation of the FreeBSD Operating System*, Addison-Wesley.

Lawrence Rosen, *Open Source Licensing*, Pearson Education.

Steven Weber, *The Success of Open Source*, Harvard U.P.

R. Kent Dybvig, *The Scheme Programming Language*, MIT Press.

Craig Hunt, *Sendmail Cookbook*, O’Reilly.

Cyrus Peikari & Anton Chuvakin, *Security Warrior*, O’Reilly.

Diomidis Spinellis, *Code Reading*, Addison-Wesley.

Arnold Robbins, *Linux Programming by Example*, Prentice Hall.

Mark Burgess, *Analytical Network and System Administration*, John Wiley.

Jonathan Land, *The Spam Letters*, No Starch.

Last year’s “bonus” was the then-new *UserFriendly* book. This year it goes to cartoons again: Nitrozac and Snaggy, *The Best of the Joy of Tech*, O’Reilly.