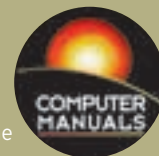


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Secrets And Lies Digital Security In A Networked World

THE CORE OF HIS
THEORY AND
PRACTICE OF
NETWORK SECURITY
CENTRES ON THE IDEA
OF NETWORKS AS
COMPLEX SYSTEMS

Author: Bruce Schneier
Publisher: John Wiley & Sons
ISBN: 0471253111
Price: £21.50
Reviewer: Martin Howse

Secrets and Lies is an essential introduction to the complex issues surrounding security and cryptography in the digital domain. Schneier dispels many current myths

regarding what constitutes a secure system and tracks the weak points of current security methodology. He's also an advocate of open standards when it comes to security software and it's easy to see throughout this book the advantages of open source software in a dangerous and complex networked environment.

We're certainly in safe hands with Schneier, though. He is the author of the now classic Applied Cryptography, as well as being the creator of the Blowfish and Twofish encryption algorithms. The core of his theory and practice of network security centres on the idea of networks as complex systems with the associated properties of such systems such as the butterfly effect. Schneier concentrates throughout on how these properties emerge in real-world systems at a practical level, and there are plenty of exciting non-technical examples. It's all about fostering a practical approach to security and avoiding just looking at the obscure technology of an individual machine.

Secrets and Lies is broken down in a logical manner into Landscape, Technologies and Strategies. Landscape surveys the current scene, detailing how criminal attacks and techniques have changed with the advent of cyberspace.

It is in detailing the technologies of digital security, however, that the book really comes into its own as an exciting and very readable introduction to the science of cryptography and computer security in general. At one level, security is mainly concerned with access control and authentication but, of course, there are deeper levels involving the security of the operating system and network infrastructure.

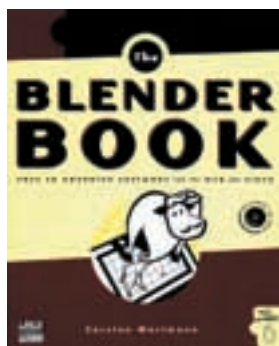
Strategies looks into developing a relevant security philosophy through an examination of the methodology of attacks and their possible counter measures. This obviously involves what he terms 'threat modelling', a scientific and complete analysis of what the real threats against the system are. This is done using 'attack trees' which methodically represent all routes which would enable an attacker to access the system. Schneier's examination of a PGP attack tree leads him to conclude that "the choice of algorithm and key length is probably the least important thing that affects PGP's overall security". Meaning that there are plenty of other ways to access the data, and it's here that the key to the whole book lies in formulating a total philosophy of security. There may be no one-stop solution to security problems, given software bugs and the increasing complexity of networked systems, but Schneier's logical philosophy of simple security does offer some hope for the future in helping to foster a correct and vigilant attitude towards digital security.

CLASSIC
TITLE

The Blender Book

Author: Carsten Wartmann
Publisher: Linux Journal Press /
No Starch Press
ISBN: 1886411441
Price: £33.76 (including 10% Computer
Manuals discount)
Reviewer: Daniel James

THIS BOOK
PROVIDES A WAY IN
TO PROFESSIONAL
3D GRAPHICS AT
LOW COST



Blender is a professional 3D graphics program with animation, video and game creation features. The program is available on six platforms, and while it isn't open source software, it is available as a free download for all of those platforms including Linux.

The creators of Blender decided to make their software fully backwards, forwards and cross platform compatible, and in this strength lies the program's greatest weakness. The OpenGL-based interface is unique to Blender and, despite some evidence of its roots on SGI's IRIX platform, is initially incomprehensible to the experienced computer graphics specialist and Linux user alike.

Fortunately a detailed technical manual already exists in the shape of The Blender Book which, in fact, is the main source of revenue for the developers of Blender, Netherlands-based company Not A Number. This book is intended to be a complementary tutorial and quick-start guide to the program and its key features. The author works for Not A Number writing Blender documentation, making this book as authoritative as it can be.

A potential drawback to a book for the beginner written by someone with an in-depth

knowledge of the software is that too many assumptions can be made about the reader's ability to comprehend the interface. However, this book has a chapter devoted to the basics of the interface, as well as a section on 3D graphics theory that will be useful to someone completely new to the area.

A CD-ROM of Blender binaries for all platforms, tutorial materials and stock textures is included with the book. The tutorials get the reader modelling and rendering quite quickly and after the first few hours the interface starts to make sense, with the 'one hand on the keyboard, one on the three-button mouse' style demonstrating its potential for rapid creative work in 3D. However, Blender remains a graphics program with a steep learning curve, especially for those of us who think we know how software works already. This book provides a way in to professional 3D graphics at low cost, without which most of us would have to admit defeat.

Linux: The Complete Reference Fourth Edition

Author: Richard Petersen
Publisher: Osborne
ISBN: 0072129409
Price: £26.99 (including 10% Computer
Manuals discount)
Reviewer: Martin Howse

SECURITY
CONFIGURATION IS
GIVEN DECENT
SPACE, WITH
SECTIONS ON
FIREWALLING AND
SSH



This fourth edition of the popular reference work certainly is very complete and up-to-date,

weighing in at well over 1000 pages and including two CDs with Red Hat 7 and Caldera OpenLinux eDesktop 2.4. It covers practically all aspects of everyday Linux, from desktop and Internet configuration and applications, to programming and server tools.

