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Murach's Java SE 6: Training & Reference



Synopsis

This book teaches how to develop Java applications at the professional level. It starts by showing how to code, test, and debug everyday business applications that won't crash. It presents object-oriented features like classes, inheritance, interfaces, and polymorphism in a way that's both understandable and useful in the real world...perspective that's often missing in Java training. It presents essential Java skills such as working with data types, control statements, arrays, collections, generics, enumerations, exceptions, threads, Swing components, applets, and text and binary files. It covers new Java SE 6 features such as new JDBC features, the StAX XML API, and the built-in Derby database. And it's all done in the distinctive Murach style that has been training professional programmers for more than 30 years.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There have been a number of books and tutorials written about Java. The gold standard for me has always been "Learning Java" by Patrick Niemeyer and Johnathan Knudsen (O'Reilly & Associates). I have had a number of new programmers, enthusiasts, and members of the JUG tell me it is information overload. The book does contain a lot of information in its 828 page heft. As a result, I have been looking for a book just for beginners. I have found it. I just completed reviewing Murach's Java SE 6. It is a very good resource for learning Java. This book does an excellent job of providing a firm basis for understanding the technology. The book is clearly and concisely written. The book is divided into 5 major sections which cover the essential Java skills to advanced topics on data

access programming using XML and JDBC. The teaching style is very clever. It typically takes the form of a page of information with facing page with examples. I found this to be very important in getting sometimes difficult points across. I typically take the "Show me the code" philosophy, and this style works for me. The other technique that is used is to convey a purpose for learning Java. This is done by using the various topics as building blocks to create an application. The final result is a completed application at the end of the book. It encompasses the lessons learned, and gives the new programmer a sense of accomplishment with a completed functional application at the end of the book. I love it. I have found that people learn better with functional code examples. This book is replete with them. One of my greatest annoyances is to have code samples which do not work. This clouds the ability to learn because it forces the beginning programmer to question their abilities. The shroud of uncertainty should not be because the gold standard code is incorrect. I am pleased to note that I tried a number of code examples and they all worked. My favorite section is Data access programming with Java. Chapter 20 covers working with XML. This is a must for any programmer. XML is the new black, and anything that can help you learn this important technology is a must. In chapter 20, the topic of StAX is covered. This is the best simplified example of using StAX I have seen. After reading the information, and performing the examples, I felt I had a better understanding of this technology. I only have a few minor negative points to mention: the title is a little misleading. The majority of the information in the book really details Java SE 5 enhancements with two notable exceptions: StAX and an introduction to Derby (Java DB). My overall impression is that the book is an outstanding resource for new and seasoned programmers. This is a great book to add to the reference shelf.

This book provides a cornucopia of subjects that most intro to Java books briefly touch on, such as threading, setting up the Java environment on the windows pc, and the tutorials and instructions on using the various Java IDE's. I found these tutorials concise and easier to follow than on the Java web site. As always, Murach's treatment of OOP concepts impressed me. By displaying these concepts in a real-world application it reinforces your learning heads, leaps, bounds and miles over OOP object models of cats, widgets, etc. Best of all the code examples work! I can tell you how about the frustration of typing a 2-page code sample to realize, oops, the code sample doesn't work. The main area the book failed to meet expectations revolved around the weakness of its database section. Providing only a command line version of the database application reduced my rating from 5 to 4.

There are probably a couple of hundred changes and improvements that have been included in the new release of Java. The problem is that after three or four releases, the new product additions bring a decreasing amount of utility to the package. By version 3 or 4 the stuff that we really need is there. Java 6 has two additions that fall into my definition of really nice new things. One, is that Java continues to get faster as new editions come out. There's nothing you have to do to make it run faster so there isn't much said about this in the book. The second new thing is that Java now incorporates an integral database. It's a relatively new database called Derby. This is a small database, written entirely in Java as part of the Apache project. In this book there is a lengthy chapter, some 32 pages, covering the use of the database from Java. This book does not include a discussion of Derby SQL, that will have to be another book. [Note: Derby is the same product as IBM's Cloudscape database.] This book is a general introductory book to Java it starts with downloading the software from Sun and carries it forth to rather complex programming. It is, as is standard with the Murach books, very professionally done, tightly edited, complete, and probably the best book on the subject.

I've purchased several of Murach's books now. The learning style in his books works well for very simple topics. When things get more complicated, this learning presentation of explanatory text on left, and code example on the right, simply does not work. I think the Author knows this, and when he approached more complicated subject matter in his books, he simply chooses to ignore content so that it would fit his presentation style. Works great for him, for you as the reader who really needs to know this stuff, not so good... Also, the Author claims that they differentiate themselves from the competition by not releasing a book before it's time. That they release a book not according to the publisher's print schedules, but after it has been thoroughly reviewed by other programmers. I just can't believe this is true. I have found tons of errors in his books, and figures where the content is completely obscured by an overlay. Other problems include his overall style. The problem with it is he spends 700 pages on the How, and not on the Why. There is no discussion of why things are setup the way they are. So, what he is really selling is a reference manual. Of the books that I've read of his that are worth it, and where his style worked was his Servlets and JSP's book. Everything else is a waste of time. I would look for another Author. Sorry, the truth hurts.

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