

the bookworm

by Peter H. Salus

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For about six months or so I've been reading the same book, or actually, parts of the same book, some of them several times. This is because I've been reading *The Art of UNIX Programming* as Eric Raymond's been writing it. And it has gotten better and better as a variety of folks – including (alphabetically) Ken Arnold, Steve Bellovin, Steve Johnson, Doug McIlroy, Henry Spencer, and Ken Thompson – have put in their two cents (and, in several cases, at least a dime).

If you are an experienced user of things UNIX-y, you'll really enjoy Raymond's work. If you're a newbie, you may have to really think about much of it; and if you're in the middle, you can taste, savor, and enjoy.

I'll assume that most of my readers are mid- to high-level. If so, the best place to begin this valuable book is at Appendix D, "Rootless Root." The first time I read it, I laughed so hard I got hiccups. Once you've read that, you might want to go to pp. 35–38 (in Chapter 1), because everything that I think of as important is encapsulated there. Raymond has rendered McIlroy's, Pike's, and Thompson's versions of the UNIX philosophy into a set of bullets, which might well be put on a wall near every hacker's screen.

Rather than take you through all of Raymond's valuable pages, let me just remark on how good certain pieces are, like the 20 pages of OS comparisons; the chapters on languages (and mini-languages), editors, and tools are extraordinary.

There are things I disagree with, but anyone can cavil at anything. This is a wonderful must-have. Buy one as soon as you can.

And thank you, Eric.

More OS Stuff

Last year I read and enjoyed Lucas' *Absolute BSD*, which was on FreeBSD. Lucas has now produced a (smaller) tome called *Absolutely OpenBSD*. If you're really into security and excessively paranoid, OpenBSD is the system for you. And as it's not an "easy" system, Lucas' new book is much needed. I especially enjoyed the sections on installation and configuration and on building firewalls with pf.

Gagné's *Moving to Linux* is a straightforward exposition of just how a non-hacker PC user can get rid of "the Blue Screen of Death." If you have a friend, a co-worker, a significant other, or a relative who periodically screams, sighs, bursts into tears, or asks for help, here's the simple solution. It comes with a bootable CD of Knoppix, Klaus Knopper's variant of Debian.

With *Linux Security Cookbook*, Barrett et al. have done a nice job in presenting a lot of security tools and techniques in a brief book (barely over 300 pages). I'm disappointed at the paucity of references, but the information that's actually here is first-rate.

The second edition of *Linux in a Nutshell* has lived near my desk for four-and-a-half years. The new fourth edition has just supplanted it. The fourth edition is 1.5 times the size of the second. It seems to be more than 1.5 times as useful.

Bruce Perens, the former Debian project leader, is series editor for a slew of open source books from Prentice Hall. I've read *Intrusion Detection with SNORT* and *The Linux Development Platform*, and they are of an extremely high qual-

BOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS COLUMN

THE ART OF UNIX PROGRAMMING

ERIC S. RAYMOND

Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2003.
Pp. 550. ISBN 0-131-142901-9.

ABSOLUTELY OPENBSD

MICHAEL W. LUCAS

San Francisco, CA: No Starch, 2003.
Pp. 528. ISBN 1-886411-99-9.

MOVING TO LINUX

MARCEL GAGNÉ

Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2003.
Pp. 348. ISBN 0-321-15998-5.

LINUX SECURITY COOKBOOK

DANIEL J. BARRETT ET AL.

Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2003.
Pp. 308. ISBN 0-596-00391-9.

LINUX IN A NUTSHELL, 4TH ED.

ELLEN SIEVER ET AL.

Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2003.
Pp. 928. ISBN 0-596-00482-6.

INTRUSION DETECTION WITH SNORT

RAFEEQ UR REHMAN

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.
Pp. 256. ISBN 0-13-140733-3.

THE LINUX DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

RAFEEQ UR REHMAN AND CHRISTOPHER PAUL

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.
Pp. 320 + CD-ROM. ISBN 0-13-009115-4.

TCL/TK: A DEVELOPER'S GUIDE, 2D ED.

CLIF FLYNT

San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufmann, 2003.
Pp. 758. ISBN 1-55860-802-8.

PRACTICAL PROGRAMMING IN TCL/TK, 4TH ED.

BRENT WELCH ET AL.

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.
Pp. 877 + CD-ROM. ISBN 0-13-038560-3.

ity. I trust the other volumes will be as good. The snort volume provides a number of useful scripts to enable you to integrate snort with Apache, PHP, etc. The *Development Platform* does an excellent job of limning just how to go about building a Linux development environment. It's accompanied by a useful CD.

Tcl Me

I've been a Tcl fan for a long time. And I admit that I am a friend both of Clif Flynt and of Brent Welch. I liked both books when they first came out. Flynt's has improved somewhat for this second edition – and those of you who read his column in *login*: will understand where much of it has come from. Welch's book has changed tremendously since the first edition nearly a decade ago. But so has Tcl since I first came in contact with it in 1989 or 1990. Tcl is a really fine scripting language, and these books will enable you to use many enhancements, internationalization, and the toolkits.

Networking Anniversaries

by Peter H. Salus

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As we close in on the end of 2003, I want to point out the various and sundry “Net” anniversaries this year has brought us.

In 1968, BBN received the contract to build and deploy a packet-switching network of four nodes.

In 1973 (30 years ago), the ARPANET was made up of 35 hosts; by the end of the year, Bob Metcalfe felt it necessary to warn about security problems (RFC 602, “The Stockings Were Hung by the Chimney with Care”).

A decade later, the Net had grown to 575 hosts and the DCA-enforced switch to TCP/IP had been announced. A mere five years later (1988), there were 60,000 hosts. That's only 15 years ago. Right now, my best guess is that the Internet is at 300 million hosts.

In October 1983, there were 78 email/news links in the UK being fed from UKC by Peter Collinson. Also in 1983, EARN was created – a European version of BITNET. (And while I'm talking about these things, it was early in 1984 that Jun Murai initiated JUNET in Japan.)

FIDONET was also created in 1983.

IBM's VNET grew to 1001 when Reykjavik was connected in 1983.

Networking was barely a teenager, but had become a raging success all over the world.

Moving on, in 1988 the NSFNET T1 backbone became operational (1.544Mbps!). Five years later, in 1993, both PSINet and AlterNet deployed T3 backbones. And DARPA became ARPA, again.