The basic installation and day-to-day setup and use of both Red Hat- and Caldera-based systems is described in a simple step-by-step manner with plenty of tips, command line examples and screengrabs of GUI configuration tools. And within a section designed to get the user up and running as quickly as possible, it's good to see that security configuration is given decent space with sections on firewalling and ssh. This more desktop-oriented section of the book also covers all the major window managers as well as standard internet tools and key office and multimedia packages.

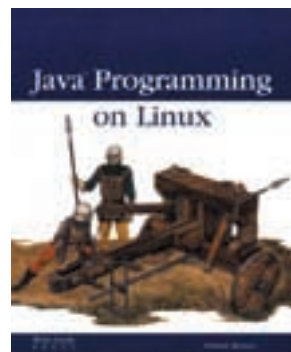
A great deal of essential information will ensure that things run smoothly for the single user, but the further chapters put the powers of Linux to work at the sharp end. There's plenty of clear coherent material covering all manner of servers, every aspect of administration, total network configuration as well as decent coverage of a range of programming tools and languages. The style here is clear and usable and it's easy to find exactly what you're after in the logical layout of this reference work.

The Complete Reference really does try to cover everything, encompassing a wide range of both tasks and tools. Yet this attempt to be all things to all people is a major problem in a book this length. Those more suited to a command line approach will not care to be bogged down with GUI screengrabs and unnecessary detail, whereas those more used to a window manager may well find the command line examples confusing. Despite this, I'm sure this will find its way onto many a corporate bookshelf as one of the most complete multi-user reference works on everyday Linux.

Java Programming on Linux

Author: Nathan Meyers
Publisher: Waite Group Press
ISBN: 1571691669
Price: £33.42 (including 10% Computer Manuals discount)
Reviewer: Martin Howse

AN EXCELLENT HEAVYWEIGHT GUIDE TO GETTING THE MOST FROM A WINNING COMBINATION



Linux and Java may sound like an esoteric combination, but it they do go well together. A fair number of Java development environments, GUI builders and RAD tools have recently been released for Linux and it can be viewed as a very useful OS for Java development.

Java Programming on Linux is a serious, hefty volume which aims to cover all aspects of using the language and architecture on Linux. There are a great deal of Java technologies available and it's enormously useful to have such a thorough guide to all the current solutions and implementations.

There's a lot to cram in here, and this is still a very concise work, even given its length. There's little room for the non-expert to manoeuvre here, with stacks of information and code examples presented right from the word go. Although there's a tiny introduction to Java, a rundown of core classes and a short chapter for those migrating from C++, it's very much assumed that you have a good grasp of the complete Java language, architecture and implementation. This book seems to be aimed more at Java

developers moving from other platforms to Linux.

The core of any Java development on Linux has to be the official Blackdown port of the SDK and JRE. Much space is devoted here to the tools available with this port and the associated install and configuration issues. There are plenty of other JREs, JVMs and compilers available and a decent cross-section is surveyed here. A few complete development environments such as JBuilder and Emacs JDE are also covered in sufficient detail.

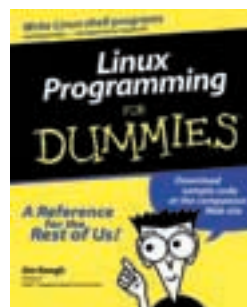
There are, of course, platform-specific issues under Java which need to be addressed, and it's very useful to find information here relating to multithreading, the X Window System and optimising performance across the board.

This is an excellent heavyweight guide to getting the most from a winning combination. There's plenty of hands-on advice with full code examples for each chapter. As a survey and reference work for a growing sector, it comes highly recommended.

Linux Programming For Dummies

Author: Jim Keogh
Publisher: IDC Books
ISBN: 0764506919
Price: £18.99
Reviewer: Martin Howse

PLEASANT, SIMPLE TUTORIAL FOR THE BEGINNER TO SHELL SCRIPTING ... A USEFUL JUMPING-OFF POINT TO MORE ADVANCED PROGRAMMING TUTORIALS



Readers expecting to dive straight into the secrets of kernel module

programming will be sorely disappointed. Linux Programming for Dummies is, however, a fun and easy introduction to shell scripting, a skill very much in demand still within Unix and Linux business environments.

It's also a fairly good introduction to programming in general, and the shell is of course an excellent place to start, with its simple syntax and intuitive structure.

Rightly or wrongly, the author equates Linux programming solely with shell scripting and this can be confusing for the newcomer. He also states that in contrast to Windows and Mac OS, Linux is a character-based environment. There's something to be said for keeping things simple, and that's what the Dummies series is all about, but there's nothing worse than poor or incomplete information.

The simple approach does however pay off when it comes to explaining good programming style and the design of a simple GUI. The advice and information here is clear and useful and, in usual Dummies style, well laid out with hints, quizzes, examples and excellent cartoons.

We're guided from the usual 'Welcome to My First Linux Program', through variables, control structures, functions and subroutines; all the elements of any simple programming language. Sticking to the character-based console does pay off for the beginner.

Things start to get a lot more interesting as we delve into simple database files and automated email. There's also a useful appendix-style chapter detailing ten of the more useful Linux command line utilities.

Linux Programming For Dummies is a pleasant, simple tutorial for the beginner to shell scripting and it would function as a very useful jumping-off point to more advanced programming tutorials. It's just a shame that the author presents Linux in such an old-fashioned light, though this old-school approach does pay off when it comes to the simple approach.

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