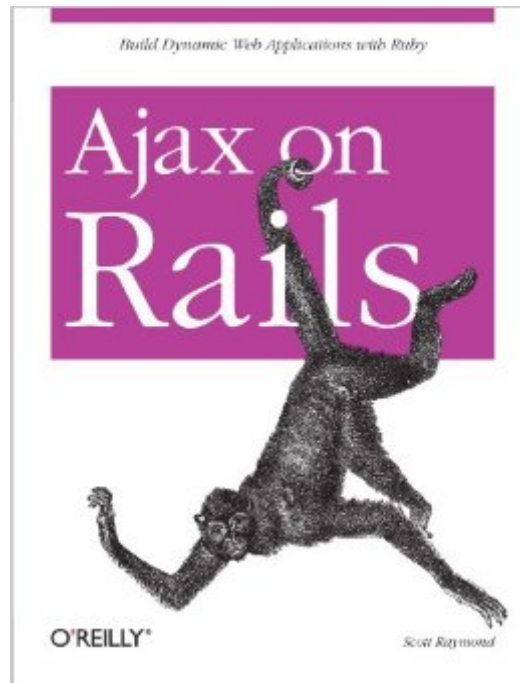


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# Ajax On Rails



## Synopsis

Learn to build dynamic, interactive web applications using the two most important approaches to web development today: Ajax and the phenomenally efficient Ruby on Rails platform. This book teaches intermediate to advanced web developers how to use both Ajax and Rails to quickly build high-performance, scalable applications without being overwhelmed with thousands of lines of JavaScript code. More than just recipes, you also get a thorough, low-level understanding of what's happening under the hood. Ajax on Rails includes three fully worked out Rails/Ajax applications, and quick reference sections for Prototype and script.aculo.us. Testing lessons show you how to eliminate cross-browser JavaScript errors and DOM debugging nightmares using a combination of Firebug, and Venkman. Advanced material explains the most current design practices for Ajax usability. You'll learn to avoid user experience mistakes with proven design patterns. Beyond the how-to, Ajax on Rails helps you consider when Ajax is (and isn't) appropriate, and the trade-offs associated with it. For those new to Rails, this book provides a quick introduction, the big picture, a walk through the installation process, and some tips on getting started. If you've already started working with Rails and seek to deepen your skill set, you'll find dozens of examples drawn from real-world projects, exhaustive reference for every relevant feature, and expert advice on how to "Ajaxify" your applications.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Scott Raymond's book "Ajax on Rails" (published Jan 2007) serves as an introduction, tutorial, and

reference for web development using Ajax and Rails. It is roughly 1/3 introductory and intermediate level text; 1/3 more advanced material for developing "Ajax on Rails" applications; and 1/3 sample - life-sized - applications. (The sample applications can be downloaded from the O'Reilly site.) The author writes that Ajax is "a really simple idea: web pages, already loaded in a browser, can talk with the server and potentially change themselves as a result." [p. 2] There is elegance in this simplicity and the book reveals a lot of the mystery around Ajax and how it works. The author does a great job exploring the basics. You will quickly get all the motivation needed to realize why this simple idea is so powerful in practice. You'll also soon see why "Ajax on Rails" is a productive approach for developing next generation applications on the web. One of the real strengths of this book is its many working examples. I found even tricky techniques described in ways that were easy to understand. As I read the book, I entered sample code described on each page. (Having a working Rails installation is key for getting the most out of the book. The author provides a quick installation introduction which is supplemented with URLs for added help.) It was easy to apply "Ajax on Rails" to my own project, which I worked on as I read the book. The centerpiece of the book is Chapter 5, which covers RJS (also known as Ruby-generated Javascript.) I expected to learn about Ajax, but I was pleasantly surprised by how much I learned about the magic of Rails and Ruby development! A number of critical technical topics, often overlooked, are also covered - including 'Usability', 'Testing and Debugging', 'Performance' and 'Security'. The author does a great job taking the reader from simple working examples to more complex applications. I certainly felt more comfortable with advanced aspects of Ajax and Rails by the end of the book. It seems to me this is the definitive text on the topic. "Ajax on Rails" has been a joy to read and work through. It was easy to mark my learning progress along the way. The material is organized clearly. The writing moves at a great pace. Sample code explores how everything works. (I expect I'll be referring back to the extensive examples in the future.) This book is a great tool to sharpen your skills around two of the most exciting aspects of the evolving web - Ajax and Rails.

This is a great book to get. The author is an expert in the field - I've seen him speak in person, and read his articles in the past. The book does not disappoint. It's really three books in one. The first part is a tutorial, taking you through the paces and up the ladder of frameworks. You go from JavaScript to Prototype to Scriptaculous to RJS, chapter by chapter, and it really makes sense. Then you get chapters on Usability, Performance, Testing, and Security, which really cover more than just the basics - Mr. Raymond shows you how to build your application around Ajax, and do it intelligently. The chapter on Performance had a better explanation of caching than I'd read

anywhere else! The second part is two chapters, two comprehensive references on Prototype and Scriptaculous, respectively. Combined, these might be worth the price of the book for some folks. I'm sure I'll be referring to these pages for some time. Finally, you have three real-world application examples. Again, these might be worth the price of the book as well! You get a Review Quiz, Photo Gallery, and Intranet Workgroup application. The code is available at the O'Reilly site now, so you don't have to type them in, of course. Still, it's nice to read about them in the book, and why the author wrote them the way he did. All of the applications are useful, and use best-practices throughout. It's nice to see O'Reilly starting to get their Rails titles out. Predictably, they're awesome. They always choose the best authors, edit and proof the books meticulously, and put out a quality product. Highly recommended.

Outstanding, with a few nits. The author is a technical master and a master communicator, the editing is first rate, the book really flows. (The new Agile Rails book (skateboard book) has an excellent section which covers the same material, but in somewhat less detail.) The sections on testing, security and performance are quite valuable. They're not too Ajax-specific and present best practices succinctly. The three case studies in the end are the most valuable chapters to me. I learn by taking apart code like this, I've hunkering down over the book, BTW, if you don't use Ajax now and think you don't need to know about it etc, you don't UNLESS: you never work with other developers, you never use anybody else's code, and all your users have JS turned off. Nits: doesn't cover basic ECMA/javascript syntax at all. Chapter 1 (30,000 foot view of Rails) is perfunctory. The index isn't great, (the Pragmatics have really raised the bar on this). Doesn't use migrations. The 1-liner method def's (no semicolons) and the ones with no parentheses around parameter lists are hard to read, IMHO. But all very minor complaints. On the whole, I would call this book indispensable

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